

Arabians...A screaming good time

By Madeleine G. Sheridan-Davison

Darkness.

*I know this place. But how? I have never been here, have I?*

A cold north wind blew across the desert, stirring my mane. I could feel the fear of the human standing beside me. My skin tingled as I caught a whiff of a strange smell. In the distance, I heard a sound. I tensed, ready to run if need be.

Then it came again, closer this time. The scent was stronger in my nostrils, neither sweet nor foul. The wind blew harder. The little human trembled and hid her face in my neck. I pawed uncomfortably. The scent told me that something was coming. I lifted my upper lip, hoping to make sense of it, but I had never smelled anything like before.

Suddenly, there it was. I could see it, clear as day though there was no moon. He was a horse, unlike any I had ever seen before. His silver coat shimmered and rippled as if in light from an unseen source. He neighed, a high, shrill sound. Then he spoke. "Come and join us in the dance of the Arabian ghosts."

I followed him, hypnotized. I had no idea how long we traveled, but I did not tire, nor did the little girl on my back. At last, we came to a place that someone had marked out with a single, bleached white bone. I waited for a moment as the ghost went off and then returned with many more like him, shimmering silver ghosts. Then he spoke again, addressing us all, "We have come to dance. It is the night of no moon. You," he said, directing his attention to the small human I

carried, “might call it a ‘lunar eclipse.’ We dance tonight to celebrate all who have gone before. And now, the fire!”

As he said this, the ghost of a small mare struck the air directly above the bone we were all standing around with her hoof, and the bone burst into flames. I almost jumped back, except I remembered the little child who rode me. *She must be so frightened*, I thought.

Then, beginning with the ghost who had brought us here, and ending with the mare that had lit the fire, we began to run. Leaping and bounding and frolicking like spring foals in the sun, we danced around the fire, then away from it we ran. I was surprised that I knew the dance. The little girl on my back laughed with joy as she held my mane. I danced until I could dance no more. The fire flickered then died out as one by one the ghosts departed. I felt happy and renewed. Then darkness folded around me.

Suddenly, there was light, and I was standing in a pasture, *my* pasture. It was day and my mother was grazing a little ways off, her red-gold tail swishing in the wind. I struggled to my feet and ran to her, nuzzling her flank.

“Hey, mom,” I said.

“Yes?”

“You’ll never guess the crazy dream I just had!”