The Backwards Race

Ready, steady... which way?



A short story for reading aloud

AGES 4-7 • Take your time. Enjoy the sounds.

The Backwards Race

Rabbit won the running race. Rabbit won the hopping race. Rabbit even won the race with a leaf balanced on his head.

"Another race?" he asked.

Tortoise was still arriving at the finish line.

"A different sort," she said. "A backwards race."

Rabbit looked behind him. "But I can't see where I'm going."

"Exactly," said Tortoise. "We shall go slowly."

They chose a short, flat path across the meadow. Mouse cleared away the sticks. Badger stood at one end to guide them.

"No running," said Tortoise. "Small steps only."

Rabbit shuffled backwards.

His ears wobbled. His feet argued. One wanted to hop, and the other wanted to hide.

The Backwards Race

Tortoise took one careful step. Then another.

"A little to your left," called Badger.

Both racers moved right.

"Your OTHER left!"

Mouse began to giggle.

Rabbit stopped to look over his shoulder. Tortoise stopped too.

"This is much harder than being fast," Rabbit said.

"My feet are surprised," Tortoise agreed.

They tried again, side by side.

Shuffle. Pause. Shuffle.

Just before the flower arch, Rabbit's ears caught gently on a low blossom. He could not see what was holding him.

Tortoise turned round and lifted the stem away.

"There you are."

Together they stepped across the line.

"Who won?" asked Mouse.

Badger scratched his head. "I was watching their feet."

Rabbit looked at Tortoise. Tortoise looked at Rabbit.

"Shall we walk home forwards?" she asked.

"Yes, please," said Rabbit.

For the first time all day, he was in no hurry at all.

THE END

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