

Aleksander Schmidt

Donkey, Piran

*and a Genius Idea
That Wasn't*



*A True Story of Three Friends, One Donkey
and an Unforgettable Summer Adventure*



COLOPHONE

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“Stop that donkey!”
“Stop him!”

Mark was shouting so loudly he could be heard all the way to Tartini Square.

People turned around. Some leapt out of the way. Others simply stood there, mouths wide open.

But no one did what he expected them to do.

Charging straight towards them at full speed was a crazed donkey, letting out noises with every stride as though he were being skinned alive.

“Hee-haw, hrrrrr, hee-haw, grrrr, hrrrrg, hee-haw...”

And behind him ran the two of us.

Mark and me.

No plan.

No dignity.

And, above all, not the slightest chance of catching him!



And then what...?

The donkey in front.

Mark behind him.

Me behind Mark.

All three of us wearing the same expression.

Each for a completely different reason.



If you are beginning to wonder how we ended up chasing a donkey through the middle of Piran, there is only one answer.

It had all begun a few days earlier.

And it had begun **with a brilliant idea.**

The kind that only comes to life after the second beer.

The kind you realise only later could never have been anything other than...

...an absolute **ass of an idea.**

CHAPTER ONE



How Mark Won the Most Stubborn Prize in the History of Village Fêtes



It was 1984.

I was young, working in the amusement-machine business and living with my friend Mark in Piran.

Those were carefree years, filled with fun, adventures and a colourful nightlife.

There was one more member of our little company: Dule.

Dule was not merely the third musketeer in our battle against boredom...

...he was the man who made sure no good piece of nonsense ever remained just an idea.

Back then, we were brimming with optimism, most clearly reflected in our firm belief that every problem had a simple solution hiding somewhere.

If you did not find it straight away, you ordered a beer.

If you still had not found it after the first one, you ordered another.



And if you had not found it after the second...

...you were almost certain you were well on your way to...

That was precisely when our most brilliant ideas were born.

And so, at one of the local fire brigade fêtes, after a couple of “cold ones”, we came up with the idea of supporting our brave firefighters by buying some raffle tickets.

A remarkably charitable gesture.

Or so it seemed to us.

And perhaps we might even win something useful.

A ball, a rake, a little wooden stool, a cuddly toy...?

Mark looked at his ticket.

He smiled.

Then he smiled even more.

He looked at it again.

Turned it over.

Then checked the number one more time, as though afraid it might have changed in the meantime.

“Boys...

...I think I’ve won something.”

“What did you win?”

He said nothing.

“I think...

...I think it’s the grand prize.”

“What’s the grand prize?”

Once again, he looked at the ticket.

Then he burst out laughing.

“A DONKEY.”

At that moment, Mark saw only one thing.

A business **opportunity**.

Our four-legged prize, on the other hand, clearly saw an **opportunity** to complicate our lives.

None of us suspected yet that the grand prize was not really the donkey.

What we had actually won was the crazy adventure he was preparing for us.

Today I am convinced that every grand prize should come with a warning.



Because, in truth, we did not win the donkey.

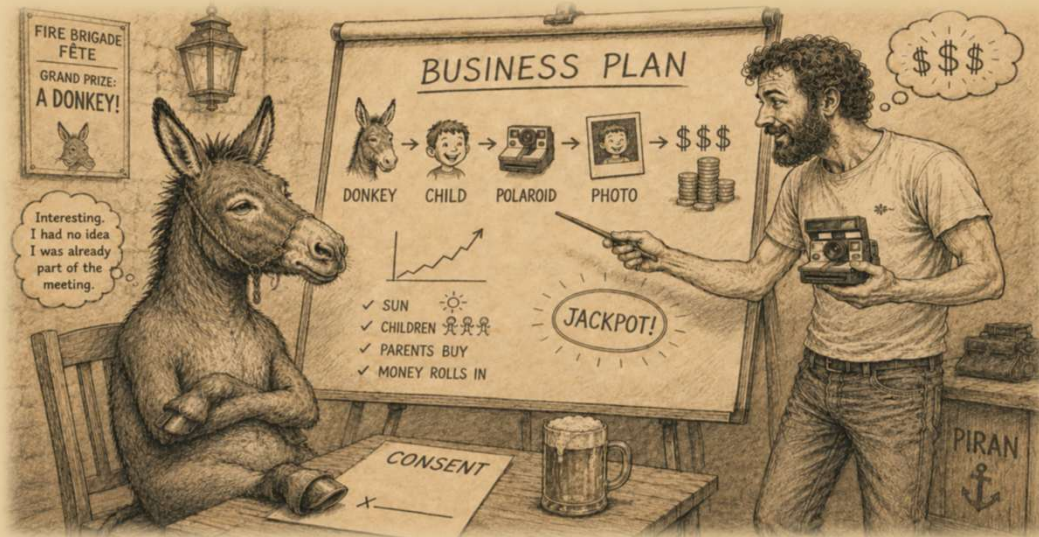
The donkey won us! New victims!

(The previous owner clearly knew why he wanted to get rid of him.)

And indeed: never look a gift donkey in the mouth, especially if you intend to turn him into a marketable commodity.

CHAPTER TWO

A Business Plan Without the Consent of Its Key Player (the Donkey)



Around that time, Polaroid cameras were becoming increasingly popular, producing photographs almost instantly. Mark already had one.

Along with a perfect plan for putting it to use.

Or so he thought.

He would take the donkey to “Kaštel”, in the centre of Portorož.

Children would have their photographs taken on the donkey.

Parents would buy the photographs.

