**The Hare and The Hare**

The first hare said loudly, “Of course I will win.

We know who’s the fastest before we begin.”

The second hare said, “Well, I’d still like to race.

Win or lose it’s a challenge to speed up my pace!”

“Alright,” said the first hare. “If you want to lose,

I’ll turn up and win any day that you choose.”

“Then a year,” said the second hare. “That’s what I need”

“To practice and practice and build up my speed.”

All summer the second hare ran every day,

To and fro, back and forth, every which way.

The first hare said, “Sorry to be so ungallant”

“But practice means nothing unless you’ve got talent.”

That autumn the second hare tested and tried

New ways to squeeze speed from a powerful stride.

The first hare said, ”Pointless!”, at least face to face,

But practised, a little, alone, just in case.

In winter the second hare ran in the snow.

“It makes it much harder! My muscles will grow!”

The first hare said, “Frankly, that doesn’t look fun.”

And thought, “I like my races more easily won.”

In springtime, the second hare laid down to rest.

“The race is tomorrow. But I’ve done my best.”

The first hare was sleepless and tumbled and tossed

“I know I should win it. But what if I lost?”

In the morning the start line was packed out with folk.

The first hare thought, “Mess up and I’ll be a joke.”

The second hare said, “What fantastic support!

I’m proud to be racing! A great day of sport!”

The friends of the first hare said, “Go! You’re the best!

The greatest, the fastest, ahead of the rest!”

From the second hare’s friends, “Be your best!” was the call.

“You trained hard, you’re ready, now give it your all!”

As they readied themselves for the starter’s gun,

The second hare asked, “Looking forward to the run?”

The first hare said, “Yes. Though I do have a cough.”

On your marks! Get set. Bang! They’re off!

The first hare was fastest away from the start

But the second hare bounded on, didn’t lose heart.

By the river the first hare lost time with a slip

And complained, “What a route! Such unsuitable grip!”

The first hare looked backwards, “I’m still in the lead!”

The second hare thought of just one thing: speed.

The first hare thought, “Soon I’ll be holding the cup!”

The second hare sped on and didn’t give up.

The first hare leaned into the curves, almost flat.

The second hare thought, “I can learn to do that.”

The first hare lost ground as they climbed up the hill

“I’m the wrong build for climbing. Or maybe I’m ill.”

They came close together, two flashes of fur,

Then closer and closer, one eight-legged blur.

And right at the finish – well, what do you reckon?

The second hare won and the first hare came second!

A triumph! An upset! Now who would have thought?

The favourite beaten, but excellent sport.

The crowd that was watching went wild with applause!

The first hare was silent. Then, after a pause:

“The going was stodgy I’m more of a sprinter

I ate something dodgy my foot has a splinter

It’s the heat it’s the season it’s not having eaten

I’m better long distance that’s why I was beaten.”

“What I think,” said the second hare speaking with tact “is:

Talent means little without lots of practice.”

The first hare went quiet. Then, after a while,

Said, “I just wonder, would you…?” The second hare smiled.

You might see from the train on the way out of town,

Two hares running races all over the down.

First one, then the other’s ahead in first place:

No start and no finish, but always - the race!

**Bio**

I was a bookish child, but also enjoyed the outdoor life and have kept up those two strands ever since. I went to grammar school, but left in the sixth form bored by the slow teaching and anxious to launch the scourge of alcoholic soft drinks onto the world. Unfortunately, I couldn’t get a big company to pick it up in time and someone else got there first, so I had to defer my career as a millionaire educational philanthropist.

I taught myself at A Level and went on to read philosophy at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. On graduating, I was involved in a range of improbable businesses with one of my brothers, including the “What U Want” fancy goods shop, manufacturing garden trellis, and selling fireworks. Somewhere in all this I also had a condom vending machine business, ran an anti-Conservative vote swapping website and briefly had a gallery of Cuban paintings. Eventually, I became an English teacher and spent a couple of very happy years at Sutton Grammar School in south London.

There I discovered two of the interests I’ve pursued ever since: outdoor education, through taking over the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, and philosophy for children. I used to rotate around the Year 7 forms starting discussions from philosophical stories, and I was greeted with, ‘Yay! It’s the philosophy man!”

Now I run two companies, Outspark which runs DofE expeditions, and The Philosophy Man, through which I train teachers, run workshops with pupils, and write stories, books and resources to help children enjoy deep discussions. I also work on residential courses for gifted teens, running day courses on all sorts of interests. My consuming hobby for the last three years has been improv, especially musical improv, which is where I get lots of practice in stringing rhymes together. I live on a narrowboat in Cambridge.

