ALPHONSE THE CAMEL STORY

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Once upon a time, there was a camel named Alphonse. A camel's life is never easy, but even by camel standards, Alphonse had it rough. His misfortunes began soon after birth, when an accident left him with severe back problems. From there, things only got worse: Alphonse became the property of a man so evil he was known as "Frank the Camel Killer." Frank had hated camels ever since a nasty incident in his childhood, one involving a camel's hoof and his rear end. He was very bitter and hadn't liked or trusted camels since.

Frank regularly overloaded his camels before taking them on trips to deliver goods to his customers. He would find the most difficult routes, ones that would force the camels to climb up and down mountains, just because he enjoyed watching the poor animals struggle. Frank's customers didn't seem to care about his frequent violations of the rights of camels, and worse, some were even amused by Frank's misuse of Alphonse and the others.

Life with Frank the Camel Killer was bad enough, but thanks to his character flaws, Alphonse managed to make it worse for himself. Alphonse was a very proud creature, and he liked to act tough in front of his camel friends. Instead of resting during his rare breaks, he would dart about and show off how much he could carry.

Over the years, plenty of Frank's camels had died as a result of his abuse. After a particularly nasty few weeks when camels were keeling over right and left, the camels decided to form a union to defend their rights and protect themselves from Frank's abuse. However, it turns out that camels are selfish creatures who don't trust one another, and Frank's camels were more interested in looking after themselves than working together. The union was a bust.

One day, soon after the union idea fizzled out, Frank loaded up Alphonse for yet another unnecessarily difficult round trip up and down the mountains. He piled and piled and piled the goods onto Alphonse's back, and then took a break, chewing a straw while admiring his cruel handiwork. Just for fun, he decided to add the straw—the very one that he'd been chewing—to the camel's load. With that, poor Alphonse eyed his owner with disgust, let out a terrible groan, fell to his camel knees, and died—another tragic victim of Straw-That-Broke-the-Camel's-Back Syndrome.

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