The money would roll in.

The donkey would toil beneath the hot sun.

Mark would take the photographs.

And the Polaroid would take care of everything else.

At long last, capitalism would begin working for Mark as well.

He could already be heard humming

“We Are the Champions” into his beard.



Those strange little jackpot symbols began to appear in his eyes—the very ones that allow any of us to become completely blind to everything around us...

...\$ \$ \$... \$ \$ \$...

...when, for one brief moment, we believe the madness will last forever.

Looking back today, I have to admit that the plan had only two minor flaws.

First: None of us knew the first thing about donkeys.

Second: No one had informed our key player about the business plan.



So, we had the donkey.

Mark had already taken a dozen or so photographs at the fête and made a little money.

A good start.

“All we have to do now is get him to Kaštel,” Mark declared, “and we’ve won.”

That was where **the real business** would begin!

For their first getting-to-know-you walk, Mark led the donkey through the already rather merry crowd of visitors.

Just as a trial run.

And so the donkey would understand immediately...

WHO WAS BOSS!



But once we had fought our way out of the crowd, the donkey suddenly stopped.

He dug in his heels!

We could not move him.

Not forwards.

Not sideways.

Not backwards.

We shoved him.

Pushed.

Pulled.

NOTHING!

What now?

What about bribery?

Dule still had a little flatbread and some cévapi left, and selflessly offered to surrender what remained.

For him, this was a considerable sacrifice.

But the donkey—nothing.

He would not even sniff it.

Perhaps he did not like flatbread.

Perhaps he did not like cévapi.

Or perhaps he was thinking: Who knows what kind of meat they're made from...?

He pretended not to notice the precious treat at all.

While we spent quite some time struggling to make him move, people began gathering around us again.

One of them stepped forward and snapped his fingers right beside the donkey's ear.



The man must have been a donkey whisperer in a previous life. Whatever the case, he knew more about donkeys than the three of us put together.

And then, as though something had roused him from a trance, the donkey took a step forwards...

...and began to walk.

It worked!



But the snap of those fingers also brought with it an amusing consequence.

It remained our secret signal long after the donkey was gone.

All it took was for one of us to snap his fingers.

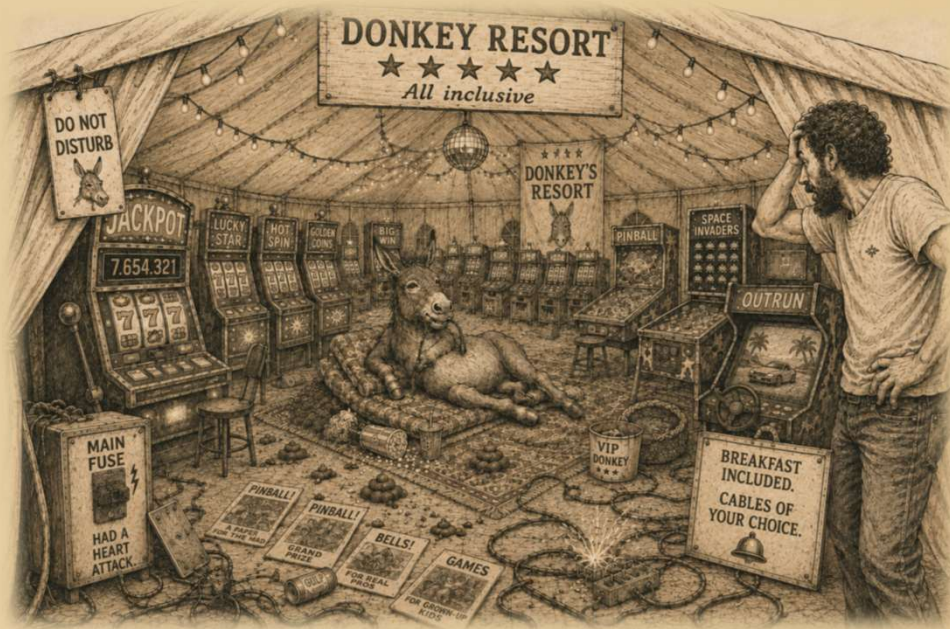
SNAP, SNAP...

We would look at one another.

And burst out laughing.

CHAPTER THREE

DONKEY RESORT



Soon afterwards, the donkey was delivered to Kaštel, where everything was already bursting at the seams.

It was time, then, to start thinking about the logistical side of our project, rather than merely the financial one.

The first problem was accommodation.

“It’ll only be for a few days,” I said.

“He can sleep in my tent, among the amusement machines.”

At the time, it seemed almost like a humanitarian gesture.

Donkeytarian, to be precise.

And so it was decided.

The next morning, Mark and I opened the tent.

I stopped dead.

Something was not right.



First, I noticed clumps of hair on the machines.

Then puddles on the floor.

Then larger and smaller piles of things I would rather not name.

I tried switching on the electricity.

Nothing.

I tried again.

Bzzzzz... hrrrrzzz...

The tent lit up as though it had been struck by lightning.

I looked at the cables.

In several places, they had either been chewed through or severed by hooves.

Then I checked the fuses.

The main fuse had suffered a heart attack.

To complete the perfect morning idyll, there was also an unbearable smell.

It stank as though we had hosted an entire herd of African elephants overnight, rather than a single donkey.

That morning, I experienced my first true moment of business enlightenment.

The donkey was not only going to generate revenue!

CHAPTER FOUR

Restaurant “THE LIVING HEDGE”



The solution practically presented itself.

Just a few dozen metres away stood a villa with a large garden, surrounded by a dense hedge almost two metres high.

