

The Donkey and the Salt



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Elias, a hard-working merchant, lived in a small village near the sea. Every morning, he would prepare his faithful donkey, Barnaby, for their trip. Today, they were heading to the seashore to buy a large load of salt.



Barnaby plodded along happily, knowing that their work provided for the villagers. But as they neared the shore, his steps grew slower. The sun was getting hotter, and the road was dusty.



ly, they arrived at the seashore, where the merchant filled many large sacks with sparkling white salt. He stacked them high on Barnaby's strong back, securing them tightly with thick ropes.



The way home felt much longer for poor Barnaby, burdened by the heavy weight. His legs grew tired, and the warm breeze from the sea did not help.



Their path led them to a shallow stream that flowed into the sea. Elias always helped Barnaby cross, guiding him carefully. Barnaby saw the cool, refreshing water and thought of nothing but relief.



As he stepped into the water, Barnaby tripped on a smooth, moss-covered stone. He staggered and, before Elias could reach him, splash! The donkey fell sideways into the stream.



Barnaby sputtered and shook his head as the water washed over him and the salt sacks. When he tried to stand up, he felt remarkably light. The water had dissolved almost all the salt, leaving the sacks empty and buoyant.



Elias saw what had happened and sighed. He had lost his whole morning's work and all the salt he had paid for. Barnaby, however, trotted along easily, feeling clever and very proud of himself.



The next day, Elias loaded Barnaby's back with only half as much salt, hoping to avoid another accident. But when they reached the stream, Barnaby, still thinking of his clever trick, pretended to slip again.



This time, Elias was watching closely. He had a different plan. 'Aha! You think you are clever, my friend?' he thought. Instead of salt, Elias decided to load Barnaby's back with large, dry sponges for the next trip, a heavy burden that would become even heavier when wet.