

Literary Guide
Alphabet of Dreams
by Susan Fletcher
prepared by Val Hornburg

How to use this literary guide

We hope to provide a literary guide that will assist teachers, book club facilitators and parents in sharing novels in creative and exciting ways with students. It is suggested that you peruse the sections of this literary guide first before engaging students in reading the novel. Then, pick and choose the activities that will help bring the novel alive to the particular students you are working with. Enjoy and mostly, have fun reading!

Sections provided:

Pre-reading ~

- Read how to create a **notebook to use throughout the novel study**
- A **summary** of the book

During reading ~

- **Vocabulary & Chapter-by-chapter comprehension** questions

After reading the book ~

- **Discussion Questions** for a Literature Circle or Book Club discussion
- **Art** responses
- **Astronomy** responses
- **Social Studies/Geography** responses
- **Social Studies/Animal Transportation** responses
- **Social Studies/The Water System** responses

NOTE: This literary guide contains references and/or links to external web sites. These web sites are managed by third parties who are solely responsible for their content and availability.

This literary guide is available on-line: <http://www.SusanFletcher.com>

*Creating a notebook to use throughout
the novel study of
Alphabet of Dreams
by Susan Fletcher*

It is suggested that students create a notebook to use throughout the novel study of *Alphabet of Dreams*, by Susan Fletcher. The notebook will hold student responses to activities chosen by the teacher and student during the novel study.

Our sample notebook is a 1” plastic view binder where a student’s piece of collage or altered artwork (artistically created with mostly recycled materials) may be inserted inside the front cover. Depending upon activities chosen by the teacher, each student will also need a set of binder dividers for their work....and plenty of notebook paper for other responses.

Creating an *Alphabet of Dreams* Binder Cover ~

Students may choose to create a collage cover for the binder. Encourage students to use whatever they might have on hand for the collage including old cards, wallpaper scraps and scrapbooking materials.

Cover Directions:

Measure the front insert of the binder cover you’ve chosen – the artwork we created was 9 ½” X 11” and fit our 1” view binder. Using themes, images, and words, create a collage representing your experience of reading *Alphabet of Dreams*. You may choose to collect pictures, quotes and images throughout the reading of the story. Be sure that the finished product fits into the front of the view binder.

Label tabs for each section ~

There is a section designated for each type of response. Choose which literary responses will work best for your students. Choose from:

- 1) Vocabulary & Comprehension Questions ~ Chapter-by-chapter or Literature Group/Book Club Discussion Questions & Response**

- 2) Art**
- 3) Astronomy**
- 4) Social Studies ~ Geography**
- 5) Social Studies ~ Transportation**
- 6) Social Studies ~ The Water System**

Summary of
Alphabet of Dreams
by Susan Fletcher

Mitra and her little brother, Babak, are beggars in the city of Rhagae, scratching out a living as best as they can with what they can beg for--or steal. But Mitra burns with hope and ambition, for she and Babak are not what they seem. They are of royal blood, but their father's ill-fated plot against the evil tyrant, King Phraates, has resulted in their father's death and their exile. Now disguised as a boy, Mitra has never given up believing they can rejoin what is left of their family and regain their rightful standing in the world.

Then they discover that Babak has a strange gift: If he sleeps with an item belonging to someone, he can know that person's dreams. Mitra believes that they can use this gift to find passage back to the city of Palmyra and their remaining kinsmen. But soon Babak and his abilities come to the attention of a powerful Magus -- one who has read portents in the stars of the coming of a new king and the dawn of a new age. Soon Mitra and Babak find themselves on the road to Bethlehem...

The acclaimed author of *Shadow Spinner* returns to ancient Persia in this spellbinding saga -- a tale filled with the color of the caravansaries and the heat of the desert, a tale that reimagines the wonder and spirit of a lost age.

(from www.SimonSays.com , a website of Simon & Schuster Pub.)

