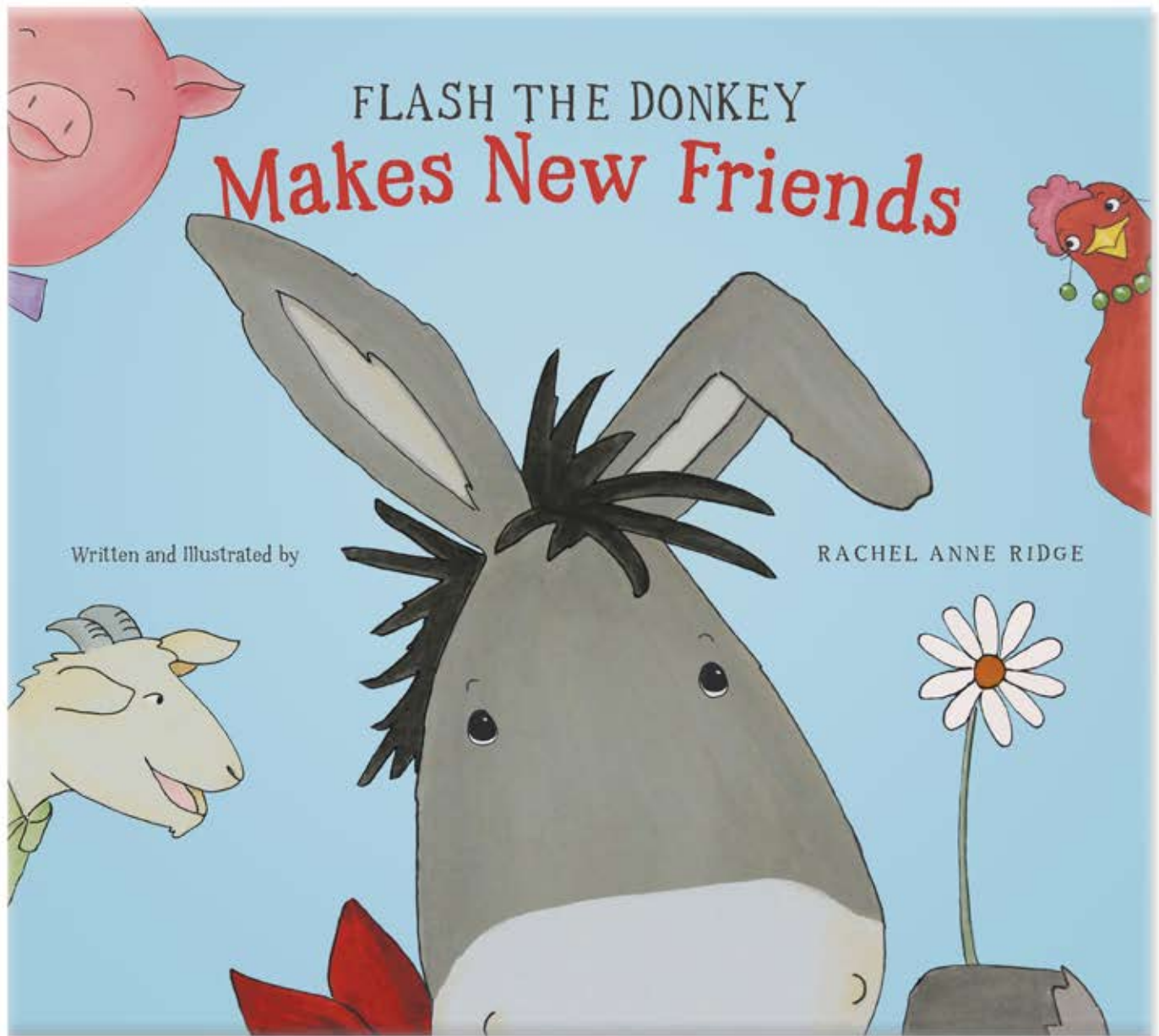


FLASH THE DONKEY

# Makes New Friends

Mommy & Me  
Activity Journal



Hi there!  
I'm Flash.



# FLASH THE DONKEY Makes New Friends

Rachel Anne Ridge

## Flash & Friends Activity Pack:

Flash and his friends have come together in a fun, interactive activity pack for you to enjoy with your little ones. Kids can color while mom guides a conversation about some of the important things Flash learns with his friends. Please share pictures of your fun with the hashtag #FlashtheDonkey so we can all follow Flash's adventures!

## Kindness Card Instructions:

It's really easy to brighten someone's day with a bit of kindness! Write a list of people you could make a card for and then get to work. Print off as many cards as you need, color in the vase of flowers, cut out the card and fold on the dotted line. Write a note on the inside of the card and send it on its way.

