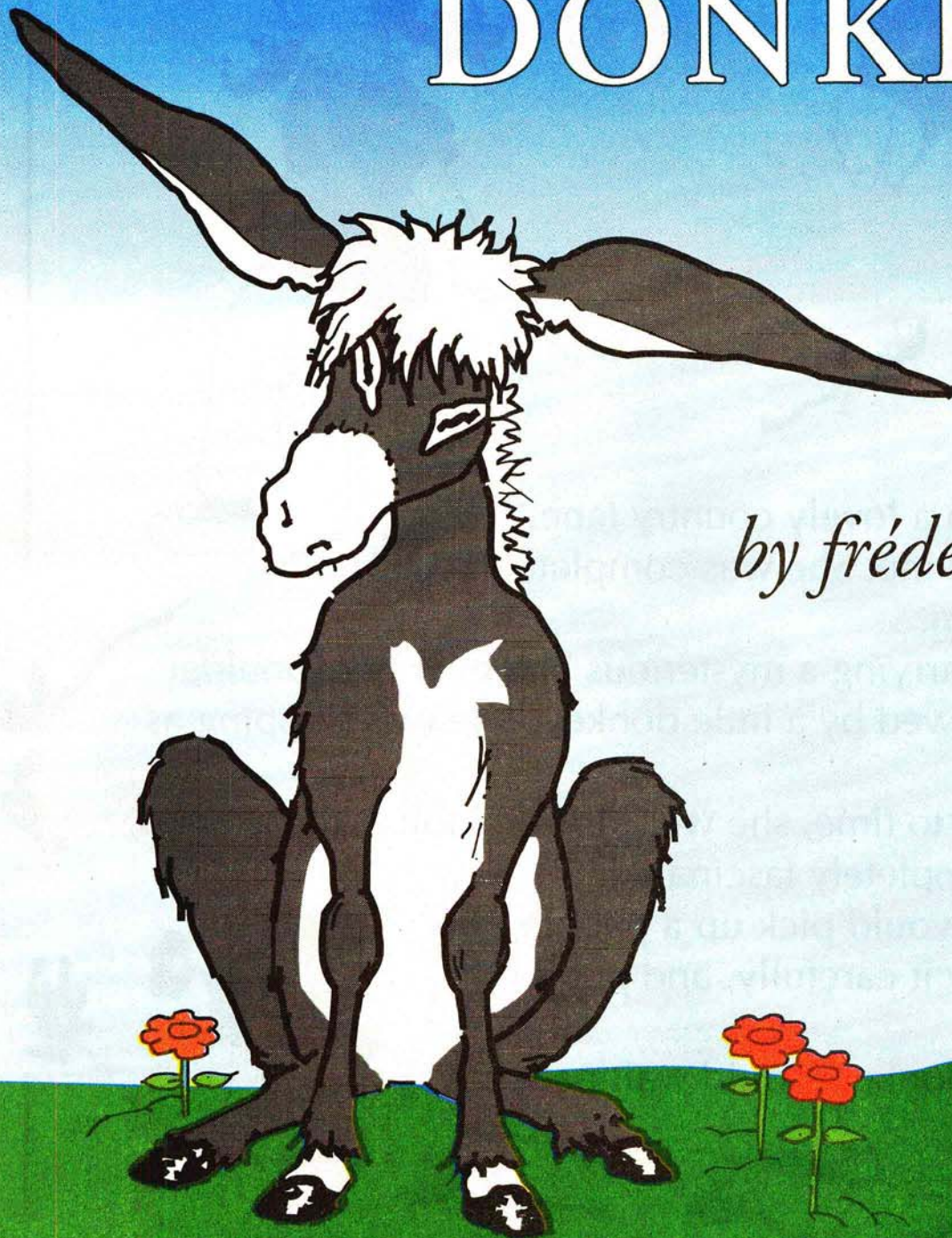


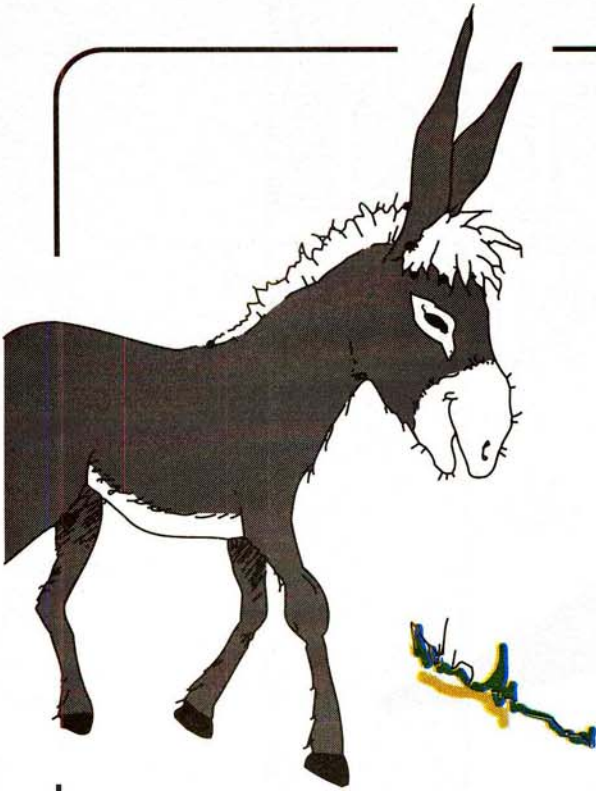
*the* LITTLE  
DONKEY



*by Frédérique*

Original Design  
Rebecca Baker  
Dale Carlson  
Computer Design  
Kratroc





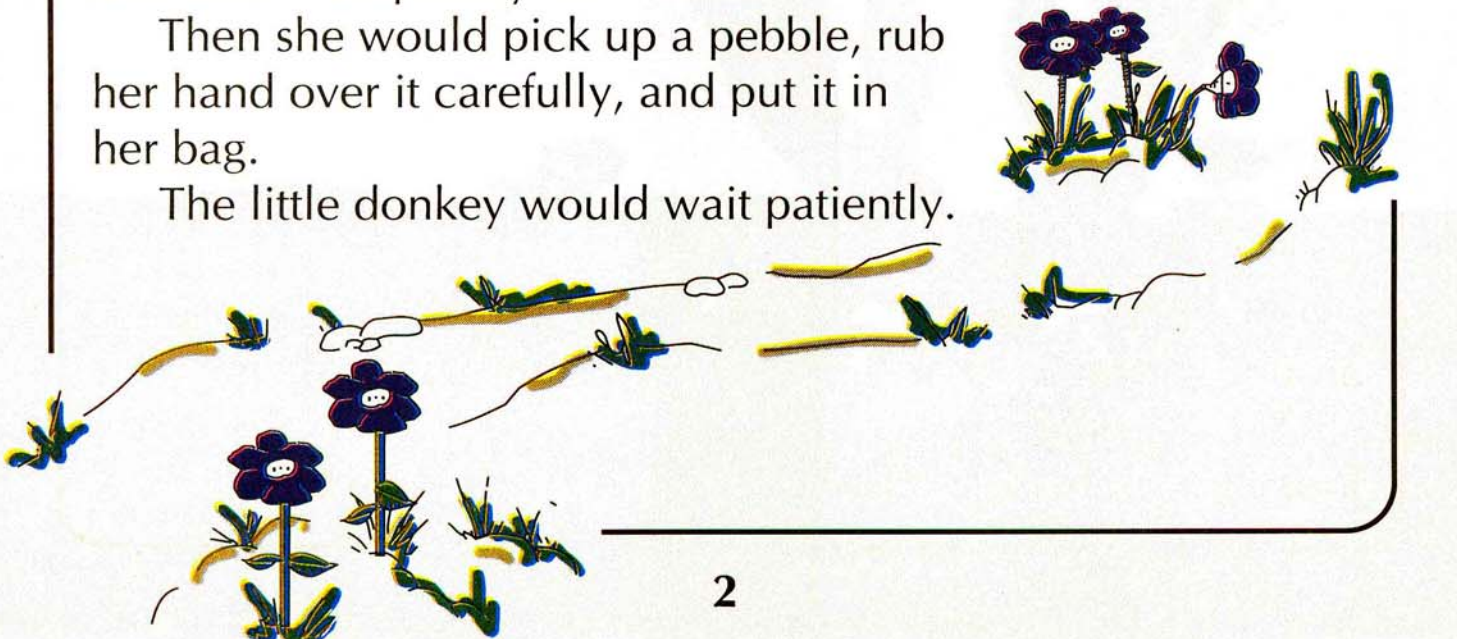
I met her in a lovely country lane.  
