

Kabul The Thirsty Camel

A shape begins to stir in the dim morning light. As the cool night air give way to a light breeze, palm fronds rustle and the silhouette continues to adjust itself ever so slightly. The sky begins to adopt a very slight pinkish hue. Shadowy figures struggle to become recognizable shapes. The distinct form begins to take on its three-dimensional characteristics as the sun comes closer to its slow, but ever trustworthy entrance. What was once a mere outline in the obscure light, is now a mound of short, bristled hair covering a coarse hide. Legs that can be differentiated from the main body, are folded carefully under the torso. The soft sand forms a perfect fit for a comfortable nights sleep.

The sky, now ablaze with bright pinks, reds, and purples continues to become ever brighter. A long neck begins to unfurl; the head attached has big lips and heavily creased eyebrows. The creature rises to its feet, its neck outstretched. Sand cascades down as the body shakes and wiggles. As the sun crests the horizon, a short burst of air rattles through huge nostrils.

Ladies and gentlemen, may I introduce to you Kabul, the camel. Kabul: a camel of normal height, normal length, normal width, normal weight, normal color, normal foot size, normal eyesight, normal hump size, normal in every way—well, except for one thing. Kabul was abnormally thirsty. He was always thirsty! And as you might guess, we see him briskly walking to the oasis water pool for a long, cool drink of water. A long, long, LONG, cool drink of water.

Today was a significant day for Kabul. He had heard that He as to be an essential part of a very important trip. Ten camels had been selected to carry a host of wonderful things to a far off country. Kabul was excited. Being part of a camel caravan is what every young camel dreams about. And this was to be his first trip.

The sun was officially up now, though barely. The Master's excitement had everyone astir. Kabul's excitement was mixed with trepidation. The hustle and bustle crescendoed as preparations were finalized. Kabul could tell that this trip was no ordinary one. It was clearly very important to his Master, and he certainly did not want to let him down.

As the Master's servants were loading him down with spices, pistachios, and almonds, Kabul caught a glimpse of his Master through the open tent flap. The Master was seated on a chair and his number one Servant placed his hand on the chair, under the Master's thigh. Kabul recognized the significance of this act. You see, in the desert culture, that hand placed as it was meant that a pressing commitment was being made—the strongest guarantee that could be promised. Kabul didn't fully understand these things, but it confirmed to him that he was indeed going to be part of something exceptional.

As the orange and red colored sky gave way to blue, the caravan was ready to go. Kabul remembered he was thirsty, as always. Wisely he walked over to the oasis pool to get his last cool drink of water before the start of the long land voyage. His mind wandered as the refreshing water passed his lips, flowed over his tongue, and ran down his throat. One

gulp...two gulps...three gulps...he lost count. The soft touch of the Servant's walking stick on his neck jolted him back to reality. Everything was now ready. Time to Go! How exciting! And there was the Master, standing in the doorway of his tent, ready to see them off on their adventure.

Kabul's large padded feet were well suited for walking on the warm sand. He knew that this is what he was born for—to caravan like this had been his dream for as long as he could remember. Now it was really happening.

Kabul's mind raced as he wondered about their destination. What was so important about this trip to his Master? Why was the caravan carrying so many wonderful things? How far will they be going? How long will they stay? And, of course, when will they get their next drink of water? He was thirsty. Five minutes into the desert, and Kabul was already parched. Ten minutes into the desert, and Kabul's thoughts centered completely around water. He was thirsty. Thirsty indeed.

Kabul knew that, as a camel, he could go long distances without water. But that was no consolation to a very thirsty young camel. He dutifully plodded along with the other nine camels, following neatly in a long train. He was wondering when he would be able to get his next, lengthy, much needed, drink of water.

Days went by, each the same as the one before. Sand. Heat. Thirst! For Kabul, his desire to do as his Master wanted was important. It is what kept him going, in spite of his thirst. Kabul would imagine the crystal clear water in the oasis pool. How glad he was that he had remembered to get that one last drink before they left.

One day, as the afternoon heat was beginning to release its oppressive hold on the caravan, Kabul sensed some excitement from the lead camels. They were approaching civilization! He stretched his neck out to the side as far as he could, to see what lay ahead. He couldn't distinguish much, but he did notice some trees. Trees mean one thing—water! Water, water, water, WATER! That reminded him again that he was thirsty.

The trees were coming closer now and the sun was lowering itself toward the horizon behind them. The desert breeze was comfortable—not too hot and not too cold. That last half of a mile was interminable for a young, thirsty camel. Thoughts of rest, accomplishment, and success were overshadowed by one overwhelming concern. Kabul was thirsty. My how he wanted a drink!

The camel caravan passed through the tree line and into a clearing, and the Servant stopped all of the camels and had each one kneel down, side by side, in a long line. Kabul, being the youngest, and the most inexperienced, was at the end of the caravan. He was the last to finally get to kneel down in the soft sand and rest. Patiently, they all waited. It was then that Kabul noticed what lay directly in front of the whole group. A well! Kabul had seen one before. Wells were full of...you guessed it...water. He could hardly contain himself at the thought of that clear, sweet water. And you do remember how thirsty he is?

The wait was unbearable. But this was strange. The Servant wasn't getting any of them any water at all. What was going on?

As Kabul was trying to comprehend this odd behavior, he glanced up and saw a young lady approaching the well. She was deftly carrying a jar on her shoulder. Obviously, she had come for water for herself. Kabul watched her with interest. She walked immediately over to the Servant. He couldn't hear the conversation or interpret her gestures toward the camels. Then she turned and ran toward the well and disappeared from sight. Kabul's heart sank. His hopes for even a sip of water seemed futile. He lowered his head and closed his eyes in disappointment.

Several minutes later, he was startled by a slurping noise. Opening his eyes slowly, he looked around. Shock and amazement would not adequately describe his next thoughts. His eyes were wide open now, wider than ever before. The young girl was back. In fact, she was carrying water to all of the camels. No sooner had she emptied her jar into one watering trough, then she would sprint—yes sprint—back to the well for a refill for the next camel in line.

Kabul watched in astonishment. He noticed the Servant was watching intently also. As Kabul's turn for watering came, the young lady poured her jar into his trough. Some water splashed in his face. She smiled and gently stroked the bridge of his nose and said, "My name is Rebekah. What do they call you? You drink all you want. I'll bring you as much water as you can possibly drink." And true to her word, she ran back to the well over and over and over again, until Kabul had all he wanted to drink. He liked this girl. She was clearly a very special person.

The Servant was quite excited now. He handed the young lady some jewelry. They talked for a minute, and Kabul could tell something extraordinary was happening, though he didn't know what. The girl ran off in the direction from which she had originally come. Minutes later a man appeared. He talked to the Servant. Could this be why they had come all of this way?

In a very short while, they found themselves at the man's home. Everything was unloaded and the camels all got to spend the night on straw. For Kabul, it was one of the best night's sleep he had ever gotten.

The next day was full of commotion. Kabul didn't understand what was going on, but it seemed to him that the young lady was to be travelling with them to the Master's house. He was right. Her belongings were packed onto several camels. The Rebekah was told to pick out a camel to ride on. She walked right over to where Kabul was kneeling, hopped up on his back, and was ready to go. She walked him over to the watering trough, and let him drink as long and as much as he wanted.

Kabul was happy. Very happy. He liked Rebekah and he knew that he would never have to worry about being thirsty again.

The End