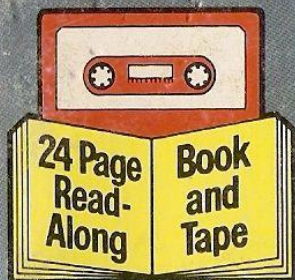
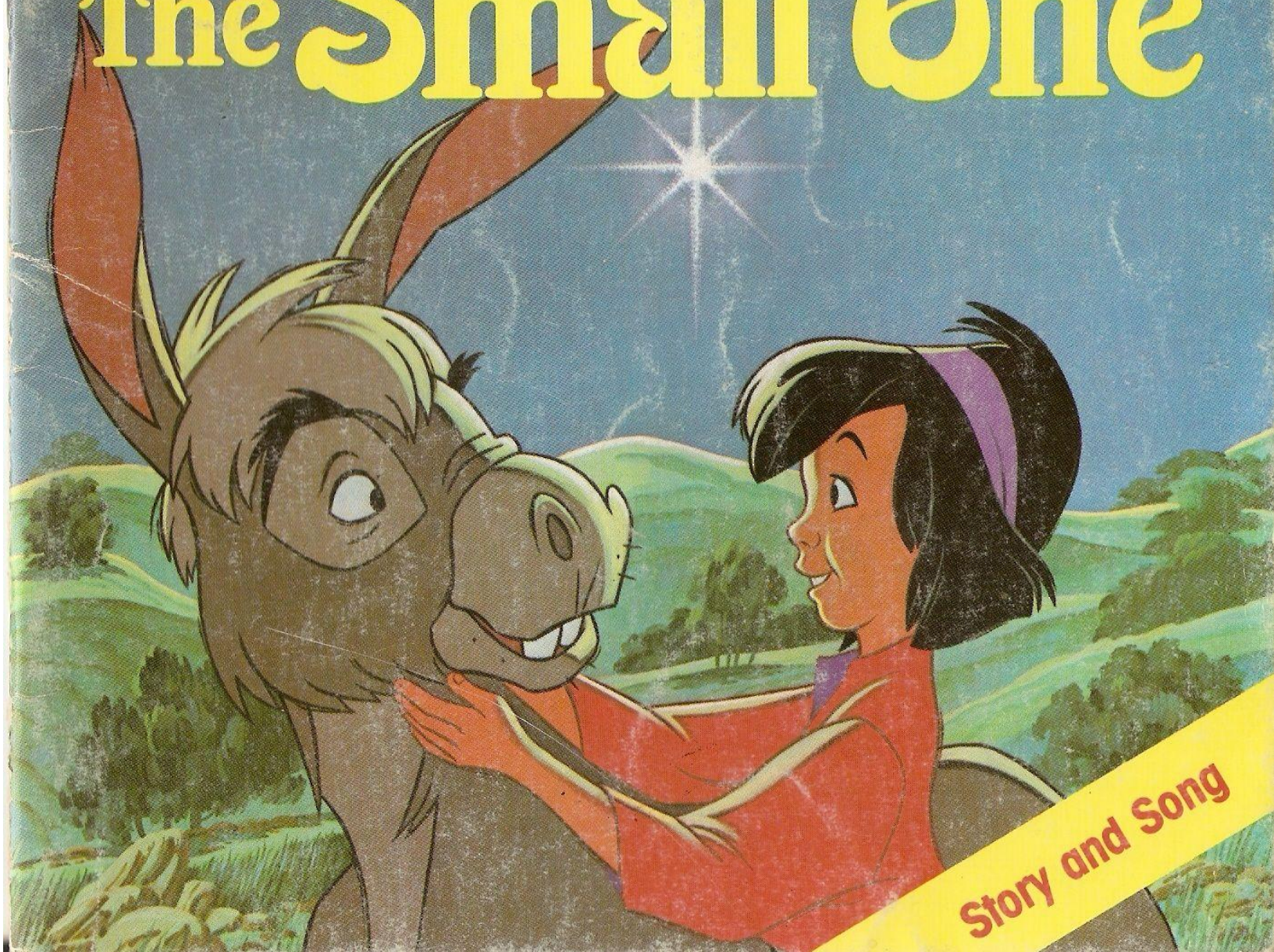


256DC



Disney's

The Small One



Story and Song



A long time ago, in a place far from here, there lived a woodcutter and his young son. The woodcutter depended on the strong backs of four donkeys for his livelihood, for it was they who carried the firewood to the marketplace.

The woodcutter's donkeys were tended by his son. The boy loved them all, but his favorite was the oldest, a donkey called Small One. "Time to get up, Small One. You don't want father to catch you sleeping again."



The younger donkeys were braying for their breakfast, so the boy carried an armful of hay to the donkeys' feeding trough and, bending over the trough, spread the hay out for eating.