She didn't see me. She was completely  
lost in a dream.

She was carrying a mysterious bag over her shoulder  
and was followed by a little donkey. She was skipping as  
she walked.

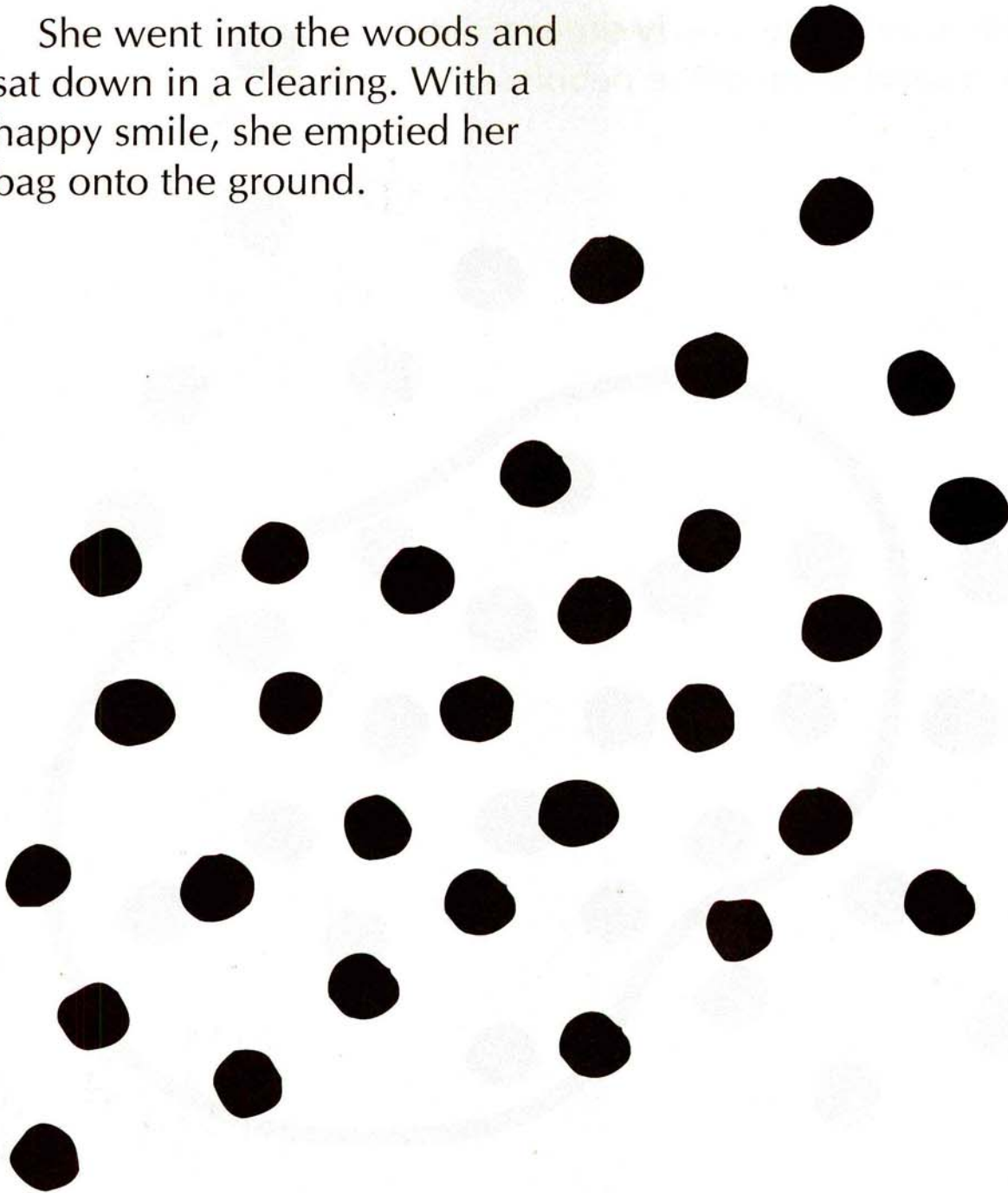
From time to time, she would stop, look at the ground,  
and seem completely fascinated.

