

## DETERMINING THE LESSON

**RL.2.2. Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.**

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Reproducible handouts students will use to complete activities during the lessons.

**PASSAGE**

A story designed to support the skills students practice in the lessons. You may use the provided text or select your own. (Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use from any other source.)

**STUDENT FEEDBACK GUIDE** A feedback tool for students to complete following the lesson set.

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# DETERMINING A STORY'S LESSON

## TEACHER NOTES

RL.2.2, Lessons 1–2

### UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit, students learn how to summarize a folktale and determine its central message or lesson. To accomplish these goals, students determine the most important events and actions in the story and then determine what the character learns. This process of recounting important details is a comprehension tool students can use for all stories they encounter in the future. Throughout the unit, discussions, inductive reasoning activities, read-alouds, theme-scheme questions, and comprehension questions guide students in the process of creating a summary and interpreting the folktale's central message.

**Lesson 1:** In this lesson, students create a summary of the folktale by determining its most important details. According to the research, students learn how to summarize by asking and answering questions about the text and deconstructing its organization. You guide students toward understanding the key details by modeling the comprehension strategies and asking guiding questions.

**Lesson 2:** In this lesson, students identify the folktale's lesson or central message by looking at the main character's actions and what the character learns. Using a character map, students find details from the story that show the character's actions and what the character learns. Students use these details to write a sentence about the story's lesson.

Research Findings	Lesson Strategies, Approaches, or Activities
<p>“Talking, writing, and drawing help readers reflect about what they've read and share their insights with others.”</p> <p>(Barton &amp; Sawyer, 2003)</p>	<p>Throughout the unit, students share their ideas with the class, write descriptions, and draw their interpretations of the text.</p>
<p>“A visual display helps readers understand, organize, and remember.”</p> <p>(Duke &amp; Pearson, 2008)</p>	<p>In Lessons 1 and 2, students use drawings to represent the details of the story and to organize those details into their own interpretations.</p>

<p>“By the time children enter school, they tell stories, compare and contrast objects, order events in a temporal sequence, and attribute causality. But children have not had sufficient experience to be able to use these structures with ease.”</p> <p>(Williams, 2005)</p>	<p>The lessons give students repeated practice with interpreting a narrative text. They also use small group discussions to strengthen student understanding.</p>
<p>“With adequate instruction, children at the elementary level might also be taught to go beyond the plot level to the lesson or theme of the story.”</p> <p>(Williams, 2005)</p>	<p>The activities’ repetition of reading comprehension skills, such as drawing and discussion, helps students determine the lesson of the story.</p>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barton, J. & Sawyer, D. M. (2003). Our students are ready for this: Comprehension instruction in the elementary school. *The Reading Teacher*, 57(4), 334–347.
- Duke, N. K. & Pearson, D. P. (2008). Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. *Journal of Education*, 189(1/2), 107–122. doi:10.1598/0872071774.10
- Williams, J. P. (2005). Instruction in reading comprehension for primary-grade students: A focus on text structure. *The Journal of Special Education*, 39(1), 6–18. doi:10.1177/00224669050390010201

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# DETERMINING A STORY'S LESSON

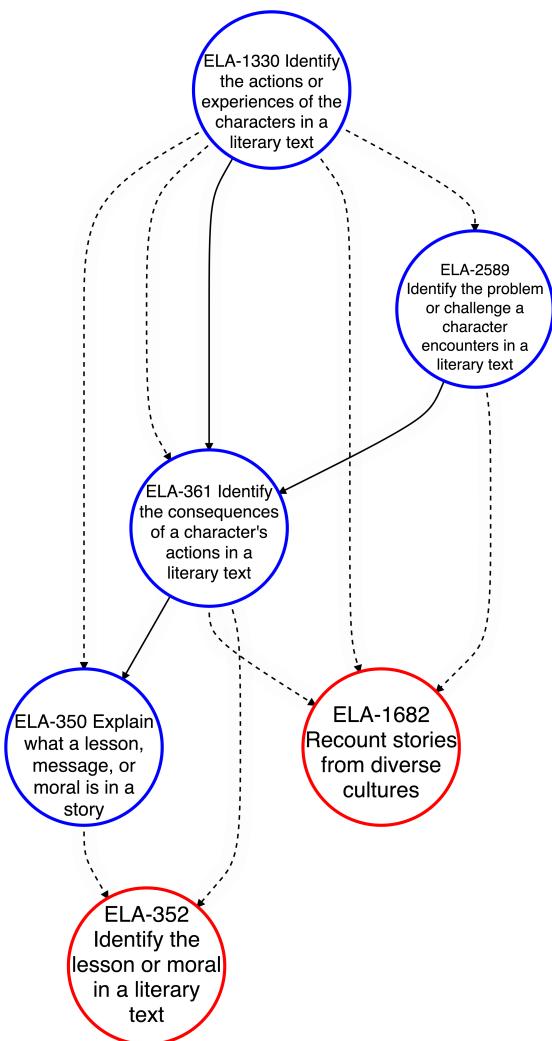
## LEARNING MAP TOOL

RL.2.2

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### STANDARD

**RL.2.2** Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.



\*Learning map model for RL.2.2.

<b>Node ID</b>	<b>Node Name</b>	<b>Node Description</b>
ELA-350	EXPLAIN WHAT A LESSON, MESSAGE, OR MORAL IS IN A STORY	The lesson, moral, or central message is based on what a character learns in a literary text, which can be used in one's personal life.
ELA-352	IDENTIFY THE LESSON OR MORAL IN A LITERARY TEXT	Identify a lesson, moral, or central message which can be generalized from a literary text using what was learned by a character in it.
ELA-361	IDENTIFY THE CONSEQUENCES OF A CHARACTER'S ACTIONS IN A STORY	Identify the consequences resulting from the specific actions of a character in a story.
ELA-1330	IDENTIFY THE ACTIONS OR EXPERIENCES OF THE CHARACTERS IN A STORY	Identify the actions, experiences, or behavior of characters in a story.
ELA-1682	RECOUNT STORIES FROM DIVERSE CULTURES	Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures.
ELA-2589	IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE A CHARACTER ENCOUNTERS IN A STORY	Identify what hinders or prevents the character from reaching his or her goal in a story.

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# CHARACTERS IN FABLES AND FOLKTALES

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RL.2.2, Lesson 1

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students recount the important events in a story.

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### STANDARD

**RL.2.2** Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, select a fable or folktale from another culture. The story should have a clear moral or lesson learned by a character. This unit includes a fable, [THE LLAMA AND THE MULE](#), which you are free to copy. For a storybook format, print the passage front and back and staple down the side. Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use from any other source.

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### MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ teacher copy of [PASSAGE: THE LLAMA AND THE MULE](#)
  - ▶ whiteboard or chart paper
  - ▶ [STUDENT HANDOUT: THE CHARACTER](#)
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### IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can retell the important events in a story.”

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**Explain** the definition of a *folktale* with the class. **Say**, “A folktale is a story that comes from a culture and is traditionally shared by word of mouth.” **Explain** that a culture is a set of beliefs and traditions shared by a group of people. **Explain** that folktales have a lesson, or moral, that teaches both the character and the reader something about how a person should behave or treat another person.

**Tell** the class that today you will read a folktale from another country and create a story map of the most important details.

**Divide** students into groups of three and **hand out** [PASSAGE: THE LLAMA AND THE MULE](#) to each student, or display a different selected story. **Direct** students to listen and follow along as you **read** the folktale to the class.

**Pass out** [STUDENT HANDOUT: STORY MAP](#) and **explain** what belongs in each category. Next, **ask** groups to reread the tale together and fill out the handout with the important details.

While students work, **circulate** and ask the Checking for Understanding questions.

