

The Miller, His Son, and Their Donkey

From the book, "Children's Classics in Dramatic Form" by Augusta Stevenson
Suggested by Aesop's Fable, The Miller, His Son and Their Ass

TIME: This morning

PLACE: A bridge, near a town and not far from a Fair.

CHARACTERS:

The Miller

His Son

First Maid

Second Maid

Third Maid

First Old Man

Second Old Man

Third Old Man

First Goody

Second Goody

Third Goody

The Mayor

His First Clerk

His Second Clerk

(The scene opens with The Miller and his Son driving their donkey across the bridge. They go to the Fair.)

SON: Do you expect to get a good price for our donkey, father?

MILLER: *(Nodding.)* Aye, lad; the Fair is the place to take your wares.

SON: Our donkey is not so young, though.

MILLER: Neither is he so old, though.

SON: But he is not so fat, though.

MILLER: Neither is he so lean, though.

SON: Truly he might be worse.

MILLER: Better or worse, he must be sold.

(Three Maids enter the bridge. They go to the Fair.)

FIRST MAID: *(Pointing to the Miller and his Son.)* Look there! Did you ever see such geese?

SECOND MAID: As I live! –walking when they might ride!

THIRD MAID: *(To the Miller.)* You'll get a laugh at the Fair, old man!

(The Maids pass on.)

MILLER: This may be true. Get you upon the beat, lad.

(The boy mounts the donkey. Enter Three Old Men. They talk together earnestly. They go to the Fair.)

FIRST OLD MAN: *(Pointing to the Miller and his Son.)* Look you there! That proves what I was saying.

SECOND OLD MAN: *(Nodding.)* Aye! There's no respect shown old age in these days.

THIRD OLD MAN: *(Nodding.)* Aye! There's that young rogue riding while his old father has to walk!

(The Old Men pass on.)

MILLER: Get down, lad. 'T would indeed look better should I ride.

(The Son dismounts; the Miller mounts. Enter Three Goodies; they go to the Fair.)

FIRST GOODY: *(Indignantly, pointing to the Miller and his Son.)* Look, Goodies, look! Did you ever see anything so cruel?

SECOND GOODY: *(To the Miller.)* You lazy old fellow! How can you ride while your own child walks in the dust?

THIRD GOODY: *(To the Son.)* You poor, poor child!

(The Goodies pass on, shaking their heads and their canes indignantly.)

MILLER: Come, lad, get up behind me.

SON: Why, father, I'm not tired!

MILLER: I know, but we must try to please them. Come.

(The Son mounts, sitting behind his father. Enter The Mayor and his Clerks. They go to the Fair.)

MAYOR: *(Turning to his Clerks; pointing to the Miller and his Son.)* Look, will you! *(He turns to the Miller.)* Pray, honest friend, is that beast your own?

MILLER: Yes, my lord Mayor.

MAYOR: One would not think so from the way you load him. Say you not so, my Clerks?

FIRST CLERK: *(Bowling.)* Just so, my lord Mayor.

SECOND CLERK: *(Bowling.)* Even so, my lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: *(To the Miller and his Son.)* Why, you two fellows are better able to carry the poor donkey than he you! Say you not so, my Clerks?

FIRST CLERK: *(Bowling.)* Just so, my lord Mayor.

SECOND CLERK: *(Bowling.)* Even so, my lord Mayor.

MILLER: Come, my son, to please them, we'll carry the donkey.

(They dismount and try to lift the donkey. This frightens the poor beast. He tries to get away, and falls over the bridge into the deep river.)

MILLER: *(Weeping.)* I have tried to please everyone! I have pleased no one!

SON: *(Weeping.)* And we have lost our donkey in the bargain!

MILLER AND SON: We have lost our donkey!