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# The Young Black Stallion

By Jeanne Rosenberg

Is there trouble, Kadir?  
It's Mansoor. He's always trouble.  
But we paid his bribe.  
We'll be all right... I hope.  
Neera!  
I was just looking.  
-I'm not tired, honest.  
-We'll stop in the foothills.  
It's safer there.  
Not much longer.  
I was dreaming about home.  
It's so beautiful - like a palace.  
Big grassy fields  
for my grandpa's horses.  
They're the best in the whole valley.  
They win every race.  
Well, almost every race.  
He must be a very important man,  
your grandfather,  
to breed horses that never lose,  
to live like a king in a palace.  
I know he didn't want  
to send me away,  
but he thought it'd be safer  
until after the war.  
Life has a way of shifting,  
like blowing sand.  
What... what is it?  
Kadir? What's wrong?  
Mansoor.  
Save yourself, Neera!  
Go west. Find the mountains.  
Follow them home.  
Don't stop. Don't look back.  
Go now! Go!  
-What about you?  
-Go!  
Kadir!  
Good boy.  
Good boy.  
Wait!  
Come back!  
Come back.  
Hey! Where are you going?

Wait for me!  
Wait!  
I'll get you a drink.  
Black?  
Black?  
Good boy.  
We'll find a way home.  
You and me, together.  
We just have to keep going.  
We're close, I think... I hope.  
We're home.  
It's there, see? Come on.  
Hold, boy. Easy, now.  
No, wait. Come back!  
Don't leave me!  
Come back.  
Black?  
Hello?  
Hello?  
-Aden?  
-Neera, is that you?  
We thought you were dead.  
No, it's really me in person.  
See?  
What were you going to do,  
chase me away?  
I didn't even know it was you.  
We heard the caravan was attacked.  
I didn't expect to ever see you again.  
-Where is everyone?  
-They ran away.  
-Everyone?  
-Not Ben Ishak or me.  
-Is he all right?  
-Sometimes I hear him crying.  
Go away.  
Leave me alone.  
Can't you hear? Go.  
But it's me, Grandpa.  
Neera?  
Grandpa.  
Oh, Neera.  
If he hadn't helped me, I would've given up.  
I just wouldn't have gotten here.

Sometimes in the desert,  
the devil plays tricks.  
Our minds get all twisted  
and we imagine things.  
No, he's real. He is.  
He's already so strong and fast.  
-We have to find him.  
-Neera...  
This black colt is just a trick,  
a devil dream.  
He doesn't exist.  
Only here, and here.  
Let him go.  
That horse, the one in front.  
-Isn't that Kazeer?  
-Uh-huh.  
Kazeer doesn't belong to us any more.  
None of them do.  
They're scattered.  
Rhamon took Kazeer.  
He took most of the mares.  
-They were like family.  
-There was no other way.  
When the soldiers came with their tanks  
and their bombs, they destroyed our fields.  
Our crops burned to the ground.  
There was nothing left. Nothing.  
I could not afford to feed them any more.  
I had to sell.  
Even Jinah?  
The thought of anyone else  
owning Jinah,  
that cut too deep,  
like a jagged knife.  
So I sent her back to the desert,  
where she belonged.  
Some people thought  
I was foolish,  
but I knew it was right.  
We are not breeders any more.  
So be it.  
At least we have a roof overhead.  
That's luckier than most.  
We kept Abha.

Oh, Abha.

-You remember it?

-Maybe.

-My beloved

-My beloved

Like a rose

A precious rose

that blooms in a garden

You shall be

forever in my heart

My beloved, my bel...

Salaam alaika, Ishak.

Need help?

We will manage.

Kazeer looks good, don't you think?

You should have been at the races.

He won, of course.

Mansoor was too busy thieving his way  
through the desert to bring Radan,  
so it was hardly a challenge.

Nothing even came close.

Still, I appreciate my prizes.

You may recognise some.

-He won those?

-Yeah. It's the new rules.

Each tribe stakes their best mare.

The winner gets them all.

You are a lucky man, Rhamon,  
to have won such fine horses.

Your reputation grows  
along with your herd.

I hear Mansoor caught  
your silver mare Jinah.

They say he couldn't catch  
the black foal that ran beside her.

Perhaps it stumbled  
into the secret valley.

You should have kept her.

You would have had a chance.

Instead you have what? That one?