The owner visited only occasionally, so the villa stood empty most of the time.

It seemed ideal.

The donkey would be safe.

Hidden.

Out in the fresh air...

Meanwhile, we cleaned him up as best we could and, to make a better first impression, poured an entire bottle of cologne over him.

“So he won’t smell around the children. That would be bad for business,” Mark commented.



Personally, I could not decide which was worse.

The cologne, or the remnants of manure still clinging to his coat.

“The subtle combination of the two aromas could surely provide fresh inspiration for the gurus of the perfume industry,” I thought.

Despite the somewhat unusual blend of fragrances, the day was surprisingly successful.

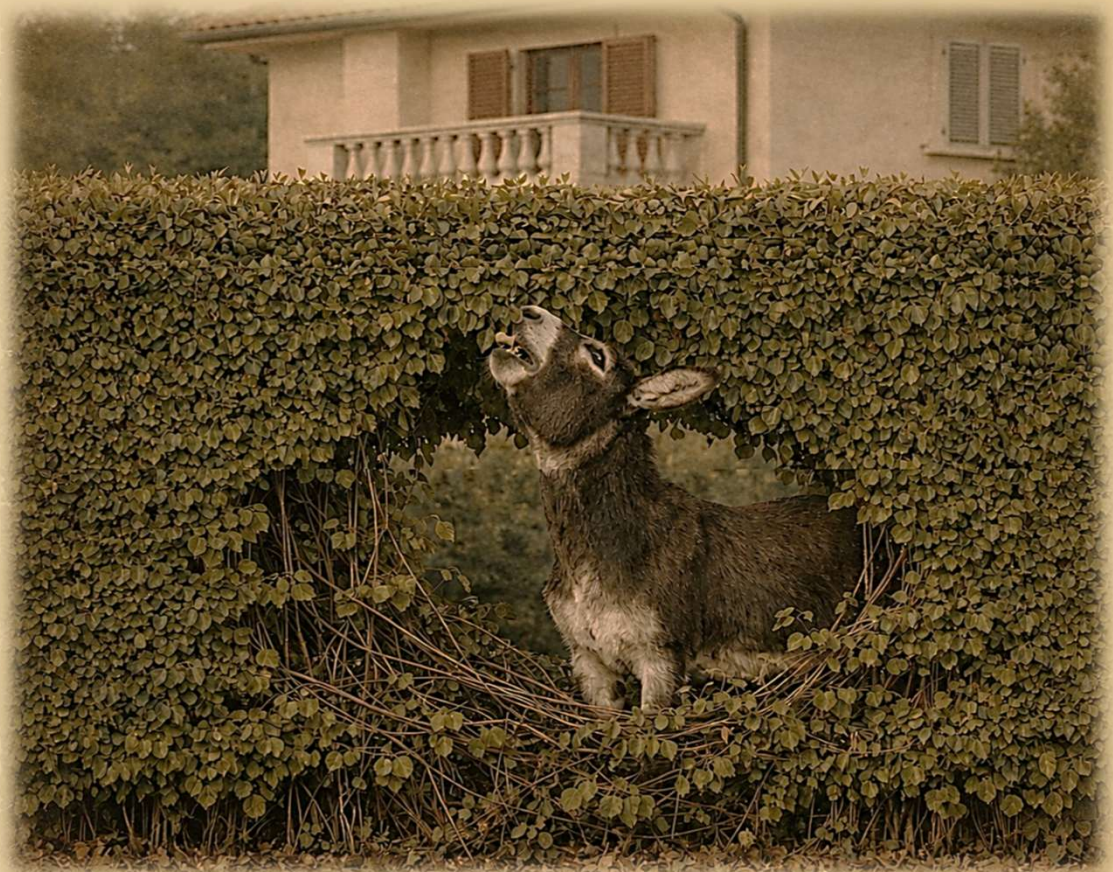
That very day, Mark took more photographs than ever before.

Our business was clearly back on the right track.

That evening, we tied the donkey to the inside of the hedge and went to bed, thoroughly satisfied with ourselves.

This time, we were certain we had thought of everything.

But the following morning...





When I looked towards the garden, for a moment I thought the hedge had miraculously become transparent.

It had not.

It simply was not there any more.

At least, not where the donkey had been.

He had eaten almost every twig and leaf he could reach.

And he had eaten his way through a hedge at least half a metre thick.

When he saw us, he brayed contentedly.

He was obviously more than satisfied with the menu.

Bed and breakfast, then.

“Hee-haw, hee-haw...”

People began to stop.

Some took photographs, while others admired the donkey through the opening in the hedge.

It was almost perfectly heart-shaped.

Clearly, we were dealing with an artist.

A greedy one, but talented.



That was when we called an emergency meeting.

The first resolution was unanimous.

The donkey had to go back to Piran.

The second resolution should have been:

“From now on, no more brilliant ideas.”

But we never passed that one.

CHAPTER FIVE



The Farmer Who Wasn't Expecting a Guest Like This



By evening, Mark had taken several dozen more photographs.

Business was booming.

His first fortune was already in his pocket.

And an achievement like that could hardly go uncelebrated.

So Mark celebrated it.

By the time he returned to Piran that night, he was so exhausted by the day's heat—and by a heroic number of beers—that he had simply left the donkey in one of the orchards.

“Where's the donkey?” I asked when he finally dragged himself home.

“In an orchard.”

I stared at him for a few moments.

“Where?”



“In an orchard. I tied him to a tree.

Where did you think I was going to take him?”

Of course. After the tent and the living hedge, an orchard was, in fact, the logical next stage in the evolution of our business empire.

