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The farmer carries one end of the pole and the boy carries the other end.

The Man, the Boy and the Donkey

(An Old Folk Tale)

A farmer and his son are going to town. They walk down the road with their donkey. The sun is hot, and the sky is blue. It is a good day for walking.

After one or two miles, they meet a man. The man looks at them and shakes his head. He says, "You fools, don't you know what a donkey is for? A donkey is to ride on."

The farmer does not want anyone to think he is a fool. He puts his son on the donkey's back. Then the farmer, the boy and the donkey continue down the road to town again.

After two or three miles, they meet some men. The men look at the farmer, the boy and the donkey. Then they look at each other and shake their heads. One of them says to the son, "What a lazy boy you are! Aren't you ashamed to let your poor father walk while you ride?"

The farmer does not want his son to feel ashamed. He tells the boy to get off. This time the farmer gets on the donkey's back. Then the farmer, his son and the donkey continue down the road to town again.

After three or four miles, they meet two women. The women look at the farmer, the boy and the donkey. Then they look at each and shake their heads. One woman asks the other, "What do you think of a father who rides on a donkey and lets his poor little son walk?"

"I think he is a bad father," the second woman says.

The farmer doesn't want anyone to think he is a bad father, but he doesn't know what to do. He thinks and he thinks. Then he puts the boy in back of him on the donkey. Now they are both riding to town.

As they ride down the road, people come out of their houses to look at them. The people look and talk to each other, and shake their heads.

The farmer asks, "Why are you all shaking your heads?"

One of the people says, "Aren't you ashamed? A great big man and a fat, lazy boy, both riding on that poor little donkey?"

The farmer and his son quickly get off the donkey. They don't want to be ashamed, but they don't know what to do. They sit down on the road and think and think for a long time. Finally, they decide to tie the donkey's feet to a big wooden pole and carry him. The farmer carries one end of the pole and the boy carries the other end. The unhappy donkey hangs upside-down between them kicking his feet. In this way, they walk into town.

When the people of the town see the two fools carrying a donkey, they all laugh. Soon the whole town is laughing.

The farmer and his son carry the donkey across a bridge. The donkey continues kicking and kicking, and now he gets his feet untied. He jumps off the bridge into the river and swims away, never to return. The farmer and the boy are very unhappy. Their good donkey is lost and they have to walk home without him.

The people of the town shake their heads as they see the foolish farmer and his son walking home without their donkey at the end of a long, hot day. For many years after, they tell the story of the man, the boy and the donkey.

THE LESSON: People who try to please everyone don't please anyone.

Exercises

I Vocabulary

You probably know many of these words from reading the story and looking at the pictures. If there are still some you don't know, look them up in your dictionary now.

shake	fools	lazy	ashamed	decide
tie	pole	unhappy	kick	tie
laugh	cross	bridge	jump	
swim	lost	(to) please		

II Definitions

Try to guess the best definition for these words. Then look them up in your dictionary and draw a circle around the answer.

- shake
 - to touch
 - to break
 - to move
- fool
 - a person who is sad
 - a person who is polite
 - a person who is stupid
- lazy (boy)
 - a boy who likes to work
 - a boy who doesn't eat much
 - a boy who doesn't like to work
- (to) cross
 - to go inside
 - to go over
 - to go away
- lost
 - at home
 - lonely
 - missing
- (to) please
 - to make people laugh
 - to make people nervous
 - to make people happy

III Reading Comprehension

Read the questions. Find the answers in the story. Write the answers under the questions.

- Where are the farmer and his son going?

