

2

The Tortoise, the Hare, and the Penguin



One warm afternoon, a tortoise, a hare, and a penguin sat on the sandy beach of Dassen Island. On the other side of the island stood a lighthouse.

“Let’s have a race to the lighthouse,” said the hare.

“Sounds like fun!” brayed the penguin.

“A tortoise, a hare, and a penguin—it’s almost like the race in that famous story by Aesop,” declared the tortoise.

? What did the animals decide to do?

At the count of "One, two, three, GO!" the hare bounded ahead. The penguin walked as fast as she could, and the tortoise crept slowly but steadily. Soon they came to a large pond. Neither the hare nor the tortoise had any idea how to get across the water, and going around the pond would take them far out of their way.

The penguin decided to help her friends. She told the tortoise to latch onto her stubby tail so he would not sink. The hare climbed onto the floating shell of the tortoise. The penguin paddled across the pond with her head straight up like a duck's.

After crossing the water, all three animals looked gratefully at one another. Then they set off again toward the distant lighthouse.

? Which animal helped the others get across the pond?





Soon the tortoise, the hare, and the penguin came to a wall. The tortoise could not imagine how he would get over. Even the penguin was too short to hop over the wall. But the hare got up on her hind legs and stretched her full length so that she made an animal ramp. The penguin and tortoise climbed carefully up her back to the top of the wall.

Then the hare hopped to the upper ledge and bounded down to the ground on the other side. She propped herself against the wall like a sliding board, and the tortoise and penguin skidded right down.

All three animals shook one another's paws, wished one another well, and started off again toward the lighthouse.

Before long they came to a dense thicket of bushes and thorny vines. The penguin and the hare could not even walk sideways without being caught by the prickly shrubs.



So the tortoise began to snap at the vines with his strong jaws. Soon he had pruned a narrow path through the thorny thicket. Then he moved backward so that his hard-shelled back spread the branches even more. The hare and the penguin walked behind the tortoise as if they were following a miniature tractor.

When they finally reached the other side of the thicket, the tortoise, the hare, and the penguin hugged one another. Then they began walking toward the lighthouse side by side.


They came to the end of the race together, each waiting for the other animal to cross the finish line.

"After you," said the hare.

"You first," offered the tortoise.

"Be my guest," urged the penguin.

They all reached the goal together. Each understood that it isn't always the fastest or even the slow and steady who wins the race. By helping one another, all three were winners.

 What did the animals do at the finish line?

Read and Understand

Circle the correct answer.

1. Why did the hare and tortoise not want to go around the pond?
 - a. It was too cold.
 - b. It would be too out of the way.
 - c. There was no way to go around the pond.
 - d. They wanted to swim in the water.

2. Why did the penguin tell the tortoise to latch on to her stubby tail?
 - a. So the penguin could float better
 - b. So the hare could stand on the tortoise's shell
 - c. So the penguin could keep her head up like a duck
 - d. So the tortoise would not sink when they crossed the pond

3. Who was the first to get over the wall?
 - a. The tortoise
 - b. The hare
 - c. The penguin
 - d. The tortoise and penguin landed together

4. Why was the tortoise like a miniature tractor?
 - a. He was making a sound like a tractor.
 - b. He looked like a tractor.
 - c. He was clearing the thicket like a machine.
 - d. He was chomping on the vines with his teeth.

Write your answers on the lines.

5. Why did the tortoise mention the famous story by Aesop?

6. After crossing the thicket, why did the animals decide to walk side by side?

7. Why did the animals hug each other when they reached the other side of the thicket?

8. What do you think is the moral of the story?
