

A Tribal Soul

by Anne Emerson, December 2023.

Annie is not a geneticist nor an anthropologist, but she is confident enough that the following merits discussion/feedback that she is putting it out there for your amusement:



Young Annie and Twin, 1974

The inner soul of someone with honey-gold hair and skin is that of a Bedouin tribeswoman. North African/Middle Eastern Desert tribes may well have been the original honey-gold peoples who conquered North India many thousands of years ago. Here are the characteristics of people who look like Annie, including her husband and children, that inspire this idea:

- Honey-gold skin and tawny hair, to match desert sands. Honey-gold skin will tan fairly dark, and not burn, as long as its exposure to the elements proceeds slowly. Such skin looks natural and healthy in the outdoors life/world. It probably glows!



Young Annie at Riverside

Long, thick, tawny hair that can grow down to the ground; it has wavy or loose tight, like African curls). This adaptation for protection from in the desert daylight, that may attractiveness. People with hair for it. If it is hidden or cut off, Biblical story of Sampson and



Young Annie's hair

grow down to curls (not was likely an the strong sun have become an indication of sexual like this are proud of it and envied its power is lost. (Consider the Delilah, and the shaming of women off their hair.)



Annie's son - blue-grey eyes

- Blue-grey eyes (neither light blue, like Norse peoples, nor dark blue/indigo, like Celtic peoples); considered cold in Middle Eastern countries – perhaps because of the self-control which their presence in the face conveys. Self-control is not coldness; and extreme self-control was probably necessary in the harsh conditions of ancient African and Middle Eastern deserts.

- Tolerance for both heat and cold; tolerance for heat up to about that of an English summer; perhaps a little more; not

tolerance for the high heat of South India. So honey-gold peoples, Annie suggests, may have conquered a temperate range of climates. Some of them perhaps spread North and adapted to a deeper cold; they likely became the Norse peoples, with very fair skins, light blue eyes, and flaxen hair. Others perhaps spread West to Europe, then to England and conquered the Celtic peoples; while others likely spread East to India and, with intermarriage, lightened the dark skins of Indian/South Asian peoples. Many of these peoples spoke Indo-European languages. (Persian; Sanskrit; Latin, for example.)



Desert sand and red seas wild, by Annie

It would be a mistake to think that Annie's tolerance for cold, and that of her children, indicates a Norse origin. Think, instead, of cold desert nights and hot desert days in the golden sands of the ancient Middle East



Chilly night, Outer Banks, NC, by Annie

and North Africa (Sahara Desert). If honey-gold peoples share genes with Scandinavians, perhaps those genes remain in the Scandinavian genome, after adaptation of honey-gold peoples to the far north.

People with Annie's genotype can likely tolerate hunger and thirst far better than the typical non-honey-gold person. We can go

for days without food or water, if we have a problem to solve. Again, I argue that this is an adaptation to the realities of desert life. It can be many miles; many days, between oases; an oasis may dry up and a life-saving response may be needed, in order to find water elsewhere. It should not be assumed that these adaptations are abnormal, if others lack them.

Now – to the personality. Annie was very lucky to have studied Middle Eastern literature, from the Pre-Islamic odes, through the flowering of Islam and the Islamic Empire, up to modern Middle Eastern poetry and prose. Perhaps it was her nomadic nature that told her to study a world to which she could travel relatively easily from her home in England; rather than, say, a Far Eastern culture for which she would have needed more money and a longer flight. Neither of which did she have, or foresee getting, although she was most interested in all sorts of cultures.

The internet recently informed Annie that hunter-gatherer tribes were matriarchal, in the way that some social animals (such as wolves) live in matriarchal packs or groups.

