A devoted traveler wed a woman whose laughter shimmered like desert sands, and he clung to her side as a dune clings to the wind. When urgent trade called him away, he journeyed to a bazaar where creatures of the desert were bartered, and purchased a fox. This fox did not speak, but its amber eyes mirrored the truth of all it witnessed. He placed it in a woven den, instructing his wife to guard it while he crossed the dunes.

Upon his return, he pressed the fox for visions of his absence. The fox’s gaze flickered, revealing fragmented images: “A storm of whispers,” it seemed to say, “and rivers that dissolved into dust.” The traveler, knowing no such tempests had swept their oasis, accused the fox of deceit and buried it beneath the sands, its cries swallowed by the wind.

The wife, who had orchestrated a mirage with nomads—a whirlwind to scatter voices, a hidden spring to feign sorrow, and mirrored shields to distort light—mourned silently. The traveler, later unearthing her ruse, wept for the fox’s truth and his own haste.