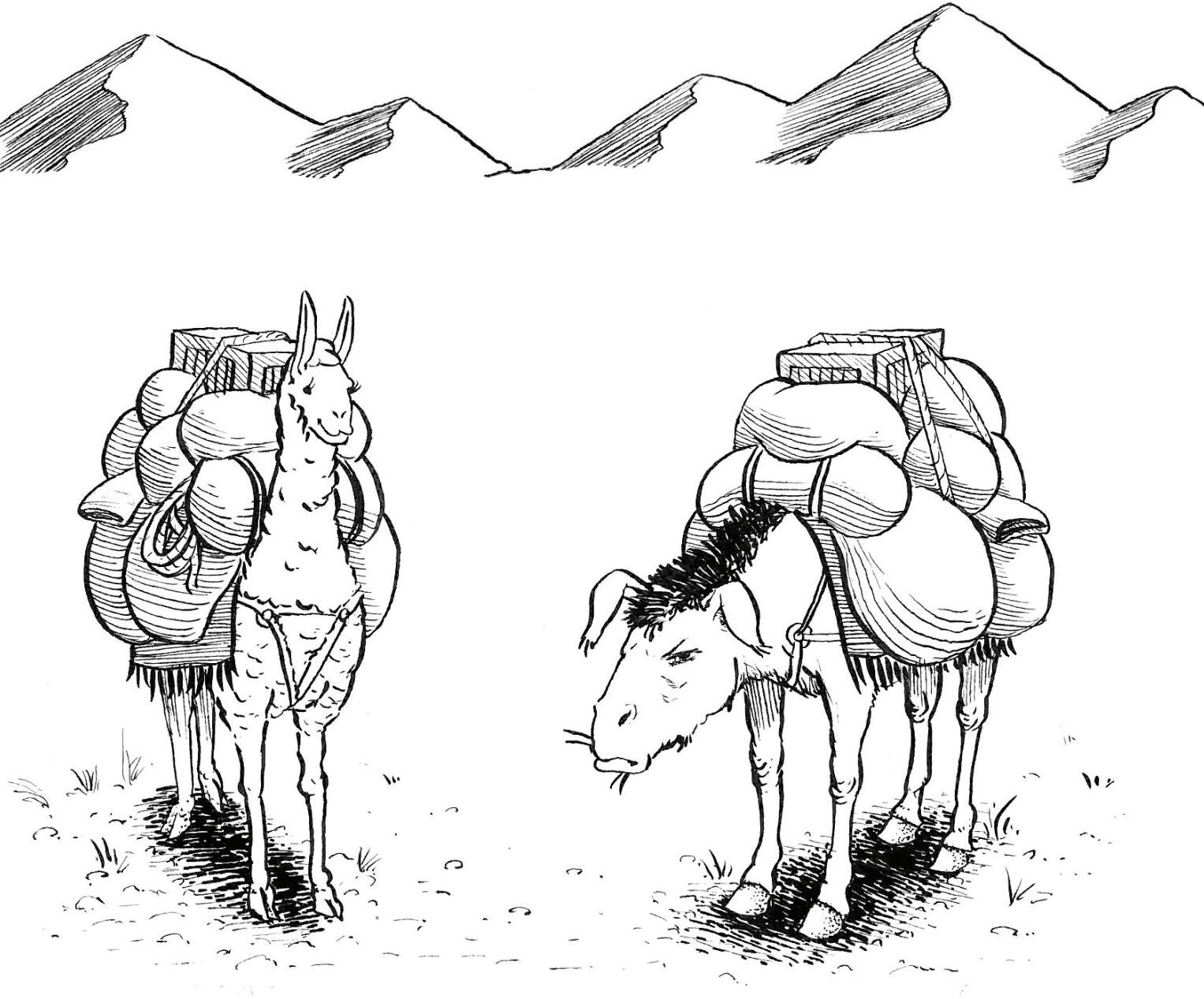
### CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Determine if the student can [RECOUNT STORIES FROM DIVERSE CULTURES \(ELA-1682\)](#):

- ▶ What happens in the story?
- ▶ What are the most important details in the story?
- ▶ What happens in the beginning of the story? What happens in the middle of the story? What happens in the end of the story?

To close the lesson, **ask** students to summarize the story and share two important events in their groups. **Call** on random students to share an important event.

For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.



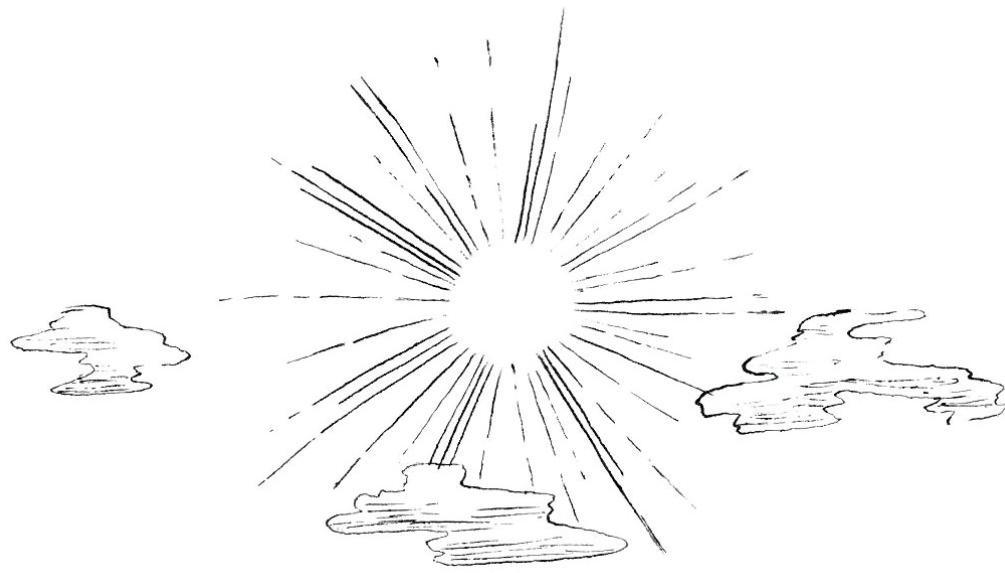
# The Llama and the Mule

**A story based on an Aesop fable**

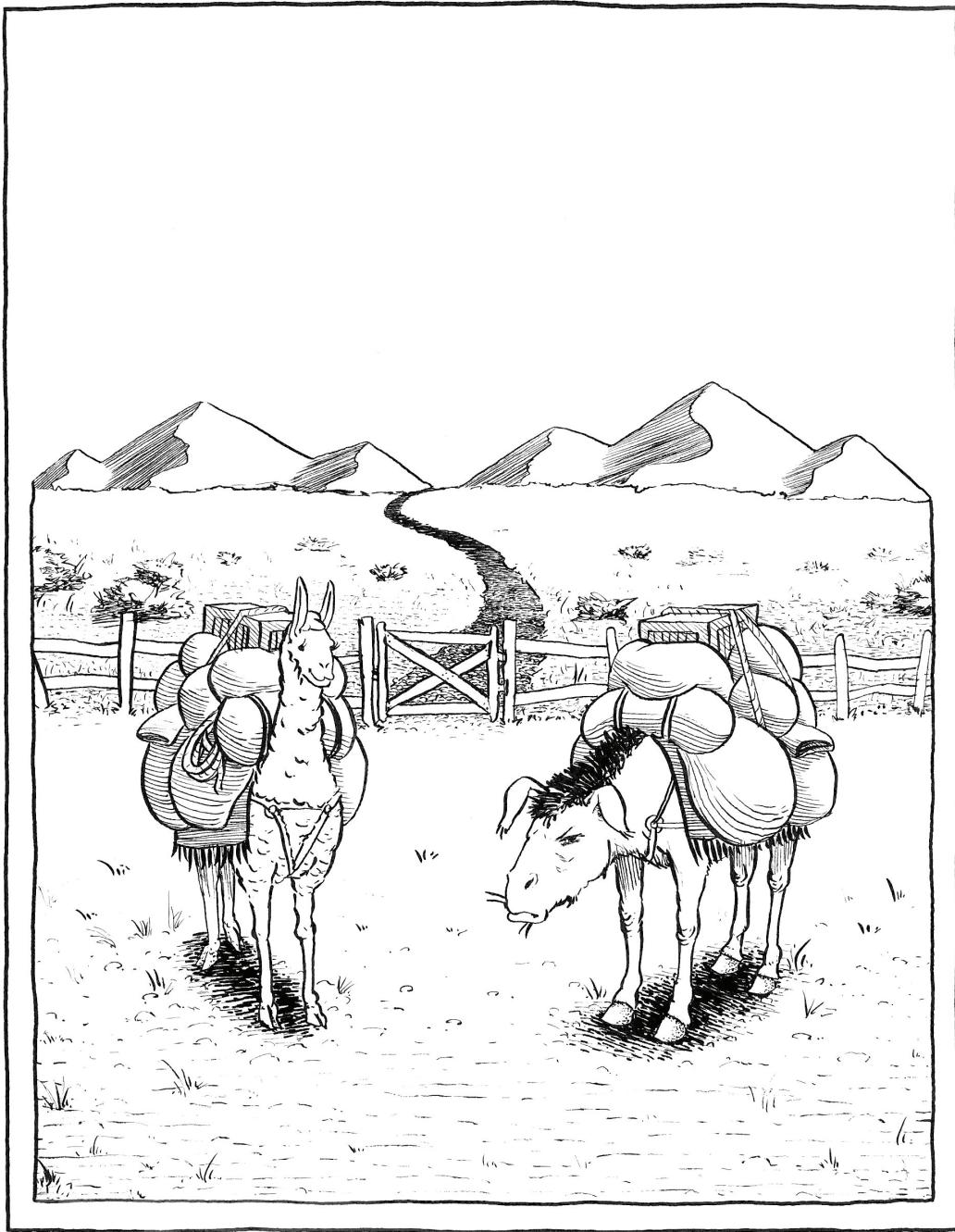
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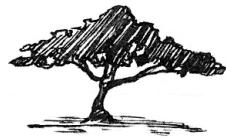
by Pat Trattles

illustrated by Trevor Eagleman



Early one morning, Mule and Llama set off on a trip to the market. Mule carried half of a merchant's goods on his back, grumbling all the while. Llama cheerfully carried the other half. The journey was a long one. They would need to cross a hot desert, climb a steep mountain, and go through a wide valley before reaching the market.