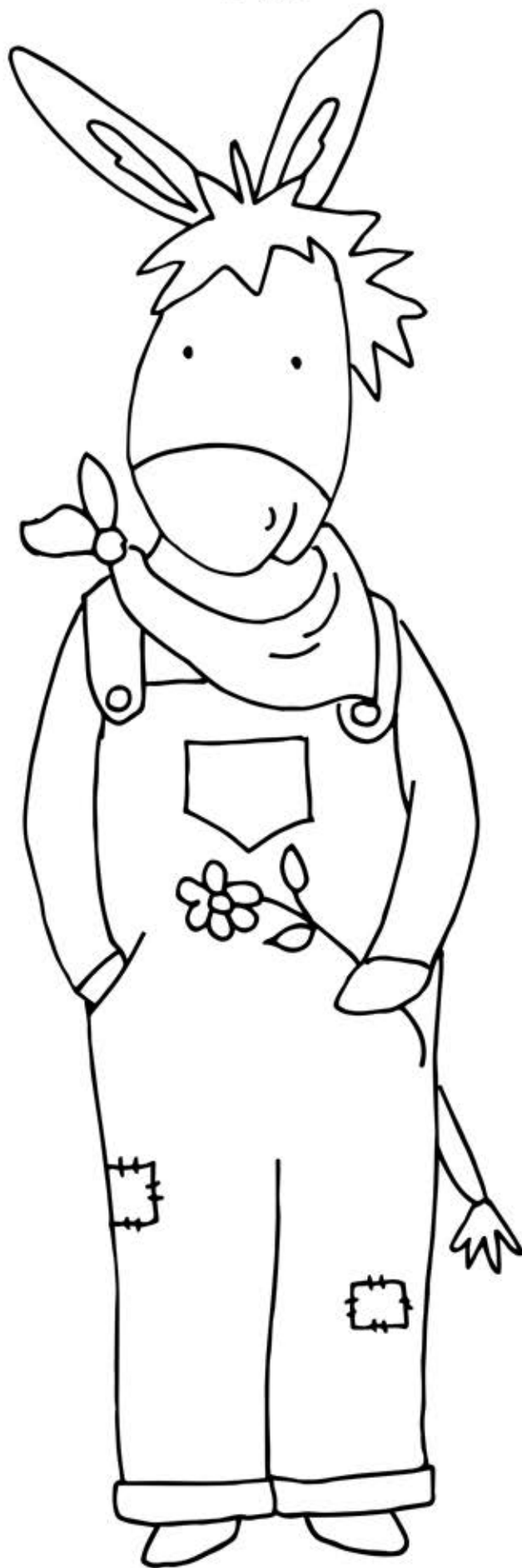
## Flat Flash Instructions:

Color and cut out Flat Flash. Then, take him on an adventure! He'd love to go with you to fun, or interesting places... and then take a picture of him! You can upload your Flat Flash photo to Flash's Facebook Page at <https://facebook.com/flashthedonkey> so everyone can see what kind of adventure you've been on together!

## Puppet Flash Instructions:

Gather your supplies: construction paper, scissors, glue, and a paper lunch sack. Cut out the shapes from the activity packet and trace around them on your construction paper. Cut out the construction paper shapes and using the example in the activity packet, glue them onto your paper sack. Tell a new story about Flash and his friends with your puppet.

# Flat Flash



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## Mommy and Me Journal Questions

Flash put things into his wagon that other people threw away.

He collected things he thought looked \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

Can you think of new ways to use old things, just like Flash?

Flash seems to have lots of good ideas. Write some of your own good ideas here.

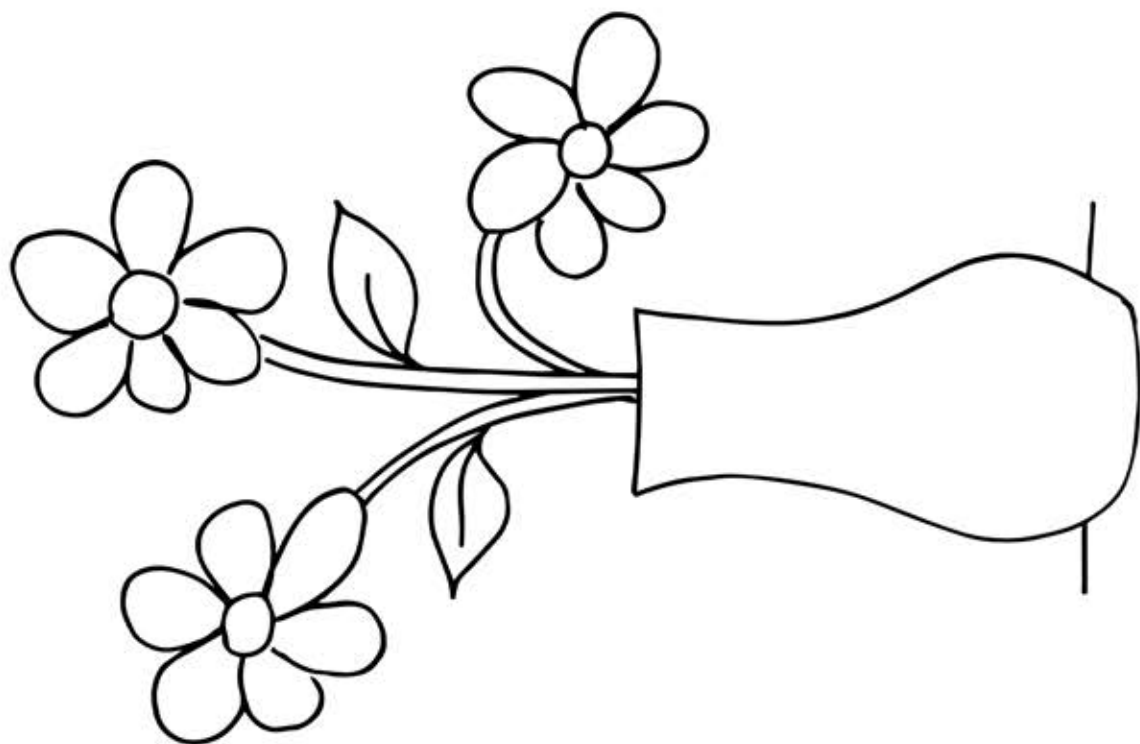
A good idea for:

Helping your parents at home

Making a new friend

Making your neighborhood better





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## Mommy and Me Journal Questions

How did Jed, Carson and Ruby show kindness to Flash?

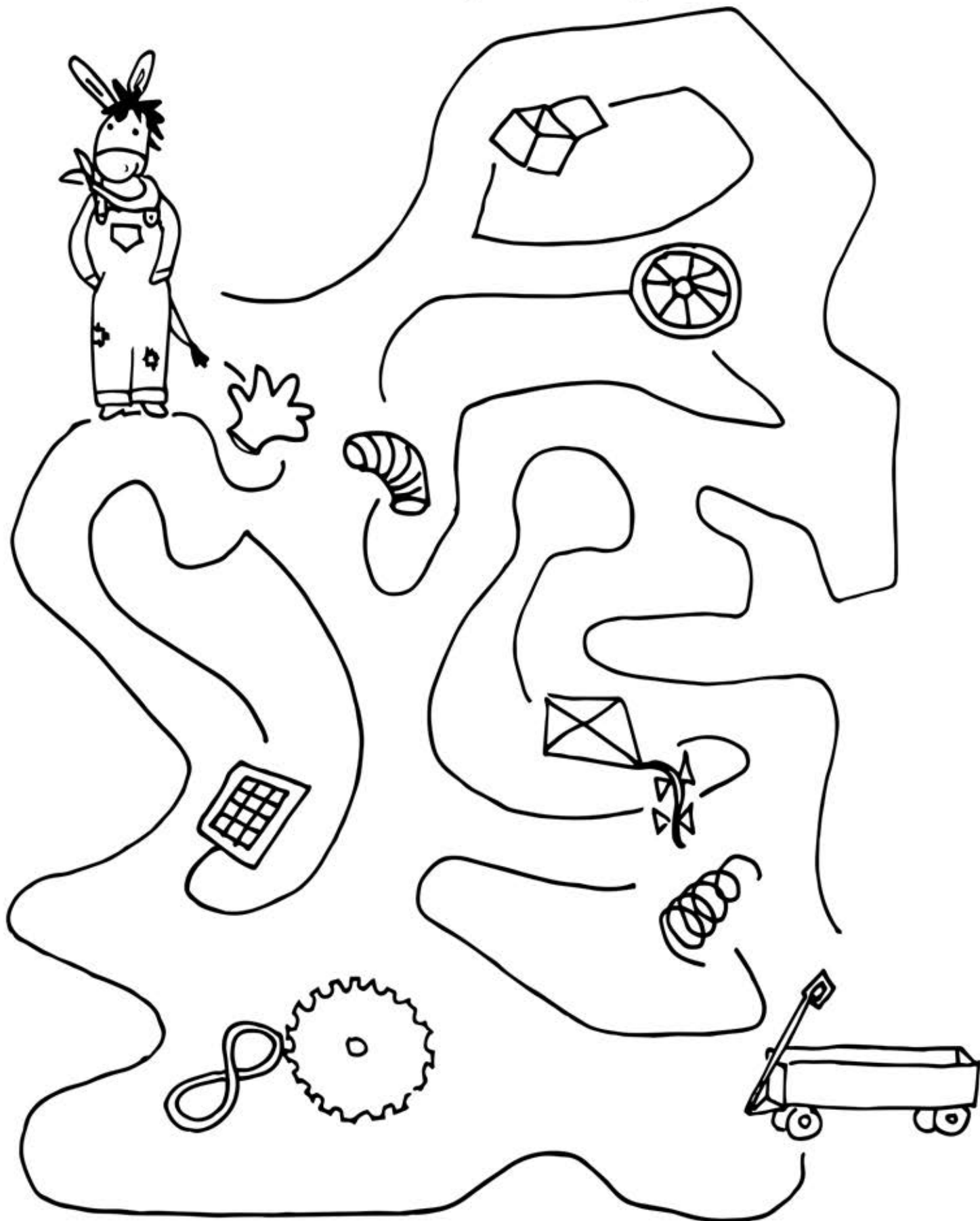
What are some ways you can show kindness to others?