Then she would pick up a pebble, rub  
her hand over it carefully, and put it in  
her bag.

The little donkey would wait patiently.



She went into the woods and sat down in a clearing. With a happy smile, she emptied her bag onto the ground.

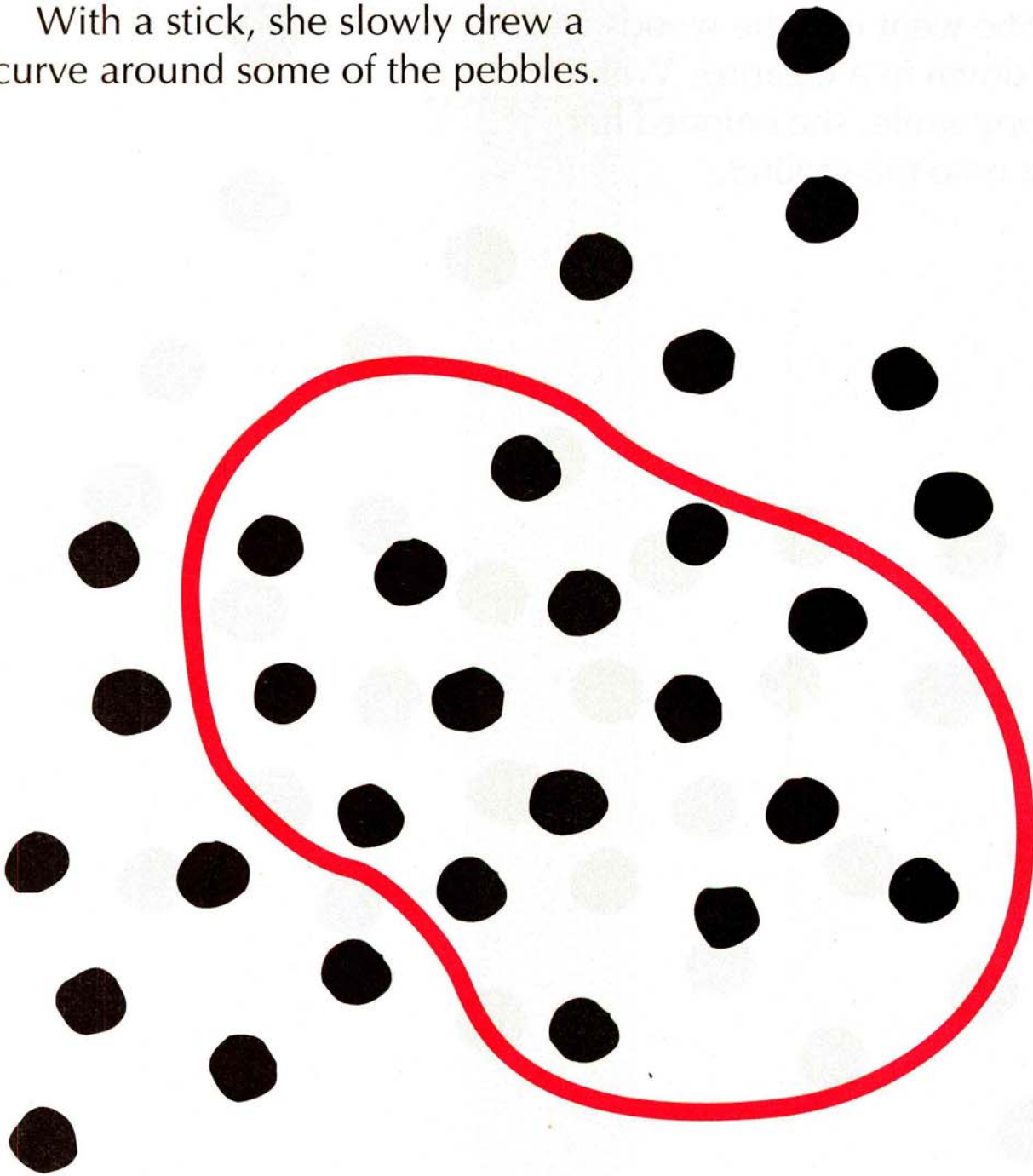


The little donkey didn't seem to be surprised and walked around, carefully choosing new leaves and eating them.

The little girl touched the pebbles one after the other and looked at them for a long time without saying a word.



With a stick, she slowly drew a curve around some of the pebbles.



"Look," she said to her donkey friend. "All the pebbles inside this string are smooth. I like to touch them. Each one of them represents one of my friends."