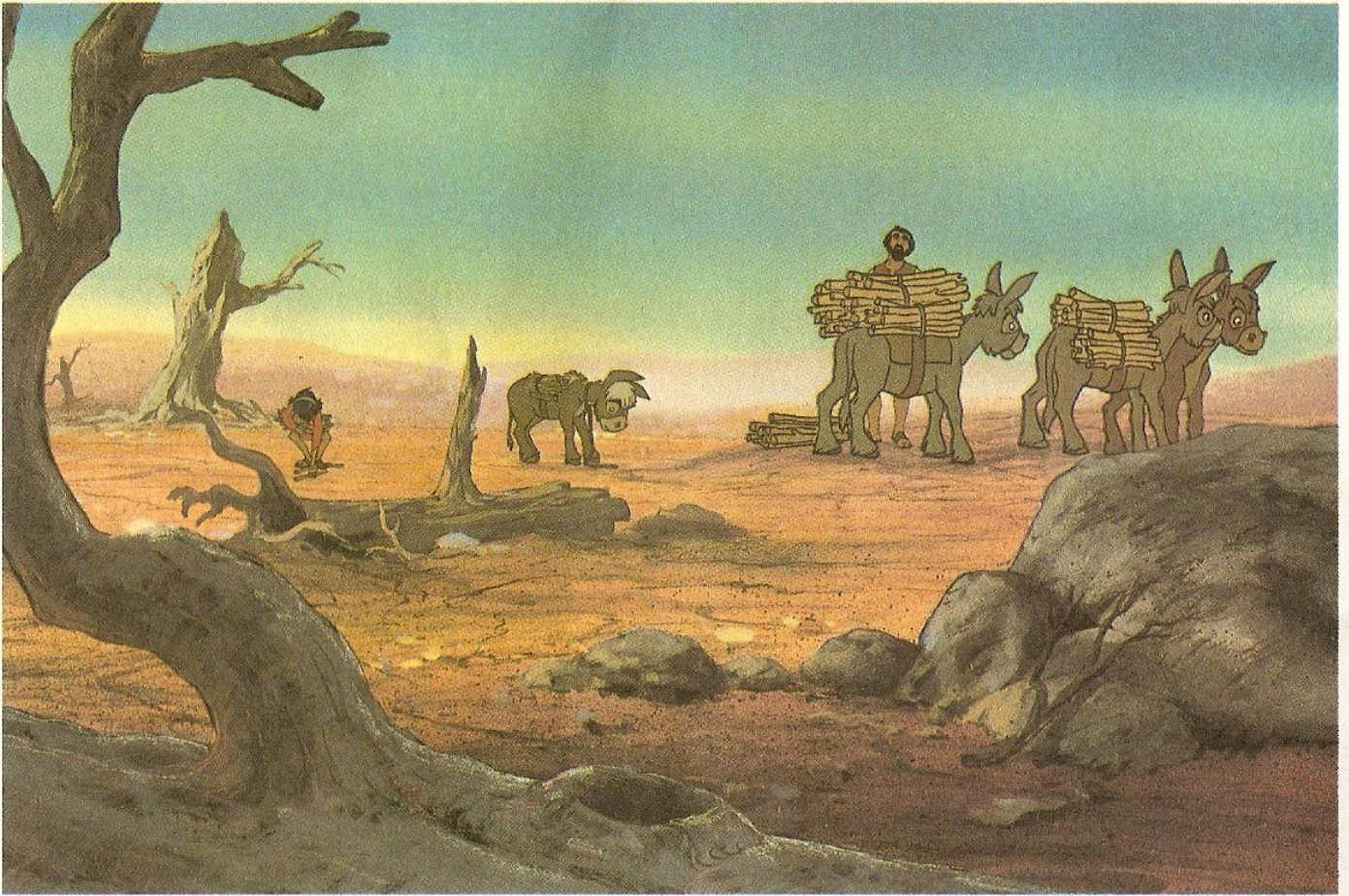
Behind him, Small One eyed the boy's bent form mischievously. With a burst of energy he charged and butted the boy headfirst into the trough!

The boy jumped up and chased after the playful donkey. The pair ran around the stable, leaping over grain sacks, scattering straw, and knocking over the donkeys' water barrel. Small One liked this game, but it quickly took his breath away. The boy teased him. "You'd better not get tired out. Father will be calling us soon."

"Come on, son. We have to get to work."

"Coming, Father!"





After the donkeys had eaten their breakfast, the woodcutter and his boy led the animals out to begin the day's work. Soon the three younger donkeys were piled high with bundles of wood. When all the wood was tied on, the small caravan began the long, hot trek over the dusty road home.

About halfway on their journey, they came to a steep hill. The three strong donkeys clopped sure-footedly to the top.

But Small One wobbled and slipped and finally began to slide backward down the steep grade! Racing down the hill after the sliding donkey, the boy pulled him to a halt. He untied the bundle of firewood and removed an armload of sticks. Small One found it easier to climb the hill now that his load was lighter.

At the top, the woodcutter was waiting for them. "Don't you have enough work without doing Small One's, too?"

"Oh, no, Father. It's no trouble at all!"





That evening, back in the stable, the woodcutter had a serious talk with his boy. "Son, are you aware that Small One eats as much as the other donkeys?"

"Well, he has a big appetite."

"That's what I'm trying to say, son. He can no longer carry a big enough load to pay for his food. We can't afford to keep him any longer."

6 "No, Father! You don't mean that!"