Why did Jed seem unhappy about having Flash stay with them?

Have you ever had a time that you misjudged somebody when you first met them?

Have you ever felt that somebody had a wrong idea about you? How did that make you feel?

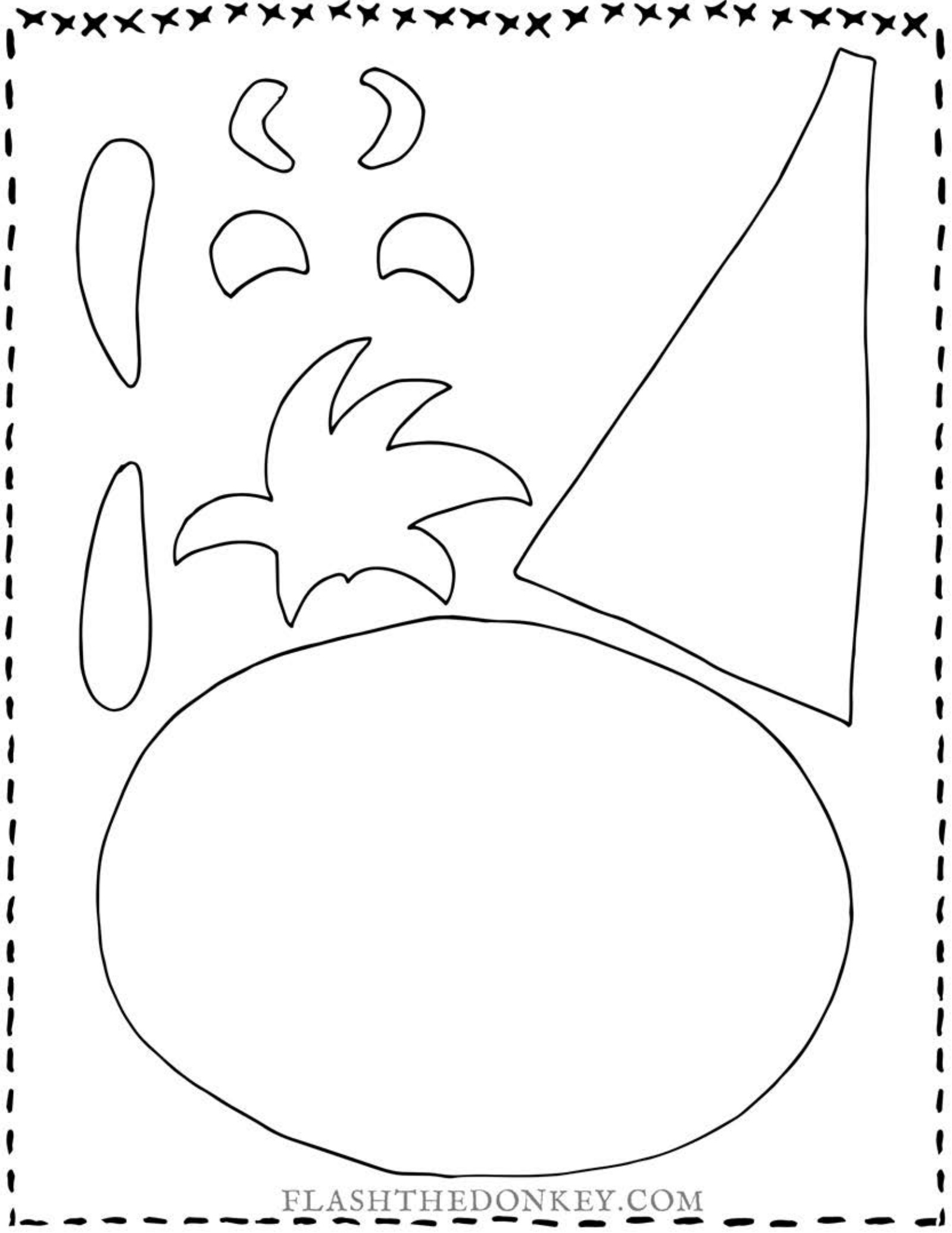
Help Flash fill his wagon through the maze.

