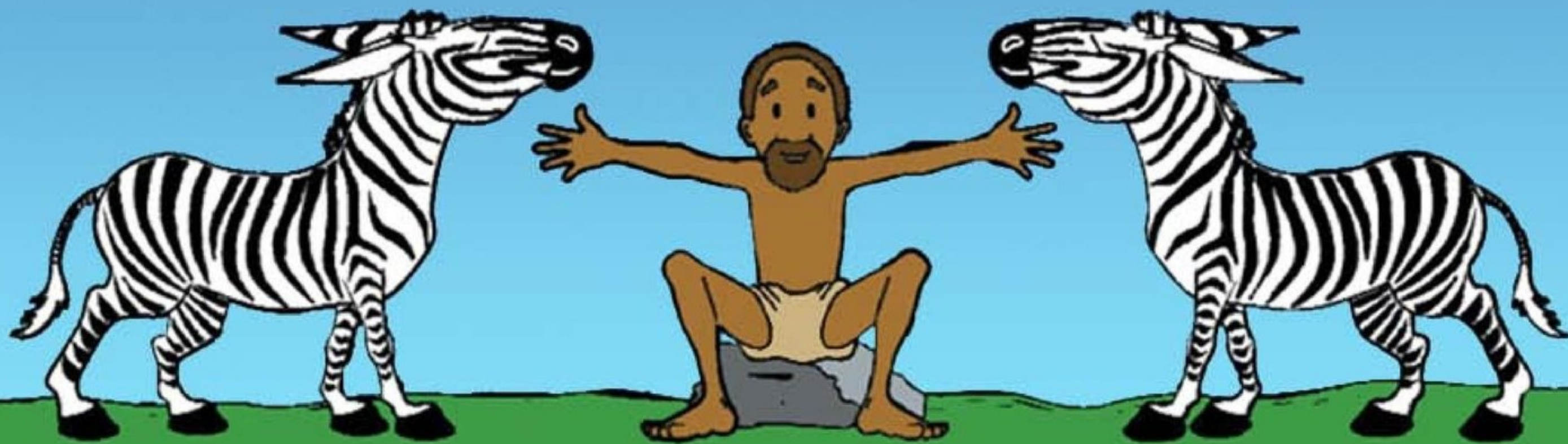


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How Zebras Got Their Stripes