Mule, who had traveled this way before, kept his head low as he plodded along the dusty path. Llama skipped along, stopping every few steps to look around.

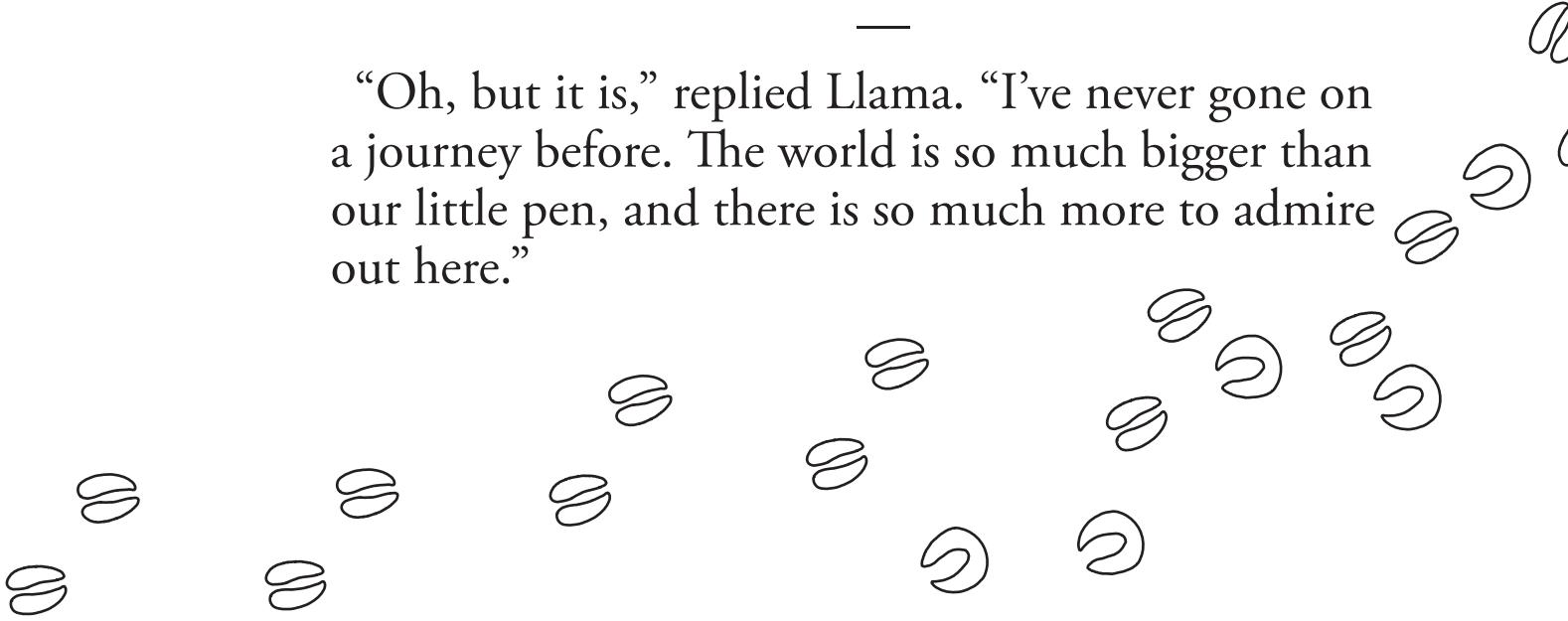
Mule shook his head at Llama.

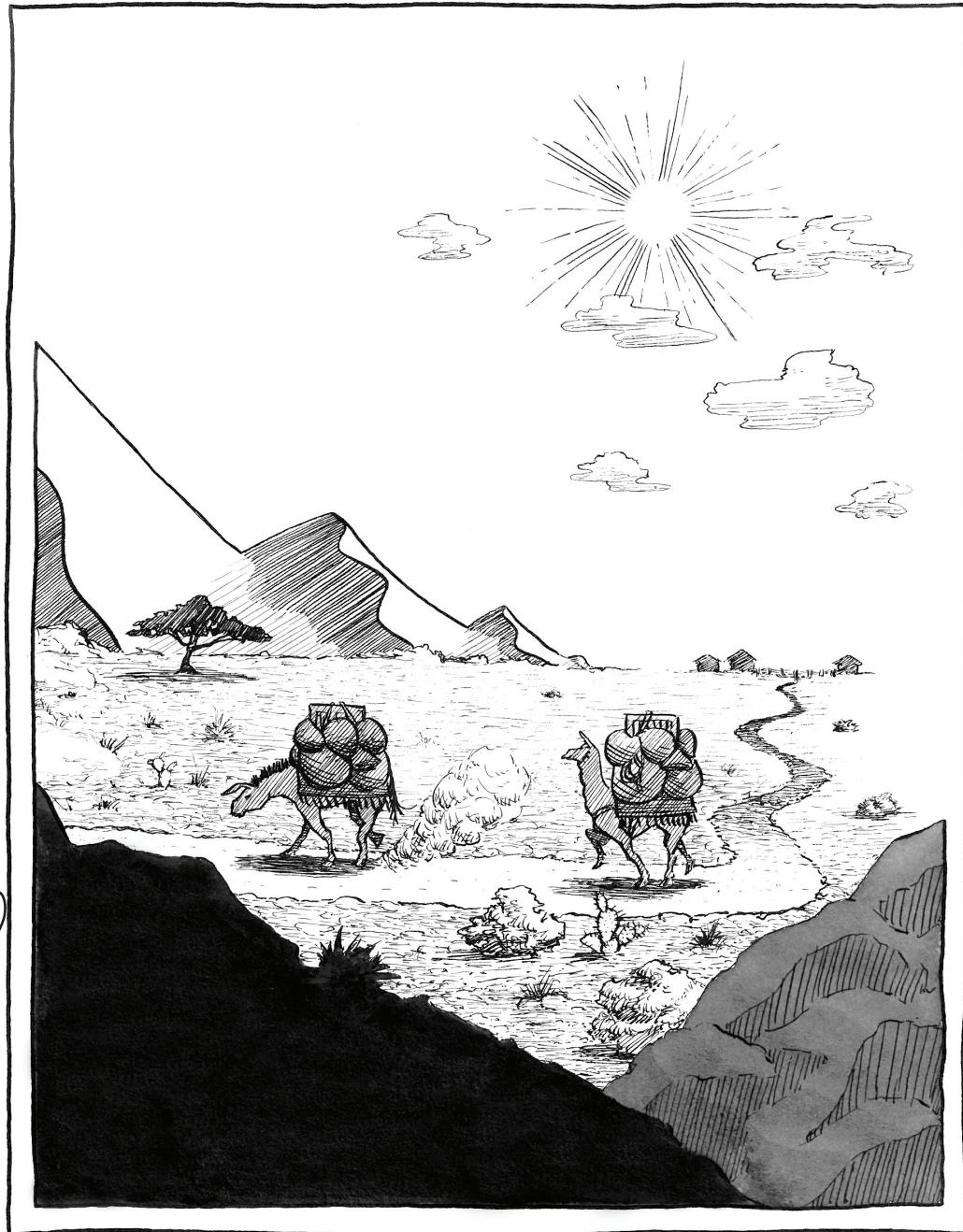
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"We'll take all day," he complained,  
"if you keep acting like this is some  
big adventure."

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"Oh, but it is," replied Llama. "I've never gone on a journey before. The world is so much bigger than our little pen, and there is so much more to admire out here."







"Admire?"

Mule snorted.

---

"Admire the dust and the heat and the glaring sun? The journey is just hard work. It will be long enough without stopping to explore."

"There is so much to enjoy," insisted Llama. "We can smell the sweet air, feel the wind on our faces, and notice the interesting sights as we go. It will help the journey feel more pleasant."

Llama's cheerfulness annoyed Mule. "Just pay attention to your work and keep up," Mule said.



