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Picture Books

When Turtle Grew Feathers: A Folktale from the Choctaw Nation
Tim Tingle
Stacey Schuett, illustrator
August House
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Will there ever be a rematch between the tortoise and the hare? It's not likely, according to this Choctaw variant of Aesop's famous story. New characters, plot twists, and a healthy dose of humor transform the familiar fable into a rollicking porquoi tale with a different take on the famous race.

Author Tingle is a storyteller and an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. His ability to bring the traditional tales of the Choctaw to life has been recognized by Choctaw Chief Gregory Pyle and a Governor's Commendation from the state of Oklahoma. He earned starred reviews and an Editor's Choice citation from the *New York Times* for a previous picture book about Choctaw history, *Crossing Bok Chitto*. Tingle's storytelling talents are apparent in bits of dialogue that seem lifted from the local playground and will resonate with young readers. When Rabbit asks, "How about you turtle? How about a little race?", Turtle responds, "Get it on!" Similarly, the moral of the story is slyly humorous: "…you don't have to be the biggest or the fastest, or the best. But it sure is nice to be friends with those that are!"

Experienced children's book illustrator Stacey Schuett matches the breezy humor of the narration with lively acrylic paintings that capture the changing emotions of the characters. The lakeside setting, vividly depicted in bright shades of blues, greens, and golds, evokes the American Plains. The appealing color palette and expressive animal characters will visually appeal to pre-readers as well as schoolchildren.

Source notes for this traditional tale include interviews with tribe elders and are clearly presented on the last page of the book. This offering merits purchase as an example of traditional literature from a Native American source and as a variant of a famous fable. More importantly, the natural dialogue, folksy humor, and vibrant illustrations, make this a story that children will enjoy reading and listening to over and over again.

Carolyn Bailey