

# The Trickster Tricked

(In which Terrapin the Turtle outwits the Trickster Rabbit)

retold by  
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Rabbit and Terrapin met near the stream one morning. It was a lovely clear day, and they both basked in the warm sunshine and swapped some stories. Rabbit started boasting that he was the fastest runner in the world. Terrapin wasn't having any of that! No sir!

"I bet I can beat you in a race," Terrapin said to Rabbit. Rabbit laughed and laughed at the idea. "You crawl so slow you hardly look like you are moving," Rabbit said. "You'll never beat me!" Terrapin was mad now. "I will win the race. You meet me tomorrow morning right here," said he. "I will wear a white feather on my head so you can see me in the tall grass. We will run over four hills, and the first one to reach the stake at the top of the fourth hill will be the winner." Rabbit laughed again and said: "That will be me! I will see you tomorrow for the race!" Then Rabbit hopped off, still chuckling to himself.

Terrapin was in a bind now. He knew he could not run faster than Rabbit. But he had an idea. He gathered all of his family and told them that their honor was at stake. When they heard about the race, the other turtles agreed to help him.

Terrapin gave each of his family members a white feather, and placed them at various stages along the route of the race. The first was at the top of the first hill, the second in the valley, the third at the top of the second hill, and so on. Then Terrapin placed himself at the top of the fourth hill next to the winner's stake.

The next morning, Rabbit came down to the stream and found Terrapin with his white feather waiting at the starting line. "Ready, set, go!" said the Rabbit and he ran up and up the first hill. The Terrapin with the white feather started crawling along behind him. As soon as Rabbit was out of sight, he disappeared into the bushes.

As Rabbit reached the top of the first hill, he saw ahead of him Terrapin with his white feather crawling as fast as it could go down into the valley. Rabbit was amazed. He put on a burst of speed and passed the Terrapin with the white feather. As soon as Rabbit had his back turned, the second Terrapin took off the white feather and crawled into the bushes, chuckling to himself.

When Rabbit reached the valley floor, there was Terrapin ahead of him again, crawling up the second hill with his white feather. Rabbit ran and ran, leaving Terrapin far behind him. But every time he reached a hilltop or a valley, there was Terrapin again with his white feather, crawling along as fast as he could go!

Rabbit was gasping for breathe when he reached the bottom of the third valley. He had passed Terrapin yet again at the top of the third hill, but here was that rascally turtle appearing on the racetrack ahead of him, crawling as fast as he could go up the slope of the fourth hill.

Rabbit was determined to win the race, so he plucked up the last few ounces of his strength and sprinted up the hill, passing the Terrapin with the white feather. He was nearly there! Rabbit rounded the last corner and braked to a halt in astonishment. Sitting by the stake, waving his white feather proudly, was Terrapin. He had won the race!