A Ugandan Folktale Retold by Ned Jensen • Illustrated by Signe Nordin

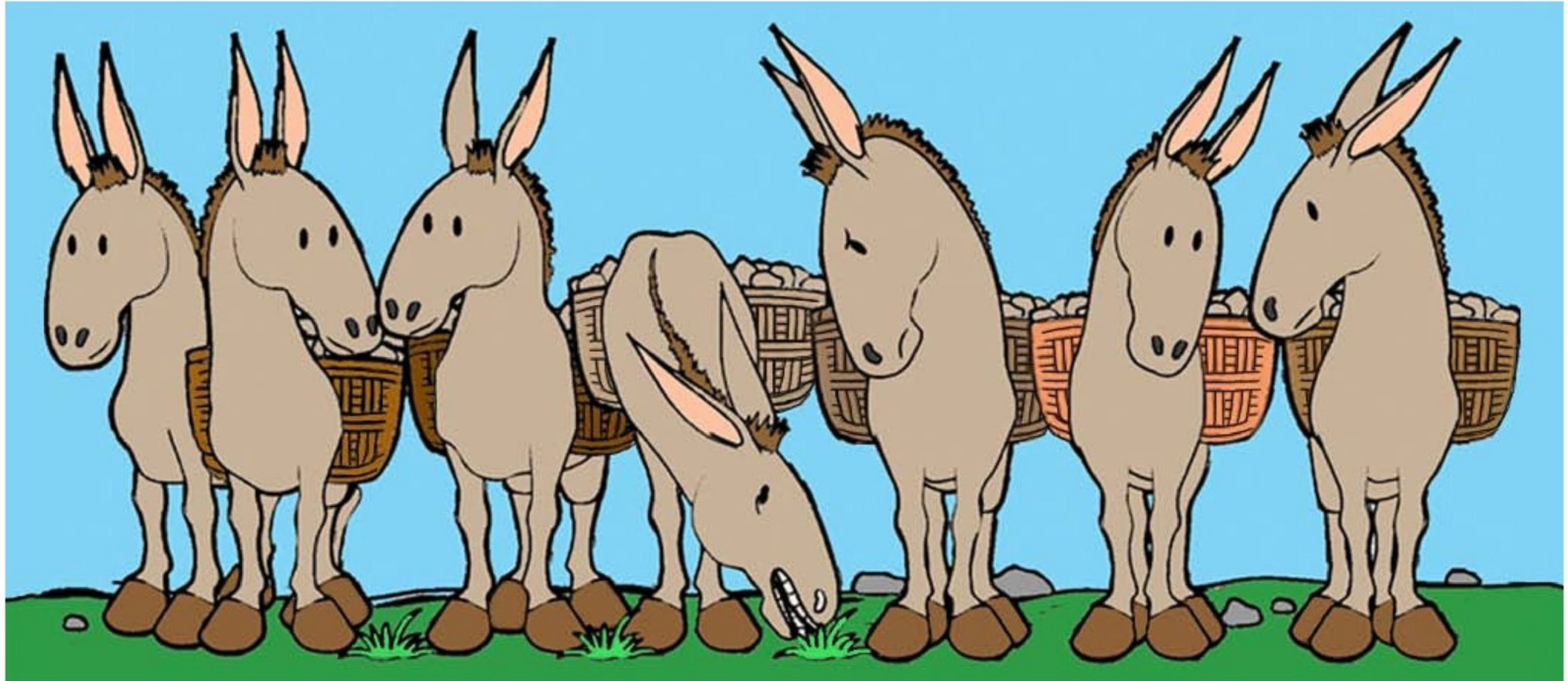
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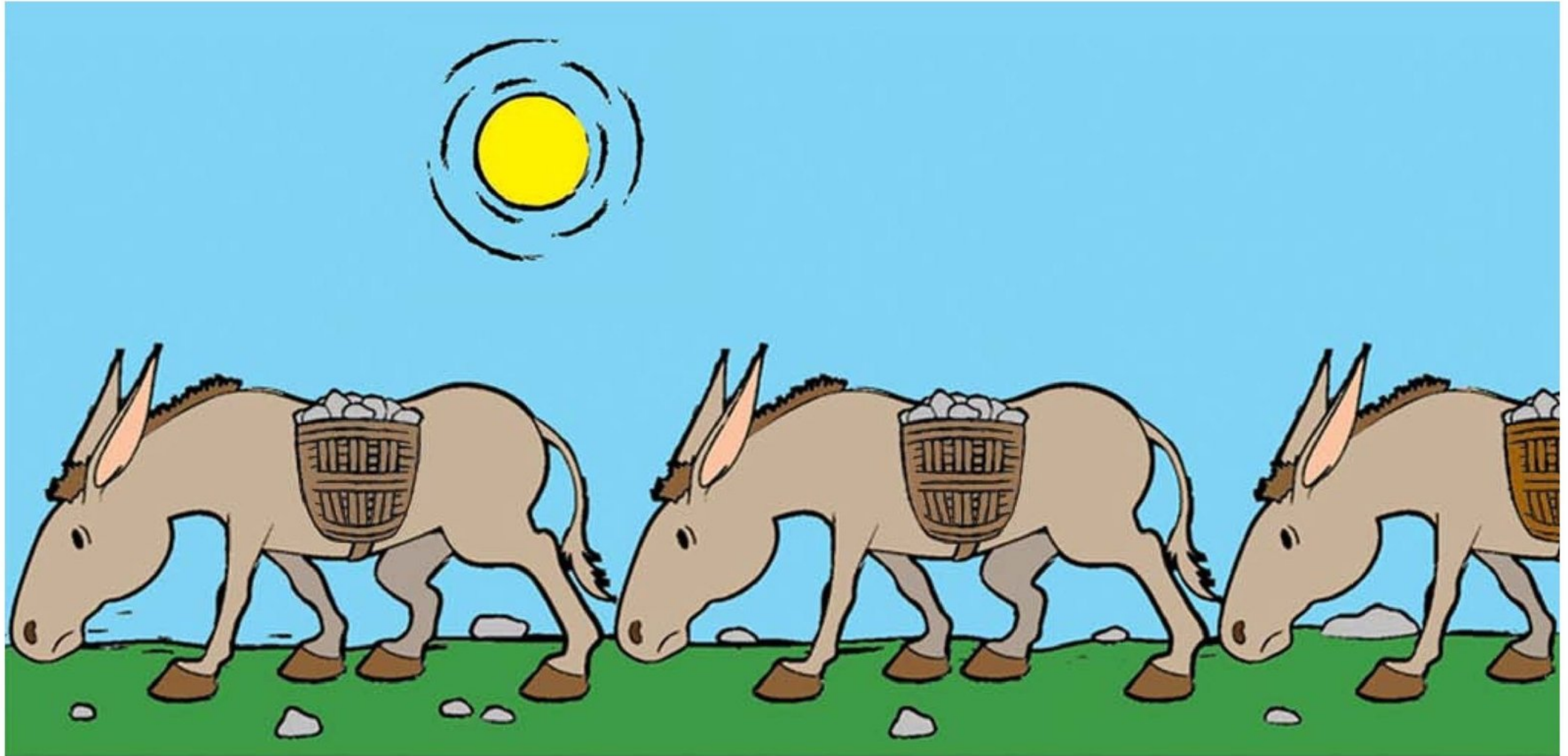


