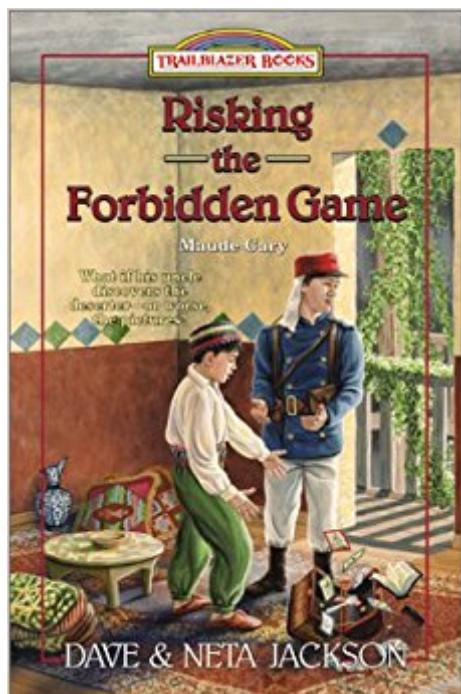


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# Risking The Forbidden Game: Maude Cary (Trailblazer Books #38)



## **Synopsis**

Trailblazer Books makes history exciting and relevant for both boys and girls. Mehdi Ksara, a Muslim boy in Morocco, collects items he finds among the foreigners living in his village. He knows he risks his parents' wrath by treasuring the pictures of Jesus given to him by missionary Maude Cary. Will the missionary's God save Mehdi when his pictures are discovered?

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Dave and Neta Jackson are a full-time husband/wife writing team who have authored and co-authored many books on marriage and family, the church, relationships, and other subjects. Their books for children include the TRAILBLAZER series and Hero Tales, volumes I, II, III, and IV. The Jacksons make their home in Evanston, Illinois.

The Dare An overloaded donkey heaved an annoyed eee-aww! eee-aww! in the narrow cobblestone street below the second-floor window, waking Jamal from his dreams. But as soon as the boy popped his eyes open, he heard the familiar call of the muezzin from the tall minaret of the mosque in the square: "Allah is great! There is no God but Allah!" The morning call to prayer already? Jamal sat bolt upright on the soft rugs and cushions that served as his bed and squinted at his uncle Samir's bed in the semi-dark room. Empty. Jamal groaned and felt around for his

trousers and cloth shoes. Why hadn't he heard Uncle Samir leave for prayer? He had wanted to get up in time to grab a handful of dates and drink some water before the gray fingers of dawn revealed the difference between a black thread and a white thread—the traditional way in the Muslim world to tell when another day of fasting had begun during the month of Ramadan. Now there would be nothing to eat or drink until nightfall. Winding his cloth sash around his already rumbling belly, Jamal hurried out on the balcony that ringed the second floor of rooms above the open courtyard of the Isaam home. The household was quiet. His father, grandfather, and uncle were probably already at the mosque where his father led prayers five times a day. His younger sisters were probably still asleep—still "babies" needing to be cared for by their mother. Jamal hurried down the steps to the lower courtyard, padded across the cool tiles and through the dark hall to the front door. It wasn't easy not to eat or drink all day long during Ramadan, but he was twelve now, no longer a child for whom exceptions could be made. Well, he'd just have to tough it out till his family broke the fast at nightfall . . . but all the more reason to play The Game today. It helped distract his mind from his empty stomach. A smile tugged at the corners of Jamal's mouth as he slipped out the door and ran down the narrow street to the mosque. No one else knew about The Game except his friend Hameem. It all started a couple weeks back when the two boys, playing along the river that flowed down the mountain and watered the town of Sefrou, had found a military canteen stuck in the mud of the riverbank. . . . Jamal snatched up the canteen, looking around to see if anyone had seen him. One of the French soldiers occupying the town must have dropped it. Hameem's eyes grew wide as Jamal dipped the canteen in the cold, rushing river, then raised it to his lips to drink. "What are you doing, foolish boy! That belongs to the infidels!" Jamal, a wiry contrast to the stocky Hameem, shrugged. "It's mine now." "But if they catch you with it, they will think you are a thief!" Jamal considered. He knew the rules. French property was French property and should be returned to the commanding officer. But why should he help the French? The French didn't belong in Sefrou—or anywhere in Morocco, for that matter. That's what Uncle Samir said. Jamal's uncle agreed with the rebel tribes out in the desert who refused to accept the Treaty of Fez the sultan had signed in 1912, which made Morocco a French Protectorate. For the most part, French, Arab, African, and Jew mingled side by side in the walled cities and towns along Morocco's fertile coastal plains. But the wild Berber tribes—who barely accepted the sultan's authority, much less a foreign power—kept the spirit of rebellion alive. One day Morocco would be independent once more. Jamal decided. "It's my trophy—the spoil of war!" He held the canteen high. Hameem sneered. "Do you think your uncle will let you bring that into your house? Your mother will make you

wash your hands and say ten prayers of penitence." That was true, too. The sultans of Morocco might be pro-European, with their phonographs and railroads and electric lights. And ordinary Muslims tolerated and cooperated with their French "protectors." But many devout Muslims would not allow anything belonging to the infidels in that most sacred place, their homes. Jamal pulled Hameem down into the scrubby bushes, where they could not be seen by the women washing clothes in the river. His dark eyes shone with an idea. "Hameem! We can pretend we are rebels, fighting alongside the Desert Prince." Uncle Samir had often held the boys spellbound with stories about the exploits of Abd el-Krim, the notorious rebel leader among the Berber tribes. "It will be a contest just between you and me to see who can collect the most things belonging to the enemy." Jamal looked at Hameem's dubious face. I dare you! Here you can have the canteen to start your collection. Now you're ahead. But I'm going to win! And so The Game had started. Already Jamal had a plastic comb, a leather strap from an officer's horse, two empty bullet casings, and a metal fork in his treasure box, hidden under the bed pillows in his room. The boys had agreed on a point system: one point for something found; five points for something taken from the buildings the French occupied at the far end of Sefrou; and ten points for something lifted right off a French soldier. As Jamal slipped into the big open room of the mosque where his father was leading the morning prayers, his mind was already plotting how he could add to his collection after school. But catching the disapproving look in his grandfather's eye, Jamal quickly washed his hands for the ritual cleansing, then slipped to his knees facing the mihrab, the niche in the far wall that pointed the way to Mecca, the Holy City.

Shipping and delivery was excellent. The book has an excellent story line for children but the difficulty of the words used make it quite difficult.

This month, I did my book report on Risking the Forbidden Game by Maude Cary, and illustrations by Dave and Neta Jackson. I enjoyed reading this book for the following reasons. 1) This is one of best books (for my age group) I have read on the topic of Christianity and Islamic religious strife. 2) If kids read this book, they will see that if they are doing things they should not be doing that eventually they will get caught. 3) Contrary to what some may think, the followers of Islam in this book are not cold blooded or evil, but warm and friendly. 4) Many fiction books have a similar plot: Two people have some fun with an activity. They see something bad in the process. They get involved with the bad things going on. They end up dealing with the consequences. This book has the same plot but it uses it to talk about the issue of religious strife. That's all for this installment. KJC

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