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K S A

# MIRAGE

In the 7th century, Jameel Bin Ma'mar was famous as a lover of the lady Buthayna from a neighboring tribe. The story of their romance is that Buthayna's people turn down Jameel's marriage proposal because they feel Jameel's verses praising their love have compromised her honor—merely saying that a woman loved a man was considered a blot on her honor in ancient Arab tribal society. Buthayna is forcibly married off to another man, but she and Jameel continue to be in love with each other, although they never consummate their love. Jameel continues to visit her at Wadi 'I-Kura (Al Ula), and to complain in verse of his longing.

**"If only the prime of the youth were new and old times come back, Buthayna, should my poetry spend a night in Wadi AlQura, then I'm happy."**

These words summarize the love the poet has for this region and I choose them to shed new emphasis on it to residents as well as visitors. The poetry offers a lens through which to witness the entire landscape. The words come from within the heart of the region and are, in many ways, an ode not only to one woman, but to nature itself. Mirage acts as a metaphor for the love Jameel had for Buthayna; a love so infinite, ever longing to be reached and grasped, like a Mirage.



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