

THE HARE AND THE HEDGEHOG

(A Play to be Read Aloud by Teacher and Student)

SCENE 1

SCENE: A farmer's cabbage field on a fine morning in spring.



HEDGEHOG: Here I am.

HARE: I can't understand this.

HEDGEHOG: It is very clear to me.

HARE: Well, we'll try again. Are you ready?

HEDGEHOG: I'm always ready.

(Again the wife puts up her head and the hare is bewildered.)

WIFE: You see I am here.

HARE: I just can't believe it.

WIFE: A perfectly simple thing.

HARE: We'll try once more. You can't beat me another time.

WIFE: Don't boast. You had better save your breath for the race; you will need it.

(When the hare reaches the other end of the field, the hedgehog puts up his head.)

HARE: This is very strange.

HEDGEHOG: Shall we run again? You seem a little tired, but I am perfectly fresh.

HARE (*panting*): No, no! The race is yours.

HEDGEHOG: Will you call my wife and children names any more?

HARE: No, no! I'll never do that again.

HEDGEHOG: Very well. And if you wish a race at any time, friend hare, just call by for me.

HEDGEHOG: Wife, have you dressed the children yet?

WIFE: Just through, my dear.

HEDGEHOG: Well, come out here and let us look at our cabbage patch.

HEDGEHOG: Fine crop, isn't it? We should be happy.

WIFE: The cabbage is fine enough, but I can't see why we should be so happy.

HEDGEHOG: Why, my dear, there are tears in your voice. What is the matter?

WIFE: I suppose I ought not to mind it, but those dreadful hares nearly worry the life out of me.

HEDGEHOG: What are they doing now?

WIFE: Doing? What are they not doing? Why, yesterday I brought my pretty babies out here to get some cabbage leaves. We were eating as well-behaved hedgehogs always eat, and those horrid hares almost made us cry.

HEDGEHOG: What did they do?

WIFE: They came to our cabbage patch and they giggled and said, "Oh, see the little duck-legged things! Aren't they funny?" Then one jumped over a cabbage just to hurt our feelings.

HEDGEHOG: Well, they are mean, I know, but we won't notice them. I'll get even with them one of these days. Ah, there comes one of them now.

WIFE: Yes, and he laughed at me yesterday. He said, "Good-morning, Madam Shortlegs." I won't speak to him. I'll hide till he goes by.

HEDGEHOG: Good-morning, sir.

HARE: Are you speaking to me?

HEDGEHOG: Certainly; do you see any one else around?

HARE: How dare you speak to me?

HEDGEHOG: Oh, just to be neighborly.

HARE: I shall ask you not to speak to me hereafter. I think myself too good to notice hedgehogs.

HEDGEHOG: Now, that is strange.

HARE: What is strange?

HEDGEHOG: Why, I have just said to my wife that we wouldn't notice you.

HARE: Wouldn't notice me, indeed, you silly, short-legged, duck-legged thing!

HEDGEHOG: Well, my legs are quite as good as yours, sir.

HARE: As good as mine! Who ever heard of such a thing? Why, you can do little more than crawl.

HEDGEHOG: That may be as you say, but I'll run a race with you any day.

HARE: Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! A race with a hedgehog! Well, well, well!

HEDGEHOG: Are you afraid to run with me?

HARE: Of course not. It will be no race at all, but I'll run just to show you how silly you are.

HEDGEHOG: Good! You run in that furrow; I will run in this. We shall see who gets to the fence first. Let's start from the far end of the furrow.

HARE: I will run to the brook and back while you are getting there. Go ahead.

HEDGEHOG: I wouldn't stay too long if I were you.

HARE: Oh, I'll be back before you reach the end of the furrow.

SCENE II

HEDGEHOG: Wife, wife, did you hear what I said to the hare?

WIFE: Did I hear? I should say I did. What are you thinking of? Have you lost your senses?

HEDGEHOG: You shouldn't speak that way to me. What do you know about a man's business? Come here and let me whisper something to you.

WIFE: Ha, ha! I see. I see. Nothing wrong with your brains. as my grandmother used to say. The hare will find that out today. (She stoops down in the near end of the furrow. The hare returns and takes his place.)

HARE: Well, are you ready?

HEDGEHOG: Of course I am,—ready and waiting.

(The hare runs as swiftly as the wind. The hedgehog starts with him, but stops and stoops low in the furrow. When the hare reaches the other end, the hedgehog's wife puts up her head.)

WIFE: Well, here I am.

HARE: What does this mean?

WIFE: It means what it means.

HARE: We'll try again. Are you ready?

WIFE: Of course I am.

(The hare runs swiftly back again. Wife starts, but stops and stoops low. The hare reaches the other end. The hedgehog puts up his head.)