Do the hopes of the great Ben Ishak  
rest with your plough horse?

Stop being a hermit, old man.

Come to next year's races.

See Kazeer win again  
for the tribe of Rhamon.  
See you there, huh?  
Ma salaama.  
Grandpa!  
Did you hear what he said?  
It's got to be him.  
My colt. He's Jinah's son.  
It's gossip, Neera. Rumours.  
If we find him, we can start all over.  
We can raise a new herd.  
We'll have horses again,  
just like before.  
Listen to you.  
Such big plans.  
You remind me of your mother -  
brave, fearless. She loved her horses.  
She could see  
right into their hearts.  
She rode like she was born to it.  
Better than most of the men.  
Come on. Good boy.  
Good boy.  
Ben Ishak! Ben Ishak!  
It's Neera!  
She's back, but she's not alone.  
She's... Come quickly!  
Come on! Hurry.  
Neera! What are you doing?  
-Have you gone mad?  
-It's him, Grandpa.  
He's not a dream. He's real.  
And he's fast. Did you see?  
-You could have been hurt.  
-No, he wouldn't hurt me.  
His heart is full of fire, Neera.  
Like the devil, Shetan.  
Whoa. Easy, now.  
He can beat Kazeer, Grandpa.  
I know it. He can win.  
He really can.  
Even if he's as good as you think, even  
half as good, the festival's almost here.  
There's no time to train,

there's no jockey, there is nothing.  
I can ride him. He listens to me,  
and he'll do it if I ask him.  
He's raw. He's wild.  
And you, you're just a child, a girl.  
-But that's not fair.  
-You know how dangerous this course is?  
I refuse to lose anyone else.  
So don't even think about it, understand?  
I won't allow it. I forbid it.  
I forbid it.  
You have to help me, Aden.  
What? Are you joking?  
Tell me you're joking.  
It's our secret now.  
All right?  
Keep him slow  
until you get past me.  
Slow. And wait for my signal, all right?  
On mark.  
Be set...  
That's not slow!  
What happened to "slow"?  
Jinah.  
Ben Ishak.  
Ben Ishak...  
-Where is he?  
-I don't know.  
Call him again.  
We'd better hurry.  
Jinah...  
Yes... Remember me?  
Rhamon! Rhamon!  
Mansoor! Mansoor!  
Control your horse, Mansoor.  
This is a race, not a fight.  
Wait! Wait for us!  
Out of the way!  
We're coming!  
Whoa. Easy. Steady. Steady.  
The tribe of Ben Ishak  
humbly presents its official entrant -  
the stallion Shetan.  
But there's an entrance fee.

What do you have to offer?  
That broken-down old mare?  
Are you sure you know what you're doing?  
What if he loses?  
Have you thought of that?  
He won't lose.  
Now go on and tell them.  
The proud tribe of Ben Ishak  
offers its finest horse as entry fee -  
the stallion Shetan.  
But it's supposed to be a mare,  
not some devil horse.  
The finest mare.  
That is the rules.  
Stop whining, Rhamon.  
Let him race.  
Tell Ishak to say his goodbyes.  
Good luck.  
Easy, easy. Ohh.  
Steady, now. Steady.  
Whoa, whoa.  
Whoa, whoa! Steady!  
Steady! Go!  
No!  
You can do it, Shetan!  
Run! Run!  
Up, Shetan! Up!  
Yes! Good boy!  
Come on, Thor!  
Come on! Come on!  
Go! Go!  
Out of my way!  
We're catching them! Yes! Yes!  
Go! Go!  
Yes! Yes, Shetan! Yes!  
Get out of the way!  
Yes! Good, Shetan! Good!  
Come on! Come on!  
Go!  
Get out of my way, Mansoor!  
We're gaining on them!  
Come on! Come on!  
You can do it, Shetan!  
You can do it!



There's our chance, Shetan!  
Now! Come on!  
Watch out!  
Let me pass!  
-Hey! No! You can't do that!  
-Out of my way!  
Faster, Shetan! Faster!  
Go, Shetan! Go! Go!  
Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!  
Neera!  
Good boy! You did it! You did it!  
You're such a good boy!  
Shetan! Shetan! Shetan!  
I'm sorry I disobeyed you, Grandpa.  
But he won. He won!  
Are you angry?  
Neera! Neera, you did it,  
you tricky little fry!  
-We did it! We did it!  
-You too, Aden!  
We did it!