



The Ass and the Little Dog

La Fontaine

French

Easy
1 min read

One's native talent from its course
Cannot be turned aside by force;
But poorly apes the country clown
The polish'd manners of the town.
Their Maker chooses but a few
With power of pleasing to imbue;
Where wisely leave it we, the mass,
Unlike a certain fabled ass,
That thought to gain his master's blessing
By jumping on him and caressing.
"What!" said the donkey in his heart;
"Ought it to be that puppy's part
To lead his useless life
In full companionship
With master and his wife,
While I must bear the whip?
What doth the cur a kiss to draw?
Forsooth, he only gives his paw!

If that is all there needs to please,
I'll do the thing myself, with ease."
Possess'd with this bright notion,—
His master sitting on his chair,
At leisure in the open air,—
He ambled up, with awkward motion,
And put his talents to the proof;
Upraised his bruised and batter'd hoof,
And, with an amiable mien,
His master patted on the chin,
The action gracing with a word—
The fondest bray that e'er was heard!
O, such caressing was there ever?
Or melody with such a quaver?
"Ho! Martin! here! a club, a club bring!"
Out cried the master, sore offended.
So Martin gave the ass a drubbing,—
And so the comedy was ended.

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