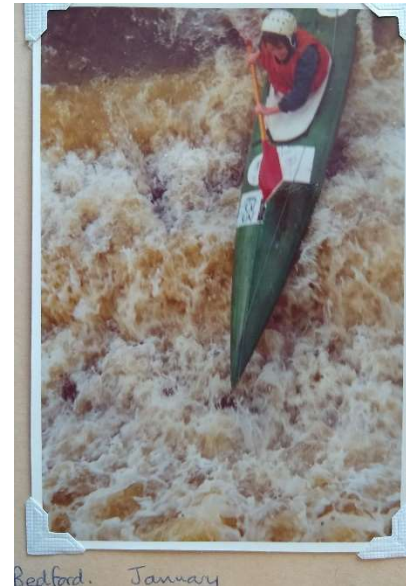


Annie's son has a wolf-dog to match!

These groups are led and taught by a wily grandmother/matriarch; she may have an intuitive sense of social justice; while the tribe's, or pack's, hard physical work is executed mostly by strong, young adult males.

So, now that she is old, and thinks like a senior tribal matriarch, Annie's poetry reflects elements of pre-Islamic (tribal) "odes" – lyrical, musical, structured, rhythmic; she likes to play with rhyme patterns, including a mono-rhyme; she addresses grand themes of life, death, and

philosophy. Her poems describe the natural world; including its behavior. If she had to pick a favorite poet, it would be Gerard Manley Hopkins – Oxford-educated spiritual leader; spinner of complex rhythms and new words. He was eventually too busy doing good works to write more poems.



Bedford. January
Young Annie shooting weir at mini-slalom

Annie has an uncanny sense of how to get where she wants to go, without seeming to remember the way.

She hypothesizes that creatures of the harsh, wild and often-empty sands, lacking signposts, get connected to the earth's magnetic field, and to the moon and to the



Young Annie - Sunset at Riverside, with swan family; photo album;
Middle Eastern carpet in background

stars. Annie loves wild things and fierce beauty; she is adapted for taking risks and making unflinching decisions for her tribe of wild men. In a more-cultured world, she is drawn to things with Middle Eastern characteristics – epic poems like those of pre-Islamic Bedouin tribes, over pretty-pretty poems; architecture such as that of the Taj Mahal, over English cathedrals; geometric designs; symmetry with one or two small things out of place. (Middle Eastern carpets could not be perfect; only God was perfect; so a mistake would be built into the design.)

For jewels, she prefers cabochons to cut stones, and raw rocks to finished pieces. She is interested in crystal structures and their properties. She might be a diamond in the rough, but sees no need to get herself cut and polished. She is hard and strong, with a crystalline structure/integrity, like a diamond (cut or uncut) and those are the qualities she respects.



Young Annie above Ullswater, 1977

Those would be the strengths of this personality-type. Today, she would likely be diagnosed ADD or ADHD. Annie has raised, and taught, such children, and they tend to have honey-gold hair, restless bodies, and a great aversion to boredom. The “system” does them a great disservice not to give them their heads and train them to use their talents wisely.

As regards personal weaknesses, the skills of a desert matriarch can be used against her by people who do not understand her, or who do not care to accept her leadership. If there are few signposts in Annie’s desert world, then false signposts can be created for her. She can puzzle and puzzle to understand this overload of information and make sense of it.

If she is guided more by intuition (that which is hidden, including the earth’s magnetic field and the feelings of others) than by obvious physical signposts, such as blazes on trees, she may not know why she is right about something; and she may be confused if others do not confirm her intuitive (or animal/instinctive/emotional) perceptions.

This gives her some intellectual qualities recognized by her teachers – conceptual wizardry, inattention to arbitrary details, and uncertainty in the presence of challengers – but not by her peers; until they have reason to see the same.

If she couldn’t be a desert matriarch, she might have been an absent-minded mathematics professor, writing elaborate epic stories in her spare time! There have been many such professors, including several trained at Oxford University in England. A few examples come to mind: Tolkien; C.S. Lewis; “The Inklings;” Dodgson; Lewis Carroll. Perhaps Adam Smith might qualify – he built a fantastic idea for a free society



Young Annie, home from North Africa, 1975

and placed it in context, within the grand sweep of history! (Yet, he wasn't married, so far as Annie knows. Maybe he overlooked the importance of women to society...)