Llama did his best to match Mule's pace. Each time Llama slowed down to enjoy the view, Mule grumbled, and Llama trotted to catch up. They traveled through the desert this way until they reached the foot of the mountain.

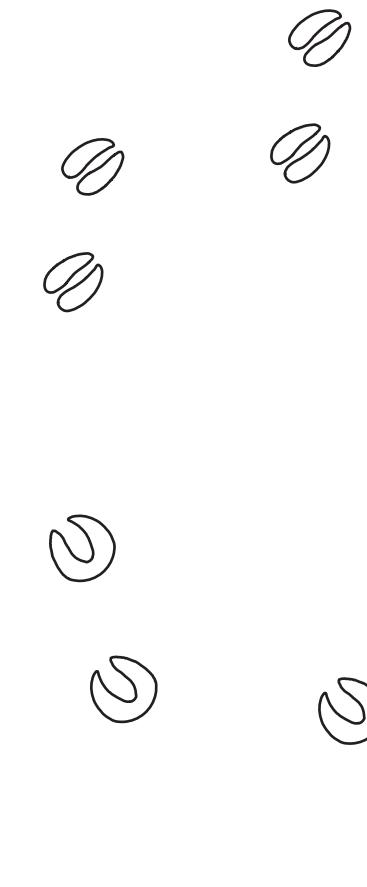
Mule navigated the familiar, rocky path. Yet Llama wasn't used to climbing, and the heavy pack made it even harder. Soon, his pack shifted and he stumbled.

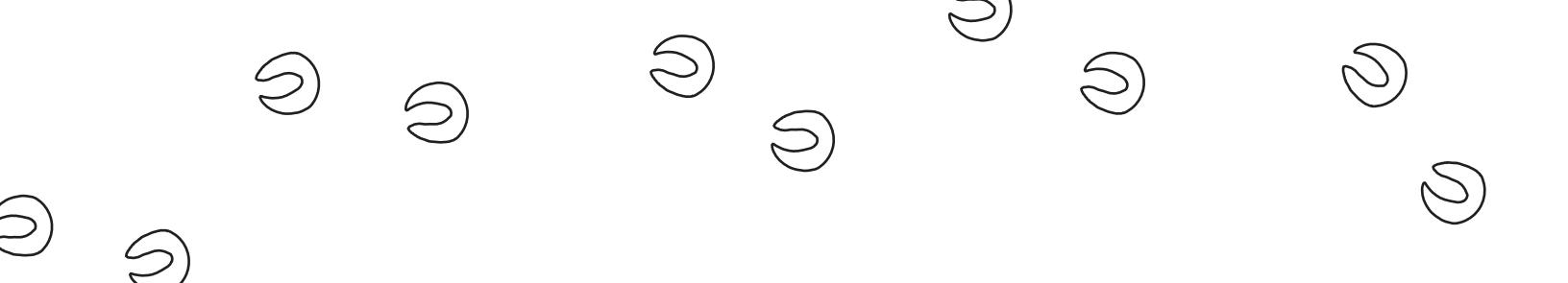
"Please, Mule, the path is steep, and this pack is very heavy. Will you slow down just a little?"

"Going slower will only make the journey longer," argued Mule. "Focus on your work and hurry up."

For a while, they continued up the mountain. Although Llama was careful to watch his footing, he soon stumbled again.

Once he felt steady on his feet, Llama asked Mule, "Will you tell me about the market? I have heard there is a wonderful shady place to rest and delicious olives to eat and sweet cool water to drink. It all sounds so lovely."





“There is a stream,” Mule said, “and some olive trees. We will wait there until the merchant sells his goods. Then we will make the long trip home. Now, stop asking questions. You’re slowing us down.”

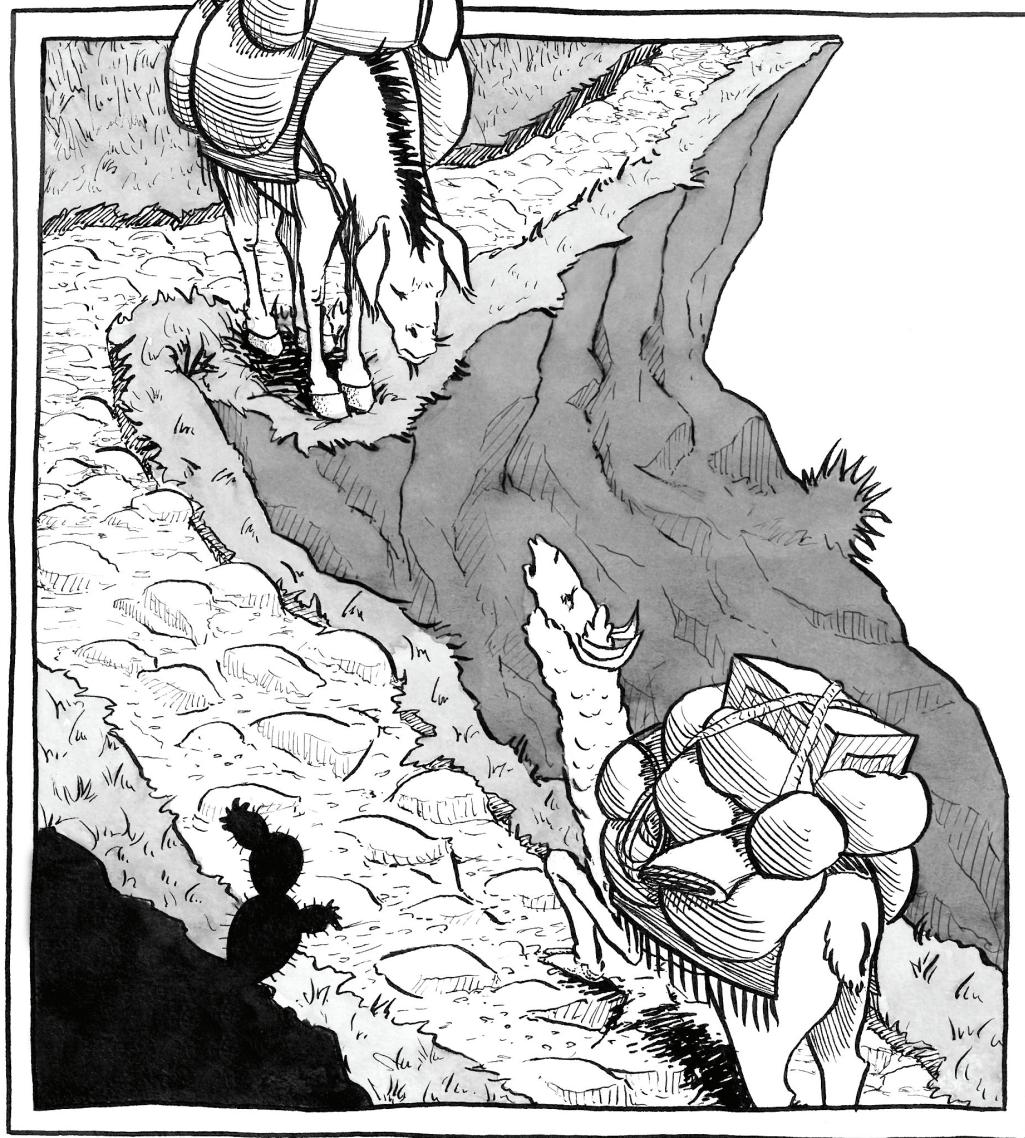
“I thought talking about the market might ease our work,” Llama replied. “We could think about the olives and the grass and the water. Then our packs would not seem so heavy, just like thinking about the wind and the sights and the smells made the desert seem not so hot.”

