Francis the Talking Mule Encyclopedia Article

Francis the Talking Mule

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Francis the Talking Mule Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Francis the Talking Mule.....3

Francis the Talking Mule

Francis was the smart, sassy talking mule who led a bumbling but sincere human sidekick into and out of trouble in seven films for Universal Pictures from 1949 to 1956. For all but the last film, the sidekick was played by singer/dancer Donald O'Connor, and the voice of Francis was supplied by character actor Chill Wills. The special effect of talking was achieved by feeding a strong thread from the bridle to the mule's mouth. A gentle off-camera tug on the thread caused the animal to try to dislodge the annoyance by moving its lips. The film series was considered silly by the critics, but moviegoers enjoyed the antics of a mule who not only talked but who was more intelligent than his owner. As the first non-cartoon talking movie animal, Francis paved the way for television's talking horse, *Mister Ed.*

Further Reading:

Edelson, Edward. *Great Animals of the Movies.* Garden City, New York, Doubleday, 1980.

Rothel, David. *Great Show Business Animals.* San Diego, A.S. Barnes, 1980.