Love Landmarks

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Love Landmarks

Our land may be a vast desert, but just as you can find oases of greenery and respite scattered throughout, so can you find testaments to love, spanning decades and centuries. Here, we will take you on a journey throughout Saudi Arabia to find a few of love's timeless imprint upon the land.

Love of two mountains, Al-Wahbah Crater, Taif



About 250 kilometers northeast of Taif, Al-Wahbah Crater is a 250 m deep and 2-3km in diameter crater with a distinctive white salt deposit center and vegetation near the rim. Once mistakenly thought to be a meteorite crater, it's now widely considered to be the site of former volcanic activity. The legend though is a far more intriguing tale about one mountain falling in love with another.

Tamiyyah Mountain lived in the Harrat Kishb lava field northeast of Makkah, and Qitn Mountain lived more than 300 kilometers away, west of Al-Qassim. One night, after a flash of lightning illuminated Qitn's beauty, Ṭamiyyah fell in love and immediately jumped out of her spot to be near him. As she flew near, her mountain-cousin Ukkash was jealous and desired her for himself, so he threw a spear and sent her crashing to the ground next to him, barely 50 kilometers south of Qitn. The spot where she had jumped from is locally known as Tamiyyah's Quarry, or Al-Wahbah Crater.

The crater can be visited today and their love story revisited and reimagined.

The Love Market, Dammam



Started in the 1940s, this was the first female market in the Eastern Province. It became famous for having traditional cafes and selling gold, jewelry and women's clothing.

There are a couple of stories behind the origin of its name.

It is said that one section of the market used to be famous for selling seeds and nuts, earning it the name of Souq Al-Habb. As the market grew, couples would visit the tailors and gold and jewelry stores in preparation for their weddings, so the inflection on the name changed into the more appropriately titled Souq Al-Houb.

Another myth recounts that someone named the street that way in honor of the 1959 Egyptian film "Love Street" (Share'a Al-Houb).

In recent years there has been an annual festival to showcase arts and crafts, as well as host performances on a stage teaching passerby about Dammam's history and culture and traditional markets. In honor of protecting its cultural standing, the street and area were renovated in 2020 by minimizing vehicle access, adding landscaping, and installing accessibility options for the elderly and physically challenged, all towards making it much more friendly and accommodating for pedestrian traffic. It is a great place for a stroll with a loved one.

Sakhrat Antarah, Al-Qassim

It has been said that famed warrior poet Antarah Ibn Shaddad used to meet his cousin Abla at this rock in Uyun Al Jiwa, Al-Qassim. Check out our story about it in our inaugural issue Isolation, April 2020. Perhaps it is time to take your partner to that special rock and recite a few romantic unforgettable lines.

The Aja and Salma Mountains, Hail

Today, Aja and Salma are twin peaks in the Shammar Mountain area in Hail; but the origin of their names stems from the tragic pre-Islamic love story of Aja and Salma.

Desperately in love, the story varies as to why the couple tried to run away. Whether they were from opposing tribes, or that their parents or brothers refused the marriage, in all cases Salma sent a letter to Aja through her maid, begging him to ignore her family and meet her at a mountain near his home. Although afraid and hesitant, he agreed to meet her at a cave, but they were still caught there and killed. Each one of them was subsequently hung up or buried atop separate mountains.

The legend goes that their love was too strong to end upon their deaths — strong enough to move mountains and make the current Aja and Salma mountain peaks closer than they used to be. The strength of this couple's love can be reflected upon with a visit to the standing timeless mark of their love.

Land of Jameel and Buthaina, Al-Ula



Jameel was a famous 7th century CE poet, but he started out as a camel shepherd — in what is now AlUla — who once had taken his herd out to the fields for grazing. His camels had been crowding around a water source when Buthaina came with her camels and, not finding access to the water, scared one of his camels away.

Jameel got angry and cursed Buthaina, but she did not take that lightly and cursed right back at him. Impressed by her rebellious character, Jameel instantly fell in love with her, writing and reciting poetry proclaiming his love and adoration for her. She loved him as well, but being from different tribes, her father refused their marriage and quickly married her off to a different man.

They still met in secret, however, and Jameel refused to hide his love as he continued to recite poetry about her. Buthaina's family complained to the authorities and were granted permission to kill him if he ever came near again. So he escaped to Egypt and never saw Buthaina again.

Some legends say that he returned years later looking for her, but she had already moved to the Levant. Another legend says that he stayed in Egypt, but before dying, he spent all his fortune to have someone take his final poem about her to Buthaina. Soon after she read the heartfelt poem, she died as well to join him in the next life.

Special Contributor:

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