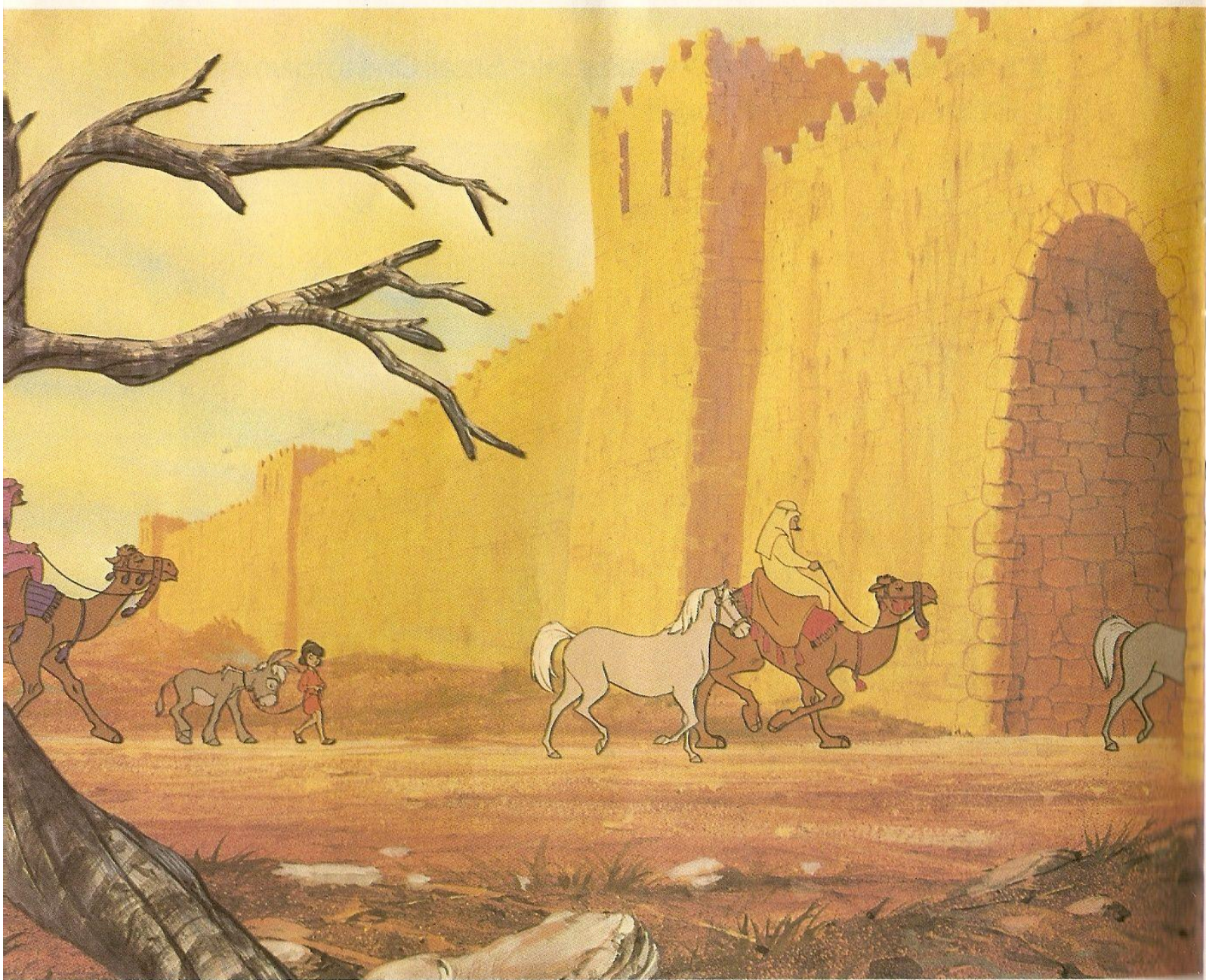
"I'm sorry, son, but tomorrow I must take Small One to town and sell him. He'll bring a piece of silver."

"Please, can I take him?"

"Very well. But understand, Small One must be sold."

When his father left, the boy said good night to the little donkey for the last time. "Don't worry, Small One. I won't sell you to just anyone. He'll be someone special, someone with a friendly face."





And so, early the next morning, the boy and his donkey made their way to the gates of the great walled city nearby. A tall helmeted guard stopped the boy at the city gate.

“Halt! State your business, boy!”

“Uh, I’ve come to sell my donkey, sir.”

“Hmmm. I know the man who is in need of such an animal. Third shop inside these gates.”

“Oh, thank you, sir!”



The boy led Small One to the third shop. Outside the doorway, the boy paused to tidy up the little donkey. After all, who would buy a donkey with a droopy ear? As the boy straightened the ear, he spoke to the donkey. "Now don't be nervous. And try and keep them straight, Small One."





The two entered the dark shop and looked around. Against one wall was a stall full of frightened animals. In the center of the room were vats of bubbling chemicals, and animal hides hung from the musty walls. At the back of the shop stood a dark figure grinding a knife on a stone wheel.



Nervously the boy called out to the figure at the back of the shop.
“Hello? Hello?”
“Yes? You have a donkey to sell?”
“His—his name is Small One.”
“One piece of silver.”

“Will you take good care of him?”

The man shook his head. “I only want his hide. I’m the tanner.”