“I’ll pick him up in the morning,” Mark announced.

That seemed like a perfectly satisfactory solution to both of us.

We had another two “cold ones” as a nightcap and drifted off into dreams of endless new opportunities.

The following morning, Mark went to fetch the donkey.

The tree was still there.

So was the orchard.

But the donkey was not!

...?...

He found him a few hundred metres away.

He was not alone.

Standing beside the donkey was the owner of a vegetable garden, **holding a pitchfork**. The donkey had apparently made his way there after somehow freeing himself from the rope.

How he had managed it, Mark could not explain.

The donkey was even less forthcoming.

The owner pointed to the broken fence.

Then to the devoured lettuce and the trampled garden.

Then to the donkey.

Then to Mark.

What followed was a stream of colourful curses and a demand that neither of us ever show our faces there again.



“Actually, he was a very reasonable man...” Mark observed sagely. “...He did, after all, refrain from physical violence.”

And that is precisely why, even today, I still laugh whenever I tell this story.

The most unbelievable part was still to come.



When I think back to those days, there is one thing above all that still baffles me.

How could we have gone on believing for so long that we were cleverer than the donkey?

After everything he had already shown us, the answer should have been perfectly obvious.

The donkey runs the show.

The donkey is **THE BOSS**. We merely follow.

Yet we humans have one peculiar trait.

When one brilliant idea fails, we do not become more cautious.

We come up with an even more brilliant one.

CHAPTER SIX

Operation Trailer



After three days, it became clear that we had a problem.

In fact, several.

We had a donkey.

What we did not have was the faintest idea what to do with him.

So we called another emergency meeting.

What was the alternative, then?

Where could he go?

“What about Mičo?” Dule asked.

We looked at him.

“He has horses and a riding school in Krog. At least he would know what to do with him.”

It was the first time in three days that anyone had said anything that sounded even remotely sensible.

Better still!



We might even be able to make some money from the donkey there.

The donkey could organise horse-and-donkey fêtes.

There was just one problem.

Krog was about fifteen kilometres away.

How were we going to get the donkey there?

...?...

And so the trailer idea was born.

The trailer was mine.

Long.

Sturdy.

Built to transport amusement machines.

If it could carry several hundred kilograms of iron without any trouble, surely it could handle one donkey.

Perfectly logical when it came to iron.

Rather less so when it came to living cargo with a mind—and plans—of its own.



I remember that morning well.

I brought the trailer to the Inn by the Sea restaurant, beside the Maritime Museum.

The sea was calm.

The guests were drinking.

Tourists strolled along the waterfront.

None of them suspected that, without even knowing it, they had been given a ticket to one of the finest shows of that summer.

Only the leading man was missing.

Mark arrived on foot.

He was holding a rope.

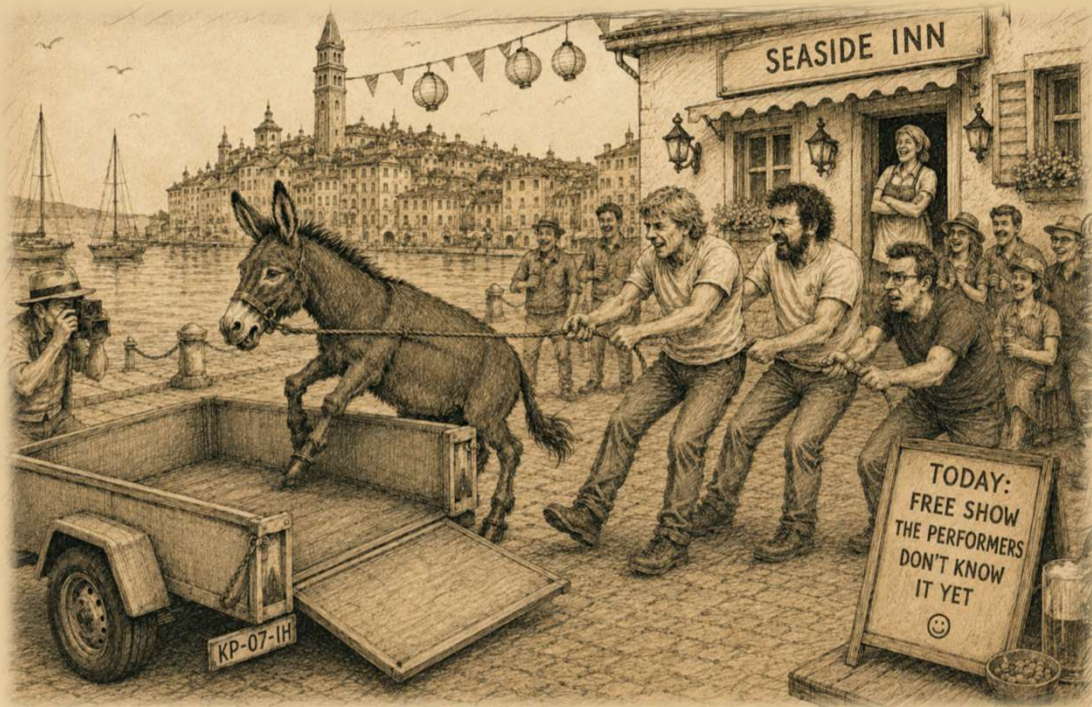
And at the other end...

...the wiliest of us all...

...THE DONKEY

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Greatest Free Show in Piran



The donkey stood a few metres away.

The trailer was ready.

What could possibly go wrong?

“This will be easy,” someone said.

Today, I can no longer remember who it was.

