



# The Camel and the Jackal

Retold by Michèle Dufresne

1 The camel and the jackal lived on the western side of a great river, where there were very few trees and very little food. They slept all day when the blistering sun cooked the dry patch of land and came out only at night to hunt for scraps. One night, the jackal took the camel aside and said, “There is a fine field of

sugarcane growing on the other side of the river. I can’t swim, but if you carry me across the river, I’ll show you how to get there. The sugarcane grows as tall as trees over there, and I’ve seen many crabs and bits of fish wash up on the shore.”

- 2 The camel agreed to the jackal's plan and carried the jackal through the water to the other side of the river. The beach matched the jackal's description, with sugarcane rods growing tall and crabs scuttling along the sand. The jackal immediately scampered off, pushing his nose into crab holes and quickly devouring whatever he found. The camel took her time, slowly breaking off and chewing a stalk of sugarcane.
- 3 It was not long before the jackal was full. "What a feast!" he said. He pointed his nose to the sky, yelping and howling at the moon.
- 4 "There is a jackal in the sugarcane!" cried the villagers when they heard the racket, and they ran toward the field to chase him away. At the sound of their footsteps, the jackal hid in a thicket and became quiet. By the time the villagers arrived on the beach, there was no sign of a jackal, just a camel slowly chewing a single stalk of sugarcane. The villagers threw rocks at her and chased her with sticks until she fell to the ground, bruised and exhausted.
- 5 After the villagers left, the jackal came out of hiding and timidly said, "We should return home."
- 6 "Yes," groaned the camel, limping to the river in pain.
- 7 The camel winced as the jackal climbed upon her back. When they had waded far into the water, the camel said, "I hadn't finished one stalk of sugarcane before you started yelping. You roused the whole village, then hid while the villagers beat me with sticks and threw rocks at me. Why did you have to make so much noise?"
- 8 "I don't know," said the jackal. "It's an instinct. I just like to sing after dinner."
- 9 The camel waded across the river as the water reached her knees, then higher and higher, until she was swimming through the deepest part.
- 10 "I feel like rolling over," said the camel.
- 11 "But then I would fall into the water," said the jackal. "Why would you do that?"
- 12 "I don't know," answered the camel. "I just like to roll over after dinner. It's an instinct." With that, the camel rolled over, allowing the jackal to slip off her back and into the dark water. She swam back to her barren home on the western edge of the river without another word. And what happened to the jackal? Well, he was swept away by the current and was never heard from again.



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## Test Questions

*Circle the correct answer.*

**1) This question has two parts. First, answer Part A, then answer Part B.**

**Part A: Why did the jackal yelp and howl at the moon?**

- a) To show the camel where the food was located.
- b) To let the villagers know he was eating their sugarcane.
- c) To show his hunger had been satisfied.
- d) To alert the camel that it was time to go back across the river.

**Part B: Which of the following statements supports your answer in Part A?**

- a) The camel agreed to carry the jackal across the water.
- b) The jackal declared he had eaten a feast and was full.
- c) The villagers arrived on the beach and saw the camel.
- d) The jackal came out of hiding and said it was time to go home.

**2) What lesson does the jackal learn?**

- a) Only eat what you need.
- b) Listen to your elders.
- c) Quitters never win.
- d) You get what you deserve.

**3) Why did the jackal come out of hiding and timidly say, “We should return home?”**

- a) He had eaten enough sugarcane and was ready to go home.
- b) He felt guilty that his actions caused the camel to be punished.
- c) He didn't want the villagers to see him eating the sugarcane.
- d) He knew the camel was finished eating.

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## Test Questions (continued)

4) On the way back across the water, why did the camel decide to roll over?

- a) To teach the jackal a lesson for devouring crabs and sugarcane.
- b) To teach the jackal it isn't nice to howl at the moon after eating a feast.
- c) To teach the jackal how to swim in the dark water.
- d) To teach the jackal a lesson for allowing the camel to take all the blame for eating the sugarcane.

5) What does the word *devouring* mean as it is used in the paragraph below?

The beach matched the jackal's description, with sugarcane rods growing tall and crabs scuttling around the sand. The jackal immediately scampered off, pushing his nose into crab holes and quickly **devouring** whatever he found.

- a) gobbling
- b) disturbing
- c) smelling
- d) dismissing