



ALADDIN AND THE WONDERFUL LAMP

Far, far away in a land where the sun is much hotter and the colours much brighter than they are here, there once lived a boy named Aladdin. Aladdin came from a poor family, but he loved walking through the city and he spent much of his free time roaming among the stalls of the marketplace, looking at all the beautiful goods for sale and enjoying the hustle and bustle.

One day, as he was strolling through the market, he bumped into a man who looked like a wonderfully nice and kind person. As they wandered through the city together, the man told Aladdin as many exciting stories as he knew. The boy hung onto his every word, and every time a story would finish he would beg the man to tell him another.

When Aladdin returned home that evening, he told his mum about his new friend straight away. His mother wasn't pleased with what she was hearing, though, and warned him to be cautious. Not all people were honest and kind-hearted, she said.

Aladdin didn't believe his mother, though. His new friend had to be a nice person! Why else would he spend all day telling a street boy such glorious stories? He was sure his mother was wrong. The next day, Aladdin went to meet the man again, eager to hear more tales of mystery and battles and glory.

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He waited in the market next to a snake charmer, who played his flute and made his cobra dance to the rhythm of the song while Aladdin watched. When the man arrived they immediately took off walking, and this time the man's stories were so good that Aladdin didn't notice that, as the sun was setting, the old man had led him on a path that went past the city walls and toward the desert. What Aladdin didn't know was that the man wasn't a kind hearted friend; he was an evil wizard who had been tricking Aladdin into trusting him!

It was dark when they arrived at a mysterious door in the middle of the desert. Aladdin was starting to get nervous, and wondered if maybe his mother had been right, but the wizard explained in his kindest voice that he needed Aladdin's help. Something valuable had been stolen from him – a golden lamp – and hidden in the cave behind this door. The door was too small for the man to go through, so he was hoping Aladdin would help him.

“Well, that sounds like the truth!” thought Aladdin, wondering who would dream of stealing from the nice man.

“I'll have to say a spell for the door to open,” the wizard explained. “When I start reciting it, you'll have to open the door and enter. Be cautious, though! The passage is going to be full of traps. You must tread carefully and not pick anything up except the golden lamp. It'll be at the far end of the tomb... I mean, cave.” He corrected himself quickly. “Just take the lamp! Don't touch anything else.”

Aladdin had a few questions, because he didn't entirely understand what he was doing and he could have sworn he'd heard the old man say he was about to go into a tomb. He didn't like the sound of that. But before he could say anything, the wizard started reciting the spell. Aladdin hesitated, so the old man grabbed the door, pulled it open, and nudged the boy in. Aladdin was scared, but he walked down the stairs to the very bottom of the tomb, and suddenly he saw heaps and heaps of gold. Remember, Aladdin was very poor, so this was a sight to behold. He had never seen such incredible riches in his life! Everywhere he looked, there were golden jewels and goblets and vases and statues...

“Don't stop! Bring me the lamp!” The wizard's voice echoed angrily around the chamber, as if he was inside.

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Aladdin quickly obeyed and hurried to the far end of the passage, where he saw a golden lamp on a stand. He grabbed it and turned to head back, but his eyes fell on a golden ring inlaid with sapphires and rubies. He picked it up, slipped it on his finger and made for the door. As soon as he touched the ring, though, the ground started to shake and rumble like an earthquake.

“Quickly, boy, hand me the lamp!” The wizard shouted. “The tomb’s about to close!”

Aladdin rushed to the door, but it was already closing.

“Throw me the lamp!” said the wizard, reaching out.

“First help me out, then you’ll get the lamp!” said Aladdin. He wasn’t going to be tricked this time!

The wizard had no choice. He grabbed Aladdin’s arm and pulled him out, but as soon as Aladdin was outside, the wizard grabbed the lamp from his hand.

“Well, now I don’t need you anymore!” he said cruelly. The door hadn’t entirely closed yet, so he grabbed the boy and tried to push him back into the tomb. Panicking, Aladdin grabbed for the wizard’s robes, and only just managed to snatch the lamp from him before falling back inside. The door slammed shut. The furious wizard stood outside with no lamp and no way to get it back, and poor Aladdin was trapped inside the tomb with nothing but a dusty lamp and a pile of jewels.

For days, Aladdin tried to get out of the tomb. He banged on the door, though he knew no one could let him out. He tried to pry it open. He searched the tomb for anything he could eat, but of course it was a tomb so there was nothing. He had no idea what to do, and finally he gave up and sat down. He picked up the lamp and turned it over. It was pretty plain, he thought.

