

Award Winning Musical Pageant Returns

The Nightly Musical Pageant is set to return to the 71st Annual Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival, February 17th through February 26th. The stage effects, costumes, and vocal talents alone will dazzle you, but you don't want to miss this new spin of the 1,001 Arabian Nights extraordinary tale, "Envy and the Enchanted Oasis." The entire show is sure to keep the audience engaged as the cast takes fairgoers back in time to the Far East.

Layan, Bayan and Hayam are three young sisters who grew up with nothing but love and devotion for each other. As sisters do, they were lightheartedly sharing their wildest thoughts about "dream husbands" when their conversation was overheard by King Khuzrau as he passed by "in disguise." Layan, the eldest sister, professed her interest in marrying the King's Baker, Farit, so that she could always have as much of his delicious bread as she wanted. Bayan, the middle sister, similarly targeted the King's Chef, Hahil, since she could have his wonderful meals and still get the Baker's bread. For Hayam, the youngest, only King Khuzrau himself would do – plus she could get the Chef's food and Baker's bread anytime she wanted as well! Having overheard the sisters' conversation, and knowing that he, his Chef and his Baker were interested in these very same women, respectively, King Khuzraw made the connection happen and each were married.

Nearly a year later, we find now Queen Hayam to be with child and still living what she believed to be the perfect life in unity with her sisters. Layan and Bayan – not so much – their former love and devotion has now given way to the seeds of envy and hatred as they believe their youngest sister to have "won a bigger prize." Not to be outdone, the two sisters devise a rather sinister plan! Offering to serve as Hayam's midwives, Layan and Bayan conspire that they will switch the baby at birth with something that will incense the King to the point of eliminating the Queen. In a surprise to all, the Queen actually gives birth to triplets whom the older sisters swap with a dog, a cat and a camel! But for Grand Vizier Farooq's intercession, Queen Hayam would surely have been put to death – instead, she is merely imprisoned for life. As for the babies, they are set in baskets and placed afloat in the nearby river.

After over 18 years of imprisonment (with instructions to all in the kingdom not to speak with her), Queen Hayam finally gets word out to someone who will hear her tale – the mystic Sarafina. Queen Hayam relays that for 18 years she has watched the Palace Gardener and his wife raise three children, two boys (Bahman and Pervis) and a girl (Perie-Zadeh) that appear to be triplets, though the wife had previously been known to Hayam to be unable to bear children. Sarafina offers to help establish whether these are actually Queen Hayam's and King Khuzrau's children. Traveling to their estate at

the outskirts of the Kingdom, Sarafina does indeed establish the truth and now must find a way to right the horrible wrongs that have resulted.

Knowing that no one would believe just her word, Sarafina devises a plot of her own which starts with convincing Perie-Zadeh that the life she thought was perfect was actually lacking three things: A Singing Bird, A Singing Tree and A Golden Fountain. Sarafina tells Perie-Zadeh to go, the brothers go in turn – without success – leaving Perie-Zadeh to attempt it on her own. As with her brothers before her, she finds a disfigured hermit (Darwyshe) as Sarafina had instructed. With Darwyshe's help, Perie-Zadeh is able to overcome the danger and successfully complete the quest – though not without experiencing her own personal disappointment!

Back home from the quest, the brothers run into King Khuzrau and his entourage while out on a hunt for jackals. King Khuzrau becomes charmed by the two brothers' manners and cannot shake the feeling that they must have met in the past. After declining an invitation to the palace (because their sister is not there to come along), the brothers invite the King to their estate to meet Perie-Zadeh. They also pique King Khuzrau's curiosity by telling of the items they have obtained on their recent quest. The King accepts the invitation and is equally intrigued by Perie-Zadeh and a familiarity to her. Of course, Sarafina uses the situation to her advantage in her efforts to assist destiny in correcting the wrongs of the past.

Will Sarafina succeed in reuniting the royal triplets with their true birth father? Their true birth mother? Will Queen Hayam and King Khuzrau believe the truth? Will it matter? And, wait, won't there be a wedding? What about the traditional wedding?

The answers to all of these questions and more are waiting to be revealed - along with a surprise twist or two. However, just like King Shahriyar in the Tales of 1001 Arabian Nights, you'll have to wait for another night to learn the answers – the night that you attend the 2017 Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival's Nightly Musical *Envy and the Enchanted Oasis*. With a cast of all ages, exciting musical numbers, authentic costumes, live animals, and timely humor mixed with suspense and intrigue – there is something for everyone in this evening of entertainment you won't want to miss! The Nightly Musical Pageant is free with general Fair admission. You'll want to come early to experience the inspirational "Salute to America" which will honor our country's armed services beginning at 6:15 p.m

The 71st Annual Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival is presented by Fantasy Springs Resort Casino, the desert's leader in gaming and entertainment. The Fair, in Indio, runs February 17-26. Gates open at 10 a.m. and close at 10 p.m. Purchase your tickets early and receive them at a discounted price: \$9 for adults, \$8 for seniors, \$7 for youth, \$7 for group tickets or bus tours (minimum of 25), and \$22 for Unlimited Carnival Ride Wristbands. For more information, call 800.811.FAIR or visit www.datefest.org where you can buy and print your Fair tickets at home.

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