

Desert Drinkables

Her nimble hands worked thick yarn through the strings of her loom. Day in and day out, Sakina made the most beautiful rugs, blankets, and curtains in two villages: Halabinan and Halinak. Sakina traveled between them to sell her wares.

Eventually, every home was covered in her handmade treasures. Sakina began to worry as her sales slowed. She would have to dip into her savings soon.

The deserts of Tanagoni are vast. Travel outside of the villages Sakina sold in was nearly impossible.

But Sakina gathered up all of her money anyway and bought a camel. She named him Masood, which meant 'good luck.' Sakina was going to need it to traverse the sands – the luck and the camel. Sakina packed up her yarn and loom. She swung sacks of water and food over the nape of Masood's neck, grabbed his bit, and headed off.

For the first few miles, Sakina walked alongside Masood. It was a similar distance as between the villages, so she was used to it. But her calves began to burn as she pushed forward, further than she'd ever been before.

After a few hours (and some sips of water and nibbles of food), Sakina guided Masood to his knees so she could ride him and rest. This cycle went on for miles and miles; hours and hours. Sakina's food ran out first, then her water.

Masood didn't seem to mind the distance and held strong, Sakina was thankful for that. Her head bobbed along with the camel's sway. She felt her skin tightening around her bones. Skin cracked over her knuckles as she stretched her hands.

Sakina stopped the camel and let him kneel down for a rest. She laid down in the sand in Masood's shadow. Getting out of the direct sun was a tiny respite. Her breathing had gotten ragged, her lips cracked, and her mind was foggy. A person can live for weeks without food, but only days without water.

Sakina's mind began to drift, wondering what would happen to Masood. He had been such a good camel. *I think I'm just going let him go. He is still strong and healthy. He will make it across the desert.* Sakina struggled to stand. She started taking her packs off Masood.

Sakina's hand ran across something on his hump. She moved his coarse hair out of the way and inspected the bump. It was a hinge; a flesh-toned hinge. Her fingers found a crack, and followed it all the way around his hump to a latch. She undid the latch, and Masood's hump opened.

Inside was water so clear that Sakina could see her reflection! Thirst overcame her, and she dunked her whole head into the hump. The water was cool, so satisfying.

Soon, though, Masood gave out a grumble; a warning: don't drink too much or we'll both die out here. Sakina filled a couple water bottles. Her mood perked up immediately, and they set off.

The water lasted all the way across the desert! Sakina lost track of miles.

On the other side, Sakina set up her shop and sold her rugs, curtains, and blankets. No seller had ever been able to travel so far and wide as Sakina. Soon, the whole country was littered with her beautiful creations.



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