The Hare and the Hedgehog 2.0

by Ronald D. Grindle

It was another day at sunny side grove when the Hare and the Hedgehog were discussing software development strategies, again.

"You can not go without proper Quality Assurance" cried the Hedgehog "you will never get things done in time and with the proper quality that is acceptable for the customer!". "Yeah, Bozo," the Hare replied sneeringly "and that's why I am considered the loser who is bulldozed into test while you are the Top Gun programmer, who gets one raise after the other!"

The Hedgehog's body was boiling from the adrenalin that was floating in his system. Of course it was exactly the other way around. He was the loser they just had bulldozed into testing.

"If we would follow your advice we would never get a project done, ever. We would be endlessly waisting time with *Quality Assurance*" the Hare continued. The way he accentuated "*Quality Assurance*" it sounded like "horse manure".

"I refuse to deliver green bananas to the customer like you do!" cried the Hedgehog.

Then the Hare had an idea. "Come on, smart ass, let's have a contest. I've heard about that AJAX thing, it's supposed to be real cool. Let's see who can deliver a cool AJAX application, by, let's say, tomorrow afternoon, same time!"

The Hare beamed at the Hedgehog with a big grin on his face. But instead of giving a response the Hedgehog pulled out his laptop and opened it. His facial expression reflected wild decisiveness.

The Hare pulled out his laptop and the race was off. But just as the Hare wanted to start up his favorite IDE the Hedgehog remarked "But first we need to agree on the requirements!" "Requirements!" the Hare thought to himself, "he's doing his QA bull again!" "Alright, let's agree on requirements" the Hare replied, making his voice sound real bored to make sure the Hedgehog got the message that requirements were so uncool.

Once the requirements were settled the Hare was ready to jump right into coding. But what was that? Instead of coding the Hedgehog started writing stuff on paper and painting graphs with boxes and lines! "What a freak" the Hare thought to himself.

The hours went and while the Hare was swiftly typing away code the Hedgehog hardly had anything on his computer screen.

The hare laughed to himself "Poor old Hedgehog, he's never going to make it, he is way too slow. He hasn't written a single line of code yet. At the same time I have written hundred lines of code already" and so he cheerfully continued to copy & paste.

At the same time the Hedgehog designed, structured, coded and refactored merciless, over and over again.

It was late afternoon when the Hare decided to get up and stretch his long legs. The hours crouching motionless in front of the monitor had made them stiff.

He went over to the Hedgehog, to peak over his shoulder. He read the code the Hedgehog was

working on. He bent over to get a closer look, he frowned as he continued to read. All the sudden he fell flat on his back and started rolling over the floor, laughing. The Hedgehog was writing test code! He was writing unit tests! Unbelievable! The Hare wiped the tears from his eyes and went back to his desk. Test code! The Hedgehog was even more stupid than he had thought he was.

"What a loser" the Hare thought to himself and went back to his seat to code some more. Then after another couple of hours: "I'm done" screamed the Hare. "But have you tested it?" the Hedgehog challenged the Hare. "Well, it compiles" said the Hare. "Let's see for ourselves" said the Hedgehog and sat down before the Hare's application. After a few clicks it crashed. "No problem, I'll fix it in a heartbeat" said the Hare hiding his anger behind a smile. "You're trying to save your behind by picking in the crumbs" the Hare mumbled to himself.

The hare started up the debugger, fixed the problems the Hedgehog had found and then claimed "I'm done!" again. "But does it run on my computer also?" asked the Hedgehog. The Hare frowned, what kind of maneuver was that now? He transfered his program over to the Hedgehog's laptop via WLAN. Then he went over to the Hedgehog to watch him test.

On the first attempt to start the program on the Hedgehog's computer it crashed immediately. "It works on my computer!" moaned the Hare. "But what good is a program that only runs on your computer" stated the Hedgehog.

The sun was about to set when the Hedgehog decided that he had enough for the day. "I will run the final tests tomorrow" the Hedgehog mumbled to himself and prepared himself to go home and get a good night sleep.

"Hey, where are you going?" the Hare squeaked. "I'm almost done! I'll be finished in an hour or so!". "You can show it to me tomorrow morning" the Hedgehog replied over his shoulder. "I'm tired. It's been a busy day. I'm going to bed." And so he waddled off.

When he came back the next morning the Hare apparently had spent the whole night hacking and debugging his code. A half eaten pizza was lying in the corner, a lot empty cola bottles were all around him. His eyes were red and the shadow underneath showed that he had had no sleep last night. His paw was shaking as he steered the mouse and he was constantly swearing at his display.

The Hedgehog sat down and started testing, as he had planned when he left the evening before. He had slept well, his mind was clear, this was the best time to test, he would not miss a single bug.

The Hare dragged himself over to see what the Hedgehog was doing. While the Hare was watching the Hedgehog's application ran into a road bump. "He's got an error! He's got an error!" it flashed in the mind of the Hare. His mood lightened up quite a bit. Meanwhile the Hedgehog carried on with testing. Despite the reported error the application continued to run and created a few more message. The relaxed way in which the Hedgehog approached this contest drove the Hare nuts. "What an arrogant a******!" he thought to himself "but I'm going to win. I'm almost done!".

Then, as agreed before, time was up, it was time for showdown.

The Hedgehog tested the Hare's application, which now also ran on his machine. The Hare's application was very colorful and had a lot of gimmicks, but it did not work as expected and eventually disintegrated itself after a few clicks. With a grim expression the Hare watched the Hedgehog poke around in his application. The Hedgehog was teasing his baby, he was so proud of.

Then it was time to test the Hedgehog's program. The Hedgehog's application was rather bland. Just

a few lines and a button, no colors. But, however hard the Hare tried to make it crash, it worked and it would even stand the test when the Hare wildly hacked sequences of characters and special keys into the keyboard.

"Looks like you have to admit that I have written the better program" the Hedgehog commented the Hare's frenzy.

"But it doesn't look as cool as mine" the Hare intervened. "But it works" the Hedgehog replied "and, by the way, yours does not meet the requirements." The Hare's face turned red in anger. That was exactly the same complaint he had heard from his manager last week. "You're not the boss here!" he grumbled. "Requirements are requirements" the Hedgehog remarked.

The Hare shrugged. "Alright, you win". The Hare felt like he was struck by lightning, he couldn't believe he just had said that! It kind of slipped out of his mouth. But then ... he was glad it was over, he was tired, weary and frustrated. He just wanted to go home, get some rest and forget about it.

Before he fell asleep a trace of doubt whizzed through the Hare's mind, that the Hedgehog might be right in the end. But then he fell asleep and the next day he had almost forgotten everything.

The Hedgehog felt a little triumph. But he knew that tomorrow he would be considered the loser again, back at work. But that didn't make him lose his feeling of content. He was proud of what he was doing. That's what kept him going, the pride of delivering a good job, even if hardly anybody noticed.

"But, who knows," he thought to himself "maybe some day people will recognize the value of quality in software. It happened before in other industries. Maybe, one of these days, people will appreciate a good job with a predictable outcome, at lower costs..."

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