Chapter -by -chapter Vocabulary & Comprehension Questions Alphabet of Dreams by Susan Fletcher

This section was created for those teachers who would like to monitor student progress closely. For each chapter of *Alphabet of Dreams*, if new vocabulary words are introduced, they are listed. Also, one or two reflection questions are provided for students to consider. Your methods of having students respond to the vocabulary introduced and the questions provided are up to you. These are some possibilities to consider:

- Refer to the binder/journal method shared in this literary guide and have students create tabs for “Vocabulary” and for “Comprehension Questions.”

Vocabulary ideas could include having students:

- use the vocabulary words in their own original sentences
- create “Jeopardy-like” questions for several chapters of vocabulary words. During a television “Jeopardy Game,” an answer is provided. The contestants on the show respond with a question that “defines” the answer. For use with vocabulary words, one student could share a vocabulary word and others would define the word using a question.

Comprehension question ideas include:

- having students write the answers to the questions in a section of their *Alphabet of Dreams* journal/notebook.
- sharing the answers to the questions in a small literature circle and recording the group answers in some fashion.

Note: () signifies the page in the paperback version of Alphabet of Dreams where you will find the word used in the text.

“L” signifies a geographical place, either ancient or present time, to find on a map

Another note: all of the vocabulary words can be found by using the following on-line resources: www.dictionary.com; www.ask.com; www.britannica.com; or www.wikipedia.com Of course, you and your students can use regular dictionaries and encyclopedias as well.

Part I - The City of the Dead

Ch. 1 Babak's Dream

Vocabulary: ossuaries (1) presage (2) Magus (3)
 thurible (3) Scythian (4)

Comprehension:

- *In this first chapter there is a quote, "Dreams can feed you, can send you on journeys to places beyond imagining." (pg.2) Do you agree with this? How do dreams play a part in your life?*
- *How do you think dreams are going to affect the lives of Babak and his sister?*

Ch. 2 Hope

Vocabulary: Susā (L, 7) Palmyra (L, 7)

Comprehension:

- *How do the dreams that Babak has, differ from other dreams?*
- *Do you believe in the power of foretelling dreams? Do you know anyone who has had this type of dream?*

Ch. 3 Paltry Gift

Vocabulary: paltry (10) Rhagae (L, 10) Spentas (14)
 transmogrified (16) parse (16)

Comprehension:

- *How can dreaming be dangerous to anyone, and especially to Babak?*

Ch. 4 The Man with Blue Tattoos

Vocabulary: profligate (19)

Comprehension:

- *How would you describe the kind of dream Mitra uses to help her sleep at night? What do you do to help yourself fall asleep at night?*
- *Why is Mitra so desperate to stay hidden that day in the caves?*

Ch. 5 Pandora's Box

Vocabulary: slavering (28)

Comprehension:

- *Does Mitra have any choice in trusting Zoya?*
- *Is a Pandora's Box opened?*

Ch. 6 Shaggy Beasties

Vocabulary: palsy (33)

Comprehension:

- *What more do we learn about the life Mitra and Babak have before they go into hiding? Who are they hiding from?*

Ch. 7 To Steal a Dream

Vocabulary: Bactria (L, 44)

Comprehension:

- *If you were Mitra, would you tell Babak that you are slipping pieces of other people's garments under his pillow so he'll dream about them?*

Ch. 8 Slit-Nose

Vocabulary: Margiana (L, 53) scabbard (54)

Comprehension:

- *How does the money Mitra and Babak receive, change how they move through the marketplace?*

Ch. 9 Pebbles and Stones

Vocabulary: querulous (62)

Comprehension:

- *What compels those living in the City of the Dead to stone young children?*

Ch. 10 The Eyes and Ears of the King

Vocabulary: caravansary (66) mulish (68)

Comprehension:

- *Why does Mitra have a hard time trusting Zoya?*

Ch. 11 Captured

Vocabulary: Caspian Gates (L, 73) brutish (74)

Comprehension:

- *Mitra is responsible for Suren's absence. How do you think she feels hearing about his possible capture?*

Ch. 12 Star Dance

Vocabulary: crone (79) defiles (79) fiefdom (81)