And now to friendship and marriage – the author of the Arabian Nights (1001 nights, approximately as long as romantic love is said to last) was a woman named Scheherazade. Her husband was a Sultan who had the lovely habit of marrying a woman at night and killing her in the morning. He was super-rich and he could do things like that! I am told the woman who inspired the Taj Mahal was named Mumtaz Mahal, but we can imagine that her nickname, or pen-name, might have been Scheherazade. The Taj Mahal is the most magnificent tomb known to man. Yet, the Sultan's third wife was already dead when, they say, he realized he loved her forever.

So, back to Bedouin tribes, and honor in the desert. If your mortal enemy avoided your tribespeople's knives and fists long enough to make it into your tent, he became your honored guest, and you had to treat him as such, with the most gracious hospitality and kindness. As soon as he left your shelter, he was again fair game for



Palm trees and sand in the US today

your knives and fists. You would surely kill him this time, before he could reach safety far away from you.

Annie has been pondering the logic of such a rule-book. She has concluded that the purpose of this nutty morality is to ensure that mortal enemies talk things through, such that the guest persuades the host that he does not actually want to kill his enemy. The visitor then will be free to leave in peace, with some sort of treaty having been negotiated. (It's

expensive to entertain lavishly, if you are a poor Bedouin. And, in the modern world, it's expensive to fight lavishly, even if you are a very rich country...)

Back now, to Scheherazade and the Sultan. The Sultan is a rich man, in charge of a wealthy and civilized culture; he has taken his desert nature (his perceived need to stay safe, invulnerable) to its extreme, with the help of his courtiers. Therefore, after an intimate moment, he must destroy his confidante in order to protect himself.

Scheherazade has had the misfortune to attract his attention. How is she to survive the night, let alone another day? So, she starts to weave spells - tales about the fierce, fantastic desert, filled with cliffhangers and magic carpets; genies and wishes (usually three – one for nirvana; one to correct the unintended consequence; and one to put everything back the way it was before). She stops telling the story, right at the cliffhanger, so that her husband has to keep her alive long enough to hear the next

chapter. Scheherazade thus becomes the woman of such a man's dreams – a desert princess who is a real tease in the bedchamber.

So, why does the Sultan not appreciate her until after her death? Annie suggests that it is because he does not understand that she is “singing” for her life. She does not do it of her own free will, exactly. He has not asked her what she wants from life; he has just assumed that what pleases him also pleases her.

Annie says, this is a universal theme in life and literature – excess breeds misperception; power corrupts; powerful men think others, even their wives, want power the same way they do. For a desert tribal matriarch, her worst nightmare is to be a guest in the tent of an enemy tribe. She can neither leave the enemy tent nor enjoy the visit, unless she can somehow persuade the enemy to love her truly.

Annie further suggests that, if all the courtiers of the enemy king (Sultan) think Sheherazade likes to be the Sultan's plaything, they may laugh along with their corrupt and foolish leader, and enjoy the spectacle, instead of helping her escape the trap. When she dies, now of natural causes, because the Sultan loves her so much that he takes her to the battlefield with him (not a good place for a new mother), everyone wonders how this could have happened.



Annie and Company, at Riverside

The Sultanate falls apart because the Sultan is mired in grief and cannot attend to affairs of state. The courtiers would have been better off telling the Sultan

what Scheherazade needed, so that she might stay well. (Speak truth to power!) Catch-22. It's a good story, anyway. And so are the stories in the Arabian Nights. Magic carpets; incognito princes; genies that won't go back in their bottles; etc.



More of Annie and Company, at Riverside. Some of these people have now had stellar careers!



Left: Young Annie carrying beat-up kayak to river. Annie's kayak was a green "Wildcat". Below: there was only one life-jacket... Annie's friend was a beginner. It's February, in chilly England!



Bushy 1/2 TERM - FEB ANNE



ANNE SEPT 72



ANDY MIKE ANNE SYMONDS YAT

Slalom at Symonds Yat on the Welsh border, 1972: Left - Annie in individual competition; Right - Annie in team competition



Annie's family – including her books, her hair and her twin, the latter with a silver medal that she won at the Bridge Olympiad in Seattle, 1984.