

Treasure of the Desert

by Alana Hansen

Maysa' Yamha sat outside of her tent in the dark stillness of the desert night. Her large, almost elegant brown eyes gazed over the family's biggest treasure. It was not silver, gold, or gems, but fine Arabian horses. The Arabians were cherished by all Bedouins for their gentle natures, speed and intelligence.

Her family had only three horses but all had the finest conformation and temperament. Her family depended on these magnificent horses not only for companionship, but also for practical purposes. Her father rode out on many raids on the backs of their sturdy Arabians and the family traveled around on them. They were not only friends but also lifelines.

Suddenly Maysa' was shaken from her thoughts by the sound of distant hoof beats. She could not see them yet but she could hear their hooves, as rhythmic as drum beats. Her heart leapt with excitement and she dashed up to the top of the sand dune that blocked her view. Once at the top of the hill she looked down into the desert below. What she saw surprised her. She was expecting traders, or other travelers, but what she saw were the finest Arabians she had ever seen.

There were fourteen in all, galloping about. Their nostrils flared and their manes and tails streamed as they tossed their finely chiseled heads. There were blacks, bays, grays and chestnuts, all a swirling mass of colors as they moved.

Maysa' knew what she should do. In the Bedouin tribes he who had the finest horses was greatly respected. Those were the finest horses she had ever seen. She owed it to her family to find those horses and bring them back.

She began sprinting back towards her family's tent. Careful not to wake her family, she grabbed a quilted saddle and a brightly tasseled bridle. She dashed off to the family's horse pasture and walked up to one of the horses.

Kareema was a small placid mare that was an amazing runner. When Maysa' came to put her bridle on she simply opened her mouth eager for the race ahead. Maysa' checked to make sure that all the equipment was functioning before leaping aboard and nudging the responsive little mare into a gallop.

Soon they had come to the peak of the sand dune where Maysa' had first sighted the Arabians. The herd, startled by Kareema, galloped away from them and Kareema, excited by the prospect of a race, breezed after them.

Soon enough Kareema and Maysa' had caught up with the herd. It felt free out there galloping at top speed with only thoughts of galloping horses... Tails flying and legs flashing around in the Arabians springy gait. Maysa' didn't know how long they had galloped before the desert's bright sun began peaking over the distant horizon.

The light must have shaken her back into her body because she suddenly remembered her goal. She needed to get the herd turned around. But how? Maysa' had a plan, all she needed to do was get in front of the now slowing herd.

Although her horse was tired as well, Maysa' was sure that Kareema would be able to get in front to turn the others around. She gave the mare the slightest of nudges with her foot and galloped her a little faster. With each smooth stride they floated closer to the leaders.

After only a little while they had made it back to the front. Ever so slowly Maysa' began to herd them around and back toward the village. Surprisingly the Arabians made no attempt to turn away and kept cantering on as the sun crept higher in the clear desert sky.

After a few hours Maysa' saw her village in the distance. She pushed the horses into a canter and approached the odd assortment of tents, palms and sand. As she drew closer she heard men shouting in wonder at the site of the fine horses and saw many start to fetch their own mounts.

Maysa' smiled as she brought the herd into her family's horse pasture, for it was something to be proud of. She had brought her family more gorgeous Arabians. To her culture Arabians were worth more than gold. So in the eyes of her friends, family and all others that looked upon, she had brought home a treasure beyond compare.