"So, I am one of these pebbles," brayed the donkey happily. The little girl kissed him on the nose.

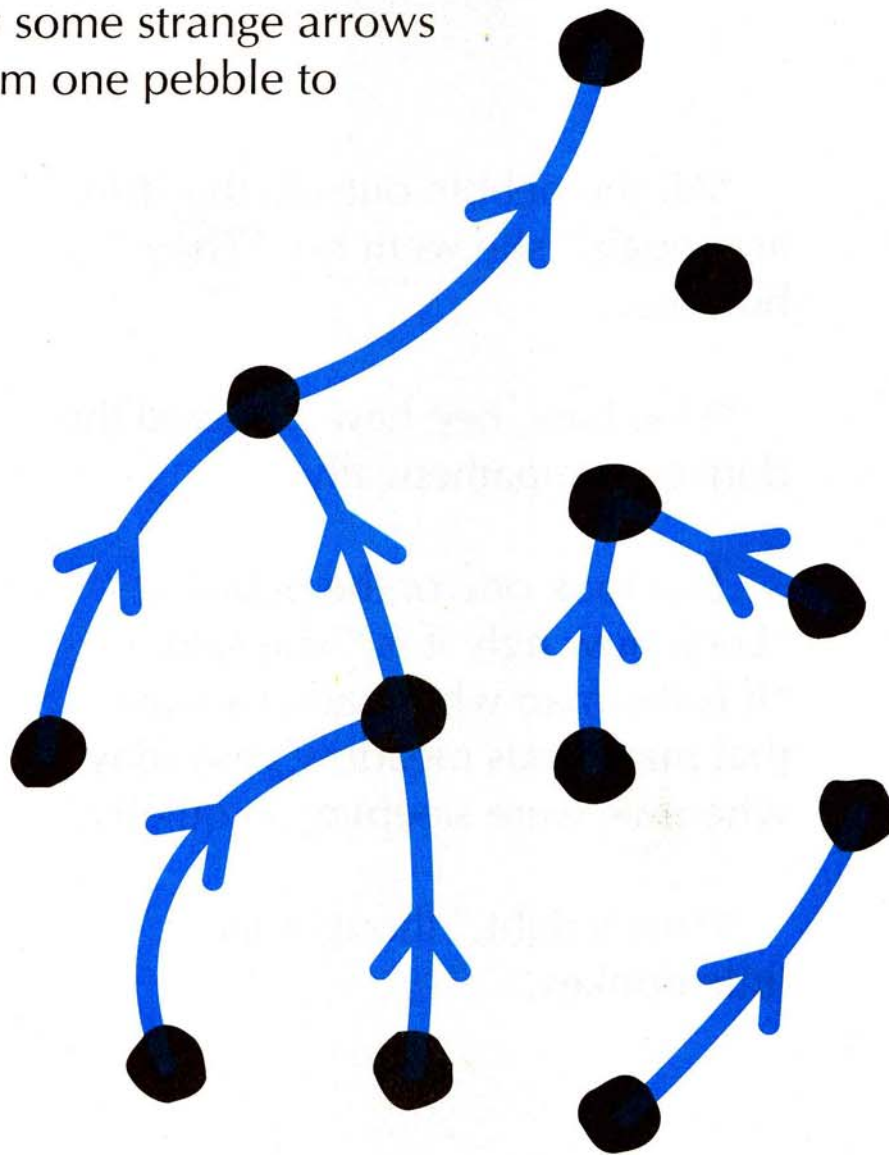
“All the pebble outside the string are rough,” she went on. “They hurt me.”

“Hee haw, hee haw,” brayed the donkey sympathetically.

She took one of the pebbles. “Look how ugly it is,” she said. “It is the man who made us leave that marvelous meadow yesterday when we were sleeping so quietly.”

“That’s right,” thought the little donkey.

The little girl mixed up all the pebbles and put some of them away in her bag. With her stick, she drew some strange arrows going from one pebble to another.



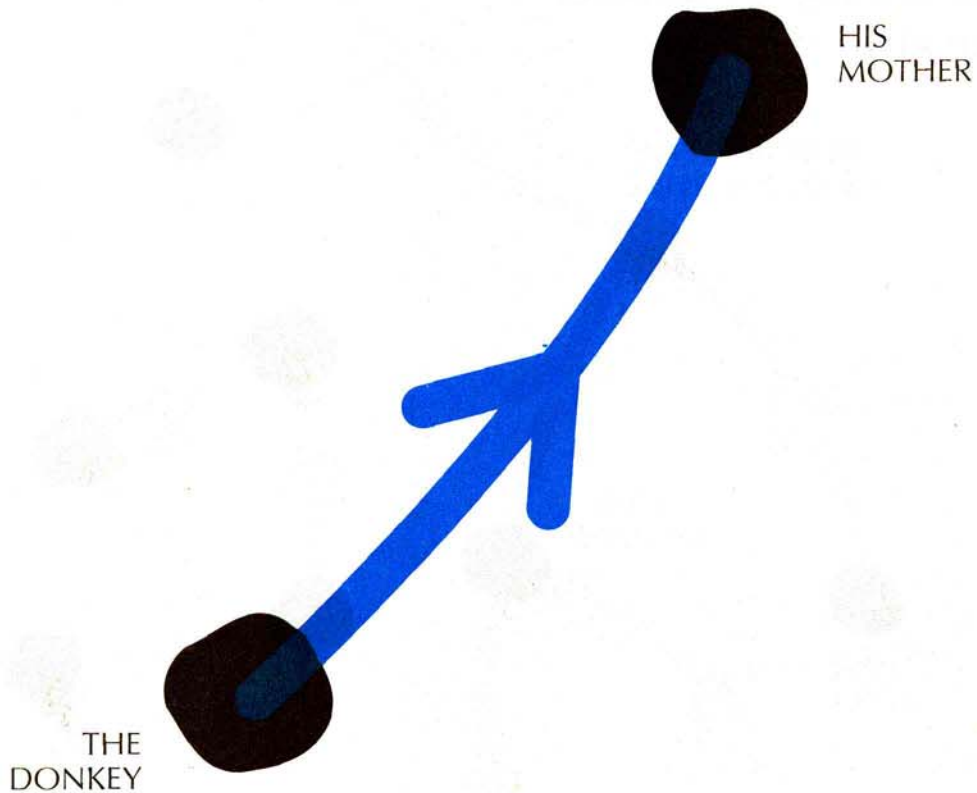
"I have drawn the story of my family for you," she said.  
"These pebbles represent members of my family."