A Ugandan Folktale Retold by Ned Jensen
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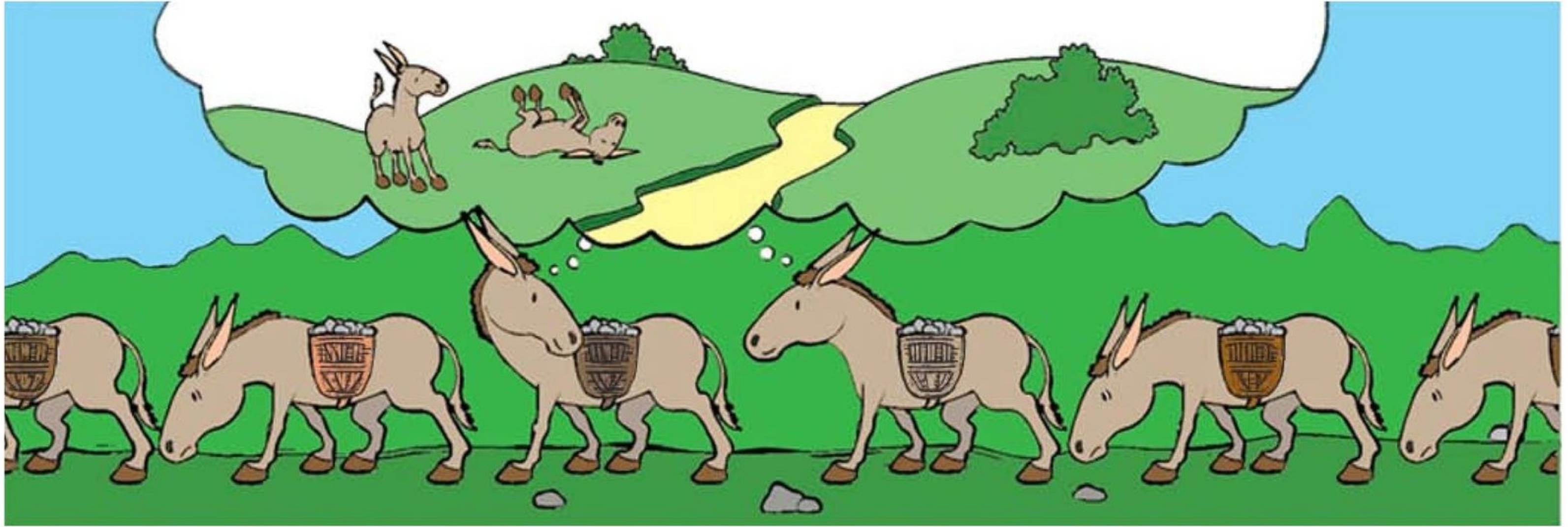
Long, long ago there were no zebras.
But there were a lot of donkeys.
The donkeys worked hard each and every day.



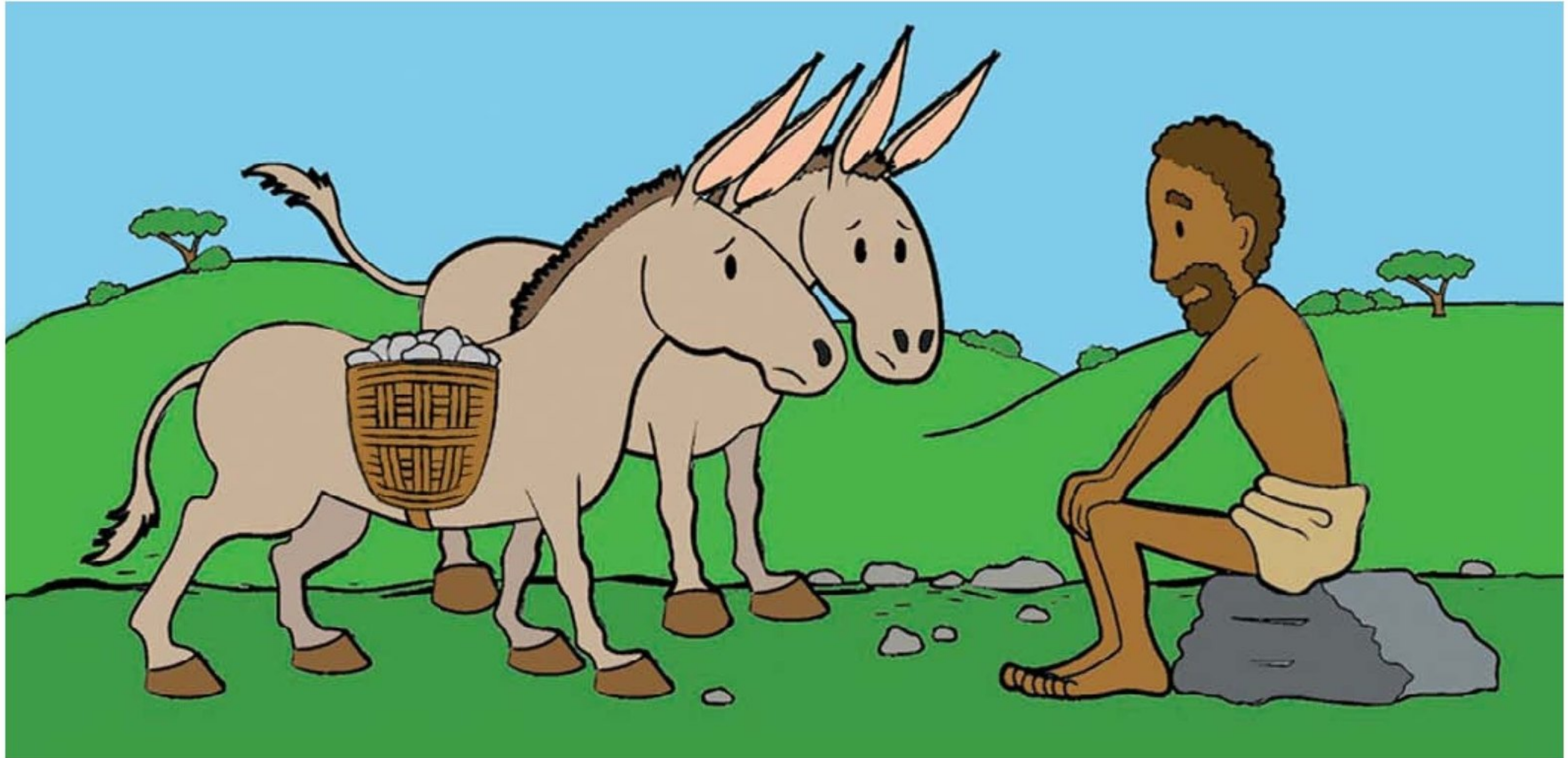
They had no time to play or to relax.
It was just work, work, work.