Comprehension:

- *It takes looking at the stars for Babak to remember and share his dream. Do your dreams ever get triggered by everyday things? Can you share an instance when that happened?*

Ch. 13 People of the Marsh

Vocabulary: hummocky (83) slaked (85) plaited (86)

Comprehension:

- *Why do you think Mitra is drugged? Is she betrayed?*

Ch. 14 Hell Hag

Vocabulary: Sava (L, 92) Elburz Mountains (L, 93)

Comprehension:

- *Do the tables turn for Mitra? For Babak?*

Part II - The Journey

Ch. 15 The Caravan Road

Vocabulary: Zagros Mountains (L, 97) potsherd (98)
laggardly (100)

Comprehension:

- *“We’re more alike than you think,” Zoya says to Mitra. From what we know about Mitra, do you agree?*

Ch. 16 He Cries for You

Vocabulary: pillion (108) gibbous moon (108)
cressets (108) draughts (109)
Ahura Mazda (109) Zoroaster (109)
arras (110) barsom rods (110)
kusti cords (110)

Comprehension:

- *So many thoughts are going through Mitra’s head as she is ushered into Melchoir’s chambers. What would you be feeling if you were Mitra?*

Ch. 17 Melchior

Vocabulary: anteroom (112) divan (112) chattel (115)
ablutions (117) crawl (118)

Comprehension:

- *Mitra tries to be assertive for her rights. Does she have any? Are her efforts in vain?*

Ch. 18 A Place of Many Secrets

Vocabulary: ewer (121) calabashes (123) sinewy (124)

Comprehension:

- *How do you think “the juggler” recognizes Mitra – by how she is tying knots or by some other means?*

Ch. 19 Procession of the Doomed

Vocabulary: mange (131) culled (131)

Comprehension:

- *Could there be reasons the cat Shirak, the donkey Gorizpa, and the camel, come into the lives of the children?*

Ch. 20 A Great Journey

Vocabulary: regalia (132) Ecbatana (L, 133)
crupper (136) plaint (139)

Comprehension:

- *Can you imagine setting off with a Magus on a caravan? There are so many sights, experiences and sounds to take in. What part do you think Mitra is enjoying? What part of it would you delight in?*

Ch. 21 Sweet Dreams

Comprehension:

- *What gives Mitra the courage to be bold, even in asking requests of the Magus?*

Ch. 22 The Fortress

Vocabulary: comportment (150) Antioch (L, 153)
Thrace (L, 153) Macedonia (153)

Comprehension:

- *Do you think Mitra has found a kindred spirit in Pacorus?*

Ch. 23 He Sleeps

Vocabulary: scree (158) limned (158) carven (162)

Comprehension:

- *Have you ever walked in your sleep or know someone who has?*
- *Why do you think Babak sleepwalks to the top of the fortress?*

Ch. 24 The Wanderers

Vocabulary: precession (166) star of Anahita (167)
edification (171)

Comprehension:

- *The planets Mars and Venus are referred to as “wanderers.” Why? (Hint: see page 403).*
- *When Melchior mutters under his breath, “Not those,” what do you think he is thinking about?*

Ch. 25 He Waits for You

Vocabulary: amphorae (172) clime (173) Ctesiphon (L, 174)

Comprehension:

- *Would you trust Pirouz if you were Mitra? Why or why not?*

Ch. 26 Across the Plateau

Vocabulary: wadis (181)

Comprehension:

- Mitra thinks, *“It was as bad as I had feared.”* (p. 185) *Why doesn’t she feel this kind of fear before agreeing to escape with Pirouz?*

Ch. 27 A Plan

Vocabulary: qanat (191)

Comprehension:

- *Is Mitra’s plan a good one? What do you think she hopes will happen?*

Ch. 28 Qanat

Vocabulary: importunings (196)

Comprehension:

- *Mitra thinks, “Who was I then? A fool who dreamed old dreams of nobility and consequence but in truth would never again have either.”* (p.201) *What do you predict will happen to Mitra and Babak?*

Ch. 29 Koosha

Comprehension:

- *Many old memories are triggered while Mitra and Babak spend time with Koosha. Are they helpful? Unhelpful?*

Ch. 30 Eyes to See

Vocabulary: sheepcotes (217) lee (218)

Comprehension:

- *How do you think Koosha can tell that Mitra is a girl?*

Ch. 31 How Would It Be?