"Then I am one of these pebbles," brayed the donkey.

"That's right," she agreed. "With blue arrows, each of them is pointing to his mother."

The donkey was thoughtful.

"I know which pebble I am," he said proudly, "because I am an only child."



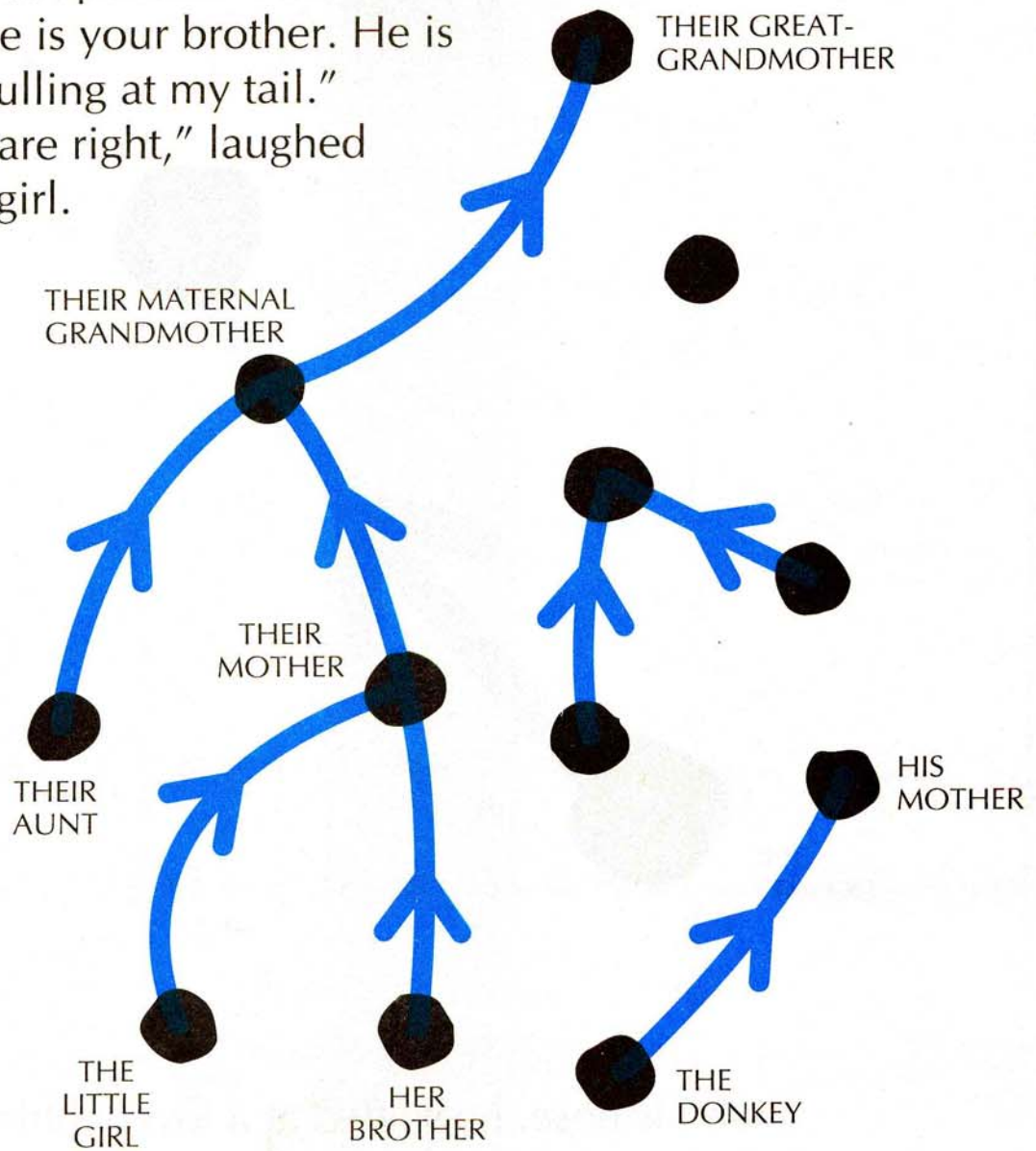
With his nose, he sniffed at a lovely little pebble.

"There I am," he said. "Because I am an only child, the arrow starting from me is the only one that arrives at my mother. She is the beautiful pebble at the end of the arrow."



"I can guess where you are," the donkey went on, nosing at a very smooth pebble. "And this rough one is your brother. He is always pulling at my tail."

"You are right," laughed the little girl.



"And this marvelous pebble is your mother," he said. "She is pointing to her own mother. Look what a lovely pebble your maternal grandmother is. She loves you very much. She loves me too. She gives me a sugar cube every morning."



"I guess that this rough pebble is your aunt. You don't like her very much," he said laughingly.

"She is always scolding you."

"You understand me well," said the little girl.