But I do remember that we all believed him.

First, we lowered the tailgate.

Mark took hold of the rope.

I stepped in behind him.

Dule moved alongside us, ready for anything.

“Come on, my friend...” Mark said kindly to the donkey.

“Just one little hop.”



The donkey looked at him.

For a long time.

Calmly.

With the kind of look possessed only by creatures that already know exactly how the story is going to end.

The two of us pulled on the rope.

The donkey did not take a single step.

We tried again.

And again.

The only ones moving were the two of us.

After about fifteen minutes, only one thing was clear.

The donkey was still standing in exactly the same place.

We were not.

Behind us, a few giggles broke out, soon followed by loud laughter.

Some of the guests put down their glasses and began to get to their feet for a better view of what was happening.

The waitress leaned against the doorway.

One of the tourists even climbed onto a chair to get a better view.

The show had clearly begun.

And admission was free.

Unfortunately, we performers were the last to find out.



So our first idea had failed.

We turned our attention to three more bottles of beer.

Each of us pondered the problem in his own way.

Then I looked at the trailer.

“Wait...” I said.

“Why should he have to jump?”

They both turned towards me.

“If we unhitch the trailer from the car and tilt it, he can simply walk aboard.”

At that moment, I felt rather proud of myself.

This was no longer an ordinary idea.

This was an **upgraded brilliant idea**.

We unhitched the trailer and tilted it as far as it would go.

Instead of a steep jump, the donkey now had a **gentle ramp** in front of him.

In fact, it looked so inviting that I was almost tempted to climb aboard myself.

“There, you see!” Mark said.

“This time we’ve got him.”

Once again, the two of us took hold of the rope.

Dule moved to the other side.

The donkey stepped sideways and walked around the trailer.

We tried again.

This time, he backed away and slipped past it on the other side.

We lined the trailer up again.



The third time, he stepped onto its edge and shoved it sideways.

We lined it up again.

And started from the beginning.

All at once, we pulled the ropes taut.

We hardly dared to breathe.

What would he do now?

One more step.

Just a little further.

Just...

And then...

...the donkey finally stood in the middle of the trailer.

For a moment, there was complete silence.

I do not know who started it.

Perhaps the waitress.

Perhaps the guests.

Perhaps a passing stranger.

Suddenly, loud applause broke out.

Real applause.

Some people laughed, while others whistled.

And the three of us stood beside the trailer like Olympians who had just won a gold medal in the noble discipline of “donkey loading”.

That was when we should have ended the show.

Taken a bow before the audience.

Had a beer.

And gone home.

But of course, we did nothing of the sort.



We were convinced that we had completed the job with flying colours.

We looked at the donkey.

Then at one another.

And almost simultaneously uttered the unforgettable words:

“Right...

...how are we going to tie him down now?”

At that moment, the donkey opened his mouth and flicked his ears.

And I had a feeling that it could not possibly be a good sign.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Moment the Donkey Took Over as Director



When I think back on that day now...

...I am almost certain the donkey knew exactly what we were up to.

I do not know how.

Perhaps he had noticed one rope too many.

Perhaps our furtive glances.

Or perhaps he simply knew people.

When people start speaking very quietly and smiling knowingly, a bad idea is never far behind.

Mark stepped onto the trailer.

I followed him.

Dule took hold of the ropes.

Everything was ready.



We agreed on a mantra:

“Slowly and unnoticed.”

In our heads, it sounded almost professional.

Slowly and unnoticed.

Like thieves trying not to wake a sleeping dog.

We managed to lay the first rope across his back.

The donkey moved away at once, but the rope remained on him.

So much for unnoticed.

Mark still believed we were succeeding.

“See?” he whispered.

“He did not even notice.”

At that very moment, the donkey turned towards us.

Not quickly.

Not in alarm.

Slowly.

With the expression of a maths teacher who has just caught a pupil cheating.

First, he looked at me.

Then at Mark.

Then at the rope.

And finally at Dule.

With the kind of look that said:

“You can’t be serious?”

But we carried on as though nothing had happened.

Somehow, we managed to lay the second rope across him...

...and...



It was time to tighten the ropes.
At first, nothing happened.
Then the donkey spread his front legs slightly.
The ropes grew taut.
A little more.
A little more.
And then...
...he finally buckled.
“It’s working!” Mark shouted.
“Aleksander, it’s working!”





I do not know who was happier at that moment.

The three of us.

Or the delighted audience.

There were now so many people outside the inn that we could easily have charged admission.

Some clapped.

Others cheered.

A gentleman in a white shirt even took off his sunglasses, apparently unwilling to miss the climax of the performance.

And then we made a mistake.

A huuuuge mistake.

Convinced that we were making progress, we tightened the ropes a little more.

The other leg buckled too.

The donkey had no choice but to sink down onto the floor of the trailer.

He lay perfectly still.

It looked as though he had accepted his fate.

Oh yes, of course!

He had clearly used those few seconds to calculate his options.

He was preparing like a world-class athlete just before a jump.

His muscles tensed.

His head dropped slightly.

He pinned his ears back.

He straightened his front legs. And then...

...BOOM!



I had never seen so many kilos turn into a rocket so quickly.

The rope snapped like a gunshot.

Mark was flung backwards.

I lost my balance.

Dule stood rooted to the spot.

All he had left in his hands was the broken rope.

Physics had just introduced him to its other side.

The donkey launched himself towards freedom.

With one mighty push, he cleared the front of the trailer and brought his front hooves crashing down with full force onto the rear wing of my car.

The metal groaned.

I groaned.

“Ooooooooooy!”