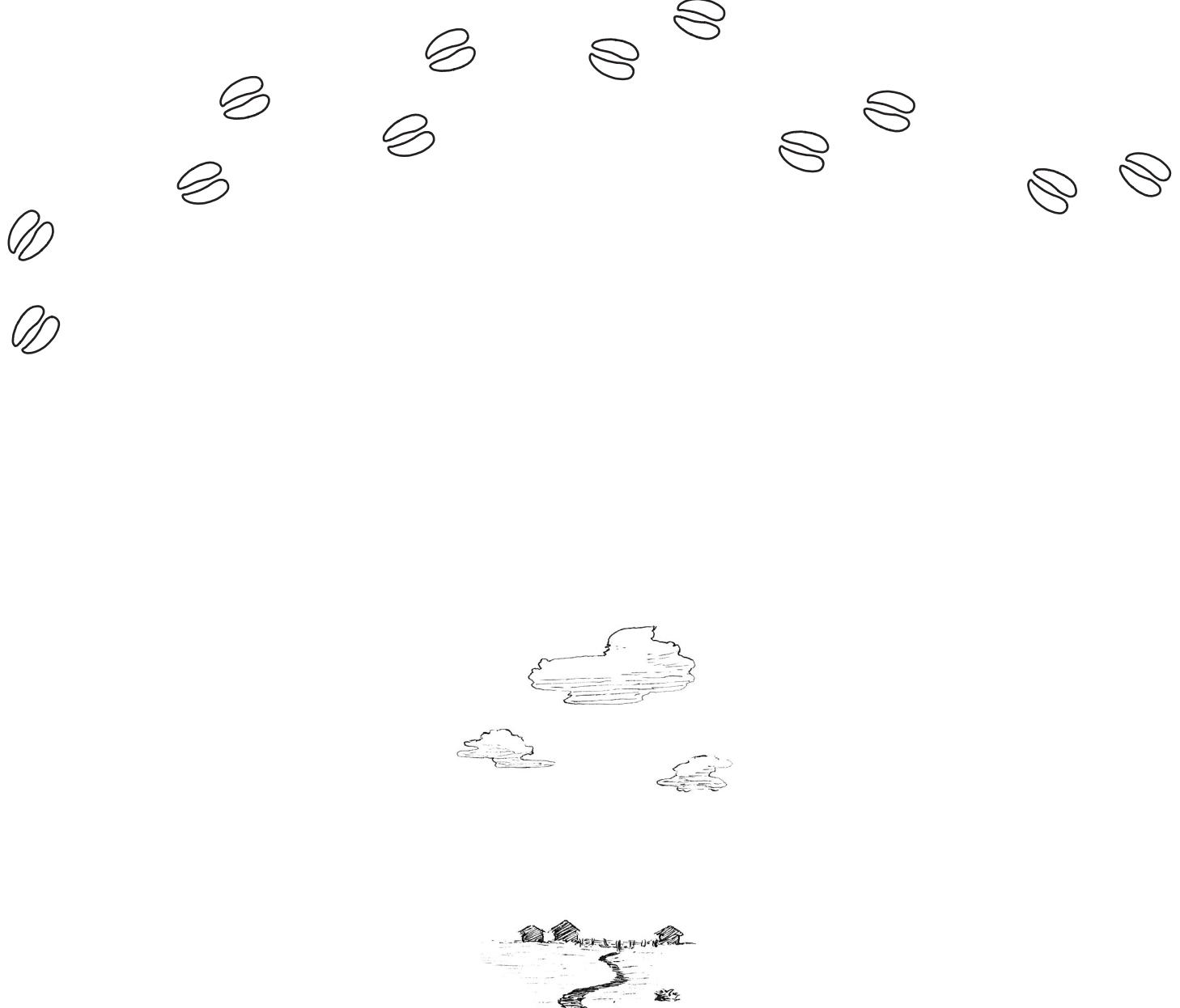
“The packs are still heavy,” Mule complained. “The desert was still hot. The path will still be steep.”

Llama sighed, but he continued up the mountain path until he stumbled again. “Please, Mule,” he asked, “will you slow down so I can climb safely?”

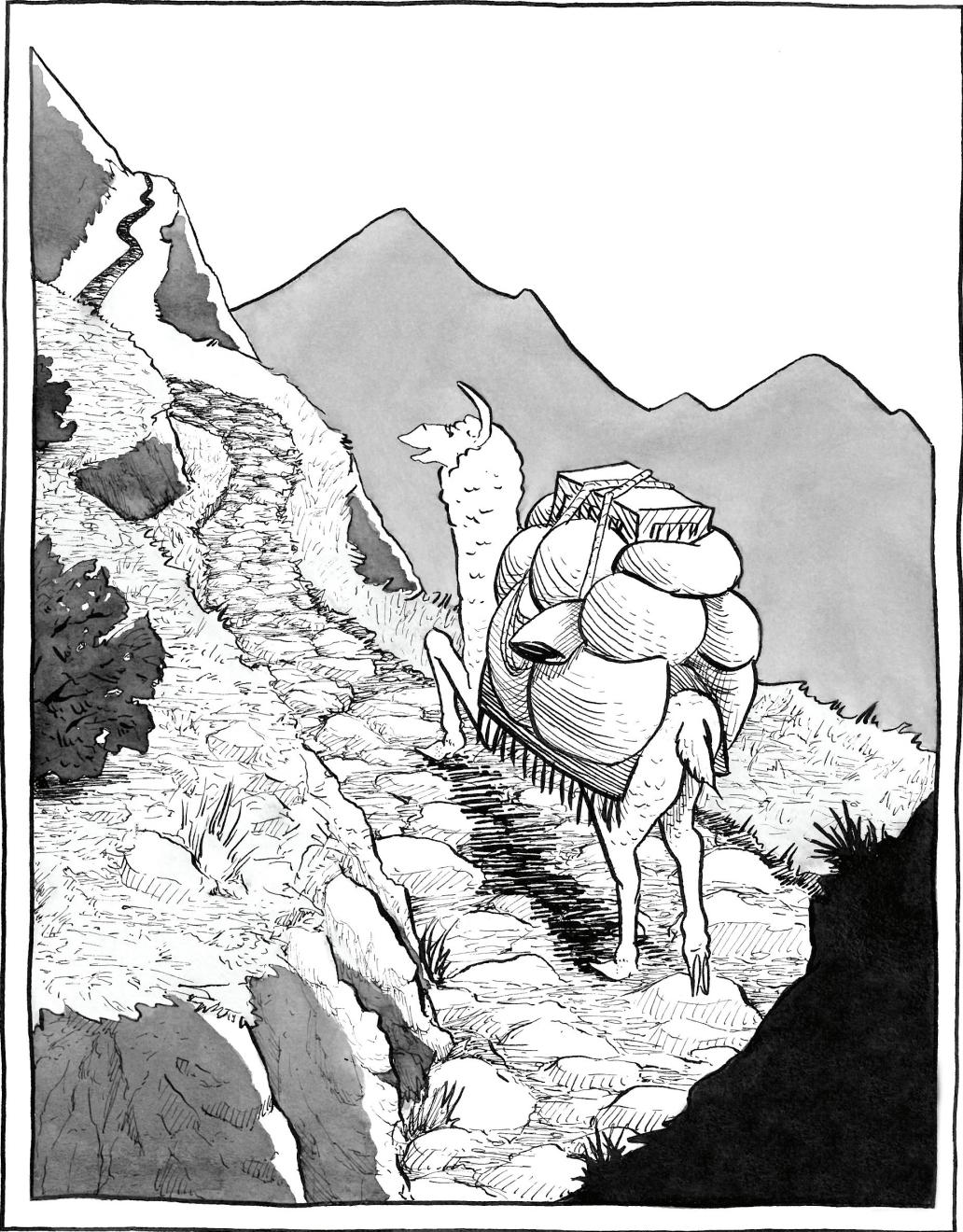
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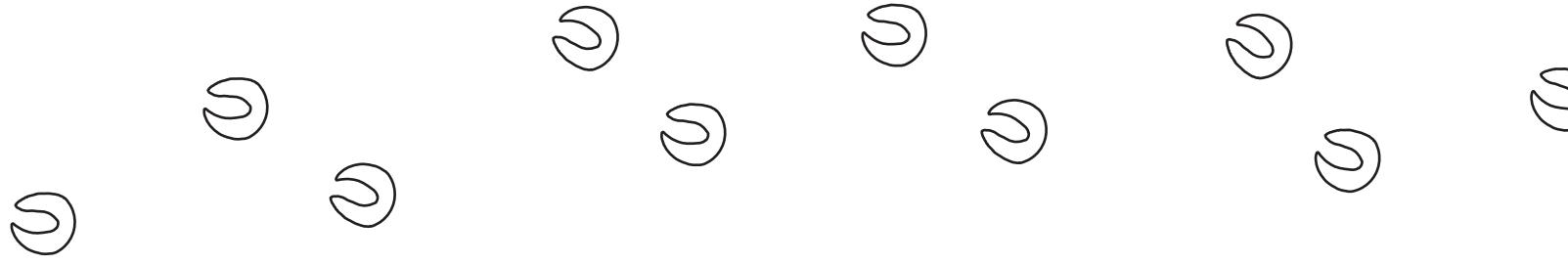
“If I go slower,” Mule grumbled,  
“I’ll have to carry this heavy pack  
even longer.” Mule huffed at Llama  
and climbed even faster.