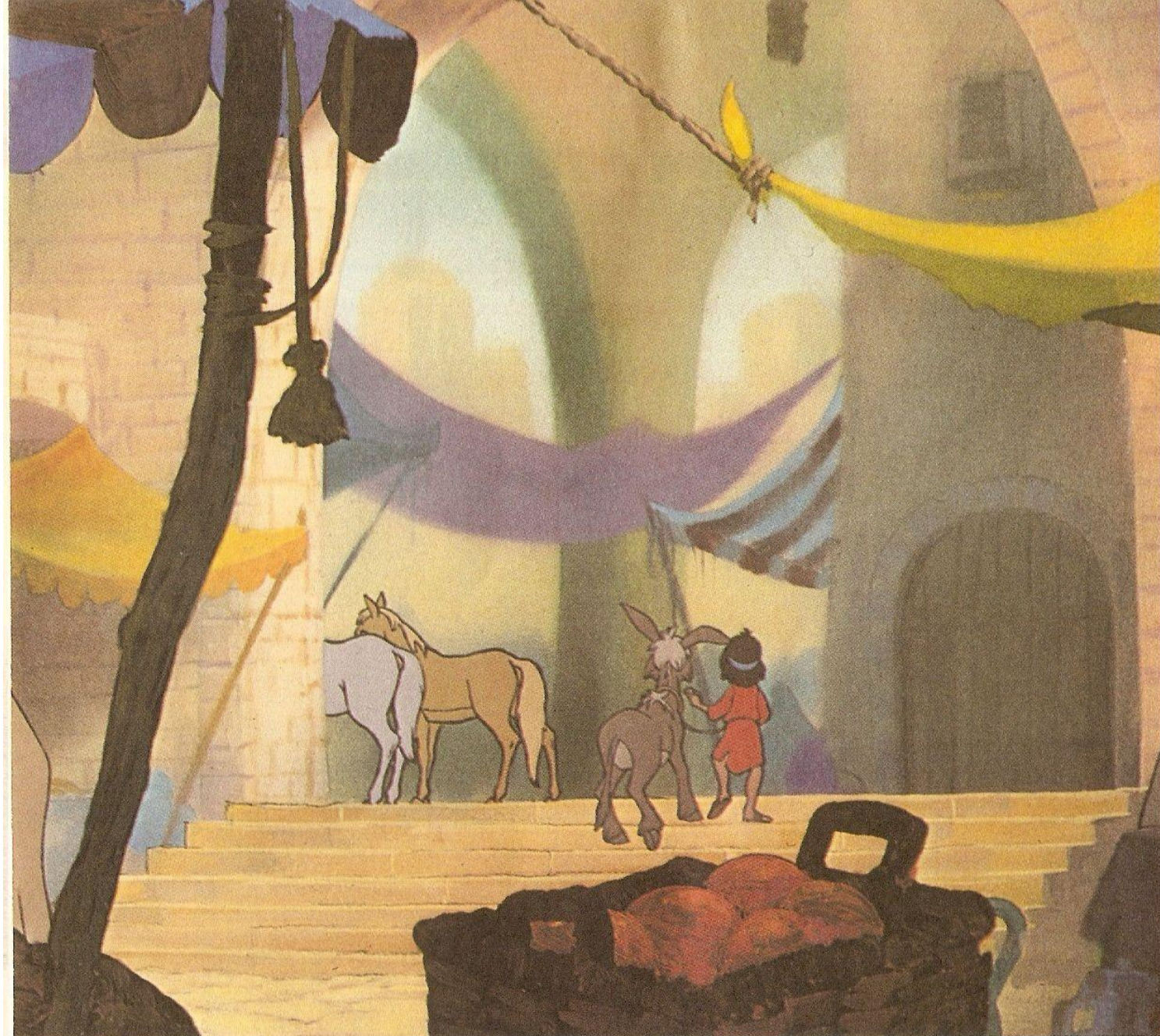
“The tanner? You want to make leather out of him?”

“One piece of silver.”

“No, I won’t sell him! I won’t! No, no!”

The boy and the donkey ran out of the tanner’s shop in terror! They didn’t stop running until they were several blocks away!





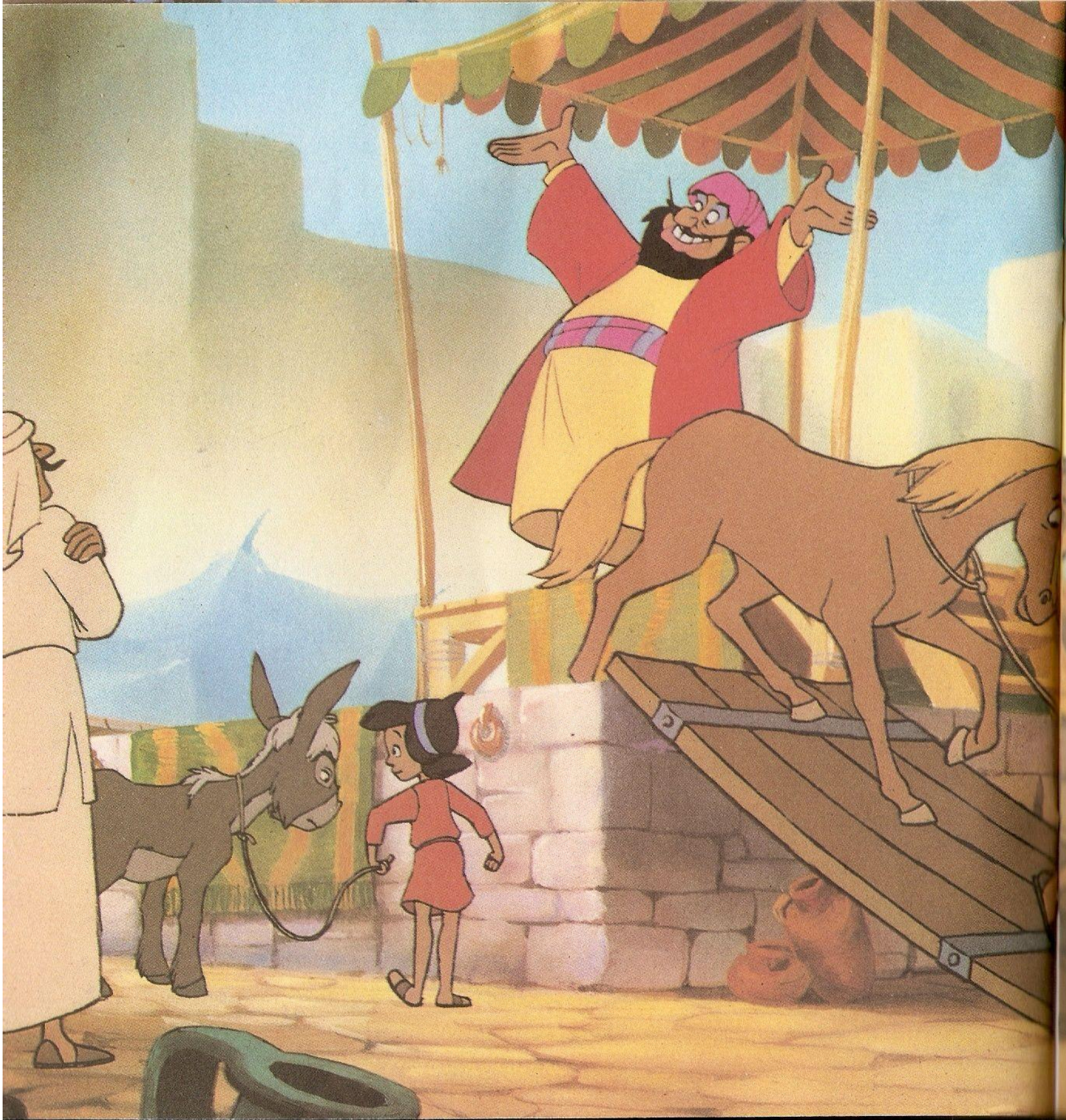
The boy led Small One into the bustling marketplace. Perhaps somewhere among the many colorful stalls another buyer could be found. But no one was interested in a very small donkey with a droopy ear.