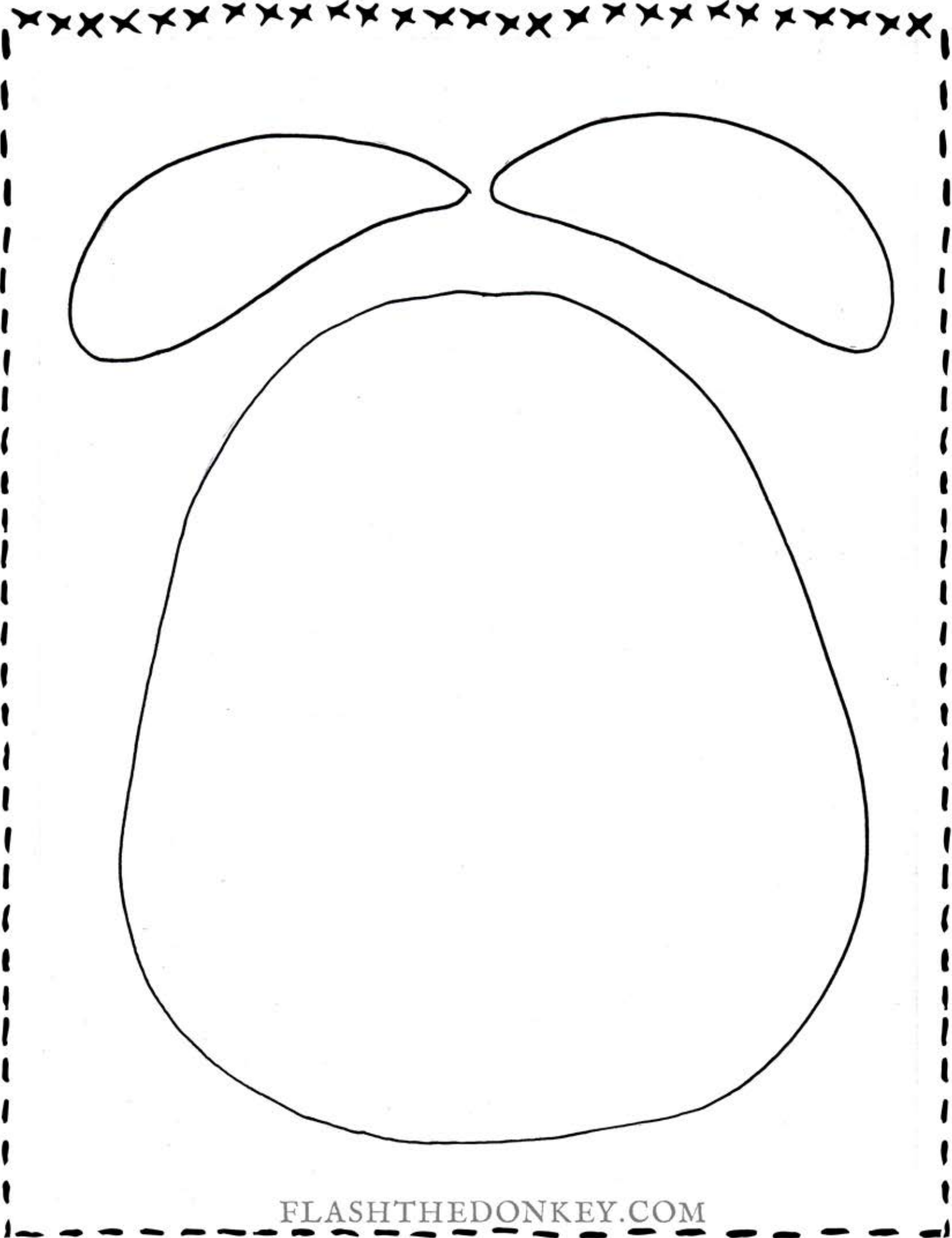




Make a puppet Flash & put on a show!







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## Mommy and Me Journal Questions

How did Flash repay the kindness shown to him by Jed, Carson, and Ruby?

What is your favorite part of the Pajama Ceremony?

How did the Pajama Ceremony make Flash feel?

Describe how being part of a family makes you feel.

**Meet Carson!**





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**Did you know?**

Donkeys can live up to 50 years.

Donkeys are related to horses and zebras. They are stronger than horses of the same size. They are very smart!

Donkeys are known for their long ears and the sound they make, called a bray. In a desert environment, they can hear other donkeys' bray from up to 60 miles away.

Most donkeys have special markings on their backs that look like a cross. Donkeys are usually gray, brown, or black, but there are also white donkeys - and some even have spots!

Donkeys are still used around the world for work. They carry loads, pull carts and plows. They help families collect water and food, and carry things to markets.

There are three sizes of donkeys: miniature, standard, and mammoth. Miniatures grow to about 36" at the shoulder, standards grow to 48" at the shoulder, and mammoths can be up to 56".

Donkeys are desert animals that originally came from Africa and the Middle East. Their long ears help keep their blood cooled in hot temperatures.

Donkeys don't like to live alone, and do best when they are in a herd of donkeys or have another animal friend.

