

The Old Man and the Ass

by Jean de La Fontaine

An old man, riding on his ass,
Had found a spot of thrifty grass,
And there turn'd loose his weary beast.
Old Grizzle, pleased with such a feast,
Flung up his heels, and caper'd round,
Then roll'd and rubb'd upon the ground,
And frisk'd and browsed and bray'd,
And many a clean spot made.
Arm'd men came on them as he fed:
"Let's fly," in haste the old man said.
"And wherefore so?" the ass replied;
"With heavier burdens will they ride?"
"No," said the man, already started.
"Then," cried the ass, as he departed
"I'll stay, and be--no matter whose;
Save you yourself, and leave me loose
But let me tell you, ere you go,
(I speak plain English, as you know,)
My master is my only foe."