

### (3) Ridiculous

It was white outside. The land was covered with a blanket of snow.

“Winter is here. Let’s keep warm inside the house.” yawned Mr. Tortoise.

“That’s right, and it’s time for bed.” yawned Mrs. Tortoise.

“But I don’t want to go to bed.” said Shelley, the baby tortoise, looking out the window. “It is my first winter, and I want to see what winter is like.”

“Ridiculous!” cried Mr. and Mrs. Tortoise. “Whoever heard of a tortoise outside in winter? You’ll catch a cold.”

Soon Mr. and Mrs. Tortoise were snoring... but Shelley wasn’t sleepy at all. She put on a scarf and her boots, and sneaked outside.

A duck spotted her breathing the cold air. “A tortoise out in winter?” he quacked. “Ridiculous! You don’t have a beak. How will you break through the ice?” Shelley shrugged. “He’s right.” she thought. “I can’t do that. I can’t break through the ice when the river’s frozen.”

Then she met a dog when passing a tree bowing with snow on top of the branches. “A tortoise out in winter?” he barked. “Ridiculous! You can’t run around like me. How will you keep warm?” Shelley didn’t know. And she tried to pull her scarf a little bit tighter when the wind blows.

Then she saw a cat when she was trying to pull herself out of the snow. “A tortoise out in winter?” she miaowed. “Ridiculous! You’re too slow. How will you get out of the cold? You will just sink into the snow and freeze to death.” Shelley wasn’t sure, as she looked down on her feet deeply buried in the snow.

Shelley trudged up a hill, looking down on the spectacular view of this winter wonderland, where she met a bird. “A tortoise out in winter?” she cheeped.

“Ridiculous! How will you fly home to your family? It’s too long a walk for you before you froze like a popsicle and died.” Shelley gulped. “I can’t fly.” she thought.

“I can’t even hop! How am I supposed to go home now when it’s like hundred and hundred of miles away?”

A tear trickled down her cheek. “They’re right.” she thought. “A tortoise out in winter is ridiculous. Now it’s too far for me to walk. Snow is too deep for me to walk, too. And I am really cold right now that I can’t even think. ” Suddenly she slipped on some ice... “Oh no... what is happening? Am I going to die now?” she screamed with her eyes shut. Then she began to get her balance and slide down the hill, faster and faster... wind blows through her face and... she’s not hurt.

She opened her eyes and looked at all the things passing her by. She’s faster than the dog and she didn’t need to run to keep warm. She’s faster than the cat, and she’s sliding with her feet up in the air.

Then she hit a bump and flew through the air like a bird! “Oh no! Mayday, mayday... tortoise is crushing.” she yelled. THUMP! The baby tortoise landed on the pond and slithered towards her shed.

The duck saw everything, “How will you get inside the house now that the door is all covered with ice?” he laughed and said.

“With my shell! Of course! With my shell. I have a perfectly hard strong shell!” cried Shelley. And she smashed her way through the ice, and into her home!

“You haven’t been outside, have you, Shelley?” asked Mrs. Tortoise, sleepily. “Outside?” said Shelley. “Me, a tortoise, out in winter? Ridiculous!”