They eat grass, leaves, bark, and shrubs.

There are wild donkeys, called burros, that roam in the United States. They are descendants of donkeys that were used by settlers as Americans moved west.

FLASHTHEDONKEY.COM

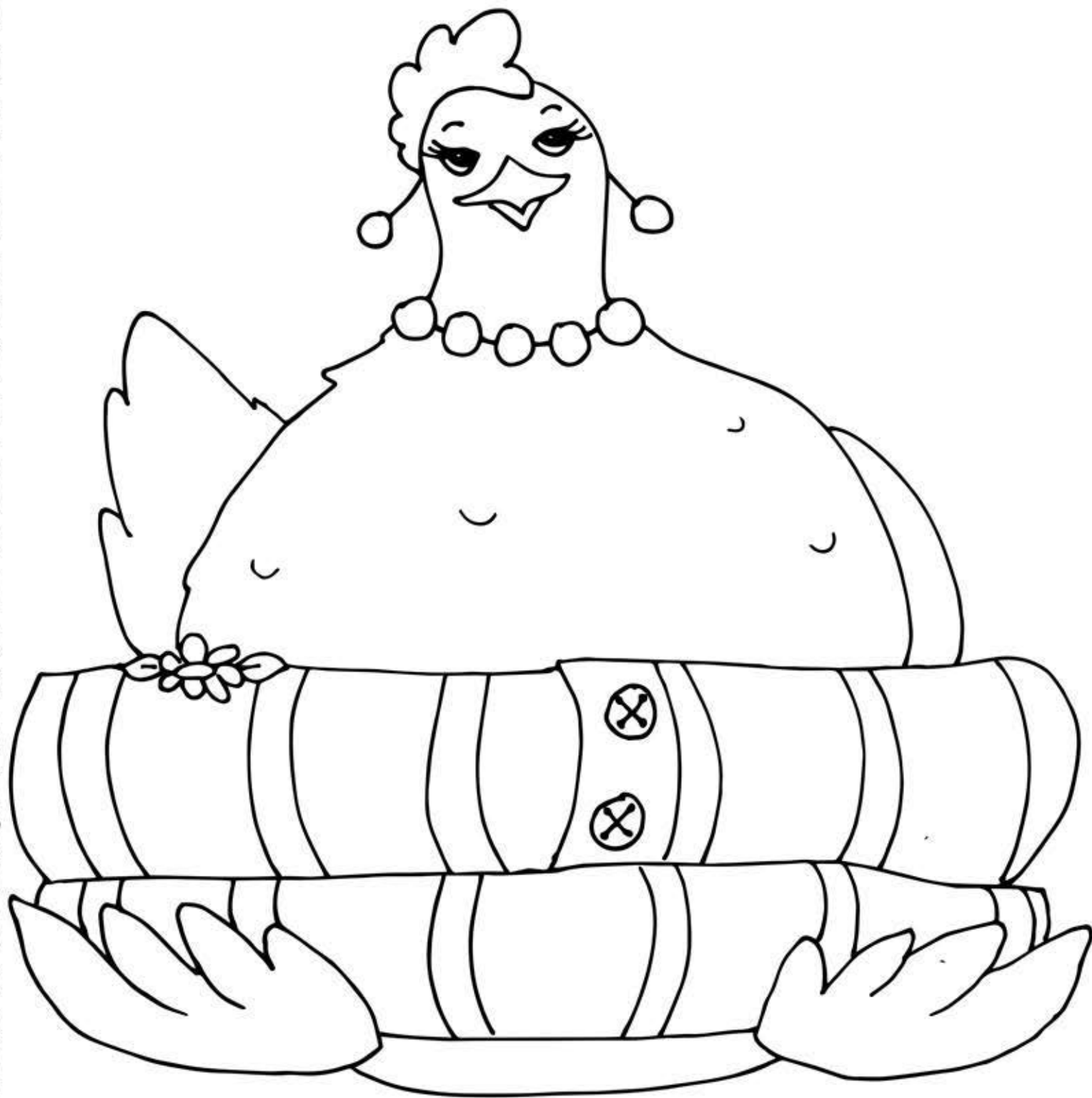


XX

This is Jed!



Hi, I'm Ruby!



**Excerpt from Flash the Donkey Who Taught Me About Life, Faith, and Second Chances  
(pp 62-68)**

By the time spring rolled around, Flash had become friends with the rather large and cumbersome cattle in the next pasture. As we educated ourselves about donkeys, we learned they are social creatures who are best kept with other donkeys. Unfortunately, that was not anywhere in our budget. Flash would have to fly solo for a while.

In the absence of another donkey, they might make do with a cow, horse, sheep, or goat. Anything but a dog, at least in Flash's case. Dogs (and coyotes) are donkeys' natural enemies, which explained a whole lot about Flash and Beau's chilly relationship. Still in a barking/kicking standoff with one another, each day found Flash at the back fence, preferring to fraternize with the fat bovines on the other side than with a slobbery, exuberant Lab. While the cows seemed mostly indifferent—lying down or standing with their heads through the fence for the "better" grass on our side—Flash hung out near them like a comfortable old companion.

