

The Founding of the Arab

I leapt from my mat on the floor, wide-eyed and breaths coming in gasps. Rubbing my hands against my face, I pondered the horrid dream that had filled my night with terror. Lakira, my gray mare, was with my mother in her tent, not sliding into the desert sands, and here was I, on my mat, not groping for a grip on her lead to pull her out. What could it mean?

Then I remembered and heard it all at once. An exhausted whinny can barely be heard over the sounds of the desert life. Lakira! She must be foaling! Pulling my robe over myself, I scamper from my tent, avoiding my two sisters. At mother's tent, I immediately know something is wrong. Lakira is lying on the floor, nostrils flared, her dappled body tense and damp with sweat. Mother sat by her head, speaking gently and stroking her neck. I am frozen in place, knowing not what to do, this is not the way our other mares acted during foaling.

Mother speaks calmly without looking up, "Katirazade, fetch you father and brothers, and then bring water and cloths."

"Yes, mama," I spin around and take off towards the men's tent.

"Father! Lakira is foaling!" Knowing he heard, I fetched mama's water and cloth, and then return to her tent.

Mother and Father spoke quietly as my three elder brothers stood to the side. "Ah, Katirazade, come, calm your mare." I slowly took mama's place beside Lakira. I tried to imitate mama's calm voice, but it is hard to control the fear I had for Lakira and her foal.

Suddenly I remembered on of my teachings, "The burden is equal to the horse's strength." I hoped it wasn't true. Lakira was string and had carried me for miles and miles, and I hope her burden is indeed not that big.

As I myself began to calm I could see that Lakira was also calming down. She was a beautiful and prized mare, one of our best. Perfect in body and mind, she had thrown many great foals, but father said this foal was to be our finest yet. I stroke her dappled neck and listen to Mother and Father converse.

“It’s tangled, I can’t find the forelegs,” Pa’s arms had disappeared inside of Lakira.

“Keep looking, they are there,” Ma assures him.

“Ah, there we are, wait... Yes.” Pa’s arms reappear grasping two dark little legs. Lakira grunts and pushes, but to no avail.

“The head is turned,” Pa explains as he again reached into Lakira, “he’s coming.”

Then suddenly, it’s over. There it is lying on the ground. A small black colt, without any taint, had just come into the world. I walk and kneel beside him, drying him with a warm towel. A proverb comes to mind and I share it quietly with the colt, “A horse is God’s gift to man. And so, you are my gift.”

Abruptly, I recalled my dream. It had woken me because I was needed here; Lakira had needed me to pull through this.

Within twenty minutes the foal was standing on wobbly legs, stumbling over to Lakira. With his muzzle the little black colt nuzzled Lakira’s side until he found her teat.

“He’s a fine foal,” Dad speaks proudly.

“Indeed,” Mother replies, “an idol of horses.”

“Yes,” I add, “an Arabian Idol.”