

The Two Asses

La Fontaine

French

Easy
1 min read

Two asses tracking, t'other day,
Of which each in his turn,
Did incense to the other burn,
Quite in the usual way,—
I heard one to his comrade say,
“My lord, do you not find
The prince of knaves and fools
To be this man, who boasts of mind
Instructed in his schools?
With wit unseemly and profane,
He mocks our venerable race—
On each of his who lacketh brain
Bestows our ancient surname, ass!
And, with abusive tongue portraying,
Describes our laugh and talk as braying!
These bipeds of their folly tell us,
While thus pretending to excel us.”
“No, 'tis for you to speak, my friend,

And let their orators attend.
The braying is their own, but let them be:
We understand each other, and agree,
And that's enough. As for your song,
Such wonders to its notes belong,
The nightingale is put to shame,
The Sirens lose one half their fame.”
“My lord,” the other ass replied,
“Such talents in yourself reside,
Of asses all, the joy and pride.”
These donkeys, not quite satisfied
With scratching thus each other's hide,
Must needs the cities visit,
Their fortunes there to raise,
By sounding forth the praise,
Each, of the other's skill exquisite.

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