

The King Camel

A
Desert
Adventure

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my son who inspired me to write; not only by believing in me but sharing with me his beautiful childhood dream about the talking camel. It gave form to characters and plots around which the story of Peter and Sarah revolves.

The White Talking Camel is as much his fantasy as is of this writer. I also dedicate this book to all members of the family who in one way or another have always encouraged me to pursuit my writer's aspirations.

And of course, I dedicate this bedtime story to all members of my family, who have equally believe in this project and supported me throughout patiently. I've taken hundreds of hours from family time to complete this book; for that, I thank each of them.

I thank friends who read the raw manuscript and encouraged me to better this project with valuable suggestions. I dedicate King Camel be time story to all children of the world hoping these storylines bring them happiness to them as they read.

I especially think of my grandchildren, Nicole, Daniel, Gianna, and Tristen who may read it in the near future and travel with Peter and Sarah to Egypt and meet the White Talking Camel themselves.

Maximus Basco/MARS

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Chapter One

A Letter from Father

Peter and Sarah jumped out quickly from the horse carriage. London's sky seemed bluer than ever for Springtime had returned to England again and flowers were bloomed everywhere while most of the trees turned leaving the cold of Wintertime.



Peter and Sarah walked with their mother to the Post Office to pick their father's letter.

The day felt warm as the soft afternoon sun rays fell over the city.

Everything around London seemed bright and lively. People crossed the streets from sidewalk to sidewalk while horse carriages trotted rapidly; their hooves clacking noisily London's cobblestone streets.

The children, holding to their mother's hands, went from the sidewalk up to the postal service inside London's Library. Peter climbed the stairs in quick steps in front of his mother and sister getting to the door before them.

Taller than his sister, and most boys his age, he looked a bit slim while Sarah seemed perhaps a bit plump; her reddish hair and hazel eyes put her on her mother's side. Peter seven just a few weeks ago, attended second grade while Sarah went to first grade for sounds and letters for six-year-olds. Both enjoy books and their parents reading bedtime stories for them.

Peter wore his favorite beige shorts today; his blue wool sweater and his dark shoes. His straight hair fell from his head straight to one side. I take after father, he proudly would say, if anybody asked.

Sarah in her white flowered dress and pink shoes ran after her brother going for the door. Her round face and grayish eyes came from her mother's side, she loved to say as well.

Peter got to the door before his mother and sister and opened it. The two children and their mother entered the old postal building to pick up their father's letter. The building's heavy, dark oak door protected by tall columns faced the busiest London's street.

Inside the postal services office, the old mail clerk, Mr. Bernard, sorted letters amongst other clerks like himself. They handed and sorted letters when the Carnehill family walked in looking for their letters. Peter and Sarah curiously glanced around as Mr. Bernard, a man of white hair and of ruddy cheeks looking a bit like Santa indeed said hello. Peter told his sister who looked like in a whisper and they giggled.

"He has puffy red cheeks and white hair and glasses like Papa Noel," Sarah said, and both giggled again. Mr. Bernard lifted his eyes and cheerfully greeted the family. He welcomed Mrs. Carnerhill and her children; the family of Mr. Maxwell Carnerhill, the English Ambassador in Egypt, he remembered.

"Good morning Mrs. Carnerhill," he said for he knew the family well for over a year when the Honorable Ambassador went to Egypt.

He lowered his blue, watery and sleepy eyes and pushed up the thick glasses perched on his nose, and said saying good morning to Peter and Sarah, greeting them also.

"Good afternoon Mr. Bernard," Mrs. Carnerhill replied politely and she asked her children to greet Mr. Bernard too. And both children cheerfully said, "good afternoon to you Mr. Bernard".

"Oh, please call me Ber. I never like this old and silly French name, he said, and he winked an eye and flared his nostrils to the children and grinned to them while doing his trick.

“He can flare his nostrils like a dragon! Peter whispered softly to Sarah. They giggled together but Peter remained perfectly still, straight and looking at the old man’s nose; his slim frame like in military attention.