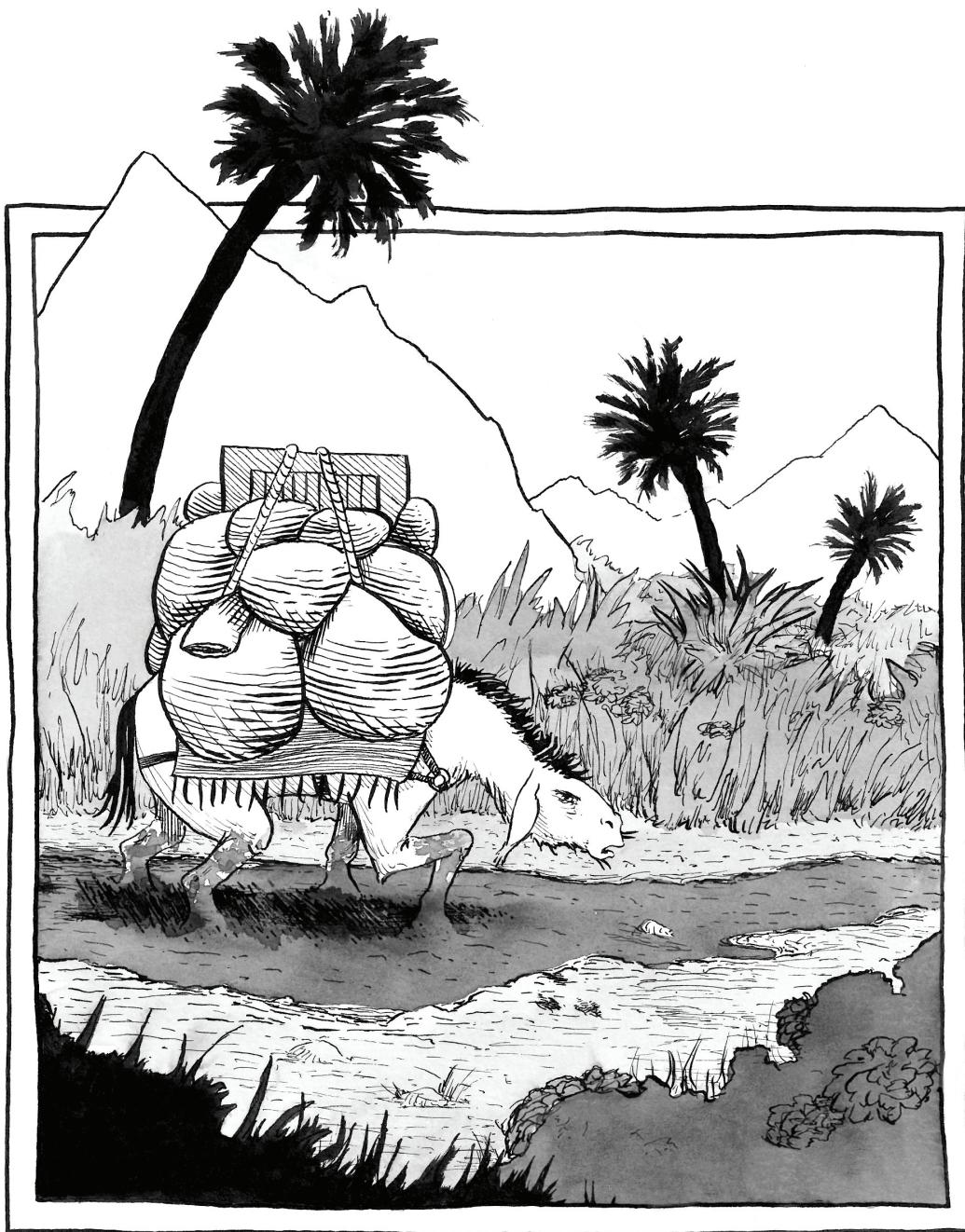


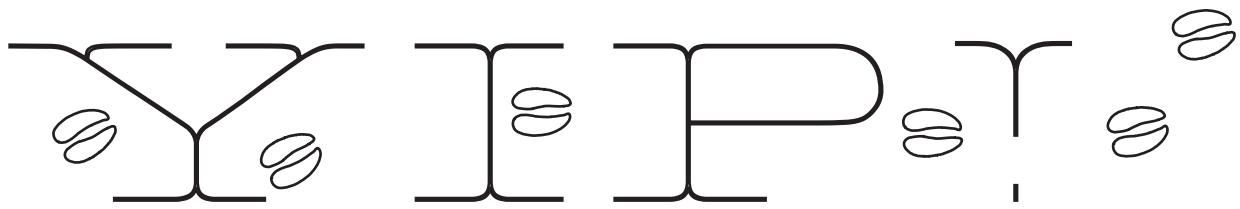
Before long, Llama was alone on the trail.  
He continued slowly but surely up the steep path,  
quietly singing a song about all the lovely things he  
had heard about the market. Singing always helped  
Llama stay cheerful.





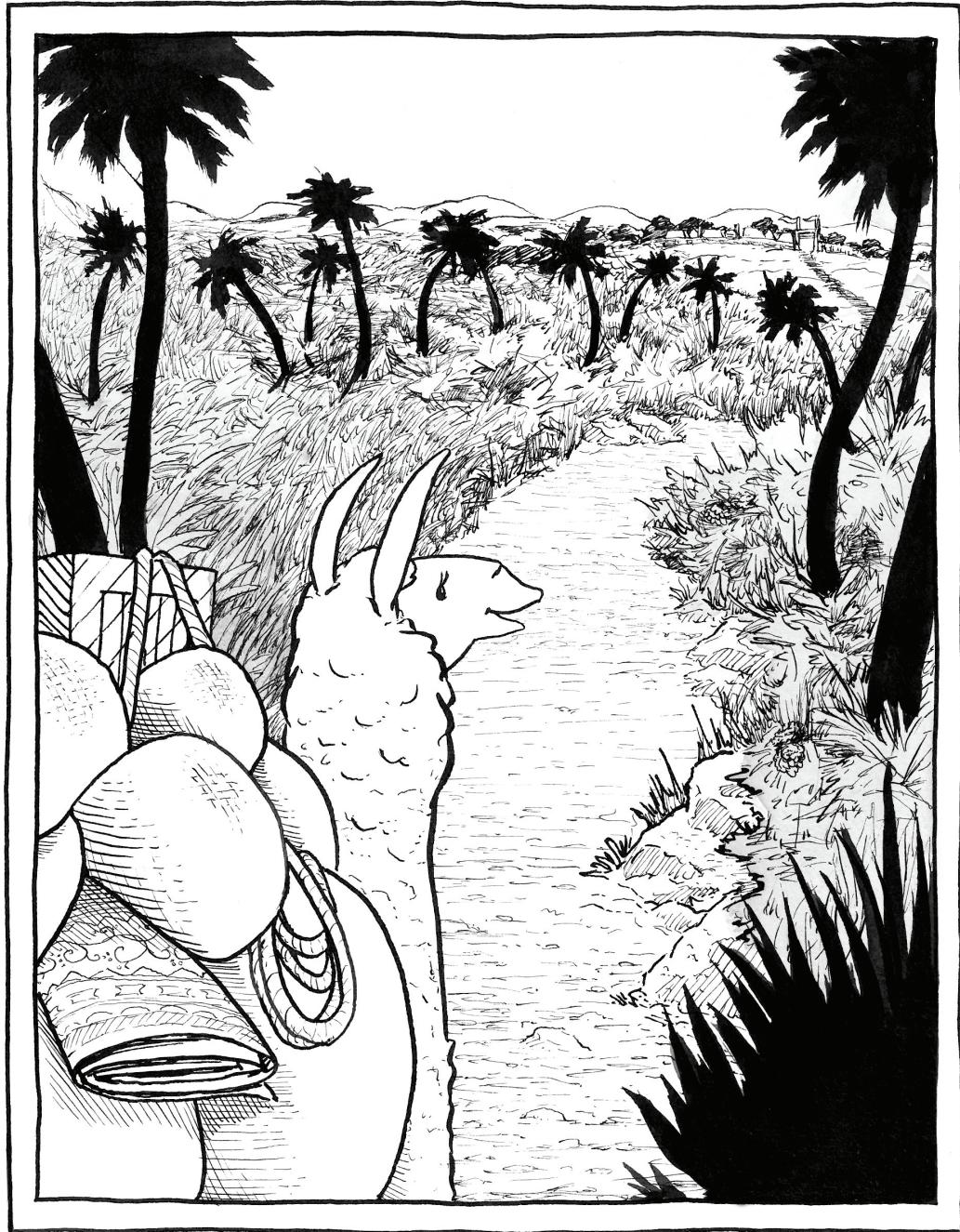
Up ahead, Mule had already reached the valley. Although the desert had been hot, and the mountain path had been steep, the journey across the wide valley felt harder than all that had come before. The heavy pack strained his back and shoulders. Thick mud covered parts of the trail and nearly glued his feet to the ground. And now he didn't even have Llama to keep him company. Mule's steps became **SLOW AND HEAVY.**





When Llama finally reached the wide, green valley, he gave a yip of joy. Surely crossing the open fields would be easier than climbing the mountain, and now they were almost to the market.