The days were warming, and there was a slow, easy pace to life in the pasture. I wished I could say the same for life on the "people" side of the fence. The stream of marauding animals only complicated the juggling act of work and family. There was nothing like picking up the contents of an overturned garbage can after a gang of raccoons had picked through it, while still trying to make it to the day's job site on time. Country life, while much prettier than suburban life, takes a whole lot more work to maintain.

Finally, a weekend arrived that wasn't filled with hockey games and trips to Home Depot for project supplies. We could catch up on some of our own honey-do's for a change. I stood at the kitchen sink and plunged my hands into the sudsy water to tackle the pile of dishes from the night before.

Washing dishes didn't seem quite so bad when I had time to look out the window and watch Grayson untangle his fishing pole and sort the tackle box in the front yard. Beau lay beside him and yawned, clearly relaxed by the sound of spinners, jigs, and spooners being organized in the hard plastic container. Grayson closed the lid, and the large dog snapped to attention, instantly ready for a walk to the pond with his boy.

Pole over shoulder, tackle box in hand, dog at side. *Thank You, God, for this.*

I reached for a plate and dunked it into the water, still gazing through the window, past the yard to the wildflowers beyond. Suddenly, the moment was interrupted by three gorgeous horses who emerged from the woods and trotted into the front field. It was as if they materialized right before my eyes, *Star Trek* style.

Once in the clearing, they lowered their heads to graze, tails swishing and manes tossing. Young males, they exemplified equine perfection: a black horse with a white blaze down its nose; a chestnut with white socks and a long, dark mane and tail; and a paint with brown and white markings. My dish scrubbing immediately ceased as I leaned forward to take in the stunning beauty of these unexpected animals.

As a child, I'd been so horse-crazy that I drove my parents nuts. Daily, I scoured the local newspaper in search of the perfect horse to put in our backyard. I was sure I'd find one that looked like Little Joe's on *Bonanza*, a beautiful paint that would be mine, all mine. I had it all planned out: We would spend lazy afternoons together—me braiding his tail and brushing him until he gleamed,

and him carrying me over the countryside in full gallop. I would be beautiful and courageous atop my steed named Apache (Patch for short).

Unfortunately, as a preacher's family, we lived in town, and later we moved to Mexico City as missionaries— so neither location was suitable for keeping equines. My fantasy of having a horse had faded into quiet wistfulness as I grew up, but seeing these animals suddenly appear reminded me of my latent desire. *Too bad all we have is a dusty donkey.*

"Come take a look at this!" I called to Tom and Meghan, flinging suds as I motioned with wet hands. They hurried to the window for a peek at our latest four- legged guests.

"Those are Russell's horses." Tom identified them at first glance with a low, appreciative whistle. "Aren't they something!" He paused for a moment in admiration. "I've got his work number. I'll give him a call to let him know they're here. But first I'll get them locked up in our pasture for safekeeping."

Infinitely easier than catching one smallish donkey, Tom handily coaxed the three horses into following his oat- filled bucket. Piece of cake. Meghan opened the gate as they arrived and quickly shut it behind them with a clang of the chain on the metal crossbar. Tom and Meghan returned to the house so Tom could notify the owner.

"Russell can't get here with his trailer until after work," Tom said, holding a business card with the number scrawled on it.

He set his cell phone down and continued. "Looks like Flash will get to have company for the rest of the afternoon."

"This could be interesting! I wonder how he'll feel about sharing his space with these guys," I responded. I slipped into flip- flops and headed to the gate to see what would happen.

And what a sight to behold.

The afternoon sun cast a golden glow over the pasture and created a storybook scene in which the stallions took center stage. Prancing and playing, they seemed to dance effortlessly across the field. It was a horse ballet!

The sun glistened off their rippling muscles as they tossed their heads and galloped through the tall grass. Their shapely legs carried them around and around, while their manes and tails flowed out behind them in raw beauty. The strength and perfection of these creatures was a joy to watch. We rested our chests against the gate, elbows out and a foot on the lowest rung, and enjoyed the show.

Just then, a movement from the corner of the pasture caught our attention.

Flash.

Arrested from the spot near his beloved cows by this sudden intrusion of the equines, he shook his long ears as if trying to wake himself up. Bending around like a contortionist to scratch his rear end with his teeth, he brought a back foot up and set it down with a thud. We watched him flex his lips as the new company's arrival began to register in his brain. He blinked his black lashes until finally alert, then did a double take. Flash looked at the horses, and then back to the cows.

Horses, cows. Horses. Cows.

Hmmm.

Yep, horses. Definitely horses.

And without a backward glance, he ditched the cows for the newcomers.