The donkeys carried heavy bundles.
They carried the bundles for miles,
but they never felt appreciated for the work they did.



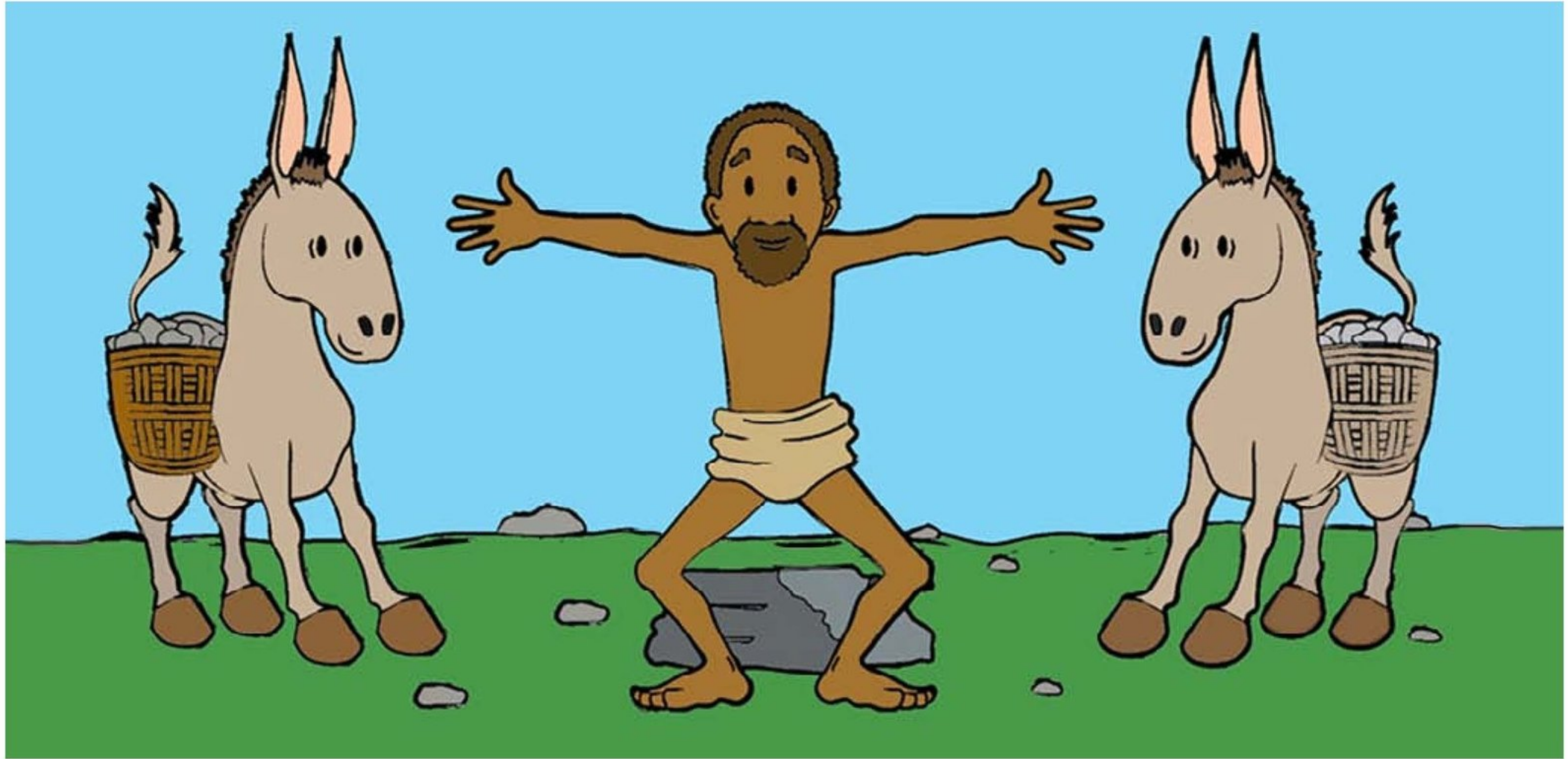
One day two donkeys got fed up.
They decided they did not want to work all the time.
Instead, they wanted to graze in green fields.
They wanted to drink from clear streams,
and they wanted to lie on soft grass.