I had just heard a sound every car owner recognises faster than the sound of their own telephone.



But the donkey showed no sympathy whatsoever.

On landing, his hindquarters came to rest right on the edge of the quay.

We all froze.

If he had slipped just another ten centimetres...

...he would have ended up in the sea among the fish and moored boats.

For a fraction of a second, it looked as though he really was going to fall.

But no.

Somehow, he caught his balance.

Raised his head.

Straightened up.

Effortlessly cleared the bar between the trailer and the car...

...and then, braying furiously, clattered off along the waterfront as fast as his hooves could carry him.

“He’s getting away!” someone shouted.

Who could possibly disagree?

CHAPTER NINE

The Chase



For the first few seconds, we stood rooted to the spot.

Apparently, it takes the human mind a little time to grasp that it has just been outsmarted by a perfectly ordinary donkey.

Then we both looked towards the car.

A large dent gaped in the rear wing.

“My car...” I managed to gasp.

Mark, who was the only one still thinking clearly at that moment, was the first to dash after the donkey and shout:

“ALEKSANDER!”

I turned around.

The donkey already had a considerable lead.

He was racing along the waterfront with the ease of a marathon runner who is only just warming up during the first five kilometres.



Of course, I ran after him.

As though I had a choice?

The Piran waterfront was full of life that afternoon.

Tourists.

Pushchairs.

Cyclists.

Elderly couples.

Souvenir sellers.

And in the middle of it all, a donkey at full gallop.

Behind him ran two grown men, each shouting his own version:

“Stop the donkey!”

“Stop him!”



That was the best part.



People watched us and moved out of our way.

Then they looked at the donkey.

Then back at us.

And did exactly what any normal person would have done.

They moved as far out of harm's way as they possibly could.

One lady clutched her handbag to her chest.

A tourist dropped his camera.

And one little boy shouted excitedly:

“Mum! Dad! Look! A donkey!”

I think he was the only person who was genuinely delighted by what he was seeing.

The three of us certainly were not.

But the most remarkable of all was Mark.

Even as he ran, he kept shouting:

“Stop the donkey!”

As though there were an association of volunteer escaped-donkey hunters simply waiting for opportunities like this.

When I think back on it now, one detail amuses me more than anything else.

Not for a moment did either of us consider stopping.

Even though, after only a few hundred metres, it was already clear that the donkey surpassed us in every athletic discipline.

We kept running.

Because when a donkey escapes from you in Piran, you simply have no other choice.

And then...

...something strange happened.



The donkey began to slow down.
At first, just a little.
Then a little more.
Finally, he almost came to a halt.
Mark and I cautiously gained on him.
Without a word.
Almost on tiptoe.
As though we were afraid he might realise we were still there.
When we came very close, he turned around.
Calmly.
Perfectly calmly.
First, he looked at Mark.
Then at me.
His breathing was almost back to normal.
Ours...
...the less said about ours, the better.
He stood there.
As though absolutely nothing had happened.
As though he had not organised the greatest traffic event of the afternoon only a few minutes earlier.
When we finally caught our breath, the tension eased.
We began making jokes at the expense of the donkey and our brilliant ideas.
The donkey was probably thinking:
“All right, lads. That’s enough for today.”
And then a thought struck me that has stayed with me ever since.



All along, we had thought that we were chasing the donkey.
In reality, he had been making us chase him all along.
He decided when he would escape.
He decided how far we would run.
And he decided when the pursuit would end.



When we took hold of the rope, he did not resist at all.
He walked calmly beside us.
Slowly, we set off back.
People stepped aside to let us pass.
Some applauded.
Others laughed.
Someone even called out:
“Well, you caught him in the end!”
But I was thinking something entirely different.
No.
We had not managed to catch him.
The donkey had simply decided to allow us to.

CHAPTER TEN

The Longest Fifteen Kilometres



When Mark and I finally had the rope in our hands again, we were considerably quieter than we had been an hour earlier.

In fact, all of us were silent.

Dule too.

Only the donkey walked along perfectly calmly.

As though he had just returned from an ordinary morning stroll.

I do not know whether we felt more like laughing or crying. Probably both.

When we reached the car, I looked at the dent in the rear wing.

Ugly... Deeeep...

Exactly the kind of shape that only an enraged donkey could make.



I slowly ran my hand over the metal.
I did not say a word.
Mark stood beside me for a while.
Then he cautiously asked:
“Are you very angry?”
I looked at him.
Then at the car.
Then at the donkey.
And then I began to laugh.
At first, it was slightly forced.
Then more and more.
Within a few seconds, all three of us were laughing.
What else was there left for us to do?
The car was dented.
The trailer was empty.
And our plan had fallen apart more spectacularly than any
director could possibly have imagined.



Then Mark gave a deep sigh.
“You know what...”
I nodded.
I knew what he was going to say.
“I’ll just have to walk to Krog.”



It was about fifteen kilometres.

In the July heat.

With a donkey.

He did not complain.

He simply accepted the decision.

That was one of the things I had always admired about him.

You could bring down even his grandest plan.

You could shatter even his finest idea.

And the very next moment, he would already be searching for the next brilliant solution.



But before he left, we were tempted by one final idea.

The very last one?

“What if...” I began cautiously.

Mark laughed.

“No.”

“I haven’t even said anything yet.”

“I know.”

“How do you know?”

“Because I know you.”

I smiled.

“What if you simply rode him?”

For a few moments, Mark looked at the donkey.

The donkey looked at Mark.



It seemed almost friendly.

“You know...” he said.

“I think he would let me.”

That was another one of our brilliant ideas.