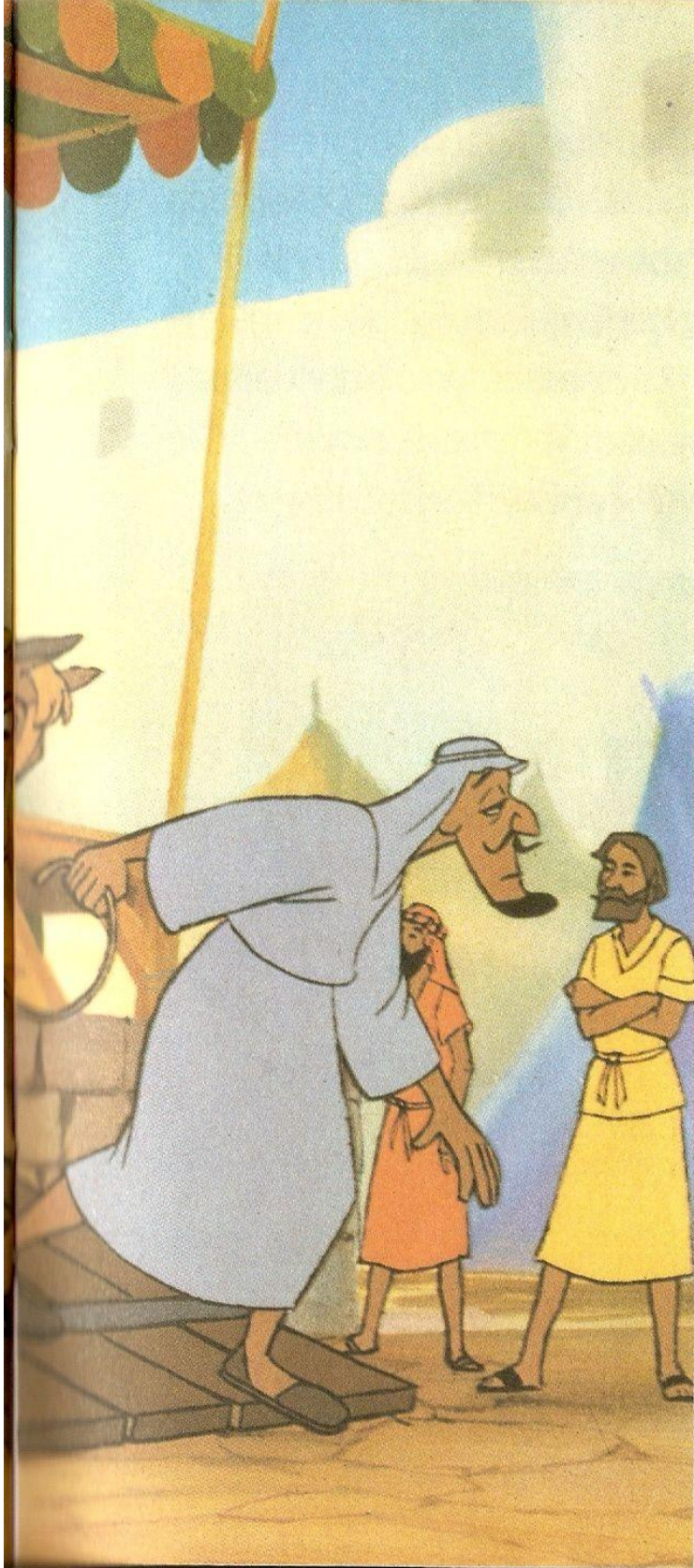
The boy sat down next to Small One and sighed. "Doesn't anybody need a donkey?"

Suddenly, a nervous merchant ran up to the boy and his donkey. "Take my advice, little boy, you will never sell your donkey here. Go three blocks straight ahead, and you will find a jolly auctioneer."

Before the woodcutter's son could thank him, the merchant turned and ran back into his shop.







The boy led Small One off. Sure enough, three blocks away he found a large group of people crowded around a stage, listening to a finely-dressed auctioneer. "What? Only fifty pieces of silver? Ho, ho! Are you all blind? This is a magnificent animal! Gentlemen, how can you pass up a bargain like this! I must have fifty-five! I won't let this gorgeous creature go for less than fifty-five!"

"Fifty-five!"

