

# Useless

A Donkey's  
Adventurous Tale



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Illustrated by Nessa Dee



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# Dedication



This book is dedicated to my father, Bart D. Brown, who passed away in 2011, and to his first grandchild—my daughter—Traci Whitmer.

When I decided to finish *Useless* with my father, I had no idea my daughter had always loved donkeys! She loved them so much that, when she married in 2009, she asked her husband to buy her a donkey.

Traci now owns two donkeys, Daisy and Sassy. I know "Useless" would have loved to play with them!

# Acknowledgment

Thank you to the following individuals who, without their contributions and support, *Useless* would not have been published.

To my dad - Thank you for allowing me to push you to work on this book with me. This book is a celebration of Dad's love of life and the stories he has left behind. His words of life and love spill out on the pages of *Useless*.

To my mother - Many years ago she typed the rough draft of *Useless* on an old Smith Corona typewriter.

To my family and friends who encouraged me to stick with it and see it through: my husband, Charles Russell; my daughter, Traci Whitmer; my friends Rosalind Hervey, Lee Ann Kramer, Matthew Scott, Lou Kennedy and Lisa Burkhardt Worley.

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To the illustrator, Vanessa Roeder, who gave *Useless* joy and life!

To Athena Dean Holtz, Founder and Publisher at Redemption Press and her staff.

High in the hills of Kentucky, in the early days of our country, lived a donkey and his family, the Nelsons. He was a typical donkey in many ways: He had short legs that had more strength than size, and he had a tail that could swat a fly with a swish and a snap. What was not typical about this donkey was that his pointy ears were two times too big—and his hardworking spirit was two times too small.



Mr. Nelson brought the donkey to the farm to work, but the animal loved most of all to play with the children: David, twelve, and his sisters, Sarah and Isabella, ten and eight, respectively. The children also loved to play with him. They loved to stroke his gray fur and whisper secrets into his extra-large ears.

"Come here, donkey," said Mr. Nelson interrupting the children's play. "I need your help with bringing this hay to the barn."



The donkey's gaze followed Mr. Nelson's eyes to the pile of hay. There, laying on the grass, he spied something fluffy and fluttery: a butterfly. The donkey wandered over to the pile and scooped up the butterfly with his nose sending the hay flying.

“Stop,” Mr. Nelson yelled.

Up the butterfly flew as the donkey galloped after him leaving the hay in a messy pile.

“Come back,” yelled Mr. Nelson. But the donkey did not hear him for he was already long gone playing with the butterfly.



While the donkey played, the children had a list of chores to do each day. David cared for the fires and watered the animals. Sarah and Isabella helped their mother prepare meals, wash dishes, wash clothes, and clean. Everyone, no matter how young or how furry, had to do their part to prepare for the long winter.

One fall day, David chopped wood while the girls hung out the laundry to dry. They were all doing their part, except for the donkey. David called the donkey, trying to get him to work. "Come here and help me haul the wood," he said.

Steadying the donkey, David tried to load wood on his back. The donkey bucked around like he was being tickled. The wood flew every which way.

“Watch out,” yelled Sarah as the donkey plowed into the line holding the clothes.

“You are useless,” said Sarah. And the name, Useless, stuck.



Mr. Nelson didn't like Useless distracting the children from their chores, but this did not stop the donkey from wanting to play. He would play hide-and-seek with Sarah and Isabella. He would go fishing with David. Useless was so friendly and happy-go-lucky, everyone loved him and played with him.

