A cartoon illustration of a young girl with dark hair in a braid, wearing a grey headscarf and a pink dress with grey pants. She is sitting on the ground, holding a long wooden stick. The background shows a desert landscape with sand dunes and a large tree trunk on the left. The title 'Annabelle and the Wishing Hill' is written in a large, stylized font in the center.

# Annabelle and the Wishing Hill



Author: Walaa Al-Jaafari

Illustrator: Esraa Majdi



3 a s a f e e r . c o m Annabelle and  
the Wishing Hill Author: Walaa Al-  
Jaafari Illustrator: Esraa Majdi



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Somewhere in this world, children are struggling to make their dreams come true. Early in the morning at sunrise, I sat on the wishing hill and sent my wish to the sky. One day, my wish will come true.

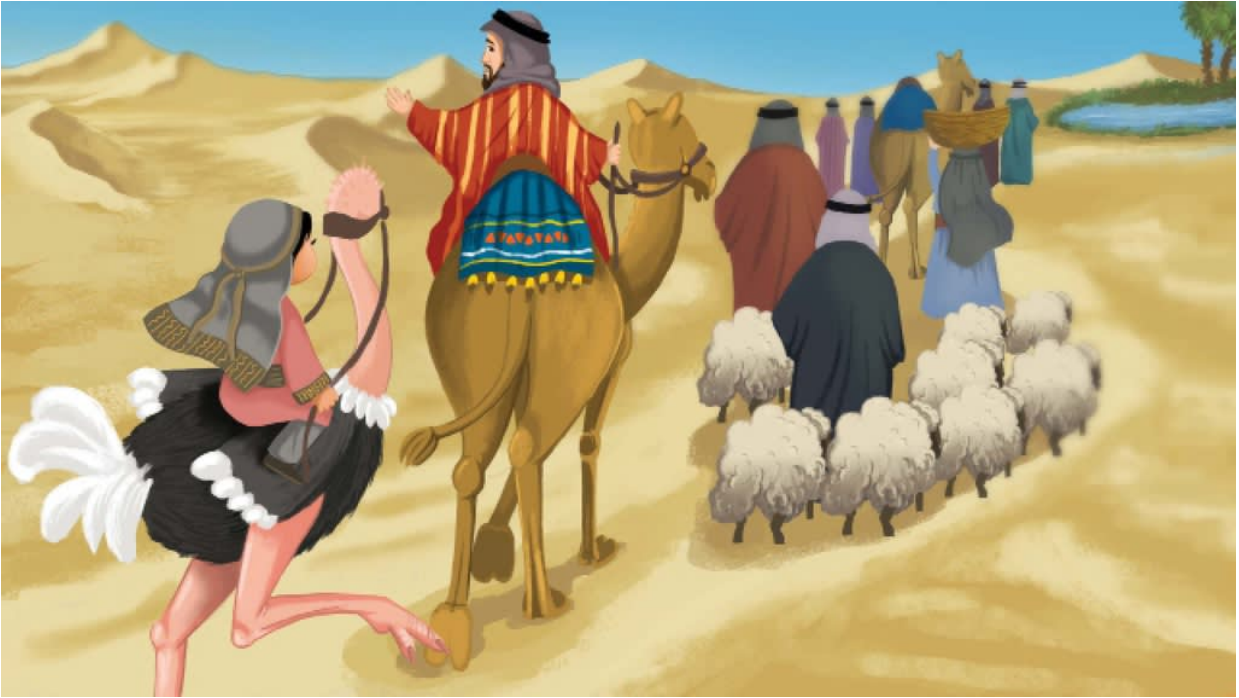


Dad called me, “Come on Annabelle.” I tapped my stick as I said, “Wig, Mig, Rig.” The sheep lined up and my ostrich, Flash, ran so I jumped on her back and off we went.



Only sand dunes here. Beyond them, nothing but rocky mountains. Nothing but pure nothingness, and among this nothingness, wishes are born. One day, close to the cactus, there will be a school and I'll carry my book, pencil and bag and go to that school.





Dad interrupted my dream saying, “Annabelle, where did you go? Hurry up, we’ll have to catch up with the others.” We were all moving to the same place - the oasis.





When we were finally there, the oasis was so crowded. We laughed and laughed. My friends called me and said, “Annabelle, please come and join us. We’re playing in the water.” I replied, “No thanks, I’ll play with the sand.”



I took a stick and drew a picture, saying, “This is a school, and this is the long road that leads me home.” As I drew, I bumped into a pair of shiny dress shoes.



When I looked up, I saw a man in a suit watching me. He turned around and said in a loud voice. “ Good afternoon, I’m the principal of the new school. It’s just beyond the valley. I came to tell everyone that all children are most welcome in our school.”



Everyone replied, “No way!” “It’s too far!” “The valley? Oh! No! Not in the valley.” I whispered, “Dad, please let me go.”



On the way home, Dad seemed gloomy and upset. I asked him, “Dad, can I please go to school?” Unfortunately, he shook his head no. “But it might be my only chance, Dad. Then I’ll build a school next to the cactus. I’ll fill the desert with books and colors! I’ll ride Flash and she’ll take me there.”





As we were warming ourselves by the fire that night, I said, “I have a plan. We can hire one of the guides to take me to the valley. Isn’t this their job? To lead people in the desert to other places safely?” Dad replied, “But they’ll ask for lots of money.” I said, “I’ll sell my sheep. I don’t need them



anymore. I'll take a rope and a lantern  
to cross the valley."



The next morning, Dad agreed that Uncle George would take me to the valley and help me cross the desert. He told everyone that I'll start studying at the school. I heard lots of grumbling, but I didn't care. Then I saw my ostrich, Flash, smiling from far away.



The sun shone brightly. I bid my  
parents goodbye and left for school.



When we arrived at the valley, there was a steep hill and the weather was very hot. When water seemed to glisten below in the valley, Uncle George asked, “Do you want to go back?”



I said, “No way.” He said, “Be careful. This is not water. It’s only a mirage. It will disappear when you arrive. Put the lantern on.” We tied the rope to a rock. I held the rope and as I climbed down, my foot got stuck between the rocks. I screamed, “Ahhh” and I heard my echo, “Ahhhh Ahhh Ahhh.” I held on to the rope and

quickly pulled out my foot and kept climbing until I reached the bottom..





We did it! I put the lantern on and we walked on a route that was surrounded by gourds and bitter cucumbers. We heard a hissing sound and I shivered and took a few steps back. Flash looked at me as if to say, “Do you want to go back home?”



I said, “No way!” and we laughed.  
Then we realized it was just a young  
deer passing by.



We finally arrived at the school. Flash stayed outside in the parking lot and I dashed into the school.



A B C D E 1 2 3 4 5 School was a magnificent place. It was full of numbers, letters, pictures, and colors.



We were back home by sunset.  
Everyone was waiting with lots of  
questions for us.





I told them about the route to school and everything I learned. “I know how to count and I’ll count my sheep.” “I’ll read stories to the little ones.” “I’ll sing and recite poetry.”





After a few days, we crossed the desert again. I was much happier this time.



And this time, there was a long line of children following me to school.



The End