Llama skipped into the valley and called out for his friend. "Mule! Where are you? We are nearly there!" Even though Mule had been grumpy, Llama enjoyed his company. And Llama felt sure he could keep up with Mule in the valley.



As Llama rounded a curve in the path, he heard a low groan. It sounded like Mule. Llama hurried ahead. He found Mule on his knees in the tall grass next to the trail.

“Mule!” cried Llama, rushing to his side.  
“What happened? Are you hurt?”

Mule growled, “I’m too exhausted to go any further. I’ll never make it to the market again. The journey is too long. I am too old.”

Llama encouraged his friend. “You are a strong and sturdy traveler. You have made this journey many times before, and you can do it this time, too. You just need a rest.” Llama unloaded some bundles from Mule’s pack, and added them to his own.



“The pack is still too heavy,” Mule complained.  
“I can’t go on.”

Llama lay next to Mule and said, “I’ll stay with you and rest a while.”

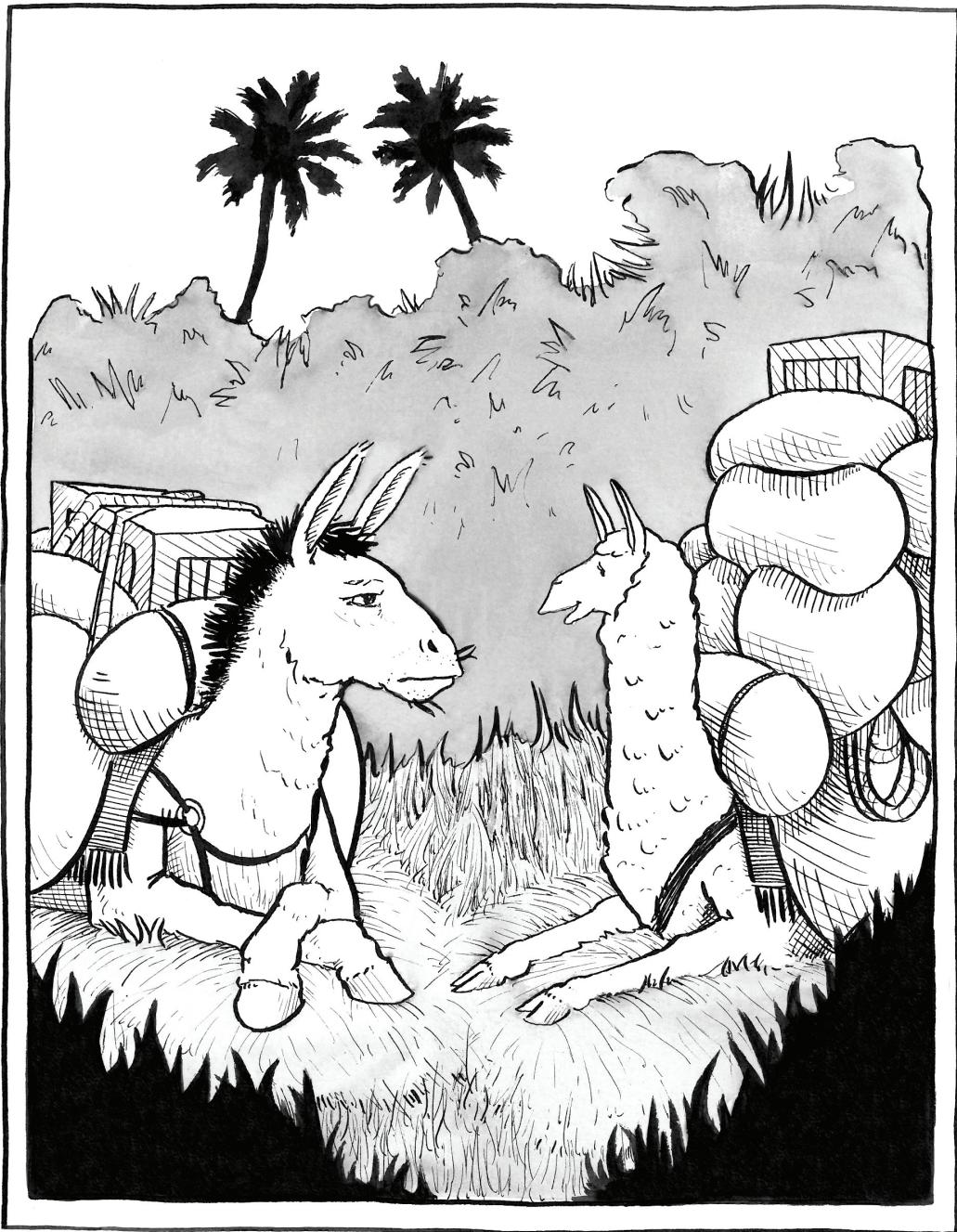
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“When you are ready,  
we will go together.”

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Mule closed his eyes. They lay quietly side-by-side for some time. Then Llama began to sing his market song.

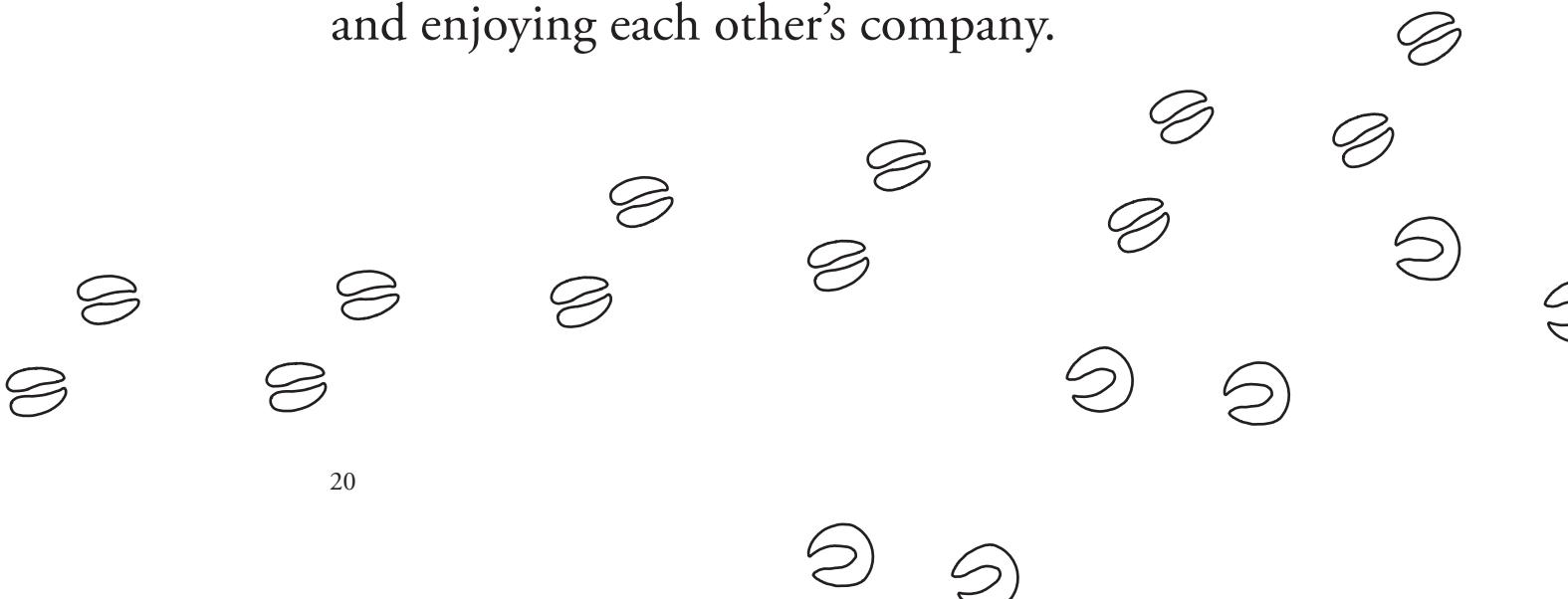
Mule sucked in a chest of air, ready to let out his grumpiest grumble. But then, memories of the market’s shady grove of olive trees, sweet grass, and cool water drifted into his mind. The pack lightened. His legs strengthened.