The first attempt.

Mark took hold of the donkey’s mane.

The donkey took a step sideways.

The second attempt.

Mark was quicker.

The donkey was quicker still.

The third attempt was a team effort.

Dule held the rope.

I stood on the other side.

Mark finally managed to climb onto his back.

For one single, glorious second.

And then...

...the donkey did something we had never seen before.

He did not bolt.

He did not buck.

He did not go wild.

He merely arched his back slightly.

Like the most experienced horse at a rodeo.

And Mark...

...flew through the air so elegantly that even a world-class stuntman might have applauded.



The landing was...

...let us say...

...slightly less elegant.

For a few seconds, he sat on the ground.

Holding his head in both hands.

Then he looked towards the donkey.

The donkey was still standing in exactly the same place,
perfectly calm.

He had not moved a single step.

As though he wanted to say:

“Now will you please stop?”

Mark picked up the rope.

Stroked the donkey's neck.

And without a single word, set off towards Sečovlje.

We watched them for a long time.

First Mark.

Then the donkey.

And then only...

...two small dots on the road.



It was only many years later that I realised the donkey was not what I remembered most about that day.

I remembered it because of my friends.

Because there are days when a person loses the battle...

...but gains precious memories of friendship...

...of stories that are never lost to time.



EPILOGUE

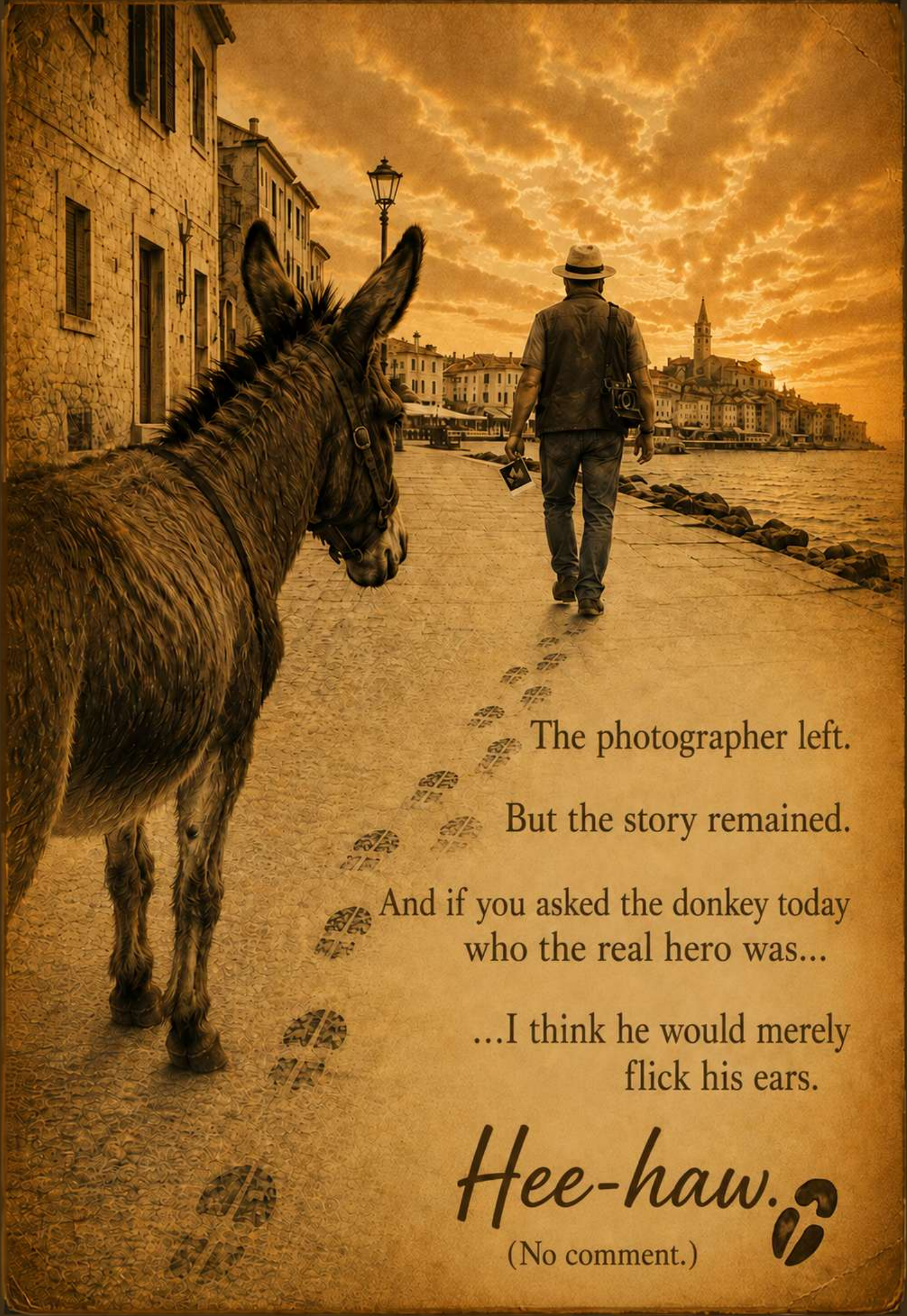
And just when you tell yourself:

“Now I have everything under control,”

life replies:

“Really?”

And sends you a donkey.



The photographer left.

But the story remained.

And if you asked the donkey today
who the real hero was...

...I think he would merely
flick his ears.

Hee-haw. 

(No comment.)

DEDICATION TO MARK



To the friend with whom I once
chased a donkey through Piran.