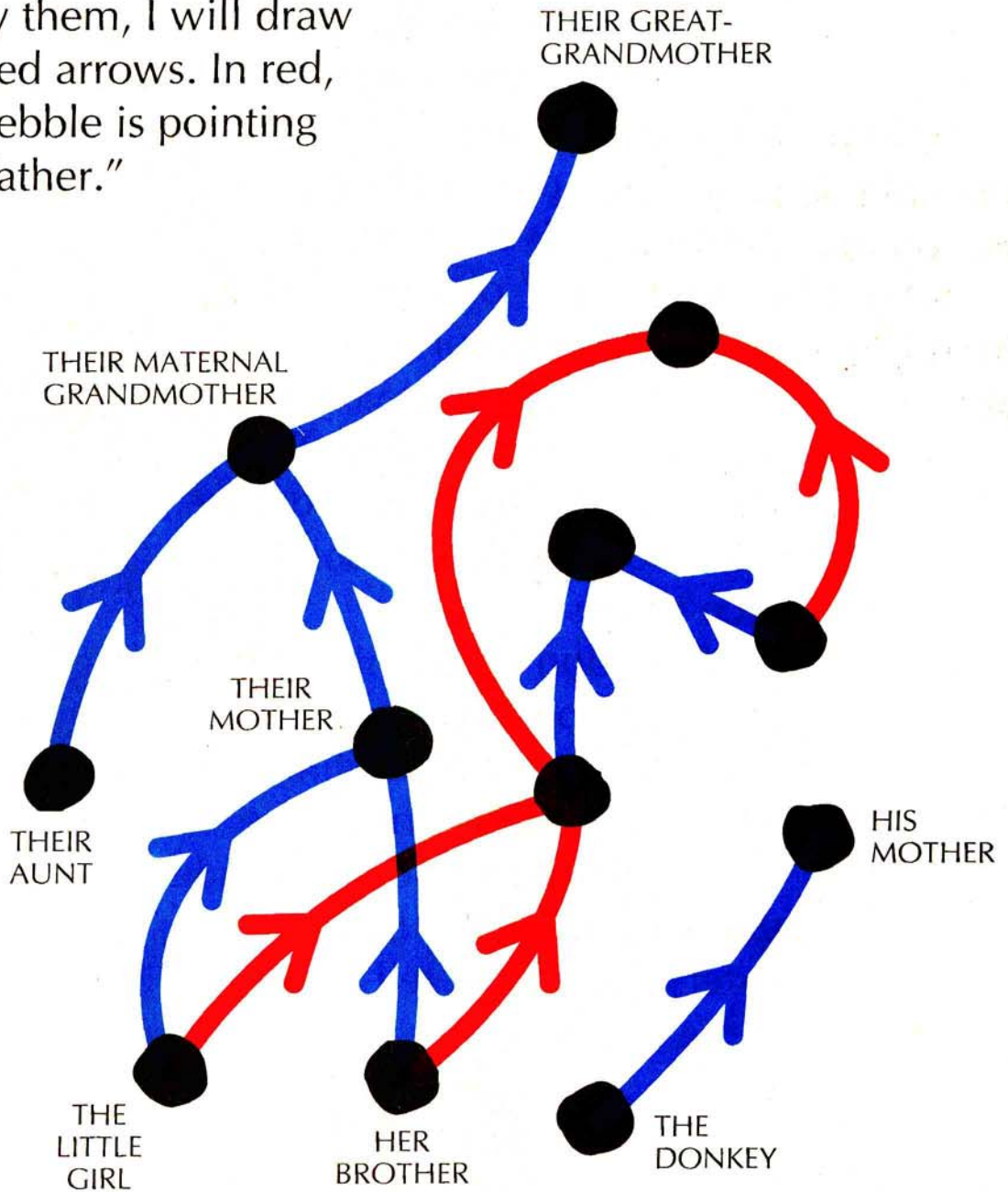
"What a pretty and smooth pebble that is at the top of your picture," observed the donkey. "It is your great-grandmother. She is very old, but she is so interesting. She loves both of us. Every Sunday afternoon she tells us some nice stories."

"But I don't recognize the other four people," he said.

"Two of them are pointing to the same pebble. They have the same mother. So I conclude that they are either brothers or sisters, but I can't tell which."



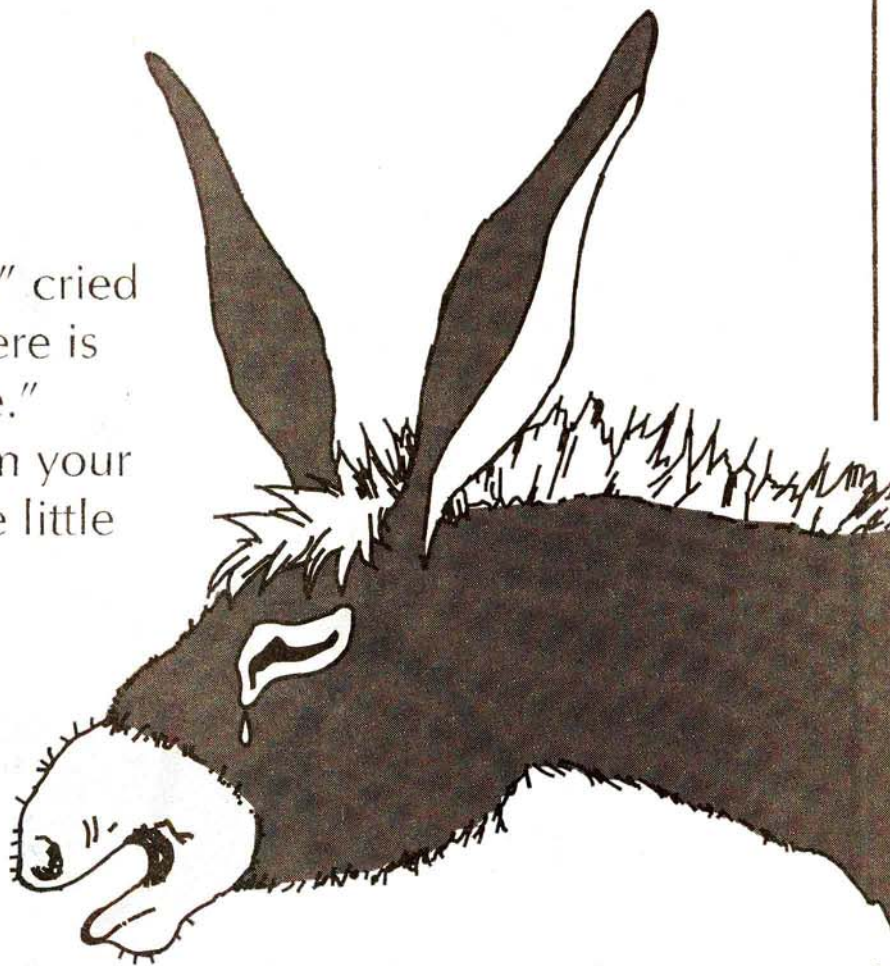
“You are right,” observed the little girl. “To help you identify them, I will draw some red arrows. In red, each pebble is pointing to his father.”





