

Travels with Camels

“Ishmael, come, now we must go,” Uncle Emeel called.

The two climbed up on to their camels. The sun was low in the sky and it was the perfect time for desert crossing.

“Why do we always travel late in the day, and often at night,” Ishmael asked his Uncle.

“I find it easier to deal with the heat, and so do the animals. When water is scarce for them to drink, it helps them conserve their strength.”

Ishmael and his uncle were mail and supply carriers in a desert region. These hearty and steady animals could manage the crossing much more reliably than a car or other vehicle.

Their wheels never got flat nor their engine fail to start for lack of water cooling it. The camels could carry on through the difficult climate.

The train of half a dozen camels were each loaded with supplies of all sorts. He would take it all to be delivered, and then return as equally loaded on the trip back.

Just where exactly Uncle Emeel lived, was hard to say, for he was nearly always on the move, sleeping in tents at night if there was no other accommodation available.

He often had a relative accompany him, or someone hired to help if no one else he knew could come along.

Ishmael was learning what it was like to be on the move for weeks at a time.

During sandstorms they would have to wait it out. They would cover themselves in blankets and hope the troublesome wind that was blowing dust would pass soon. They would hope the trail wouldn't be too hard to find again, once it was over.

The camels were naturally equipped with all that was needed for handling each type of danger and challenge they would be faced with. They had to.

There was no way a camel could put up a tent, or dig a well, or do other things that humans could do to take care of themselves. And they didn't need to either; they were designed to manage just the conditions they faced.

When it was late in the night, the travelling team pitched a tent and sat around the fire they built with wood and fuel they carried for this purpose, or what they could find around.

“Say, Ishmael, when this month is over, and it is time for you to go back to your studies and family in the town, do you think you'll miss these fine friends of ours?”

Uncle Emeel said, motioning over to the camels who were now at rest.

They had found a spot with water, an oasis, and the camels had had a long and refreshing drink before going to sleep.

“I suppose there are some things I'll miss, and something things I won't,” Ishmael replied.

“But one thing is for sure, I'll never forget. For I have learned much, and this trip has been an adventure in many ways.”

They recalled some of the events.

Once as a sand storm was blowing their way, they settled the

camels down on to the sand, and took shelter on one side of them, under cover of blankets.

The camels eyes and nostrils were made in such a way as to not be greatly affected by this harsh weather condition.

When Ishmael was tired sometimes on the journey he was able to place himself in such a way over the comfortable creature, so as to get some rest.

He strapped himself on, and dozed while the hard working camel continued plodding on, doing the work.

Without such a creature, they would most likely never have made it to their destination, if all they could do was walk.

As a treat for the camels, when they needed extra motivation on the journey, Uncle Emeel would offer them each a few dates. He brought them for this purpose.

Dates were a natural package of nourishment and energy. In fact, they all took a snack of them every now and then— Ishmael and Uncle Emeel included.

The moon and stars were very bright on this night, and the light was reflecting off the water. The camels were resting, and it was time for the travellers to do the same.

When the fire had died out, the last cup of tea was sipped, and the small meal enjoyed, it was time for rest.

They were glad it wasn't very windy on this night. It seemed rather pleasant. There were good times and tough times when travelling. One needed to be brave through the challenges to then get to enjoy the things not many others did.

Uncle Emeel decided to tell his nephew some stories, from

long, long ago; stories about when one of their ancestors took a train of camels to find a special person.

“The manager of the goods of a rich distant relative of ours had gone on a trip. This was many, many years ago.

“He had travelled for a long while before at last reaching his destination—a certain town where he had been instructed to go.

“When they arrived, there was only one thing on the camels’ minds, and that was water, and lots of it.

“To keep the town as nice as it could be, the well for drawing water was kept outside of the town entrance.

“Flocks and animals, and travelling trains of camels would be given water out there.”

“The manager at last sat down, thirsty and tired. But he wasn’t about to forget what he had come for. However, before he could proceed into the town, something must be done for the water needs of his camels.

“Just then, some women came out to draw water for their households. They often came together, so they had time to chat, and perhaps help one another.

“The travelling manager with the camels asked one of the women if she might be so kind as to give him a drink from the jug of water she had just drawn.

“Taking pity on this weary traveller, she did so, though she didn’t know there was a special surprise about to be offered to her.”

At the word, “surprise” Ishamael listened even more intently. He always enjoyed the story time at the end of the day with his uncle.

He learned much, and would have plenty of stories to pass on one day to his own nephews and children, when he was older.

Uncle Emeel continued,

“The manager had in his bag some very expensive jewellery to give to the best woman he found—and to the one that helped to give water to the camels, without him asking them to do so.

“When this beautiful young woman noticed the camels were also in need of water, she offered to help them.”

“It took many trips to the well for the lady to fill her jug with water and bring it back to the trough where the camels were drinking. The camels were very grateful indeed.

“When she was done, the manager surprised her by giving the beautiful gifts to her, and said she was just the type of woman he was looking for.

“But that wasn’t all. More kindness followed. The young woman’s parents and brother let this man and his travelling team, including all the camels, come to their house and property.

“The camels were given food and a place to rest, and the travelling men were given a meal by this family.

“Without the camels, this trip wouldn’t have been possible.”

“Who was the special person the man was hoping to find on his trip? He needed to find the best woman he could, that would

also would enjoy travelling back with him and his team. A young woman that would agree to be a wife to the son of our rich, travelling relative.

“ Like me, he too didn’t have a certain place to call home, but depended on his good, hard-working, well-trained camels to get him along where he needed to go.

“Did the woman want to go?” Ishmael asked, wondering what happened in the end of the story.

“Yes, I’m happy to say she did. So from one day to the next she became a wealthy woman, married to a kind-hearted man—all because she took the time to care about the needs of someone’s travelling camels.”