“Please do it again, Mr. Bernard,” asked Peter as he pressed his hair perfectly cut and combed to one side.

"Can you do this like me? Mr. Bernard asked Peter, then asked Sarah flaring his nostrils like tiny wings. He smiled and fixed his skyblue eyes on Peter and on Sarah this time. Sarah hid behind her mother's skirt a bit shy perhaps, but soon she pushed her head sideways to see the old Mr. Bernard’s flaring nostrils. Mr. Bernard flared his nostrils again gazing and wiggling at her.

"How about you Peter? Can you flare your nostrils like this? Pretend to be a friendly dragon, puffing balls of fire like in the old tales from Marlin the Wizard,” he asked with a warm smile. The Children giggled again watching Mr. Bernard nostrils flaring up like the nose of a camel.

“Just pretend to be a flying dragon and flare your nose. Just twitch your nose,” Mr. Bernard said with a grin on his friendly face looking like Santa Claus with glasses on his nose.

Peter tried hard. His nostrils never moved a twitch. He even pulled an earlobe to help himself a bit as the clerk suggested. But his nostrils never flared like Mr. Bernard's nostrils did. He could wiggle his nose and could twitch it like a honey-smelling-bear miles away, he said grinning to the children.

"You have to practice a lot more.” Mr. Bernard said, and his eyes under his bushy, grayish eyebrows growing over his thick glasses grew even bigger.

“Oh, don’t worry children I've practiced for sixty-five years long. It is only now I can twitch my nose like this and flare my nostrils like that. “Don’t be disappointed for practice, practice makes the master, my dear,” he said grinning and showing his teeth behind a thick white mustache.

A canopy of white hair over his lips gave him the looks of Santa Clause's face with an untrimmed mustache and puffy red cheeks. His nose trick delighted the children and they laughed and giggled. He wiggled it once more for them. He saw them smile again and then, he stopped his nose tricks and stood up.

He then walked a few feet behind his desk, looked up and pulled a letter from the wall. A wall looking like a giant beehive with many holes; big holes that enough to fit squirrels in them, Peter thought, but of course, only letters filled the squares on the wall and Mr. Bernard reached for a yellow, paper envelope. He read the name on it and handed the letter to Mrs. Carnerhill. It was for her; from her husband.

It came from the Ambassador to Egypt. The stamp on its backflip read in pencil markings, Cairo, Egypt 1864 Year of the Lord. Sender: Honorable Maxwell Carnerhill, Ambassador for the Royal Kingdom of England, Mr. Bernard reads aloud for the delight of the children.

"My mom is going to take us all to Egypt," Peter said with a glow sparkling in his eyes. His voice is lively as he never sounded ever before.

"That's a long, long way from London," Mr. Bernard said.

"I'm going with my mom and Peter too," Sarah's voice sounded happy saying that. Her grayish glowing gleeful eyes locked on Mr. Bernard's eyes.

"We're going to visit our father in Egypt. We're going to ride a camel too," Peter added.

"Me too," Sarah said.

"How wonderful for you two children," Mr. Bernard said. The old man's eyes looking at them. He smiled and said.

"Uhhh, how wonderful, I would give a million pounds to travel if I were a rich man and see Egypt with you. And go to see the pyramids!"
"Ride on a camel as a king!"

The old man said. Mr. Bernard's eyes wandered into space. For a second, perhaps imagining himself with the children.

"Children we must go now," Mrs. Carnerhill said.

She thanked the postal clerk ready to turn around on her heels for the door, but then Mr. Bernard called out the children's names saying, "Ahh, Peter and Sarah, do you know Egypt is far from England?

Maybe thousands of miles you're going to sail. Do you know that?

And do you know Egypt had many Pharaohs like kings in Spain and Queens in England? And do you know that one of them was a child like you only?

Both children stop in their way out and listened to the old postal clerk speaking to them.