Vocabulary: fodder (225)

Comprehension:

- *“How would it be, to cease with struggling and let go of it all,” Mitra wonders. (p.221) Are Mitra’s hopes for returning to Palmyra helping her or hindering her? If both, why?*

Ch. 32 If You Were a Girl

Vocabulary: currying (228) kohl (234) henna (234)

Ashi (234) Armaita (234)

Comprehension:

- *Describe Giv’s treatment of Mitra? Should he be so angry?*

Part III - To Follow A Star

Ch. 33 Ecbatana

Vocabulary: Saoshaynt (244) cataclysm (244)

Comprehension:

- *“Sin. It still felt like sin.” (p.245) Why does Mitra put the piece of cloth beneath Babak’s tunic when she knows it clearly will disturb him?*

Ch. 34 Star-Taker

Vocabulary: astral (249)

Comprehension:

- *“It is also said...that Melchior hopes for the currency of dreams to buy his way back into his old position of power.” (p. 247) When Pacorus tells this to Mitra, what feelings does this generate in her?*
- *What is a star-taker (astrolabe)? For more information about these, go to the following website:*
<http://www.astrolabes.org/electric.htm>

Ch. 35 Balthazar

Vocabulary: aquiline (257) azimuth (257)

Comprehension:

- *Describe Balthazar? His knowing ways? How is he different from Gaspar and Melchior?*

Ch. 36 Lose This World

Vocabulary: imperceptibly (263)

Comprehension:

- *Do you think Babak has dreamt too long for others and will “lose this world?”*
- *Why do you think Balthazar offers to take on the responsibility of the children when he hardly knows them?*

Ch. 37 Two Farewells

Vocabulary: implacable (272)

Comprehension:

- *Why wouldn’t Mitra agree to sell Gorizpa to the first buyer?*
- *“No matter how you tried,” reflects Mitra, “you couldn’t keep from betraying those you cared for.” Who do you think Mitra is referring to?*

Ch. 38 The Way to Babylon

Vocabulary: yazata (276) Herkales (276)
King Mithradates (276)
Seleucia (L, 280) Chaldeans (280)
Tigris River (L, 281)

Comprehension:

- *How is traveling with this caravan different from the other times Babak and Mitra travel with the Magus?*

Ch. 39 The Garrison

Vocabulary: whickering (285)

Comprehension:

- *“Well. You come from spirited stock,” says Giv. (p. 287) How terrifying must that experience be, to have daggers plunged into the bundles all around Babak and Mitra? And, her secrets are known to Giv. What thoughts must be going through Mitra’s mind?*

Ch. 40 The King’s Men

Vocabulary: Ishtar Gate (L, 288) ziggurat (289)

Comprehension:

- *The secret is out that the children are Vardan’s, the leader of the rebellion. How do the various members of the caravan act when they hear this information? Who would you trust?*
- *Would you want to be near the children?*

Ch. 41 Madmen and Stargazers

Comprehension:

- *“But the great western desert...only madmen and stargazers would dare it.” (p.298) What do you think Giv means by this?*

Ch. 42 Across the Desert

Comprehension:

- *Why do you think Babak takes a turn for the worse, when he isn’t dreaming for others anymore?*

Ch. 43 Blood

Vocabulary: tamarisk tree (310) convocation (312)

Comprehension:

- *Even more so than before, Mitra feels alone and has so many regrets. She is strong though, and perhaps must be even stronger and more determined now. Why?*

Ch. 49 Three Visitors

Vocabulary: motes (358) aquiver (360) trajectories (360)
 lucid (362) lexicon (366) admonition (366)

Comprehension:

- *How do the goodbyes of Melchior, Pacorus and Balthazar differ from one another? What does this reveal about each person?*

Ch. 50 The Babies

Vocabulary: runnels (371)

Comprehension:

- *Mitra and Babak are abandoned again due to a misunderstanding. Who are the soldiers really after and why?*

Ch. 51 Soldiers

Vocabulary: clangor (375) imprecations (376)
 curlew (377)

Comprehension:

- *In this chapter, we see the blessings and curses of Babak's dreams. How would you feel if you were Babak and many of your dreams came true – especially horrific ones?*
- *Why do you think the woman entrusts Mitra with her baby?*

Ch. 52 This Perfect Dark

Vocabulary: juddering (384)

Comprehension:

- *Mitra ponders, "What was it all for, the far, blazing omens of the night and all of this long journey?" (p.379) How would you answer this?*
- *Mitra also muses, "It occurred to me now that one might know a man from his dreams. That dreams, like stars, might make up an alphabet, a pattern of signs through which we might read the pulses of his heart, the temper of his soul." (p. 380) What place do dreams play in your life?*
- *Describe the ending? Is it a happy one? Hopeful? What questions are still unanswered at this point?*

Part V - Epilogue

Ch. 53 Home

Vocabulary: sojourners (390) prescient (393)
 vainglorious (396) soughing (400)

Comprehension:

- *We learn that many people change in the two months that progress in the novel. Who has experienced the most amazing changes?*

*Discussion Questions for Literature
Circles, Book Clubs or
whole class discussions
Alphabet of Dreams
by Susan Fletcher*

- 1) Find the place where the title appears within the book. Reflect on the title and share what it means within the context of the book. (Ch. 52)
- 2) People are always saying you should *follow your dreams*, but does it matter *which* dreams you follow? In other words, are some dreams more worthy than others? What do a person's dreams reveal about him/her? And what is this book saying about dreams – dreams in the sense of longing and aspirations?
- 3) With Koosha, the issue of Mitra's "being seen" comes up. What does it mean to be *seen* by another person? Are there times when we feel that people aren't really seeing us – that they're seeing what they want to see, instead of who we really are? Why do they do that? (Why do *we* do that to other people?) Or, in the case of women who are aging, why are they becoming invisible?
- 4) There are some *images of light* in the book. At the beginning, Mitra craves light; she can't bear to go into the caves without it. But in the cave near the end, she no longer craves light, and when she closes her eyes, her memories and her dream are full of images of light. What do you make of this? Does this feel like religious imagery to you, or do you think it's a softer metaphor? If the latter, a metaphor for what?
- 5) *Caves* are always showing up in Susan Fletcher's books. There are three cave-like places in this book: the caves at the beginning, the qanat, and the cave near the end. How do the caves function, in terms of Mitra's development? What does it do for her to spend time in these dark, quiet places? Can you trace her development by touching base at the scenes in the cave-like places?
- 6) The three Magi are also following their dreams on this journey. At one point Mitra reflects that Melchior is pursuing power; Gaspar, knowledge;

Balthazar, matters of the spirit or heart. Some have reflected that people over the centuries have approached their religions for a variety of reasons – and power, knowledge and matters of the spirit are perhaps the top three. Do you agree with this? Can you think of other reasons? Can you think of historical or personal examples of people approaching their religions for power, for knowledge, and for matters of the spirit or heart?

7) How does Mitra change over the course of the novel? What about her dream, her dream of uniting again with her noble family? “There was heart in it,” she thinks near the end, “but twisted by bitterness.” How did it have heart? How was it twisted by bitterness? What, specifically, are some of the things/characters/events that bring about her change? (You might think about the function of the animals here, for example, or how her sexual awakening plays into it.)

8) Did Mitra trust Zoya too much? Why do you think she did or didn’t? Zoya claims that she’s done Mitra a favor and Mitra doesn’t even know it. Is this true? Has she done Mitra a favor? Is Zoya a villain, a hero, or....what?

