



# Donkey: The Mystique of Equus Asinus

*Michael Tobias, Jane Morrison*

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The donkey (*Equus asinus*) is both ancient and mysterious and is called by many names: donkey, burro, wild jack, hinny, and ass. Donkeys and their relative, the mule (a donkey/horse cross), have lived with humans for thousands of years. References to mules date back at least 3,000 years. In the Bible, Genesis 36:24 refers to the mules in the wilderness. In Homer's *Odyssey* a mule cart transports Princess Nausicaa to the seashore. Mohammed rode upon a mule into battle. Jesus' family on a donkey during the flight into Egypt was a favorite subject of Renaissance painters. By the time of *Don Quixote*, the donkey was one of the most beloved animals in all of European literature. In Cervantes, the donkey is stubborn and faithful, loving and intelligent. Today, the humble and elegant donkey is becoming a popular companion animal. In the Western states, one can see donkeys grazing peacefully alongside horses on private land. Miniature donkeys are especially popular pets. There is also a growing awareness of donkey abuse and neglect, and donkey rescue societies have sprung up to offer aid. Along with wild horses, wild burros are part of America's heritage. Complete with history, lore, science, ecology, and inspirational stories celebrating the spiritual bond between humans and donkeys, *Donkey: The Mystique of Equus Asinus* expresses the joy that these saintly creatures with big, furry ears bring to our lives.

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