"And of course," he added, "Egypt is the land of old pyramids too! And one cannot forget the river, the Nile! The longest of all rivers in the world! And it's there in Egypt for you to see! He went on. "Do you know there are Oasis of freshwater in the middle of nowhere? Palm trees grow around small ponds, do you know that? People and camels go there to drink water and rest under the trees in the middle of the desert. Oh, children! Children! How wonderful for you to go!

"We're going to sail on the Castle One, it's the new ship of the royal company! Peter said with more excitement about the English ship.

"Many days you're going to sail for sure," the old clerk Mr. Bernard replied.

"But it's the fastest ship, very fast and it's going to take us no more than a month to Egypt, that's what father says," Peter quickly replied also standing taller than most seven years olds. His long legs seemed growing faster than most kids his age under his shorts.

"Ahh...Peter, your father has informed you well. Now pay attention.

Many camels you're going to see in Egypt. But be aware for there is one that is very special! Yes, sir!

“He wanders everywhere and runs great distances from here to there any moment! He might be very close to you at any time, ahh, but you cannot see even he is very near there, Mr. Bernard said fixing his eyes filled with wonder on Sarah then on Peter too.

"I would like to see that camel! And ride on its back, "Peter said almost in a shout of excitement.

"Me too, "Sarah dared to say in her tiny voice. Her hazel eyes sparkled on her face adorned with tiny freckles like stars like glitter on her rosy cheeks.

"Ahh, very well Sarah you're brave also. Soon, I'm sure you two are going to ride a camel indeed. But, did your father tell you about the most mysterious of all camels in the desert? The one nobody but only children? The old mail clerk asked the kids in a whisper like in secrecy. He pinched softly Sarah's pinkish cheek and ruffled Peter's hair gently with one hand.

"No, but all camels are especial, father says," said Sarah timidly.

"He's right dear Sarah. They all walk long, long distances in the desert, and don't drink water for days and are loyal to their Masters. But children tell me did you ever hear of the White Talking Camel?

"No, never, "Peter said with wide eyes and his mind traveled like the wind; his imagination flew like desert sands in an instant. A White Talking Camel wow! He asked himself aloud.

"It's the most handsome of all the camels; he's strong and tall and grace he trots lifting his snout with pride as he steps over the sands like a General for Royal Armies."

"Wow, is it very, very tall?

"He is tall enough to see all around him, and believe me, this camel wanders through the desert and only children can see him! But hear this too now.

Only children who are kind and brave can see him, they say! Only children who are of good heart can ride on its back! Mr. Bernard said smiling.

“Like Richard the Lion King a brave warrior, father says.” “and kind as well, children, kind as well remember that.”

“Can he bite me? Sarah asked.

"Ahh, no...he's nothing like other camels for he's tamed and kind with children.”

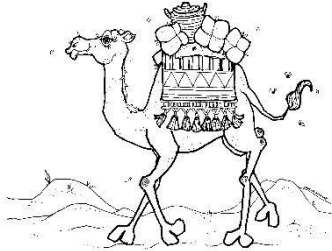
“Well, let me tell you about him. This camel wanders through the desert. And only children can see it! Hear this. Only children who believe can see him, they say! Only children especially children can ride on its back! Mr. Bernard said smiling. “Oh... that is the White Talking Camel indeed! He's the one camel, only children can ride on its back, the story says! The old man repeated again.

"Pay attention children and listen,” Mr. Bernard said.

Chapter Two

A Camel King Too

“The King of Camels He is! He is also a prince in his own world. His fur as white as snow might be when you see him at night and of any



color of the sands when seeing him at daylight. Its fur may even softly glow blueish hues with the moon's light. His honey-brown eyes are large and round, but even when you think he's sleeping he's awake looking at everything around you.

His big eyes look like walnuts on his long snout and he might even wink an eye with thick long eyelashes if he wants to talk to you and say hello! Mr. Bernard said and went on to say more.

“When does come to the desert, Mr. Bernard,” Sarah ask curiously again.