9) There’s been some discussion lately about the prevalence of girls dressed as boys in children’s literature. Why do you think this happens? Is it a negative trend? Positive? Has it been overdone? Is it believable that girls at various times in history might have dressed as boys?

10) One blogger opined that Mitra should have been a boy. What would that have done to the story? Would the story have worked as well that way?

Social Studies Group Response Activity ~

Compare the map at the front of the book to a modern map of the Middle East today.

Art Responses for
Alphabet of Dreams
by Susan Fletcher

Collage ~

Directions have already been shared encouraging students to create a collage that depicts images from the story. This piece of work can become the cover of the binder that will hold all work done in relation to reading and reflecting upon *Alphabet of Dreams*.

Another idea is for students to:

- color photocopy the above artwork and insert the copy into the front of the 1" binder cover and to...
- display the actual collage on some bulletin board or other type of display. The artwork could be framed using a simple frame from a dollar store or using other inexpensive means.

Alphabet of Dreams ~

Invite students to reflect upon the title of the book, *Alphabet of Dreams*. What comes to mind when they read the title? What do they dream about and hold dear?

Using their favorite art materials, encourage students to visually represent in some manner, their own alphabet of dreams. This could include a combination of collage, sculpture, printing, etc. The sky is the limit! A written explanation should accompany their artwork.

*Astronomy in
Alphabet of Dreams
by Susan Fletcher*

Gaspar studied the stars with various instruments, but mostly with an astrolabe.

Astrolabe Activity #1

Learn how to use an astrolabe (the Magi's star-catcher"). You can find out more about astrolabes, and how to use them at the following website:

<http://www.astrolabes.org/electric.htm>

Astrolabe Activity #2:

Encourage students to make astrolabes of their own. Directions can be found at:

http://cse.ssl.berkeley.edu/AtHomeAstronomy/activity_07.html

Some activities for using your homemade astrolabe are found at:

http://cse.ssl.berkeley.edu/AtHomeAstronomy/activity_08.html

Buy a personal, customized, quite reasonable astrolabe for your very own:

<http://www.astrolabes.org/personal.htm>

How we read the stars now

Most scientists use telescopes and other technology to study the stars and planets. Make a visit to a local planetarium, or use books and the internet to learn more about astronomy.

Making a Basic Telescope Activity

Directions for making a basic telescope can be found at:

<http://www.howstuffworks.com/question568.htm>

Social Studies ~ Geography in
Alphabet of Dreams
by Susan Fletcher

Mapping

At the beginning of the novel there is a map for the area covered by the characters in *The Alphabet of Dreams*.

Mapping Activity #1 ~ Group Activity

Encourage your students to work together in groups to answer the following questions:

- *Through what modern countries do Mitra and her companions travel?*
- *Which cities have the same names today as during the time of the novel? Which cities have different names?*
- *On a modern map, can you find the places that Mitra and her companions traveled?*

Mapping Activity #2 ~ Mapping Mitra and Babak's journeys:

- Ask students to make their own sketch of the map at the introduction of the novel. Encourage them to record the travels of Mitra and Babak on this map while reading the novel.

Mapping Activity #3 ~ Mapping today's Middle East

- Students might plot the journey on a map of today's Middle East. They can use some of the ancient maps at the following websites for assistance:

There is a fun, interactive map of ancient Parthia at the following website:

http://ancienthistory.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=ancienthistory&cdn=education&tm=1524&gps=136_136_1024_573&f=21&tt=13&bt=1&bts=1&zu=http%3A//www.parthia.com/map_mea.htm

Another map depicting ancient times is found here:

<http://www.oznet.net/iran/oldmap.htm>

Famous ancient gates

Mitra and her companions go through the Ishtar Gate in Babylon. You will find various photos of this gate at:

<http://images.google.com/images?hl=en&q=Ishtar+Gate+Jerusalem+photo&um=1&ie=UTF-8>

Ancient Gate Activity #1:

Encourage students to research and discover:

- *When was the Ishtar Gate built?*
- *The gate has been reconstructed out of ancient, glazed bricks; where can this reconstruction be found now?*

For help answering these questions, students can go to:

<http://www.bible-history.com/archaeology/babylon/ishtar-gate.html>

Ancient Gate Activity #2:

We are not told which gate Mitra goes through to Jerusalem.

