



PAMELA CAMEL
by
Bill Peet

Pamela gets fed up with her status in the circus and decides to run away. She feels nobody will miss her because she is considered to be a "stupid brute". When she saves the train from a terrible wreck, she is viewed differently and welcomed back into the circus as the "most amazing and extraordinary dromedary to walk the face of the earth!"

Although Pamela doesn't live in an area of the world where there is a severe shortage of water, camels live in severe climates. Camels can be divided into two groups, those with two humps and those with one. These humps are made of fat and serve as food reservoirs. Camels don't store water but water in their humps is released when the fat in their humps is burned. In a way, therefore, humps are water reservoirs, too. Certain cells in the camel's stomach also extract a great deal of water from the animal's food. Camels use their fur to keep heat OUT! The camel's brain can't get too hot. Blood on the way to the camel's brain is cooled by passing through blood vessels in the camel's long nose, where the air moving in and out carries away the heat.

Bactrian camels have two humps, and can go without drinking for five to six days. They can smell water for thirty miles. Dromedary camels, such as Pamela, have one hump, are larger, and can go longer without water. They are strong, tireless, and can travel for twelve hours with heavy loads and no rest. No wonder Pamela was not afraid to try it on her own: no wonder she viewed herself as special!

MATERIALS: 1 cup solid vegetable shortening, 2 Ziploc™ bags

ACTIVITY: Measure shortening and put into one bag. Turn second bag INSIDE-OUT and put this bag INSIDE the bag with shortening making sure to reverse the zipper tracks. Push the shortening around to make one or two humps.

TEACHER NOTES: If you are preparing many bags, it is less expensive to use the cans of solid vegetable shortening. However, if you are preparing just a few bags, or doing it with students, the one-cup sticks are much easier (less messy) to use.

SOURCE: SuperScience Blue Edition, January 1990.

STANDARDS:

BSL: 3.3, 4.11, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 12.1

NCTM: 4d, 10a

SCS: A1, A2, B1, C1, C3, H2, H4

Peet, Bill. Pamela Camel. Houghton Mifflin Company, c1954. ISBN#0-395-41670-1.