

# Racing Home

by Elizabeth Trach

Jill and Ricky lived in a farmhouse near a pond. Each spring, the pond was filled with baby turtles that climbed up onto the rocks to warm themselves in the sun.

One spring day, Jill was bored. She wanted to play with the turtles. Suddenly, she had an idea.

Jill ran down to the pond and saw that several turtles had climbed out of the water and onto the shore. She slowly walked to the water's edge, making sure that she did not cast her shadow over the turtles and startle them. Jill bent down and picked up two turtles. They were so small that she could carry one in each hand.

Jill ran back up the hill to the house. "Ricky!" she called. "Come see what I have!" Jill hid her hands behind her back.

Ricky came outside and let the porch door close with a bang. He didn't see anything. "What?" he asked.

"Ta-da!" Jill cried. She held out the turtles to Ricky. "Let's have a race!"

Ricky liked that idea. He chose the bigger turtle. "Mine will definitely be the fastest!"

Jill and Ricky decided that the starting line for the race would be the edge of the patio. Jill counted out twenty paces and places a piece of string across the grass to make a finish line. The children held the turtles in their hands at the starting line.

"On your mark. Get set. Go!" yelled Ricky. They let go of their turtles and waited.

For a moment, the turtles were still. Then Ricky's turtle took a step forward. Then another. Soon he was headed straight for the string.

The smaller turtle blinked and took a step forward. Then he followed the big turtle. He was catching up! Who would win?

Ricky's turtle crossed the finish line first. Ricky cheered. But Ricky's turtle didn't stop walking. He kept walking back toward the pond.

"I think he wants to go home," Ricky said.

Jill's turtle was right behind. Both turtles kept walking and never looked back.

Jill and Ricky followed the turtles to make sure they made it back to the pond safely. They watched as the two turtles slipped back into the water and swam away.

"I guess they'd rather be at home than racing," said Jill.

"Me, too!" said Ricky. "I'll race you!"

---

And both children ran back home together.

**Questions**

1. How does Jill surprise Ricky?
2. Which turtle wins the race?
3. Why don't the turtles stop at the finish line?
4. Do you think the turtles were happy to be in the race? Why or why not?