

Aesop's Fables: Fitting In

The Miller, His Son, and Their Donkey

One day, a miller and his son set off to sell their donkey at a fair. Their donkey carried their luggage, and they walked beside him. Soon they met some women.

"You're walking? How silly! You could ride!" one said. So the miller made his son ride the donkey.

Then they met some old men. One said, "See that lazy boy ride the donkey? His poor old father has to walk!" So the son got down and the miller rode the donkey.

Then they met some women and children. "Why, you mean old man!" one woman shouted. "Your poor little boy has to run to keep up with you on your donkey!" So the miller told his son to ride, too.

When they were almost at the fair, they met a judge. He said, "Your poor old donkey has to carry you *and* your luggage? Why, you two could carry *him* easier than he can carry *you*."

So the miller and his son got down. They tied the donkey's feet together. They put a pole between his legs and turned him upside down. Then they carried their own donkey on the pole!

As they crossed a bridge, a crowd gathered to laugh at the silly sight. The laughter made the donkey angry. He broke free from the pole—and fell into the river. So the old miller went home. By trying to please everybody, he had pleased nobody. And he lost his donkey, too.