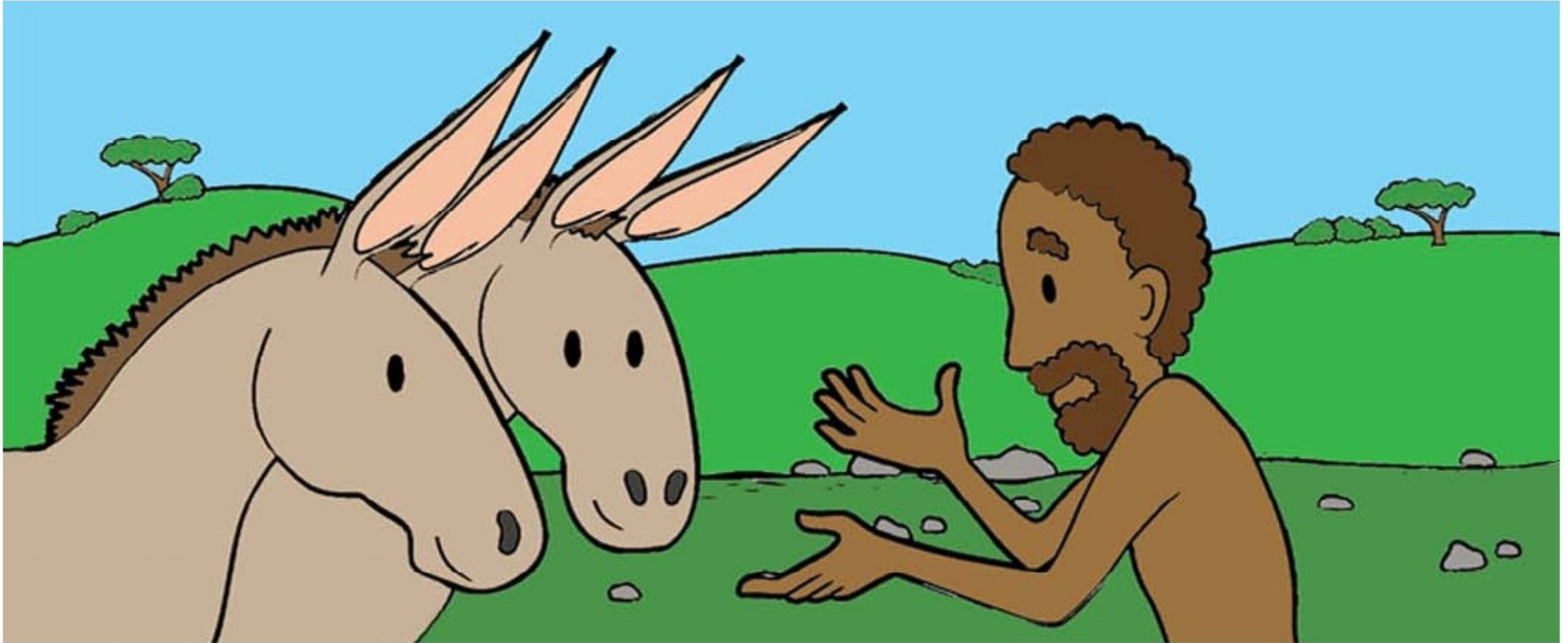
The donkeys went to see a wise old man.
They told him their problem.



The wise old man thought and thought.
He agreed that they worked too hard,
and he wanted to help the donkeys.



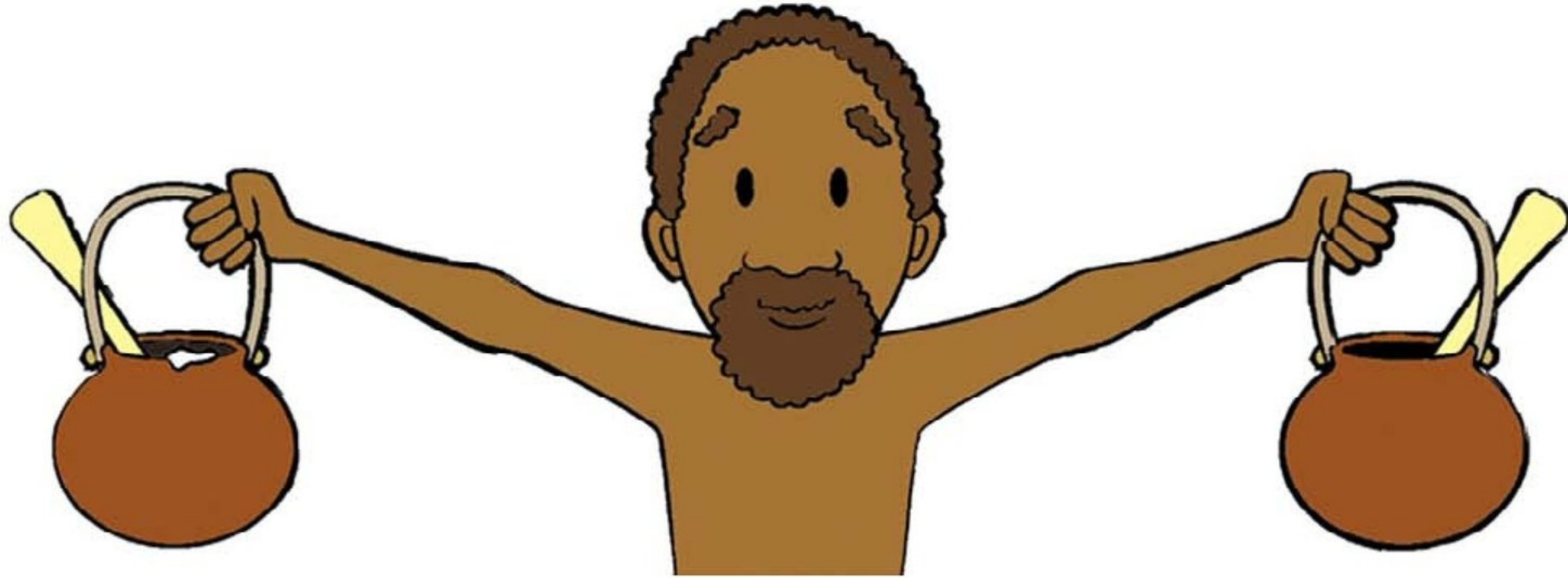
Then suddenly the wise old man jumped up.
“I have an idea,” he said.



