

# All for the love of Figs

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Sameer held his breath as he crouched down behind his brother, Hakim. He had been waiting a long time for his brother to fall asleep in front of the campfire, wrapped up in his carpet, nestled in the sand. All of the boys were sound asleep, except Sameer. He had been waiting all day for this moment. Ever since his older brother stole his bag of figs right out of his hands. It was his bag of figs, he'd earned it from tips given to him from the tourists they ferried in the dessert on the camels. Sameer was too young to get formally paid, so he relied on his tips to give him spending money. A bag of figs was a treat he seldom had and it meant a lot to him.

Earlier in the day, the boys had visited the market before reporting to work. Sameer had rushed to the fig merchant and had proudly negotiated a fair price for his bag of figs. As he stood admiring the ripe, juicy figs, his older brother Hakim swept past him grabbing the bag and holding it over Sameer's head as he laughed.

"What have we here?" Hakim asked, "A lovely bag of figs. Thank you little brother for buying me such a thoughtful gift" Hakim laughed as he teased his little brother. He stuffed the bag deep into his pocket and strolled away.

Sameer fumed with rage. He knew better than to chase after Hakim or to bawl like a baby. It would only make things worse. It was better to bide his time, and wait until his brother's guard was down and he had forgotten all about the figs.

Now that night had fallen and everyone was asleep, Sameer crept as quiet as a desert rat up behind his sleeping brother. He knew Hakim had placed the figs in his saddle bag, all he had to do was reach in, ever so slowly, careful not to move too fast, make any noise or breathe too hard. Kneeling beside the bag he reached, just a little further and felt his way into the bag. His fingers seeking the burlap string that held the fig bag closed. He found it, wrapped his fingers around it and slowly, slowly pulled the bag out. Then, just a quietly he backed away.

Back at his own bed he slid deep into his rug and pulled it high over his head. He had done it. He had pulled a trick over on his brother Hakim. He began eating the delicious figs one by one. They were so sweet and juicy. Worth all of the trouble to get them back. By morning the figs would be eaten and the bag burned in the fire. There would be no evidence of the theft and Sameer would have the knowledge that he was a skilled and honorable thief. After all, it wasn't stealing when the figs rightfully belonged to him.

Just then, a hand grabbed the rug and jerked it back. It was Hakim. Sameer clutched the bag of figs. "Go away Hakim, these are my figs." Sameer shouted angrily. Hakim just smiled and crouched down beside his little brother putting a finger to his lips. "Sh, you'll wake the whole camp. Oh course they are yours and you may keep them. You almost got away with your prize without me knowing. Next time, eat your figs more quietly. You were making enough noise to wake the dead." Hakim laughed. "Now share a fig with me and keep it down. We don't want to wake the others and have to share."

Sameer smiled and laughed with his older brother. Then he held out the bag and offered him a fig. The two brothers sat side by side in front of the fire, the rug around their shoulders. Both feeling a brotherly love they didn't quite understand and didn't need to express. They had each other and a bag of figs. It was enough.