Encourage students to find out:

- *What are some of the famous gates of Jerusalem today?*

Photos of the gates of Jerusalem and their history can be found at:

<http://www.bibleplaces.com/oldcitygates.htm>

Ancient Gate Activity #3:

- *Can you draw the walls of Jerusalem and put in the various gates?*
You will find photos of some of the gates of Jerusalem in Biblical times at:

<http://www.bibleplaces.com/oldcitygates.htm>

- *Why were ancient cities surrounded by walls?*
- *Why don't modern cities have them? (it has to do with the invention of gunpowder)*

Social Studies ~ Animal Transportation
in
Alphabet of Dreams
by Susan Fletcher

Transportation is an important theme that runs throughout *Alphabet of Dreams*. You will find information and activities provided for transportation by camels. Choose the activities that best meet the needs of your students.

Camels ~ transportation by land

For the answers to many of the questions and suggested research below as well as to learn more about camels, visit this incredible website:

<http://www.allcamels.com>

There are several different kinds of camels in *Alphabet of Dreams*.

- What is the difference between one-humped camels (dromedaries), two-humped camels (Bactrian camels), and crosses between the two (hybrids)?

For help answering these questions, you can find a diagram of a Dromedary camel here:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/mammals/camel/camelcoloring.shtml>

A Bactrian camel diagram is found at this site:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/mammals/camel/Bactrian.shtml>

Photos and information about hybrid camels are found here:

<http://www.messybeast.com/genetics/hybrid-camels.htm>

<http://www.camelphotos.com/DifferentTypesP1.html>

Questions to consider:

- *What are the ways in which camels' bodies are specifically adapted to their environment?*
- *How is the Bactrian camel adapted for a different kind of climate and terrain?*

- *Can you think of other animals specifically adapted for particular environments?*

Camel Gear

Mitra is given the job of mending camel gear.

Questions to consider:

- *What are some examples of camel gear and decoration that camels might wear?*
- *What is a nose peg?*

There are many different kinds of saddles for dromedaries. Learn about Tuareg saddles, Kenyan saddles, Arabian saddles and Omani saddles.

Questions to consider:

- *In what way are Omani saddles significantly different than the others?*
- *Where is a saddle usually put on a Bactrian camel?*
- *How does a saddle for a camel differ from a saddle for a horse?*
- *What other means of transportation were used in the ancient times?*

*Social Studies ~ The Water System
in Alphabet of Dreams
by Susan Fletcher*

Qanats

Questions to consider:

- *What is a qanat?*
- *What purpose does it serve?*
- *Why must the water run underground?*
- *How is a qanat constructed and how does it work?*
- *What device is used to get water up out of the shaft of a qanat?*

Visit these websites for ~

Photos and an explanation of qanats:

<http://www.livius.org/q/qanat/qanat.html>

Qanats (Kariz) in Iran:

[http://www.destinationiran.com/Kariz_\(Qanat\).htm](http://www.destinationiran.com/Kariz_(Qanat).htm)

History of qanats:

<http://users.bart.nl/~leenders/txt/qanats.html>

While Persians were using qanats, the Romans were using aqueducts.

Question to consider:

- *Why would the two countries develop different ways of transporting water?*

Qanat Activity #1:

Using a Venn diagram, compare and contrast the qanat with the aqueduct. For a description of how to use Venn Diagrams as a graphic tool, visit this website:

<http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/actbank/tvenn.htm>

Qanat Activity #2:

- Find out where your tap water comes from. Is it as clean as bottled water? How might you find out? Water is becoming more and more of a precious resource. Create some kind of educational tool that will:
 - *teach your friends about where the water you drink comes from*
 - *educate us about water conservation and its importance, or*
 - *the pros and cons of using bottled water*