

## IN THE DESERT

## Time Speeds

With the river behind them, the children moved up a long incline dotted here and there by unusual flowered shrubs. They had colorful berries also which the children ate as they made their way along.



Finally they stood at the crest and looked with amazement. As far as the eye could see there was white sand. Nothing but drifts and dunes in an ocean of white, lifeless sand.

"It's a desert!" said Amy. "What if we get thirsty?" added Meg. Nathaniel remained silent. He knew that every time so far they were somehow guided through each hard part. And when they left the difficulty behind, they were changed for good. They had grown in strength and in much more. He stepped out moving straight ahead.

After sometime all their eyes could see was a blue sky with no clouds, a bright sun and an endless beach of sand.

"What if, " Nathaniel said, "what if you could count each tiny speck of sand! How many numbers would you have? What if ..." Nathaniel stopped. A wind song was moving over the dunes.

Another song for food, for inner drink flowed upon them. A simple melody interwoven with even simpler sounds. A quieting. A hushing as when something truly beautiful is seen for the first time.

 As many as the stars  
 As many as the stars above  
 As many as the tears that have fallen  
 Tears of my children, tears for my children  
 As many as the stars high above.  
 Deeper, deeper into the night sky that never ends  
 As many as can ever be seen.  
 Tears as stars, stars as tears  
 Stars as my love received  
 Sand as the times my love has been refused. 

Tears rolled down the children's cheeks at the songs, adding even more stars to the heavens.

### Time Wings

They all sat down in the sand. Amy spoke first. "How wonderful to receive love from the True One. That his tears of love did not end up as dry sand." She let a handful run through her fingers.

"Yes. It's like we were chosen to know and understand," Meg added.

Nathaniel looked at the girls. They looked at him. Almost at the same time, they blurted out, "We've changed on the outside, too. We're looking older. It's like time has swept past our bodies leaving us older. We look like teenagers. Natty looks like a young man." "And you girls look like beautiful teenage girls. We're not children anymore," finished Nathaniel. "At least not to this world."

Meg opened the scroll and began to read.

"My love draws you nearer and nearer  
If you draw near to me,  
I will draw near to you.  
The closer we get, the more you'll be like me  
Because you'll begin to see me face to face."

She rolled up the scroll. "Don't you already feel the presence of the True One, even in the middle of this ocean of sand," she concluded.

The other two simply nodded. They all closed their eyes and enjoyed fully the beauty of the moment, the beauty of their understanding, the beauty of their knowing precious secrets, holding trust so close.

## Desert Blooms

While they sat in quiet, something marvelous happened. Rain drops dotted their faces. And then more and more fell until their eyes were blurred by little streams dripping from their hair. Nathaniel jumped up and started to shout some songs they had learned long ago as small children. The girls joined in the romping playfulness. "What a wonder," they thought. Rain in the desert. Finally they huddled together, squatting with their coats over their heads. Coats that had warmed them from the cold, cooled them from the heat, lifted them in praise, now protected them from the sudden rain showers!

As soon as the rain finally stopped, they stood up and looked around them. Streams had formed and flowed into small ponds. All around the edges of the ponds, little buds were popping out of the sand. Seeds had waited for just this very rain to grow. In fact all across the desert a miracle seemed to be happening.

Plants were growing wonderfully, lush flowers of every sort. Frogs had squeezed up through the mud bottom ponds. The desert had come alive with the waters.

Meg and Amy with Nathaniel following walked from discovery to discovery, amazed at the many varieties of flowers. Different shapes. Different sizes. All beautiful in their own way. Special in their own time.

"It's like the desert is talking to us," said Amy.

"What do you mean?" Meg replied, arms full of flowers.

"All of the plants are beautiful in their own way. In their own time. Just like people back around home. They are all special in their own place, at their own time. They look different. Live in

different places, but each is unique and special because they were made to be that way. The time, place and person are uniquely designed by a most wonderful gardener."

#### Oasis

The days traveled in the desert were not all easy. In fact some of the most difficult times were spent trailing along sand dunes, walking besides barren out-croppings of rocks and facing the drying, blowing sands all done in the glaring watchful eye of the hot sun.

During several sand storms, they huddled near large rocks and used their coats for protection. Thoughts of the beautiful river left behind grew more and more distant. Amy tried to remember how satisfying the waters tasted. How they had swum and bathed in the crystal waters. It all seemed such a dream to her.

Meg remembered things left behind. Experiences that had forced them to grow. How they emerged stronger through the hard times. The good times balanced the not so good with beautiful freshness. She knew there would be goodness somehow even in this part of the journey. The True One would not fail them. They would make it through.

Nathaniel was truly thankful for the help that met them at every point of their needs. When hunger and thirst began to numb them, like a wound left unattended too long, they discovered an amazing cactus plant. Its juicy flesh gave them a fruity food that completely satisfied. Another plant, when scraped, gave a powder that mixed with cactus juices. The sun baked it into delicious pancakes.

But now they had traveled on for what seemed forever. Any hold on time was surrendered. The three of them began each walk with oil on their heads and words from the scroll. This had become their food. This had become their drink.

Finally one day they crested a huge sand dune. To their great joy, off not that far, was a lush cluster of palms surrounding what looked like a lake of water. Nathaniel broke into a song. The girls joined as they raced to this great oasis. Their eyes still hadn't noticed the banquet spread out for them on blankets. And the one with fire eyes who waited for them with great love and patience.