Miriam Riverlea, "Entry on: Hip and Hop in the House! A Free-Flowing Tortoise and the Hare Collection by Jef Czekaj", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1236. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Jef Czekaj

Hip and Hop in the House! A Free-Flowing Tortoise and the Hare Collection

United States of America (2010)

TAGS: Aesop Aesop's Fables





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Hip and Hop in the House! A Free-Flowing Tortoise and the Hare Collection
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Australia, United States of America
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2010
First Edition Details	Jef Czekaj, *Hip and Hop in the House! A Free-Flowing Tortoise and the Hare Collection*. New York: Disney/Hyperion, 2010, 40 pp.
ISBN	9781368022132
Official Website	hipandhopdontstop.com (accessed: July 1, 2021)
Genre	Comics (Graphic works)
Target Audience	Children (4–8 years)
Author of the Entry	Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com

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Creators



Jef Czekaj , b. 1974
(Author)

Cartoonist, children's author and illustrator, Jef Czekaj lives in Somerville, Massachusetts. Under an assumed name, he is also a DJ with an award-winning hip hop group. He has written and/or illustrated thirteen books, including *Cat Secrets* and *A Call for a New Alphabet*. His comic about a girl and her dim-witted grandfather, *Grampa and Julie: Shark Hunters*, ran in Nickelodeon Magazine for a decade and has been published as a graphic novel in 2004. Czekaj is also the co-founder of the Somerville Comics Collaborative, a group that brings local residents together to tell stories of their city in comic form.

Sources:

Official website (accessed August 25, 2019).

Profile at scholastic.com (accessed August 25, 2019).

Bio prepared by Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com

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Additional information

Adaptations

Embedded within the author's website is a webpage that identifies the four elements of rap culture (movement, street art, mixing records, and singing, czekaj.com – accessed: July 1, 2021) and includes mixes of child-friendly rap songs that do not include swearing, and sexual or violent content.

Summary

Hip and Hop in the House! reimagines Aesop's familiar characters the tortoise and the hare as rap artists Hip and Hop. True to the core of the traditional fable, Hip's raps are so slow that his audience nods off, while Hop's rhymes are "quicker than lightning" (p. 7) and cannot be understood. Despite coming from different parts of the forest, the pair overcome their differences to become great mates, and share in the honours of "Best Rappers in Oldskool County". In the second chapter, Hip and Hop throw a surprise birthday party for a hedgehog named Yaul, who is negative about everything. Though he resists for a long time, finally Yaul learns to say yes and enjoy himself, thanks to the thoughtful generosity of Hip and Hop. The animal characters help to spoof hip hop culture, from Notorious P. I. G. to Snoop Froggy Frog, and the final bonus mini-comic extends the joke to other musical genres. Hip and Hop visit their local record shop, where they admire albums by Moosey Elliott and Public Anemone, among others. Heading home, they are keen to listen to their new acquisitions, until they realise that neither of them owns a record player. Thankfully, their animal friends come to the rescue, with an elephant offering his trunk as a turntable, while a stork uses its beak as the needle, and a hamster runs on the wheel.

Analysis

Hip and Hop in the House is a quirky, clever comic book. This text travels a long distance from Aesop but maintains the traditional focus on talking animals and a simple didactic message. The original moral adage, slow and steady wins the race, is replaced by a message promoting friendship and celebrating diversity. Readers are not required to be familiar with Aesop or his fables to appreciate the story of Hip the turtle and Hop the hare, but it does help to have some knowledge of popular culture. Drawing on his professional interest in hip hop music, Czekaj engages in wordplay and embeds visual gags

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	within his illustrations. Many of the musical references are likely to go over the heads of young readers and are more likely to resonate with their adult guardians.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aesop Aesop's Fables
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Friendship Good deeds Humour Invention Morality Music* Pop culture references Talking animals

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