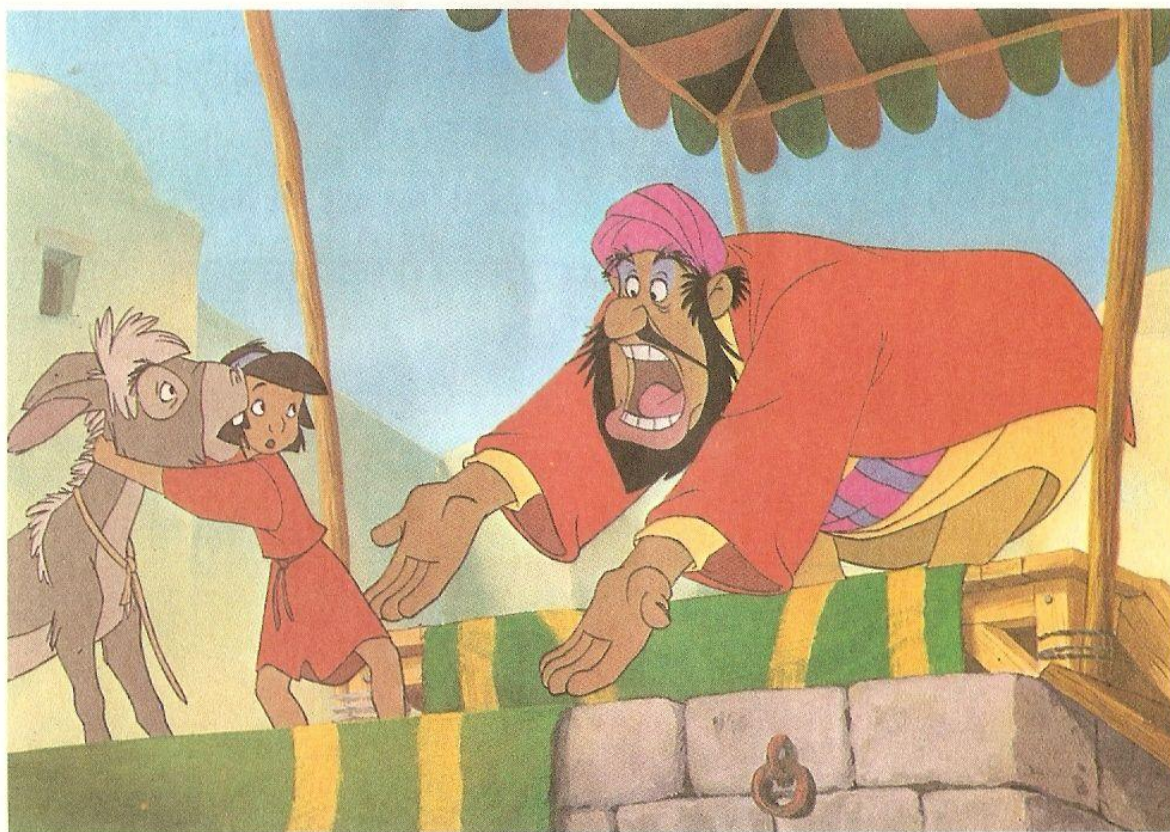
"Fifty-five is bid! Thank you, my friend. Now could I hear sixty? Sixty would be music to my ears!"

"Uh, sixty."

"Sixty pieces of silver! Do I hear more? Very well, then. Sixty, once. Sixty, twice. Sold to that lucky buyer there for sixty pieces of silver."

The boy led Small One up on stage. "Small One, I'm sure we'll find a home for you here. Now try and keep your ears straight."

Without looking down, the auctioneer began his sales pitch again. "Now, gentlemen, this next animal will truly amaze you—a steed of great breeding. So rare, so...what? Hey you, you there, boy. Get off there! I haven't time to waste on a scrawny donkey!"