“What is your idea?” asked the donkeys.

“I am going to paint you,” said the man.

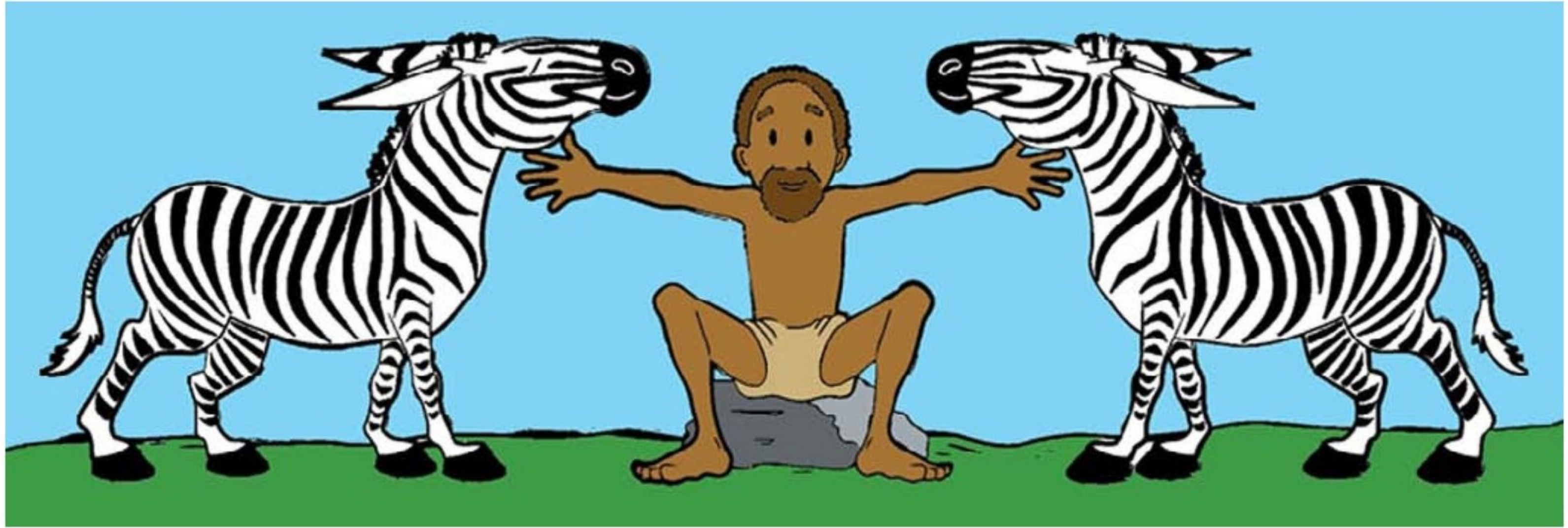
“I will paint you, and no one will know you are donkeys.”



The wise old man went off to find some paint,
and he returned in just a matter of minutes.
He had two pots of paint.
One pot was filled with white paint,
and the other was filled with black paint.



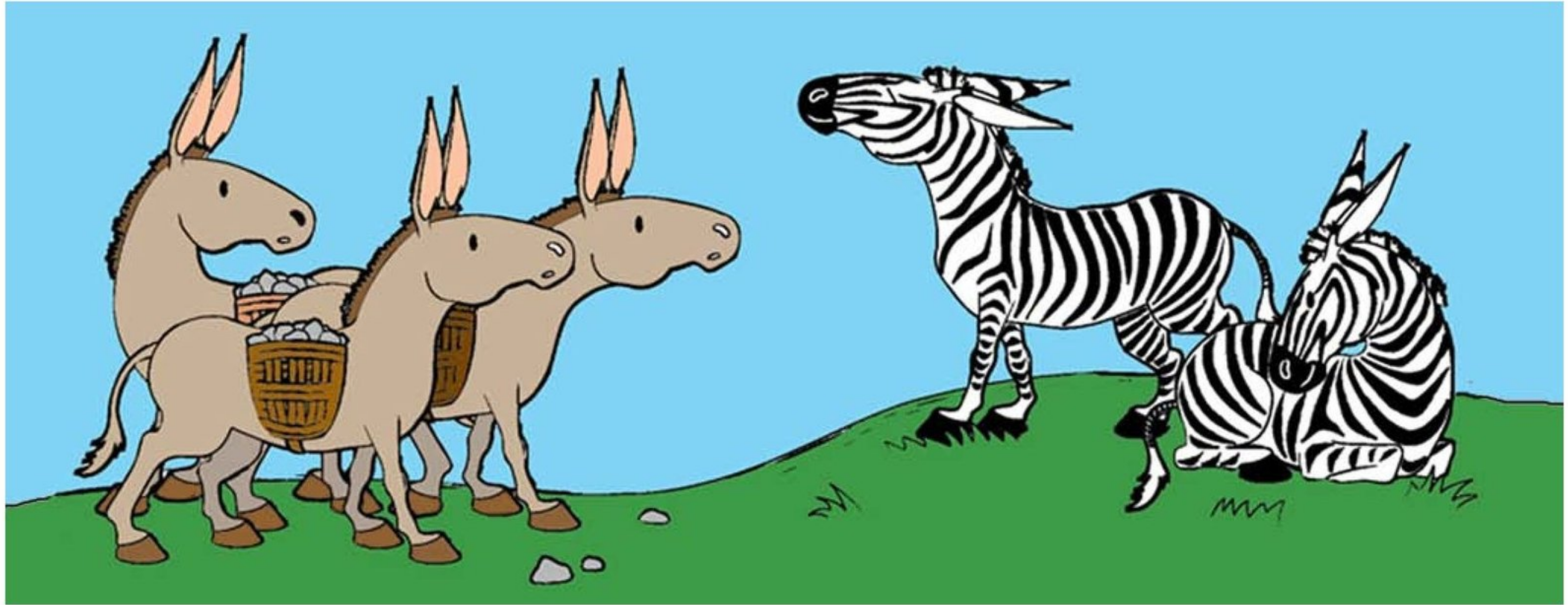
The old man began to paint the donkeys.
First he painted them white, and then
he painted black stripes over the white paint.