**Style choices**

I first thought I would use gender neutral names for the hares, such as Alex and Sam. But sticking to “the first hare” and “the second hare” beckoned as it provided a repetitive element, the rhyme with “what do you reckon” was a shoo-in and on a deeper level, the message of the story is that one hare is able to adopt the mindset of the other - at the end, you can’t tell which hare is which.

I’ve vetted the rhythms by getting my Mac to read the whole thing to me repeatedly, so that I know it flows. The only bit it trips over is the couplet that cheats a little:

“What I think,” said the second hare speaking with tact “Is:

Talent means nothing without lots of practice.”

But that will be broken over a page turn, so I think it will be fine.

**Mindset theory**

Mindset theory may sound like a flaky extension of the positive thinking movement, but it’s well supported by both experimental evidence and its impact in schools. It emerged from Dweck’s studies into how children responded to failure. In a classic experiment, she first gave the children easy puzzles to do, and then spit them randomly into two groups that received different kinds of praise. Some children were given praise that suggested a fixed mindset - that ability at solving puzzles was something you had or didn’t have - “You’re really smart at these!” The others were given praise that suggested a growth mindset - that puzzle solving was a skill that could be developed - “You really worked hard at those puzzles!”

Next, all the children were given much harder puzzles. Those who had received the fixed mindset praise tended to give up quickly, and when given the choice between more hard puzzles or going back to the easier ones took the soft option - shying away from an experience that conflicted with the idea, “I’m good at these.” The children who received the growth mindset praise had a “Bring it on!” attitude to the hard puzzles, showing perseverance.

Fixed and growth mindsets are accompanied by a whole range of attitudes to success, failure, effort and practice, and the verses of The Hare and The Hare illustrate many of them. Lots of the verses will work well as chapter head quotes in books for teachers and parents, and they can also be expanded with commentary for children on how to apply the ideas themselves.

**Illustrations**

The challenge with illustrating the book will be that it is so focused on two characters. I can’t decide whether more naturalistic or highly anthropomorphised illustration will be best, and I wonder if a comic-book multi-panel style might work well as the use of different shot sizes could heighten the drama, and a variety of panels could be used to illustrate a single verse, although I appreciate that’s unusual for a rhyming book.

**Annotated Text**

>Indicates connections to mindset theory

>>Suggestions for illustrations

The first hare said loudly, “Of course I will win.

We know who’s the fastest before we begin.”

The second hare said, “Well, I’d still like to race.

Win or lose it’s a challenge to speed up my pace!”

>It’s about winning vs. it’s about improving

>>I see them looking out over the location for the final panel of the book

“Alright,” said the first hare. “If you want to lose,

I’ll turn up and win any day that you choose.”

“Then a year,” said the second hare. “That’s what I need”

“To practice and practice and build up my speed.”

>Ability is fixed vs. It can be improved with practice

>>Visions of the future - on the podium for the first hare, perhaps 12 panels of practice, one for each month with changing seasonal background for the second hare

All summer the second hare ran every day,

To and fro, back and forth, every which way.

The first hare said, “Sorry to be so ungallant”

“But practice means nothing unless you’ve got talent.”

>The clear thesis of the fixed mindset

>>Contrast between activity and laziness, perhaps first hare lying on a sun lounger

That autumn the second hare tested and tried

New ways to squeeze speed from a powerful stride.

The first hare said, ”Pointless!”, at least face to face,

But practised, a little, alone, just in case.

>Being methodical, experimenting and refining practice vs. Practice as something a bit shameful, since suggesting a lack of natural talent

>>Left hand page multi-panel with “Rocky” style preparation pictures; right hand page has just the last line, page mostly blacked out with a single panel of the first hare by himself

In winter the second hare ran in the snow.

“It makes it much harder! My muscles will grow!”

The first hare said, “Frankly, that doesn’t look fun.”

And thought, “I like **my** races more easily won.”

>Appetite for challenge and difficulty vs. Preferring easy wins as confirmation of ability

>>For variety, a double page spread with a winter scene with some Christmas ruches spread out behind. Each of these four verses can have some spare details showing time passing

In springtime, the second hare laid down to rest.

“The race is tomorrow. But I’ve done my best.”

The first hare was sleepless and tumbled and tossed

“I know I should win it. But what if I lost?”