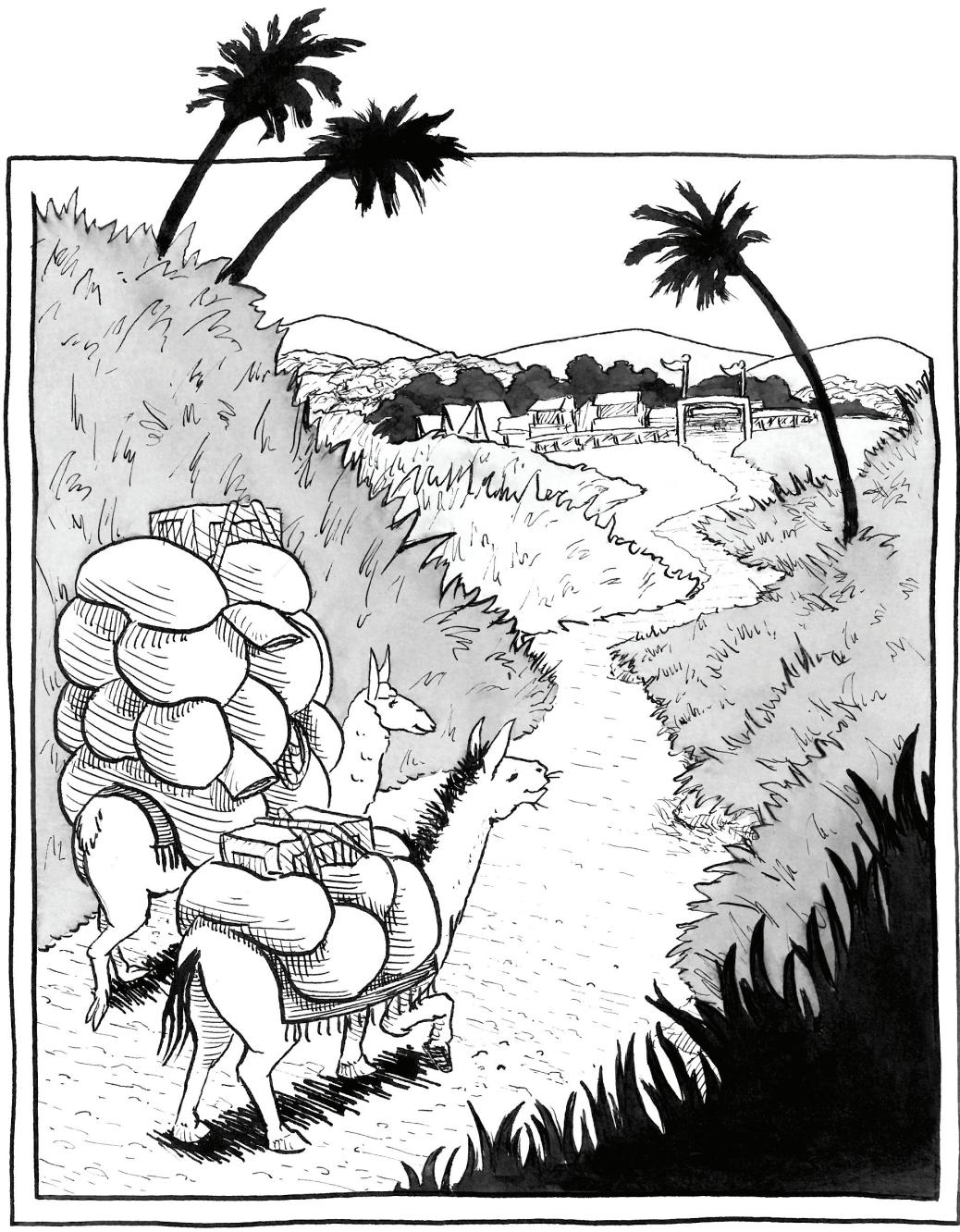


Mule stood up and agreed to continue. As they walked, Llama asked questions about the market, and Mule kindly answered. He described the taste of the olives and the grass. He shared funny memories from past visits. As he talked and laughed, Mule's feet moved a little more quickly. Now they were nearing the end of the journey, and he had more energy than when they started.

Mule thought of how grumpy and negative he had been. He felt sorry for leaving his friend behind instead of enjoying traveling together all along. Mule understood now that his bad attitude made the difficult trip even harder, and rushing made it take even longer.

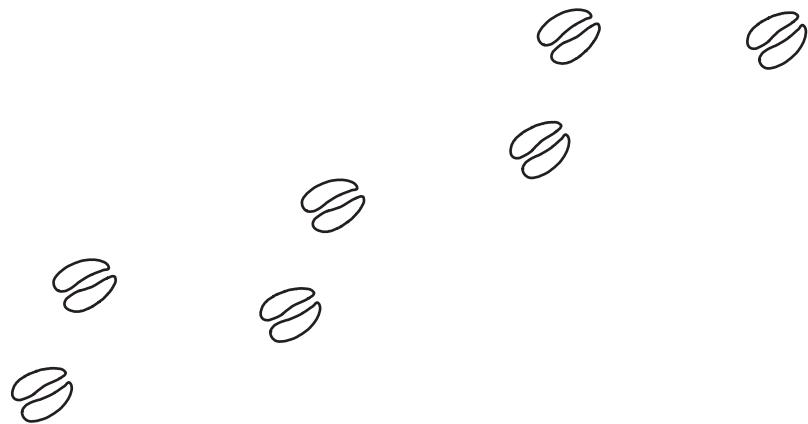
From then on, Mule and Llama made the journey **SIDE - BY - SIDE**, talking and singing and enjoying each other's company.







THE  
END



Acknowledgment: "The Llama and the Mule: A story based on an Aesop fable" by Pat Trattles, copyright © 2017 by The University of Kansas. Illustrations by Trevor Eagleman, copyright © 2017 by The University of Kansas.

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STORY MAP  
STUDENT HANDOUT

Lesson 1

**Directions:** Draw the important events that happen in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

Beginning

Middle

End

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# EVENTS AND LESSONS IN FABLES AND FOLKTALES

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RL.2.2, Lesson 2

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students determine the lesson or moral of the text.

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### STANDARD

**RL.2.2** Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

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### MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ teacher copy of [PASSAGE: THE LLAMA AND THE MULE](#), or other story from Lesson 1
- ▶ whiteboard or chart paper
- ▶ [STUDENT HANDOUT: AN EVENT THAT TEACHES A LESSON](#)

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### IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can identify the lesson or moral that a character learns in the story.”

**Review** the folktale and story map from the previous lesson. **Ask** students to recall the most important events and actions in the folktale.

**Ask** the following questions as a review:

- ▶ What is the most important event at the beginning of the folktale?
- ▶ What is the most important event in the middle of the story?

**Tell** the class that today they will determine what lesson a character learns in the story. Students will use their story map from the previous lesson as a guide.

**Divide** students into the same groups as the previous lesson and pass out [STUDENT HANDOUT: CHARACTER MAP](#). **Instruct** students to work together to complete the handout.

Students will determine answers to the following theme-scheme questions:

- ▶ Who is the character?
- ▶ What is the character's problem?
- ▶ What is the character's solution to the problem?
- ▶ What happens next in the story?
- ▶ What lesson does the character learn?

While students work, **circulate** and **ask** the theme-scheme questions in the Checking for Understanding box.

### CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Determine if the student can [IDENTIFY WHAT A CHARACTER LEARNS IN A LITERARY TEXT \(ELA-2721\)](#):

- ▶ What is the character's problem?
- ▶ How does the character try to solve the problem?
- ▶ What happens next to the character in the story?
- ▶ What does the character learn because of this?

Next, **invite** groups to share their character maps with the class. **Ask** students if what happened was good or bad. Have students explain what the character learned. **Discuss** how this lesson can apply to others. **Collect** handouts at the end of the lesson.

For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.

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STORY MAP  
CHARACTER MAP  
Lesson 1

**Directions:** Draw details about a character in a story that learns a lesson.

The Character: \_\_\_\_\_

The Character's Problem	The Character's Solution

What Happens Next

Lesson Learned

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## DETERMINING A STORY'S LESSON

### STUDENT FEEDBACK GUIDE

[RL.2.2, Lesson 1–2](#)

**Directions:** For each learning goal, circle the sentence that best matches what you can do.

Learning Goal	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>Retell the important events in the story</b>	I can retell the important events that happen in the beginning of a story.	I can retell the important events that happen in the beginning and middle of a story.	I can retell the important events that happen in the beginning, middle, and end of a story.
<b>Find an event in the story that teaches a lesson to a character</b>	I can find an event in the story and explain what happens to the character.	I can find many events in the story, and I can find a lesson the story teaches.	I can find the most important event and explain how it teaches the character a lesson.