2. The first man they meet tells them what a donkey is for. What does he say?

3. What does the farmer do after he tells the boy to get off the donkey?

4. What does the second woman say about the farmer?

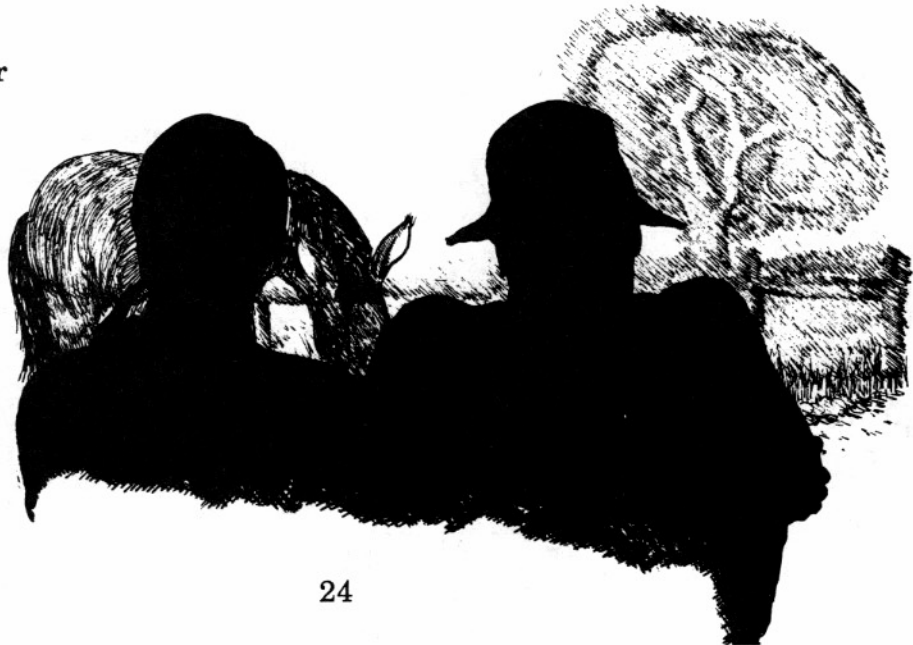
5. What do the farmer and his son do after they both get off the donkey?

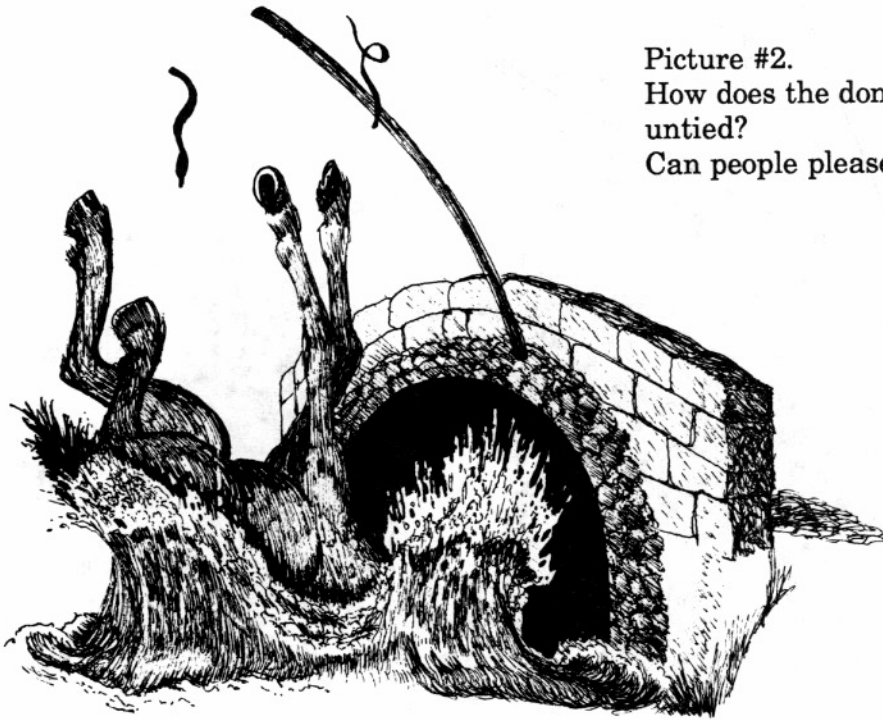
6. What does the donkey do when he gets his feet untied?

IV Discussion

Look at the pictures. Talk to your partner. Use words from the story.

Picture #1.
Why is the farmer
ashamed?
What are they
thinking?
What do they
decide to do?





Picture #2.

How does the donkey get his feet
untied?

Can people please everyone always?

V Writing

Write three things the people say to the farmer and the boy as they continue down the road to town.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Exercise Answer Key

THE MAN, THE BOY, AND THE DONKEY

Exercise II

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 1. | c | 4. | b |
| 2. | c | 5. | c |
| 3. | c | 6. | c |

Exercise III

1. The farmer and his son are going to town.
2. (He says) "A donkey is to ride on."
3. This time the farmer gets on the donkey's back.
4. (She says) "I think he's a bad father."
5. They sit down on the road and think and think for a long time.
6. He jumps off the bridge into the river and swims away.