>It’s about effort vs. The fear of lost status since talent is fixed so losing defines you as a loser

>>Left hand page, single shot of contented second hare sleeping; right hand page, multi panel with the first hare in every possible sleeping position, scaldingly silly, e.g. Tied up in bedclothes

In the morning the start line was packed out with folk.

The first hare thought, “Mess up and I’ll be a joke.”

The second hare said, “What fantastic support!

I’m proud to be racing! A great day of sport!”

>Public performance causing anxiety due to need to live up to reputation for talent vs. A celebration and culmination of one’s efforts

>>Double page spread with multi-species crowd scene. Lots of opportunities for details to notice.

The friends of the first hare said, “Go! You’re the best!

The greatest, the fastest, ahead of the rest!”

From the second hare’s friends, “Be your best!” was the call.

“You trained hard, you’re ready, now give it your all!”

>Fixed mindset praise about talent vs. Growth mindset praise about effort and practice

>>Possibly double page spread with supporters on either side with banners

As they readied themselves for the starter’s gun,

The second hare asked, “Looking forward to the run?”

The first hare said, “Yes. Though I do have a cough.”

On your marks! Get set. Bang! They’re off!

>”Taking out insurance”, making excuse in advance so that failure will not damage self-image as talented

>>No ideas for first three lines. Last line - three panels, with only the back feet showing in the final one.

The first hare was fastest away from the start

But the second hare bounded on, didn’t lose heart.

By the river the first hare lost time with a slip

And complained, “What a route! Such unsuitable grip!”

>Resilience in the face of setbacks vs. Need to blame setbacks on external factors for self-protection

>>Second hare in foreground looking towards first hare ahead. 3 panels for 2nd half of verse - running, tumble, indignation

The first hare looked backwards, “I’m still in the lead!”

The second hare thought of just one thing: speed.

The first hare thought, “Soon I’ll be holding the cup!”

The second hare sped on and didn’t give up.

>Focus on external rewards vs. Focus on excellence

>>Alternating close ups, for the lines of the first hare featuring the second hare behind or below, in the case of the second hare not featuring the first.

The first hare leaned into the curves, almost flat.

The second hare thought, “I can learn to do that.”

The first hare lost ground as they climbed up the hill

“I’m the wrong build for climbing. Or maybe I’m ill.”

>Seeing other’s strengths as opportunities for learning vs. Seeing them as a threat requiring excuses

>>From the view of the second hare, seeing the first lean into the curve; other page shows second hare gaining, first hare under pressure

They came close together, two flashes of fur,

Then closer and closer, one eight-legged blur.

And right at the finish – well, what do you reckon?

The second hare won and the first hare came second!

>>Perhaps a slightly arty one with multiple images of them getting closer and closer together. Need to have it so the page turns at the end of line 3.

A triumph! An upset! Now who would have thought?

The favourite beaten, but excellent sport.

The crowd that was watching went wild with applause!

The first hare was silent. Then, after a pause:

>>Scene with lots of detail of the crowd’s enthusiastic response, maybe a chicken laying an egg in mid air that has broken on someone else etc.

“The going was stodgy I’m more of a sprinter

I ate something dodgy my foot has a splinter

It’s the heat it’s the season it’s not having eaten

I’m better long distance that’s why I was beaten.”

>If talent is fixed, and you’re meant to be good, failure has to be explained away

>>Multi-panel with the same image, starting big close up and zooming out to leave him small in the middle of the last frame.

“What I think,” said the second hare speaking with tact “is:

Talent means little without lots of practice.”

The first hare went quiet. Then, after a while,

(Said, “I just wonder, would you…?” The second hare smiled.

>The rebuttal of the fixed mindset thesis, and the clear signal that you can switch from one to the other

>>Possibly some repeats of key pictures from the seasons of training

I imagine the second hare looking tentative, leaning wait on one leg and looking down as a child might when asking someone to play with them, doubtful of getting the desired answer.

Two hares running races all over the down.

>>Long shot through train window with small, distant hares) You might see from the train on the way out of town,

First one, then the other’s ahead in first place:

>>Multiple images, slightly transparent, of both hares in different points on the track, forming a circle

No start and no finish, but always - the race!

>>Double page spread with both hares leaping towards the reader (page turns just before “the race!”

>Process, not result, collaboration more than competition

Contact details:

Jason Buckley

7 Tower Road

Writtle

Chelmsford

Essex

CM1 3NR

07843 555355

jason@thephilosophyman.com