

The final Race of Speedy Weedy and Mosey Dawdle

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There was once a tortoise and a hare. One was called Speedy Weedy and the other Mosey Dawdle. Speedy Weedy was always puffing up his chest and boasting.

"I am the fastest, bestest and brilliantest beastie in the whole wide world," said Speedy Weedy, flapping his ears.

"Wrong!" shouted all the other animals. "Don't you know the story? The tortoise is the fastest. He won the race."

"That's just a silly tale," said Speedy Weedy. "A tortoise couldn't win the race. That's impossible."

Speedy Weedy boasted and boasted. He said he was king of the castle and the most magnificent and cleverest ever. He said this over and over again until Mosey Dawdle and the other animals were tired of hearing him talk. The only thing to do was to have a race.

The animals gathered under a chestnut tree. Speedy Weedy declared the race to be around yonder mountain and back again. Whoever touched the tree first would win.

"Ready? Set. Go!" shouted the animals, and off Speedy Weedy raced, kicking dust into Mosey Dawdle's face. Mosey Dawdle pulled his head into his shell until the dust had settled. By this time Speedy Weedy was out of sight.

Mosey Dawdle lumbered after Speedy Weedy. He hadn't gone but a few feet when a songbird sang in the chestnut tree and he stopped to listen. He hadn't gone but a few feet more when he heard two blue jays arguing about which of them had the most melodious voice. "Neither," said Mosey Dawdle, and crawled on. He hadn't but gone nary as far as ten feet when Curly-Whirly the Snow White Sheep, who had watched the start of the race from the top of a steep bank, tumbled down and landed on her back.

"Help!" she cried, waving her feet in the air.

The animals rushed to her side and tried to turn her over, but Curly-Whirly was so fat with fleece they couldn't do it. So Mosey Dawdle powered his way underneath her with his bulldozer legs and over she rolled.

"Hurray!" cried the animals and decided to have a feast to celebrate. They set a table, gathered chairs and sat down to a wonderful meal cooked by Yikes-Spikes! They feasted and drank and praised Mosey Dawdle for his fine deed and forgot all about the race.

Meanwhile Speedy Weedy was running and running. He didn't dare stop for he remembered the tale of the tortoise and the hare that Brother Aesop told so long ago. Secretly he thought it might be true. So he snatched at pieces of grass as he sped along to keep himself fed.

"Fast food on foot is fine for me," said Speedy Weedy. "Look how far I have run. I will surely win the race. I cannot loose," and off he raced around the mountain.

He came upon a rabbit caught in a snare, but he didn't stop and chew the rope from around her neck.

He came upon a dove caught in a cage. She cooed softly, and cried: "Kick the door open and let me free."

"Can't," lied Speedy Weedy. "My legs won't stop," and away he sped.

He came upon the biggest butterfly of the summer sipping nectar from a flower—but Speedy Weedy was too busy running to see such beauty.

Back at the tree the animals were still enjoying their meal when sharp-eyed Foxy-Woxy spied dust rising in the distance.

"Speedy Weedy is coming back," he said. "He'll be here in a moment."

"Oh, dear," cried Mosey Dawdle. "I forgot about the race," and the other animals laughed for glee.

A moment later Speedy Weedy rushed up. He stopped in his tracks when he found them dining and having a fine time and Mosey Dawdle sitting with them.

Speedy Weedy opened his mouth to speak, but he was huffing and puffing so hard that his heart stopped and he fell down dead. The animals carried him in a long funeral procession around the countryside and back to the tree. Then Mosey Dawdle took Speedy Weedy's paw and touched it to the tree trunk.