



HERCULES AND THE POTTER

Once upon a time there was a potter. Every week he would go to the market to sell his ceramic jugs. It took a very long time to get there, because the roads were winding and full of potholes and the jugs were very fragile and could crack easily. He always rode slowly and carefully, but the pottery in the wagon would shake and rattle anyway and the noise would echo in the hills.

One day, heavy rains came and didn't stop for almost a week. The streams were full of rushing water that overflowed into fields and flooded the roads, forcing the potter to stay at home and wait for the rain to stop. When the sun finally came out, the potter rejoiced and loaded the wagon with his best jugs. He set out early in the morning, but after an hour on the road, his wheels started digging into the muddy ground and his horse, pulling the heavy wagon behind her, began to get very tired.

Soon the roads were so muddy that the wheels got completely stuck and the horse couldn't pull the wagon an inch further. The potter prodded her and tried to get her to move, but the horse was exhausted and only neighed and panted. After a long while, the potter desperately started yelling.

"Why does all the bad luck in the world have to befall me? No one wants to help me. I always have to do everything alone! Where is Hercules when a man

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needs him? What did the gods give him all that strength for if he won't even bother to come and help a poor potter like me?"

Hercules immediately heard the potter's wails and calls for help and decided to go and see what kind of hardship could have caused such desperate cries. When he arrived and saw the potter sitting in the wagon and whipping his horse, he was furious.

"How dare you ask others for help while you're just sitting there doing absolutely nothing at all?" asked Hercules, angrily. "When I see you at least try, I will gladly come and help you."

Shocked, the potter jumped off his wagon, rolled up his sleeves, and gave the wagon a push. As soon as he started pushing, the horse started to pull. Inch by inch, the wagon moved and the wheels slowly rolled out of the mud.

And from that day on, the potter never again blamed others for his misfortunes or demanded help unless he truly needed it.