Just like that, the cows were dead to him. He trotted over to meet his new posse.

Flash's sparse mane bristled back and forth as his choppy gait carried him to the trio. He pulled up next to the shiny black leader and raised his giant head in greeting. The horse turned his graceful

neck to see the short donkey arrive and gave a snort. Ha! As if motioning to his friends, he nodded toward the opposite end of the pasture, and the three were off in a cloud of dust and hooves— only this time they were followed by Flash, who looked hopelessly outgunned and outclassed.

Next to the cows, Flash had seemed like a regal ruler of the landscape. His intelligent eyes and quick wit endeared him to the mindless, cud- chewing bovines who kept him company each afternoon. But now, with the arrival of the three ballerinos, Flash suddenly had some shortcomings, starting with his stature. Such stubby legs! And his head's proportion was conspicuously out of whack. My word, so *huge!* And the ears— oh, the ears.

But Flash did not care. He shifted into high gear and headed after the group, now circling at the far end of the pasture. Bucking and braying as he went, he joined up and fell into step with their show. They paused at his arrival, deciding whether or not to let this newcomer enter. *Please?* Flash seemed to say with his ears, all forward and hopeful. Someone whinnied in reply. One of them broke rank and allowed Flash in.

And in that instant, he was one of them.

The horses pranced.

Flash pranced.

The horses reared.

Flash reared.

The horses tossed their manes.

Flash tossed— well, *tried* to toss— his mane.

The horses glistened.

Okay. Flash didn't glisten. In fact, he magnetically *collected* all the kicked- up dust into his fuzzy gray coat.

But no matter. Flash was having the time of his life. He wheeled and turned and danced and cavorted. He chased and nuzzled and pawed and reared. He was ridiculous in his earnestness, but he was part of the horse ballet— and his little heart beat faster with each plié and spin.

Flash had burst into life, and every equine cell in his body was ablaze. *The soul of a thoroughbred in the body of a shaggy donkey.* What a picture; what a day. This was living, and I'd never seen him look so endearing. The setting sun outlined his form in golden fringe as his pace slowed to a graceful *adagio* around the three horses. Circling, spinning, moving. The cows looked on in disbelief. What had happened to their quiet, unassuming friend? They hardly recognized him with his new air of confidence and all.

Evening fell like a gossamer curtain over the field, and Russell arrived with his dual truck and horse trailer to load up the gorgeous guests and take them home. With a slam of the trailer door and a roar of diesel, they were gone, and Flash stood at the gate with ears pricked and trembling. His nostrils flared, and his sides heaved as he stifled his bellows. He watched the trailer turn the corner and disappear down the driveway. Something had happened to him that day, and even *he* knew it.

He was changed.

He was bigger, stronger, and more powerful than before.

He showed confidence.

He held his head higher.

He carried himself boldly.

He'd become fearless.

And all because he'd run with horses.

It was as though he had suddenly realized his own greatness. As if someone had told him that donkeys and horses were nearly identical in genetic makeup. That they shared the same chromosomes—sixty-two of them, in fact. The *only* difference between donkeys and horses is an *extra* set of two chromosomes that horses carry. An extra set that Flash didn't need in the least.

I thought about Flash and his visitors long afterward.

Maybe he'd been told all his life that he'd never amount to anything because he lacked the two units that would make him great. Maybe he spent all his time thinking about how his mane didn't blow in the wind and how his gait was bumpy and how silly he'd look if he tried running. Maybe he'd always compared himself with horses and come up short every time. Maybe nobody ever told him that he has 97 percent of the same chromosomes as those horses . . . or that the horses needed two *less* to be just like *him*.

Maybe nobody ever told him that *he has all the chromosomes he needs* to be a perfect donkey.

I wondered if, until now, Flash had been focused on the two he lacked, rather than on the sixty-two he had. I wondered if he'd told himself, as I had: *If only I'd finished my college degree.*

I wondered if he'd said: I'm not talented enough to run with the big boys. My ears are too big, my head too heavy, my legs too short, my bray too loud.

*I wasn't born into money. Or looks. Or special intelligence.*

I'm not graceful. I can't prance. I don't glisten.

*I don't have business training. I'm too old. I drive an ancient Ford Explorer. I never took art lessons.*

Looking at his lack had kept Flash with the cows—those lackluster, mediocre characters who sat and wished for better grass and more gumption.

Once again I found myself mirrored in this winsome donkey of mine. But this time, I saw what a change of perspective could do. Perhaps I needed to start focusing on my sixty-two, rather than the two. *Aw, Flash. You're a genius.*

^^

Find Flash on  
Amazon.com,  
BarnesAndNoble.com,  
BooksAMillion.com,  
Tyndale.com and many  
other great retailers!



"charming and funny"  
Chicago Tribune

"powerful and uplifting"  
Publishers Weekly  
starred review

FLASHTHEDONKEY.COM