“Well, he walks and runs in the desert anytime! He goes from here to there and then to anywhere at the speed of light. He's a true free camel! Oh yes, listen to this. The story says there're children who swear that this camel even walks on air and its hooves never touch the sands,” Mr. Bernard said in a whisper.

“Can he fly indeed, like birds, Mr. Bernard,” Sarah asked surprised.

“Shssssssssssssss, says nothing about that.” He smiled and kept saying. “Ah, yes, but pay attention again. Nobody can see him or hear this camel. The story says that this is a unique camel indeed knowing many languages. A camel that talks like you and me, but nobody can hear. Only children can see and hear him, they say! Yes. Only those who are brave and kind of heart like you are children!

“Only those, of course, will get to see the White Talking Camel says this fairytale. The camel of Ali Baba in the old, old days this camel learned many languages from many men and now talks like you and me!

“Is he for real Mr. Bernard? Peter asked once more.

"But of course, my dear! Again, pay attention to this tale. For they say that this camel one day escaped from Ali-Baba's herd of a thousand camels. Yes! He did escape to the desert; he went to be free again for he valued his freedom more than anything. More than jewels and gold, more than food and water he values his freedom, “Mr. Bernard whispered the words like a secret between them.

Peter and Sarah stood without moving, not wanting to go anywhere, but only wanting to listen to Mr. Bernard’s story. "Aaahh, for sure it’s going to come to you, children. The White Talking Camel crosses the desert anytime from here to there, day or night, they say. I'm sure you’re going to meet him when he wants to come to you," the postal clerk said.

“Where does come, Mr. Bernard?

“Ahh, children, children, the White Talking Camel is of the finest family. He is also a camel king from afar, from a faraway nation and from a million miles and many Constellations he flew one day. “Are you of a brave heart and kind? Of course, you are; then you’re going to see him and I have no doubt he’ll come to you, and to you, Sarah,“ Mr. Bernard said looking at the Carnerhill kids.

“I can't wait to go looking for this camel. We should leave today, look for him and ride on his back," Peter said enthused. Then, as if remembering something else, Mr. Bernard said again.

"But listen to me well children for many desert bandits are going to say to you, “Hey little kid and your sister! Come here, and you also come to me here! They could say it in a soft whisper.

“Here come and see my camel. Shhsssssss be quiet. This is the real White Talking Camel! Yes!

“Ride on it for three wishes but pay me now one coin of gold. Ohh...Children, children! Do not believe them! It's all a trick and be aware of liars!

“We won't listen to them, Mr. Bernard, right Sarah? Peter said asking his sister, and she nodded her head,

“There is only one camel like this, yes only one indeed. The one with the most shining white coat he is! He is tall and strong. If he were human, a prince or king he would be here! He is also smart and knows much about numbers and stars.

He knows of constellations and the history of many nations for he has traveled the Universe. Be aware in many languages he may also talk to you two!

“You might hear him talking in English and Portuguese saying good morning or bom dia! Then, he also may talk to you in French or Spanish. He might say to you “Bon jour talking in French or Buenos Dias talking to you in Spanish,” Mr. Bernard said smiling at them.

“What's his name, Mr. Bernard? Sarah asked curiously in all her innocence.

“Oh, my dear children you are going to know when he comes to you the first time. He will lower his front legs for you to jump on his back. He's going to wink an eye and say “hello I'm the talking camel and this is my name you know but it's a secret now between you and me! And you're going to ride on its back like a Sultan prince, Peter! You're going to say the White Talking Camel has come to me!

“And you Sarah my dear, you are going to ride in this beautiful animal like an African queen! Mr. Bernard said with a smile, then winked an eye to the children's mom and both merrily laughed.

“Have you ever seen the White Camel, Mr. Bernard? Peter asked his voice filled with curiosity.

"Oh, no, for I've never traveled like you going to Egypt. And if I were to travel now, I would have to be a child like you. I would have to be kind and brave to ride on a camel.

"So, be brave and kind and go and find the White Talking Camel indeed," the postal clerk said with a grin looking at Mrs. Carnerhill.

