

The Five Wishes of Kābul the Cāmel

Once upon a time, on the hot sands of the Sahara, there lived a camel. His name was Kābul, but no one referred to him by that name. Instead, they called him “Ol’ bag o’ bones”. You see, Kābul was not what most would consider cute or pretty. He wasn’t noble, stately, or handsome. He was just plain homely.

Now, one would not expect a camel to be beautiful because that is just not the way camels are created, but to Kābul, that simply was not good enough. Every day he watched the other animals around him, wishing he could be like them. But at the end of each day, when he looked in the mirror, he was still the same “ol’ bag o’ bones” camel.

One particular morning, Kābul awoke with an uneasy feeling. Oh, the day was normal enough, and yet something about that day would be different from any other he had ever experienced. As Kābul plodded through the desert sands, his mind wandered here and there. As he walked along, a glint of light caught his eye. There, sticking out of the sand dune, was *something*. What in the world could this be? Bending his scruffy neck downward, his lips grasped it’s handle, and with a gentle tug, out came an oil lamp. It was tarnished and dented, but still in reasonable condition. It’s rounded, flowing form was covered in dust, so he gave it a lick with his tongue. What happened next left Kābul wide-eyed and frightened. Smoke began pouring out of the spout of the lamp. As the desert breeze caught the drifting smoke away, there appeared a short, fat, man with a magnificent turban on his head. In a booming voice he said, “You have released me from my fate. For that I am very grateful. I will reward you with five wishes, but be sure to use them wisely!” With a nod of his head, he was gone.

To Kābul, this was too incredible to be believed, and yet he wondered, was it really true? Common sense told him that fairy tales are for library books, not real life! Yet, his heart wanted to believe. Deep in thought, he shuffled along, dreaming and hoping.

Just past a grove of palm trees, Kābul met a most magnificent animal—an elephant. Kābul watched this beast intently. What power! How impressive! Oh, to have a trunk like an elephant, he thought. My, what he could accomplish with a trunk like that! And those huge ears—how handy they must be on a hot day. Gently fanning the air, ears like that could keep someone like him *very* comfortable on a hot day. And so he wished. He wished for an elephant’s trunk and ears. “I wish I was a *camelephant*”. (That was wish number one.)

The most incredible thing then happened. His nose began to grow, and his ears as well! In no time at all, Kābul had a most wonderful trunk and ears to match. He was so excited and happy. This new trunk was absolutely magnificent! How handy this will be, and useful too. Kābul was the happiest *camelephant* there ever was. And as the day grew hotter, he began slowly flapping those large ears. The resulting breeze cooled him nicely. It was simply heavenly.

Kābul paraded himself across the sand proudly, a handsome *camelephant*, if there ever was one. As he continued his walk, an antelope bounded across his path. What a free spirit, he thought! To be able to run and jump so effortlessly would be

such fun. And those horns! Those horns would command respect, if only he had some. Kābul wished he had feet like an antelope, and horns like an antelope. “I wish I was a *camelephantelope*” (That was wish number two.)

The most incredible thing then happened. Kābul’s large padded feet changed to small antelope hooves, and an impressive rack of horns sprouted from his head. Giving his new feet a try, he leapt into the air. Never had a *camelephantelope* jumped so high and so far. This was absolutely wonderful! Now he bounded along, seemingly effortlessly. The wind almost whistled through his horns. Kābul paraded himself across the sand proudly, a handsome *camelephantelope*, if there ever was one.

Continuing his journey happily, he came across an amazing animal—a pelican. As he approached, the bird spread his wings. What a display. The bird effortlessly took flight, carrying something in his huge bill. Kābul thought to himself how wonderful indeed it would be to be able to fly like that. And how useful a pouched bill would be to carry things in. He wished he could fly and carry things like a pelican. “I wish I was a *camelephantelopelican*”. (That was wish number three.)

The most incredible thing then happened. His lower jaw began to grow. And it grew and grew. And on his back he felt a strange sensation. Wings complete with feathers formed in no time at all. Kābul spread his new wings and flapped them with all his might. Never had a *camelephantelopelican* flown so freely. It was a magnificent sight to behold. Kābul was happy—very happy indeed!

As he soared through the sky, Kābul noticed a little canary fluttering along. He admired those little feathers. The bright iridescent yellow was absolutely gorgeous. If only he were that color. Everyone would then stand in awe. He found himself wishing he had the plumage of a canary. “I wish I was a *camelephantelopelicanary*.” (That was wish number four.)

The most incredible thing then happened. In no time at all, Kābul was completely covered from head to hoof in bright yellow feathers. What a sight to behold! Kābul flew through the sky towards home—a beautiful, awesome, *camelephantelopelicanary*, if there ever was one.

As he approached his home, from his vantage point high in the sky, he could see all of his friends and family. This will be great, he thought. He was certain they would be impressed with his improvements to himself. It was glorious to be a *camelephantelopelicanary*!

His wings hardly made a sound as he lightly touched his hooves to the ground. Those around him were startled to see him. In an instant, that emotion transformed into pure terror! What kind of creature had come from the sky, they didn’t know, and they weren’t waiting to find out. Everyone ran away and would not venture out of the safe hiding places. This had not worked out at all the way Kābul had planned—all of his friends running in fear! He had hoped they would admire his magnificent changes.

It was when he looked at himself in the mirror that it began to sink into his brain. All the things he had wished for just weren’t meant to be a part of a camel. He didn’t look wonderful at all. In fact, he looked quite hideous. But fortunately for him, he had one wish left. “I wish I was back to my old self”, he said. A puff of

smoke, and a flash of light, and Kābul was back to his “ol’ bag o’ bones” self. And, you know, it wasn’t so bad after all. A smile spread across his face. A camel is meant to look, act, and behave like a camel, and not like a *camelephantelopelicanary*.

The End