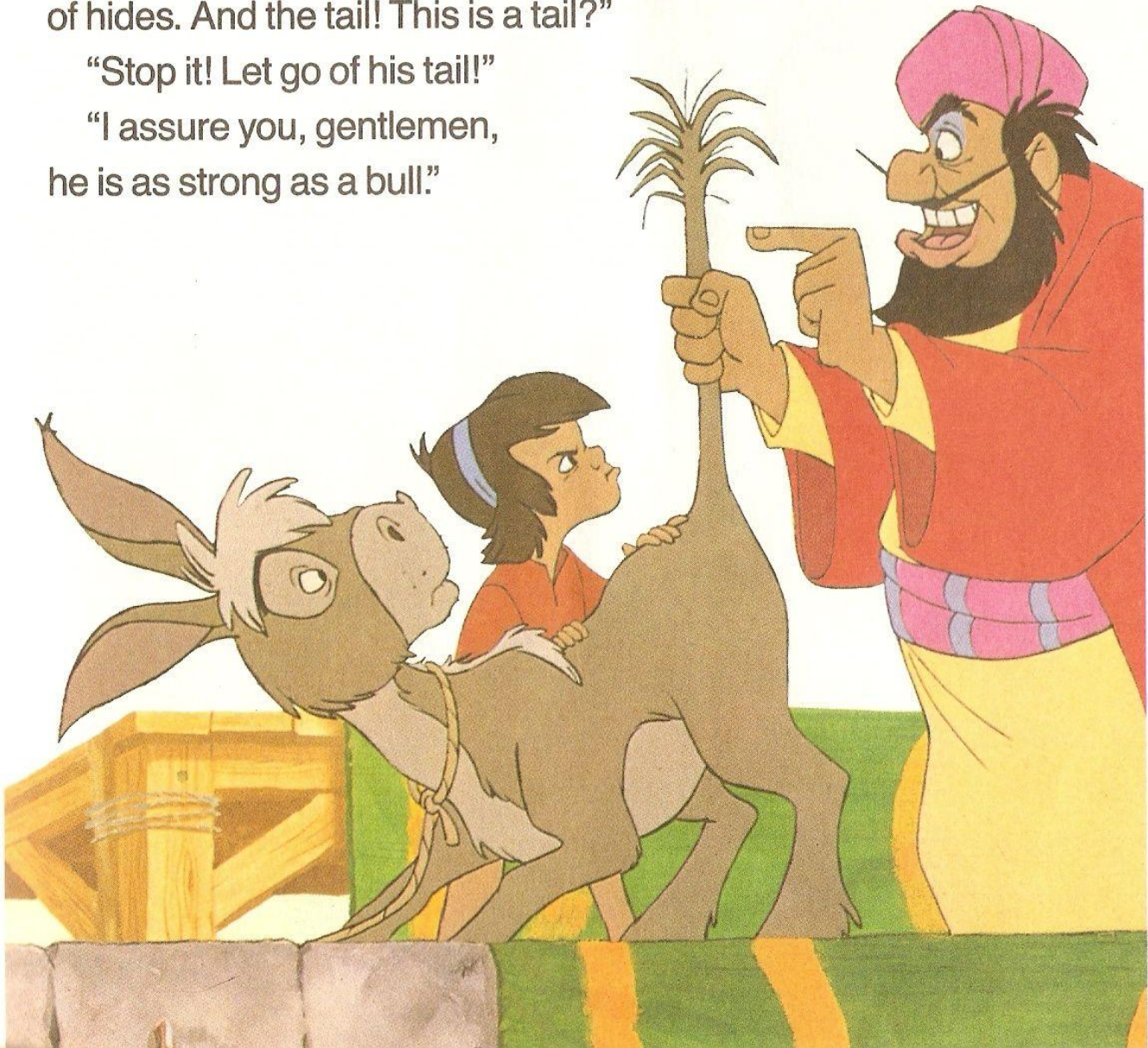


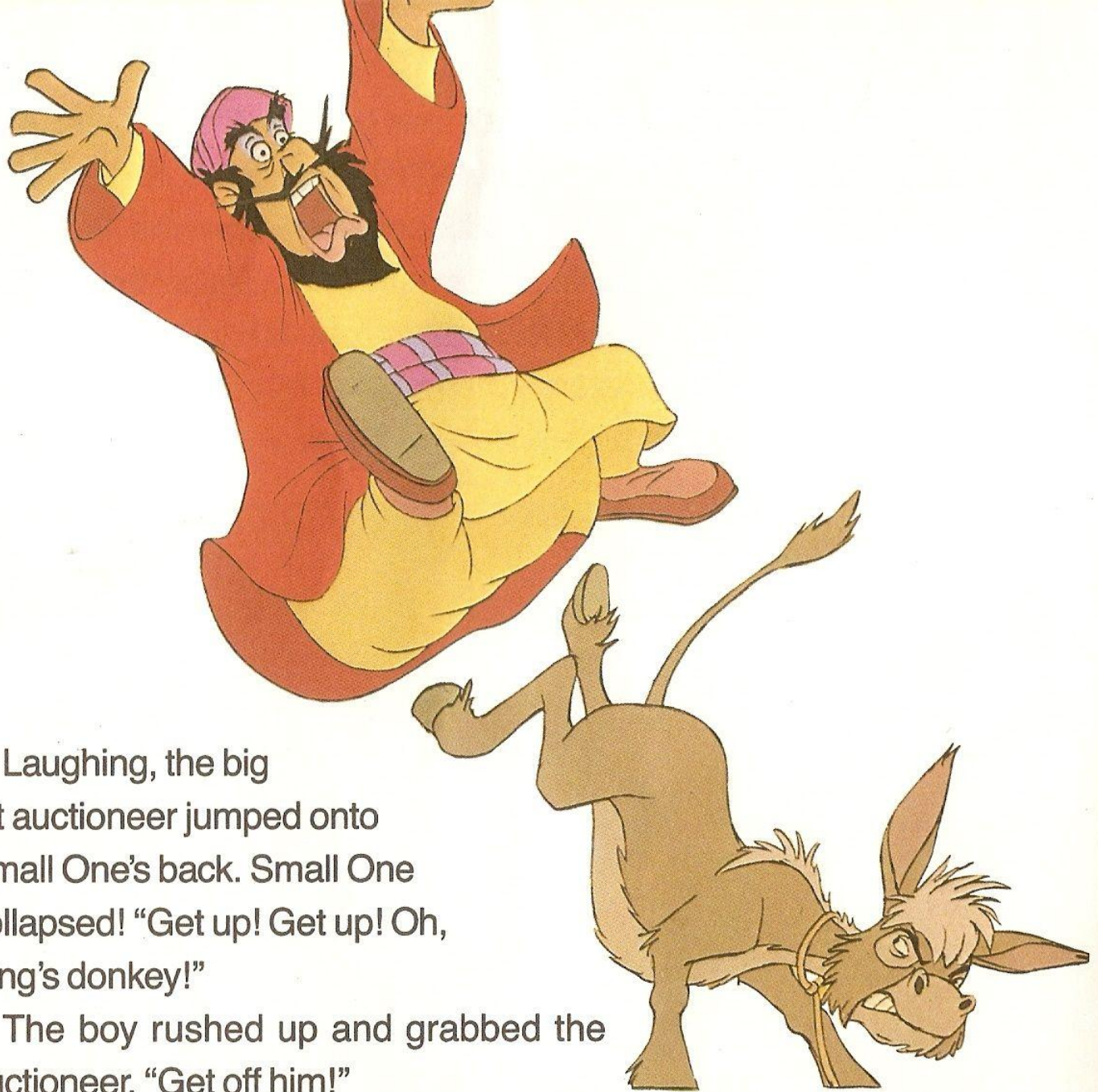
“He’s not scrawny! He’s a strong donkey! He’s gentle and kind. And good enough to be in the King’s stable!”

“Did you hear that, gentlemen? It seems we have the Prince of Donkeys with us today! Come, gentlemen, who will start the bidding at one thousand pieces of silver? Observe, my friends, the sleekest of hides. And the tail! This is a tail?”

“Stop it! Let go of his tail!”

