

THE FARMER AND HIS DONKEY

By
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Once there was a farmer who lived alone on a small farm. His most important possession was his donkey named Billy.

Billy was a very friendly donkey, but sometimes he could be very stubborn. There were times when he just did not want to work at all. At those times, the farmer did not mind. When Billy was lazy so was he. They had the same personality. That is why they got along so well.

The older Billy got the less work he wanted to do; the farmer was the same.

The farm began to fall apart. The roof leaked, the door was only on one hinge, and the front porch was falling down. The barn needed paint, the fence was broken in many places, and the chickens ran around because the chicken roost had been damaged from a storm the summer before.

About the only thing the farmer did was feed his animals. He knew if they were not fed, they would die, and then he would be all alone.

The farmer began to run out of money. He did not plant his crops and he did not sell any of his chickens, so money was getting less and less.

One day, while he was sitting on his broken porch, a man came by. He drove up in his old pickup truck and stopped in front of the house.

The farmer was so lazy he did not even get out of his chair to say hello.

The man walked up to the house and greeted the old farmer.

“Are you Farmer Jones?” the man asked.

“Yes, that would be me. Who’s asking?” the old farmer replied.

“I’m Rusty Walters. I just bought the farm down the road from you, and I wanted to come by and say hello,” Rusty introduced himself.

“Nice to meet you, Rusty. I’d offer you some coffee, but I didn’t make any today. Would you like to sit on my porch with me and watch the clouds go by? It’s a real nice day for watching clouds,” Farmer Jones suggested.

“No, thank you. I have many things I need to get done over at the farm. I just moved in and there are so many things I need to finish.

“What I was wondering was if I could borrow your donkey. Bill Mitchell told me you had a donkey and I have a job that only a donkey can do. Would it be possible for me to borrow him for a day or two?” Rusty asked.

The old farmer laughed.

“You want my old donkey to do work for you?”

Still laughing, Farmer Jones about fell out of his chair.

“Why are you laughing so hard?” Rusty asked.

“Obviously someone is playing a joke on you. That old donkey of mine wouldn’t do a day’s worth of work if you starved him. He’s the laziest donkey in the world!” the old farmer continued to laugh.

The farmer thought Rusty was joking.

“No, really. I would like to borrow your donkey for just a day. I’ll bring him home tomorrow,” Rusty asked again.

The old farmer stood up, still laughing, and waved for Rusty to follow him.

They walked over to the barn. When the old farmer opened the door to the barn, the smell from inside almost knocked Rusty over.

“Whew! That’s a strong smell in there!” Rusty commented while covering his face with a cloth.

Inside they found Billy, slowly chewing on some hay. He was tied up to a post in the middle of the barn on a chain.

“Why is your donkey tied up on a chain in the middle of the barn?” Rusty asked.

“If I let him loose he’ll destroy just about everything in here,” the old farmer answered. “He’s lazy, but he likes to have fun.”

Farmer Jones took a key from his pocket and opened the lock to the chain.

He handed the chain to Rusty and said. “Here, you can have him for the day. Be sure to feed him or he’ll get pretty angry, and when he’s angry, look out. He’ll kick and make so much noise you won’t know what to do.”

Rusty took the chain and walked up to Billy. Rusty whispered something into Billy’s ear and then led him out of the barn.

“How did you do that? He has never walked out of the barn like that for me!” the old farmer asked.

Farmer Jones was very surprised.

“It’s a little secret. I’ll see you tomorrow,” Rusty said, as he loaded Billy into the back of his truck.

The next day Rusty returned with Billy.

“Thank you so much for letting me have Billy for the day. He did so much work and we finished everything I needed to get done. He’s a great donkey,” Rusty praised Billy.

The old farmer was shocked.

“Are you serious? He hasn’t done a decent day’s work in years. What did you do?” farmer Jones asked.

“It’s a little secret. Thanks again,” Rusty said with a big smile. “May I come and use him again in the future?”

“I guess so,” was all farmer Jones could answer since he was so surprised that Billy had done such excellent work.

The old farmer took Billy back to the barn where Billy began to eat. He looked

very contented.

Two weeks later, Rusty returned.

“Hi, Mr. Jones. I was wondering if I could use Billy again. I have something that only a donkey can do. Is it OK?” Rusty asked.

The old farmer threw him the key to the lock and told him, “You know where he is. He hasn’t moved since you brought him back.”

Rusty loaded Billy into the truck as easy as could be, and drove off.

The next day Rusty brought him back once again.

“So, how did it go this time?” farmer Jones asked.

“He was wonderful. We got everything we needed to get done finished. He’s an amazing donkey. I wish I had one just like him,” Rusty commented.

“Really? That’s a big surprise. Do you want to buy him?” the farmer asked.

“How much do you want for him?” Rusty asked.

“Let’s see. How about one hundred dollars?” the farmer offered.

“That sounds about right. Let me get the money from my truck,” Rusty answered, and then went to his pickup.

The old farmer began to wonder if he had asked too little for the lazy donkey.

When Rusty returned, the farmer had changed his mind.

“I think he’s worth two hundred dollars. Will you take him for that?” the old farmer waited for Rusty’s response.

“You’re a good negotiator. I’ll make it even better so we don’t have to argue and you’ll get a good deal. I’ll give you four hundred dollars for the donkey but only on one condition,” Rusty responded to the new price.

“Really? You’ll give me four hundred dollars? What’s the condition?” the old farmer asked.

“If you throw in the farm, I’ll give you four hundred dollars,” Rusty smiled.

“You want my farm?” the old farmer responded in surprise.

“What else are you going to do with an old lazy donkey and a broken down farm

house?” Rusty answered.

The old farmer thought about it for a while and then agreed to the terms.

“I’ll do it!” the old farmer said as he put his hand out to seal the deal.

With four hundred dollars, he would be able to move to a nicer place and he wouldn’t have to take care of the animals anymore.

“When do I have to move?” farmer Jones asked.

“Take your time, just make sure the title is transferred to my name by Friday,” Rusty smiled, as they shook hands on the deal.

When Rusty arrived on Friday, the old farmer had the title to his property and gave it to Rusty.

“She’s all yours!” he said with a big smile on his face.

He was going to move to town and rent a really nice room where a lady would come in and cleanup every day.

Farmer Jones moved to town. He did not go out very often because he was still lazy.

One day, as he was walking through the town, he saw Rusty at the post office. The old farmer walked across the street to say hello.

“Hi, Rusty. How are things going on the farm?”

“Pretty well,” Rusty answered while trying to put a letter into the mailbox outside of the post office.

“How’s Billy?” the farmer asked.

“Who?” Rusty answered.

“You know, Billy. My donkey,” the farmer inquired further.

“Oh yeah, Billy. He’s as lazy as ever,” Rusty replied.

“I thought you said Billy was a hard worker,” the old farmer stated.

“No, he’s just a lazy old donkey,” Rusty replied with a smile on his face.

“Really? May I ask you how got him out of my barn so easily?” farmer Jones asked.

“I just told him if he didn’t listen to me I was going to hit him over the head with a piece of wood. He’s pretty smart, for an old donkey,” Rusty answered.

“So, what kind of work did he do for you that you wanted to take him away all the time?” the old farmer asked.

“He was helping me with my investments,” Rusty answered.

“What kind of investments?” the old farmer’s curiosity was getting stronger.

“Do you really want to know?” Rusty asked.

“Of course!” the old farmer answered.

“He helped me buy your farm from you for a very low price; that is how he helped me!” Rusty said as he walked away.