"My father is dead," cried the little donkey. "There is no red arrow from me."

"Don't be sad; I am your friend," comforted the little girl.

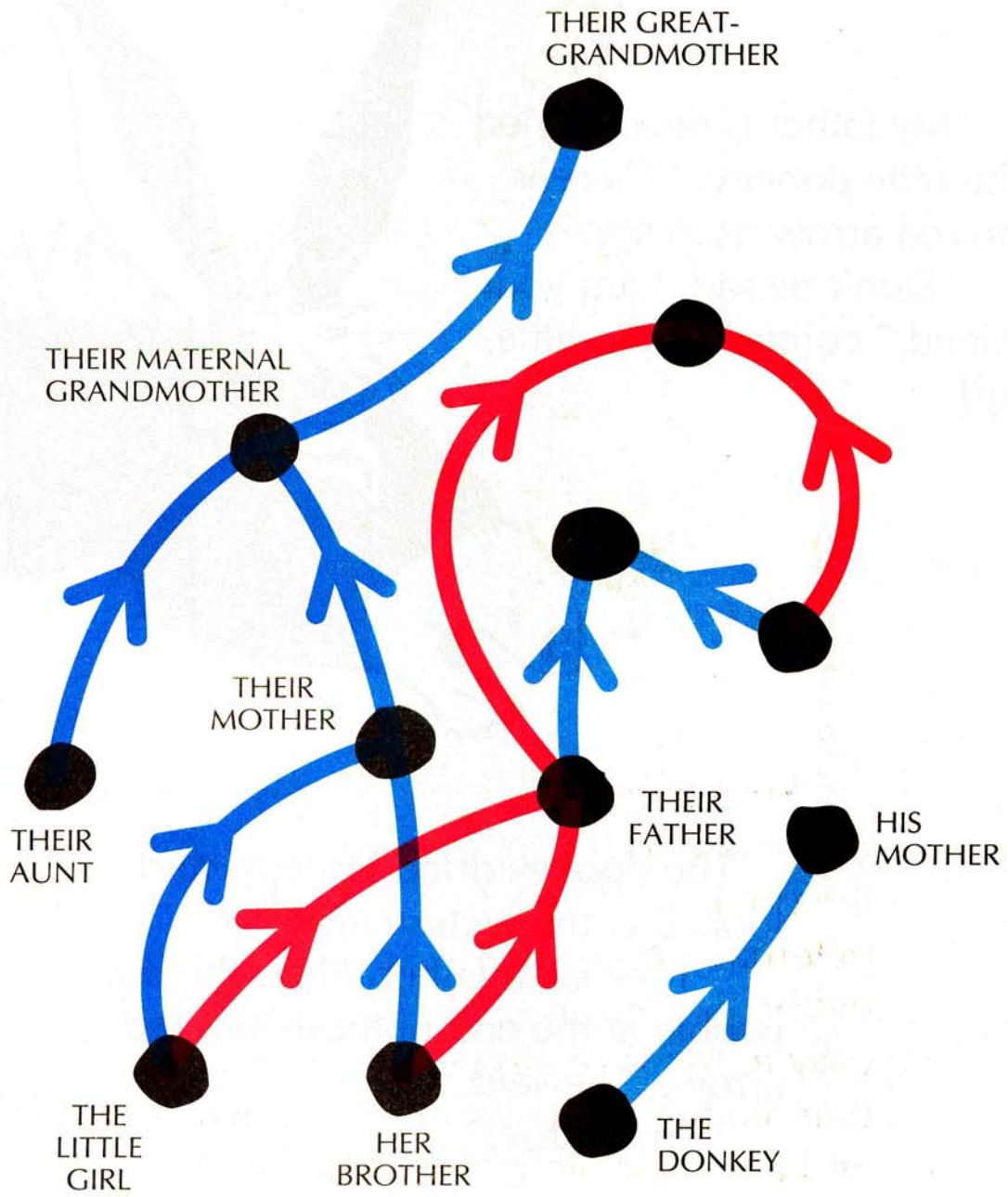


The donkey dried his tears and looked at the picture again.

"I see your father. He is the big pebble at the end of these two red arrows," he said.

"That's true."

**CAN YOU SHOW WHICH PEBBLE  
IS THE LITTLE GIRL'S FATHER?**







“Your father is pointing to his own father and to his own mother,” explained the donkey. “One of these pebbles is your paternal grandfather. And the other pebble is your paternal grandmother. It is easy to recognize them, because a grandfather is the endpoint of a red arrow, and a grandmother the endpoint of a blue arrow.”

The little girl was proud of the donkey.