“What kind of a lamp are you?” he said aloud. “Why did the old man want it so badly?” He rubbed the lamp with his sleeve to wipe off the dust, thinking that he might be able to find some markings that would explain it, but the moment he started wiping the lamp, it began to shake. Startled, Aladdin dropped it on the ground and backed up. The last thing he needed was another earthquake!

The lamp started glowing, and it began to smoke. Then, suddenly, a ghost appeared

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right in front of him. It was hovering in front of him, huge but oddly not scary at all. In fact, it had a very friendly face.

“I have spent hundreds of years trapped in this lamp. My purpose is to serve the one who frees me. From now on, I will be your servant,” the spirit said.

“Um, I’m sorry, but what are you?” Aladdin asked. “And how did I free you?”

“I’m a genie, of course!” the spirit said. “And I would imagine you rubbed my lamp to free me. That’s how it usually works.”

Aladdin thought he must be hallucinating. He’d been in the tomb for a long time with no food or water, after all. But he wasn’t – the genie was real.

“What would you like to do first?” the genie asked.

“Well, can you get me out of here? And can I take all the treasure with me?” asked Aladdin.

Before he knew it, he was back home in his mother’s tiny kitchen, heaps of jewels and golden coins right next to him. He couldn’t believe how miraculously powerful the genie was. He saw his mum on the other side of the room, staring at the piles of gold on her kitchen floor, and he waded through all jewels and hugged his mum.

“We’re never going to be poor again, mum!” he promised.

From that day on, Aladdin could afford anything he liked at the market. He bought beautiful clothes for his mom and himself, and every day he enjoyed delicious food. Meanwhile, the genie lived with Aladdin and his mother, occasionally doing tasks for them but, for the most part, sleeping in his lamp.

After a few years, though, Aladdin started to feel like he was missing something. He was happy in his life, but he’d fallen in love with the sultan’s daughter. The princess was incredibly beautiful and kind, and since Aladdin had first laid eyes on her he’d been able to think of no one else.

“I’m going to try my luck,” Aladdin told his mum one day. “I’m going to ask the sultan for her hand in marriage. After all, we’re rich now, and there’s no way the sultan could ever know that we used to be poor.

He mustered all his courage and then, one day, he went see the sultan. He wore his nicest clothes and brought a chest of gold as a gift. The sultan immediately

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took a liking to Aladdin and introduced him formally to the princess. The young woman also liked Aladdin, and her father, seeing that she would be happy, gave them his blessing.

Aladdin was overcome with joy. To prove his love to his bride-to-be, he decided he wanted to give her the most beautiful palace in the realm. He went home and told the genie the good news, and together they found the perfect place for the genie to magically build a marvellous palace.

The evil wizard had not forgotten Aladdin, however. He had used the time to concoct a masterful plan to get the magical lamp back. And so one day he disguised himself as a merchant and headed to the palace where Aladdin lived with his new wife.

When he arrived, Aladdin was not at home. Instead, he spoke to the princess.

“New lamps for old! New lamps for old! Good morning, beautiful lady! I’m offering this beautiful new lamp decorated with rubies and sapphires in exchange for any old one covered with dust you have at home,” said the wizard. “How about that one over there?” He pointed at the genie’s lamp.

Of course, the princess had no idea that it was a magic lamp, and it seemed perfectly reasonable to trade it for a nicer lamp. The moment the old wizard held it, he cackled maliciously, polished the lamp to wake the genie up, and ordered him to take him, the princess and the palace to the country where he had come from.

You can imagine Aladdin’s shock to return home to find no home! As soon as he found out what had happened, he leapt on his horse and galloped away in search of his beautiful wife. He rode and he rode, but he had no idea where the wizard had taken her. He got off his horse, feeling as though he had failed, but suddenly he remembered that he was still wearing the ring he had found in the tomb.

“If the lamp was magical, maybe this ring is as well,” muttered Aladdin.

He polished the ring and firmly said: “Bring me back my beloved wife and our palace.”

Suddenly the dust started rapidly swirling around him. More and more whirls formed until it became a sandstorm and, just like that, his palace materialized

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around him and his wife fell right into his arms.

Aladdin and his wife rejoiced. Aladdin called his guards and together they captured the wizard and threw him into the dungeon forever.

From that day on, nothing but happiness filled the palace walls. Aladdin never forgot that once he had only been a poor street urchin, and he and the princess made sure to rule kindly and responsibly and always take good care of their people.