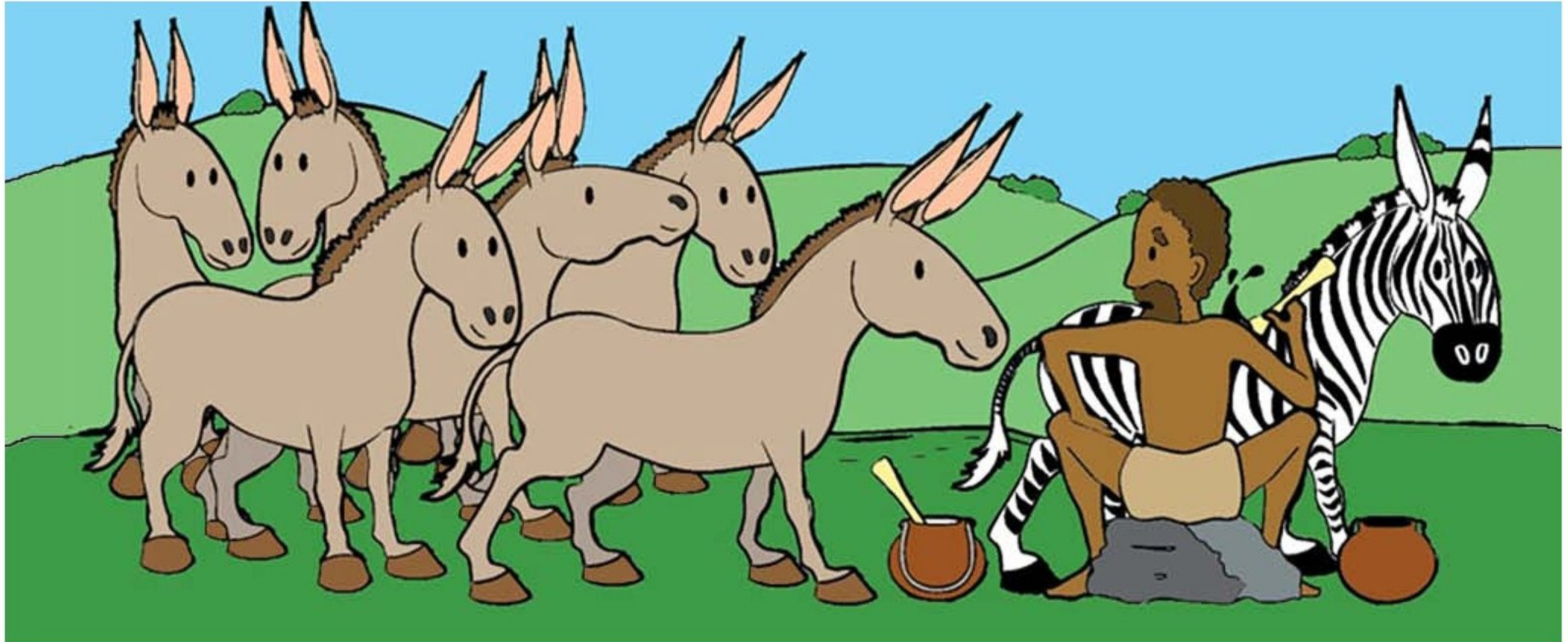
When he was finished,
the donkeys did not look at all like donkeys.
“You no longer look like donkeys,” the wise old man said.
“Everyone will be fooled. I will call you something else.
I will call you *zebras*.”



The zebras went to a field to graze.
No one bothered them,
and they did not have to work.
Instead, they lay in the grass and slept.