“I assure you, gentlemen, he is as strong as a bull.”





Laughing, the big fat auctioneer jumped onto Small One's back. Small One collapsed! "Get up! Get up! Oh, King's donkey!"

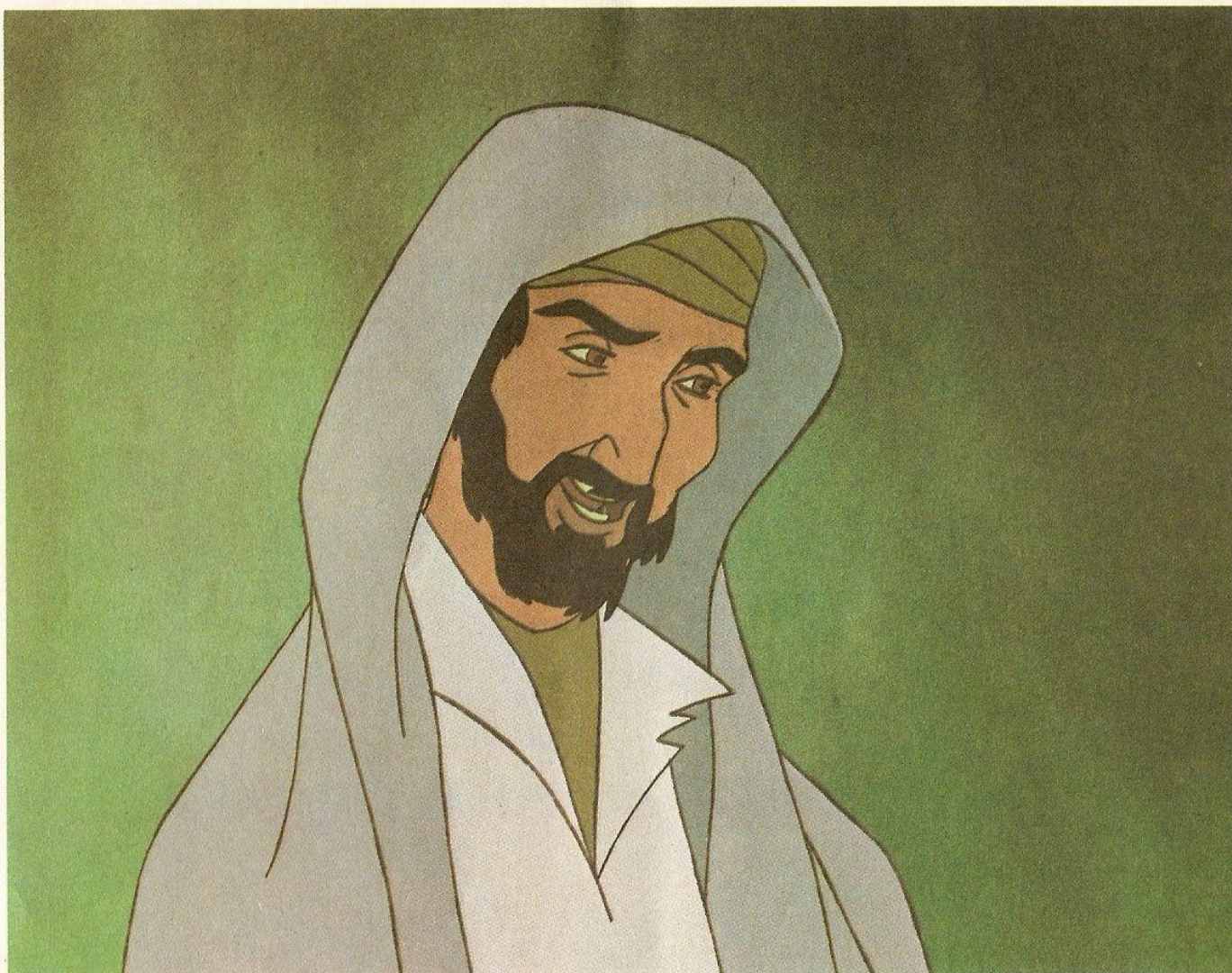
The boy rushed up and grabbed the auctioneer. "Get off him!"

But the auctioneer pushed him roughly away. When Small One saw this, he gathered up all his strength, and bucked the auctioneer into the crowd. The man glowered. "Get that miserable beast out of here."

By the end of the day, the boy still hadn't found a buyer for Small One, and he couldn't go home until Small One was sold. The tired donkey knew there was only one solution.

Small One led the woodcutter's son back to the tanner's shop, ready to give up his life to help the boy. But the boy wouldn't stand for it. Even if it meant never returning home, he would not sell the little donkey to the tanner.





The boy sat down next to Small One and began to cry. "I'm sorry, Small One. I know I promised to sell you to someone kind and gentle, but we haven't met anyone like that all day."

Then a shadow fell across them. The boy looked up to see a friendly face. "My son, I have been searching all day for a gentle donkey to carry my wife to Bethlehem. Is your donkey for sale?"

The boy smiled. "Yes, sir. His name is Small One."

"Small One? Well, he looks strong enough."

"And kind!"

"I can only offer you one silver coin. I know that's very little."

"No, that's fine! I just want Small One to have a good home."

"Well, my son, he will have. I'll take good care of him."

The boy hugged his old friend. "Good-bye, Small One. Be strong and sure of foot, and follow your new master."





As the donkey was led away, he looked back at the woodcutter's son. The boy had kept his promise by finding someone special for Small One. The little donkey smiled and straightened his ear, then followed his new owner down the street.

And so Small One carried Joseph's wife, Mary, on his back all the way to Bethlehem, where she gave birth to a wondrous child named Jesus. Thus, the woodcutter's scrawny little beast of burden did become the King's donkey after all.