Back then, we had no idea that one day
we would become part of a story.

Even less that one day I would have
to tell it without him.

But as long as I keep telling it,
somewhere, we are still running after that donkey.



MORE FROM THE SAME PEN...

Before I tackled the Donkey,
I had been dealing with a somewhat more demanding 'animal' species—
Homo sapiens (or perhaps not?).

And I wrote instructions for it, although its stubbornness means
it probably won't follow them anyway.



And because I knew in advance
that this would not be enough,
I also released **MEDITATION**.



And when I finally **believed**
I had everything under control,
life sent me **another...**

DONKEY.

Instructions for him are next! ♥



THE END...

...or is it?

The donkey may really have stopped running.

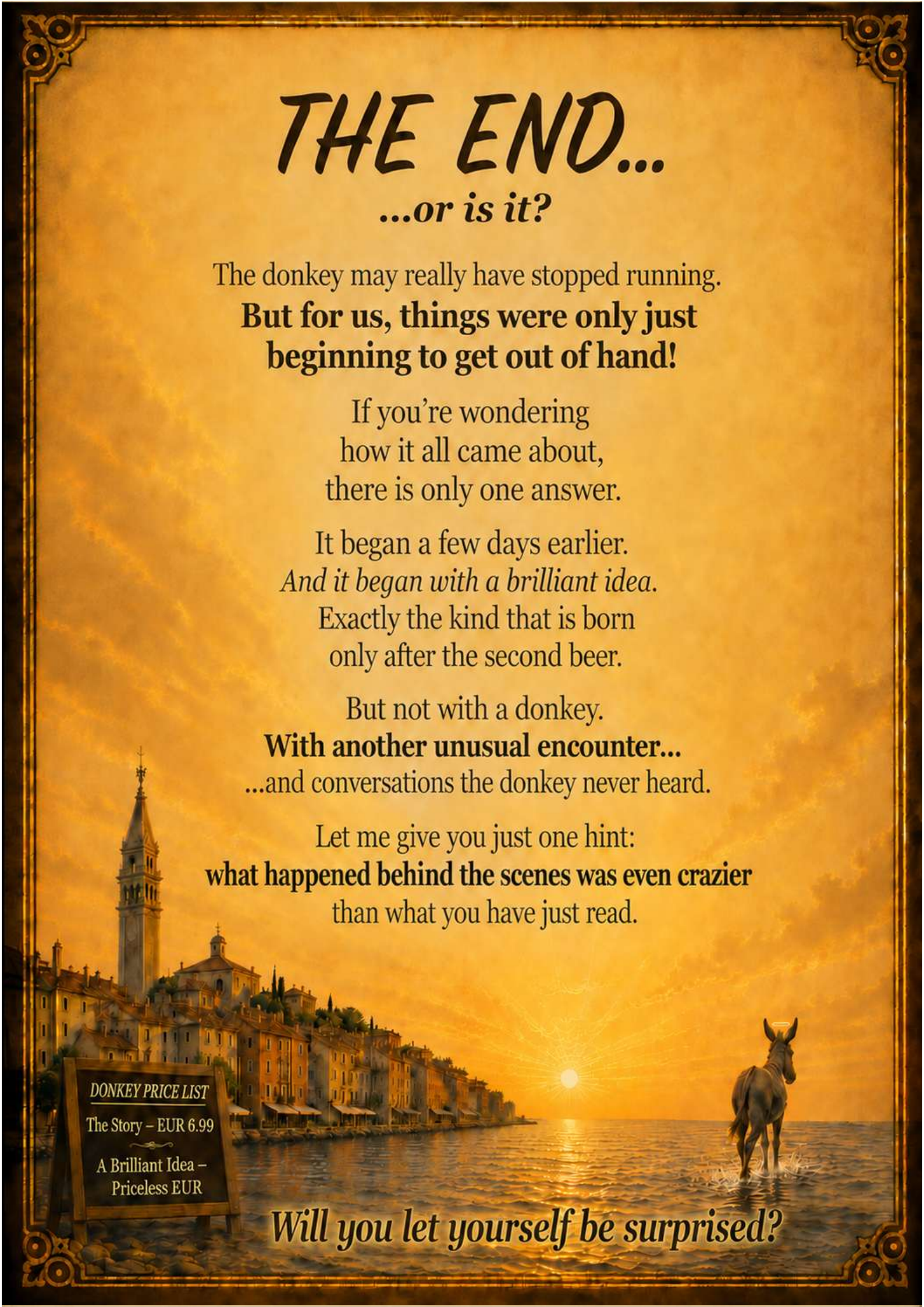
**But for us, things were only just
beginning to get out of hand!**

If you're wondering
how it all came about,
there is only one answer.

It began a few days earlier.
And it began with a brilliant idea.
Exactly the kind that is born
only after the second beer.

But not with a donkey.
With another unusual encounter...
...and conversations the donkey never heard.

Let me give you just one hint:
what happened behind the scenes was even crazier
than what you have just read.

The background of the entire page is a warm, golden-hued illustration of a coastal town at sunset. On the left, a tall, ornate bell tower rises above the town's buildings. The town itself is built on a hillside overlooking the sea. On the right, a donkey stands in the shallow water, facing away from the viewer towards the setting sun. The sun is a bright, glowing orb on the horizon, casting a long, shimmering reflection across the water's surface. The sky is filled with soft, golden clouds. The entire scene is framed by a decorative, ornate border with circular motifs in the corners.

DONKEY PRICE LIST

The Story – EUR 6.99

A Brilliant Idea –
Priceless EUR

Will you let yourself be surprised?



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