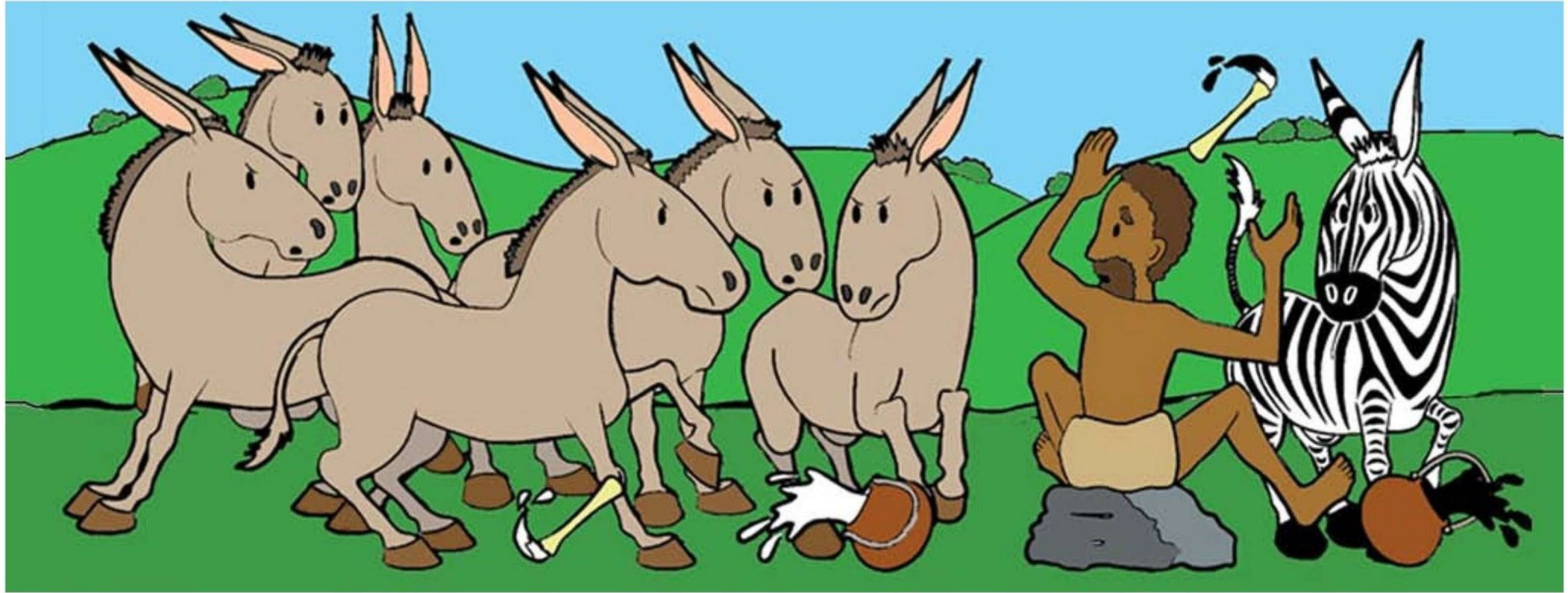


Soon other donkeys saw the zebras.
They asked the zebras where they came from.
When the zebras told the donkeys their secret,
the donkeys all rushed to see the wise old man.

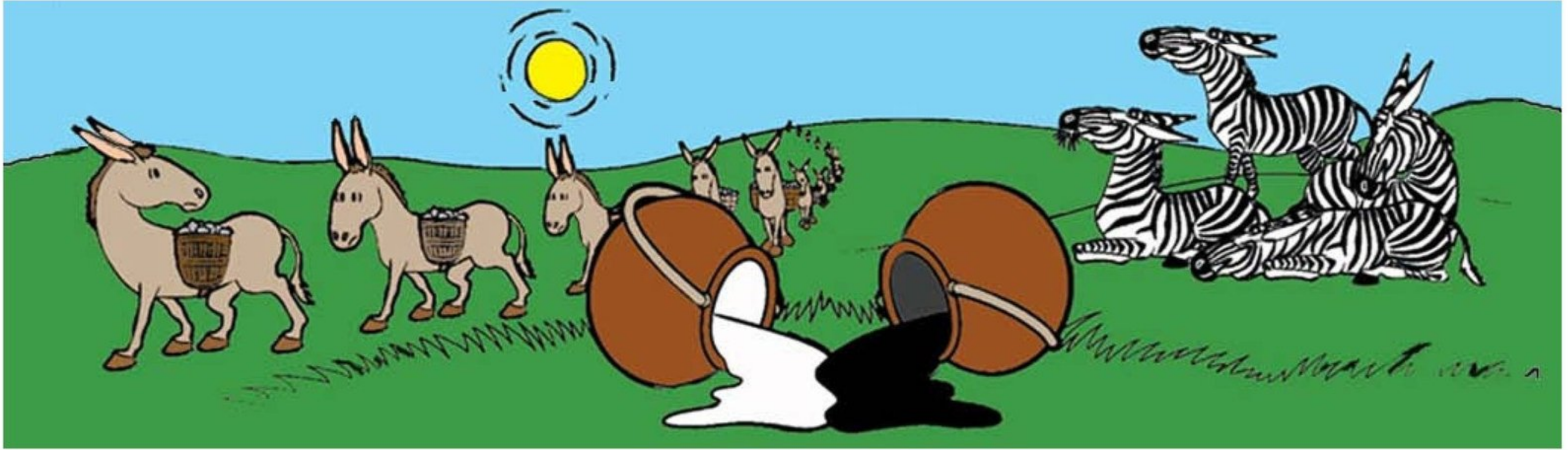


“Make us into zebras, too,” they pleaded.

So the wise old man painted more donkeys.
As he did, more and more donkeys came.



The old man could not paint fast enough.
Soon the donkeys became impatient.
They began to kick and stir about,
and they knocked over the paint pots.



There was no more paint.

The painted donkeys ran off to become zebras.

The unpainted donkeys, because of
their impatience, had to return to work.

This is why both donkeys and zebras roam the earth.

This is also why it is important to be patient.

This story is a retelling of a folktale from Uganda. Uganda is a small country in east-central Africa containing the northern part of Lake Victoria.

How Zebras Got Their Stripes
Level K Leveled Book
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A Ugandan Folktale
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