"The last pebble is a very smooth one," observed the donkey. "Certainly he is a person you like very much."

"That's right," agreed the little girl.

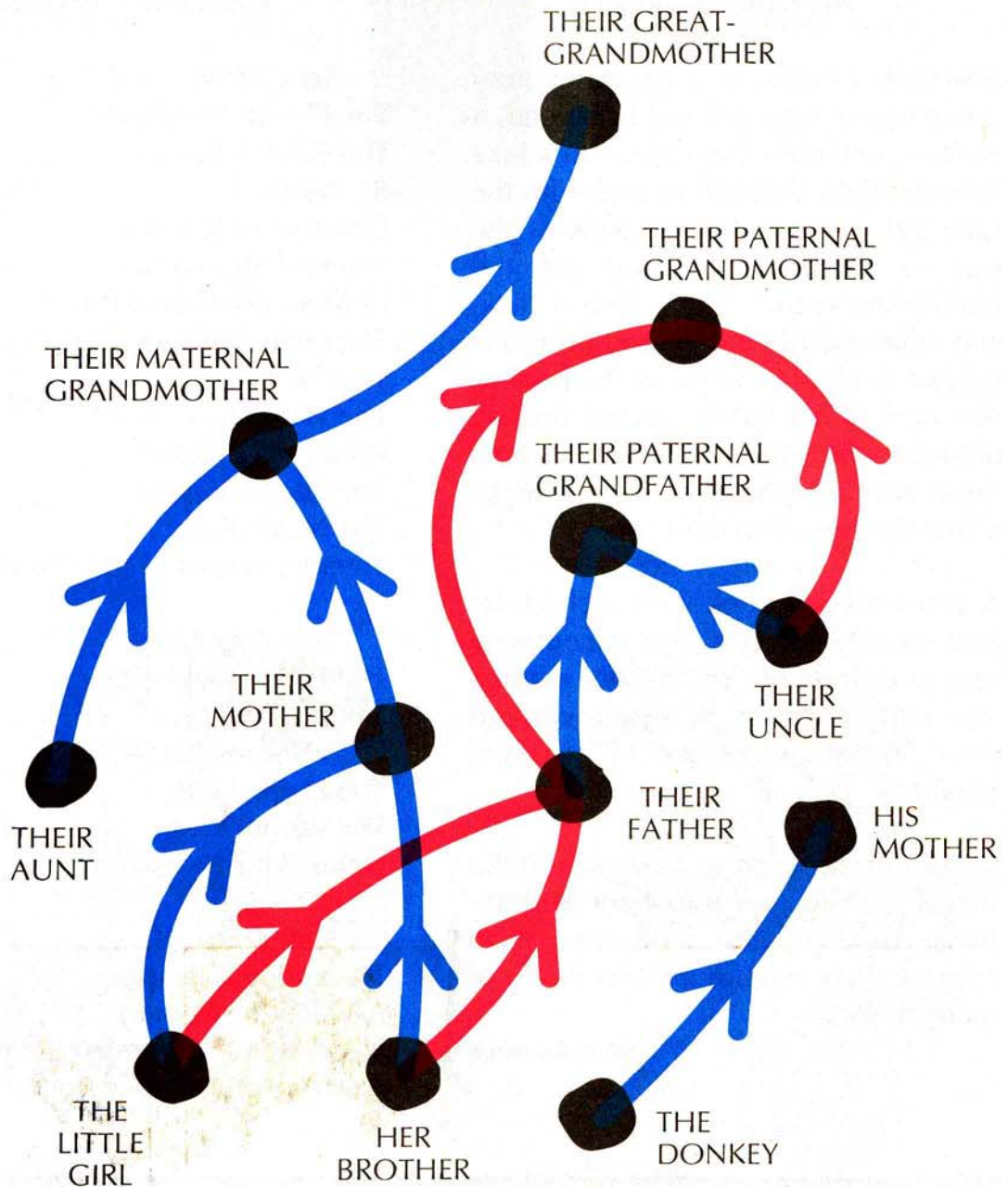
The donkey was thoughtful.

"I recognize him," he exclaimed. "He is your uncle, the brother of your father. Both he and your father are pointing to the same father and to the same mother."

"You are clever," said the little girl and she kissed him on the nose again.







They were quiet for a long time as they looked at this marvelous picture. Then the little girl put all the pebbles into her bag. The donkey ate a last leaf. Then they went home, chatting happily.

## The Little Donkey

*The Little Donkey* is a delightful story about how a little girl and her friend, a donkey, entertain themselves on a lazy afternoon. As children so often do, the little girl pretends that the pebbles she has so carefully collected are the people she knows. Then, with a stick, she draws arrows in the sand from one pebble to another to show the donkey the story of her family. As the donkey identifies the various family members, these two friends share their feelings about the people in their lives.

If you read this book with a child, let him identify the dots and encourage him to express his ideas. After reading *The Little Donkey*, he might wish to draw a similar picture of his own family.

Relationships, even as they exist in the life of a child, are important abstractions. To enjoy this little story is to enjoy a short venture into the world of mathematics.

**Ann Karmos**

## Stories by Frédérique

*Ages 5 to 8*

The Playful Numbers  
The Baby Is Born  
81 Roses  
One Out of Seven  
The Old Shoemaker  
I Am a Very Happy Boy  
The Little Dreamer  
Two by Two  
The Weird Story of 24  
Where's My Nose?  
The Happy Puppet  
The Magic Box  
Summer School in the Old Days

*Ages 8 to 12*

The Little Donkey  
Singing Friends  
I Am Not My Name  
The Living Lines  
The Square Trap  
Nabu Wins an Award

*Ages 10 to 14*

The Hidden Treasure  
A Valentine Mystery  
Election in the Number World  
A Very Strange Neighborhood