

The Ass and the Mule

Aesop

A certain man who had an Ass and a Mule loaded them both up one day and set out upon a journey. So long as the road was fairly level, the Ass got on very well: but by and by they came to a place among the hills where the road was very rough and steep, and the Ass was at his last gasp. So he begged the Mule to relieve him of a part of his load: but the Mule refused. At last, from sheer weariness, the Ass stumbled and fell down a steep place and was killed. The driver was in despair, but he did the best he could: he added the Ass's load to the Mule's, and he also flayed the Ass and put his skin on the top of the double load. The Mule could only just manage the extra weight, and, as he staggered painfully along, he said to himself, "I have only got what I deserved: if I had been willing to help the Ass at first, I should not now be carrying his load and his skin into the bargain."

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