"C'mon children...we must go now for...Mr. Bernard our dear friend has letters to send. Perhaps places to dream about I'm sure. He'll tell us about the White Talking Camel the next time around.

Your father will send us another letter. We're going to come again. Mrs. Carnerhill said. She smiled at Mr. Bernard the mail clerk and friend.

Then, pulling her kids to the door they went saying their goodbyes. The children wanted to ask many questions about the White Talking Camel, but by then, their mother's hands pulled them to the door.

Outside Big Ben called London's time. Its musical chimes the children heard in wonder gazing at its tall tower. The old Ben's clock rose over the river Thames. Boats of fishermen went under old London's Bridge waters. The bells played the Westminster Quarters notes at exactly a quarter-hour before five o'clock.

Children, children! We need to go immediately. Their mother said with her children in tow. They all hurried to seek the street walking down quickly to call a horse carriage. When got in the carriage it was getting late for evening supper all over London.

Soon bedtime tales and stories would be read to the children before going to bed. Mrs. Carnerhill raised a waving hand and called a carriage; it stopped only a few feet from them and quickly she haggled a good traveling fair to pay and home they went away.

Its sky covered with many soft shades of blues and pale pinkish mauves. The sun seemed to hide and going away as if wanting to sleep too. The dome of the sky looked like dragging yellows and soft grayish clouds like a veil of air covering all.

All carriages had lit their beacons for drivers to see, their wicks fluttered lighting the streets. London's Bridge stood over the river and its yellow walls glowed on the water as horse-drawn carriages went from one end to the other of the bridge over the Thames river. The carriage crossed the bridge, then it went through a few narrow streets. Sometime later, the carriage stopped in front of a large mansion house.

The Carnerhill children jumped from the carriage and ran inside laughing. After supper, they wanted to get in bed soon. They wanted to fall asleep quickly to dream and dream of faraway places, they said. They wanted to dream of deserts and camels! Yes! They wanted to dream they played with many children around them. In their dream, they all could ride flying on camel's back and above over the desert!

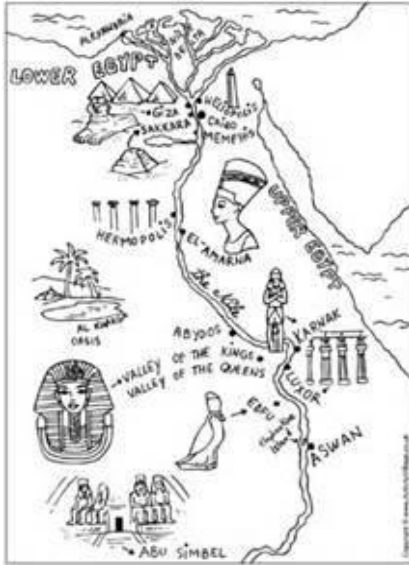
In their dreams, they wanted to ride on the back of the White Talking Camel! The king of camels they were sure would come and be in their dreams. They hopped into bed quickly saying good night to their mom. They gave her a hug and they got a kiss from her going to sleep.

Chapter Three

The Trip to Egypt

The morning sun rays of Springtime fell over the city port of old Plymouth making it warm and bright. The Castle One ship was ready for its trip to Egypt, the land of many kings. The port's many merchants around offered their goods with loud voices for those travelers

sailing to Egypt. It was a long, long voyage on the Mediterranean ocean a trip to the far land of ancient mummies of Pharaohs. A million and one sounds filled the port when the carriage arrived at the seaport of Plymouth. Peter jumped from the carriage before Sarah and his mom and stood in



wonder looking at the Castle One. The ship waited for all its passengers to come aboard; its two tall smokestacks rose high. His eyes explored everything around him and then, he looked up at the ship again. It was anchored just a few yards from the edge of the waters; it looked taller and larger than Saint Paul's cathedral in London.

The ship's smokestack, taller than any of the tallest columns outside at the portal of the church, Peter thought as men carrying sacs and luggage went up the ramp to the deck. Peter measured its side and it

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