



The Smuggler

A Folk Tale From the Middle East

A clever smuggler led a donkey burdened with bundles of straw to the border between two lands. The inspector at the border eyed the donkey's bundles with suspicion.

"I must search your bundles!" the inspector said. "I think you have hidden valuables that you wish to sell at the market. If so, you must pay me a border fee!"

"Search as you wish," said the man. "If you find something other than straw, I will pay whatever fee you ask."

The inspector pulled apart the straw bundles until there was straw in the air, straw all around. Yet not a valuable thing in the straw was found.

"You are a clever smuggler!" said the inspector. "I am certain that you are hiding something. Yet so carefully have you covered it, I have not discovered it. Go!"

The man crossed the border. The suspicious inspector looked on with a scowl.

The next day, the man came back to the border with a donkey burdened with straw. Once again the inspector pulled apart the bundles. There was straw in the air, straw on the ground, straw, straw, straw all around.

"Not one valuable thing have I found!" the exasperated inspector said. "Go!" The man and the donkey went across the border. "Bah!"

Every day for the next ten years, the man came to the border with a donkey burdened with straw. Each day the inspector searched his bundles, but he found nothing.

Finally, the inspector retired. Even as an old man, he could not stop thinking about that clever smuggler. One day as he walked through the marketplace, still trying to solve the mystery at the border, he muttered, "I am certain that man was smuggling something. Perhaps I should have looked more carefully in the donkey's mouth. Or he could have hidden something between the hairs on the donkey's tail!"

As he mumbled to himself, he noticed a familiar face in the crowd. "You!" he exclaimed. "I know you! You were the man who came to the border every day with a donkey burdened with straw. Come and speak with me!"

When the man walked toward him, the old inspector said, "Admit it! You were smuggling something across the border, weren't you?"

The man nodded and grinned.

"Just as I suspected. You were sneaking something to market! Tell me what it was!"
"Donkeys," said the man.

From *Wisdom Tales From Around the World* retold by Heather Forest.
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Dear Parents

As you read this entertaining tale, encourage your child to change his or her voice whenever a new person in the story speaks. You can make this more fun by taking a turn to read and changing your voice to fit the character in the story.



TIP OF THE WEEK

Encourage your child to change his or her voice to express questioning, surprise, or other emotions as he or she reads. It helps your child understand who is talking and follow the events in the story more easily. To help your child tell when a speaker changes, remind him or her to look for the following clues:

- * Indentation, signaling a new paragraph
- * Quotation marks
- * Tag lines, such as the word "said" or "replied"

The Questions

What are three ways you can tell that a new character is going to speak in a story?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

We have completed this assignment together.

Child's Signature

Parent's Signature