

Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp



LONG long ago there lived in the capital of China a young boy, Aladdin, the son of a very poor widow. One day as he played in the street with his companions, a stranger who was passing stopped and spoke to him.

"Child, was not your father called Mustapha the tailor?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," answered Aladdin, "but he has been dead a long time."

At these words the stranger threw his arms about Aladdin's neck, kissed him several times, and with tears in his eyes said:

"I am your uncle; your worthy father was my own brother. I knew you at first sight, you are so like him."

He then gave the boy a handful of money, saying:

"Go, my son, to your mother. Give my love to her and tell her that I will visit her tomorrow, that I may see where my good brother lived so long and ended his days."

Aladdin's mother was much surprised to learn that her husband had a brother, but she rejoiced with her son at the good fortune which had come to him, for the stranger promised to buy Aladdin a shop, and to dress him as handsomely as the best merchants in the city.

Early the next morning the stranger called to take Aladdin into the country to spend the day. After walking some distance they reached a narrow valley between two mountains. Here Aladdin's companion paused and bade him gather up all the dry sticks he could find. These the stranger set on fire. Then, pouring some incense into the blaze, he pronounced several magical words, and immediately the earth opened, disclosing a stone with a brass ring fixed in it.

Aladdin was greatly frightened, and would have run away; but the stranger caught hold of him and said:

"Do not be afraid. Under this stone there is hidden a treasure destined to be yours, and which will make you richer than the greatest monarch in the world. Take hold of the ring and lift up the stone."

Aladdin did as he was told; and there appeared under the stone a staircase leading down to a door.

"Descend those steps, my son, and open that door," said the stranger. "It will lead you into a palace divided into three great halls. Before you enter the first hall be sure to tuck up your robe and wrap it about you, for if your clothes so much as touch the wall you will die instantly. Then pass through, the second and third halls without stopping. At the end of the third you will find a door which opens into a garden, planted with fine trees loaded with fruit. Walk directly across the garden to a terrace, where you will see in a niche a lighted lamp. Take the lamp down and put it out. When you have thrown away the wick and poured out the oil, put it in your waist band and bring it to me."

The stranger then drew a ring off his finger and putting it on one of Aladdin's said: "This is a talisman against all evil, so long as you obey me. Go, therefore, boldly, and we shall both be rich all our lives."

Where Jewels Grew on Trees

Aladdin followed the stranger's instructions; but as he was returning with the lamp, he noticed that the fruit of the trees was composed of what he imagined to be coloured glass, though in reality these bits of glass were beautiful jewels of every description. He filled his purse and his skirts with them; and, loaded with riches of which he little realized the value, he returned to the mouth of the cave and cried out:

"Pray, uncle, lend me your hand to help me out." The stranger, however, insisted that Aladdin give him the lamp first. But the latter whose hands were filled with jewels refused. At that the stranger flew into a passion, threw some incense into the fire, and spoke two magical words at which the stone rolled back into place, imprisoning the boy in the gloomy cave.

Aladdin then realized that the stranger was no uncle of his, but a wicked magician who designed him evil. And this indeed was true, for he was known as the African magician, and had come from his native land for the express purpose of obtaining the magic lamp. An oracle had revealed to him its whereabouts, and had further stated that the lamp must be given to him as a gift from the hands of another if he would obtain favours from it. It was for this reason that he had prevailed upon Aladdin to secure his prize.

Aladdin's cries for help echoed and re-echoed through the dark cave, unheard by anyone.

Worn out at last he joined his hands to pray, and in doing so rubbed the ring which the magician had placed on his finger. Immediately there rose from the earth a frightful Jinn or spirit bearing a torch in his hand, who said: ?

"What wouldst thou have? I am ready to obey thee. I serve him who possesses the ring on thy finger; I, and the other slaves of the ring."

Although greatly frightened, Aladdin replied "Whoever thou art, deliver me from this place."

No sooner had he spoken than he found himself on the very spot where the magician had left him, while no sign of the cave remained. He quickly made his way home, and after relating to his mother all that had happened he asked for some food.

"Alas, child," she replied; "I have not a bit of bread in the house, nor have we money to buy any."

Aladdin thereupon suggested selling the lamp, and his mother agreed, but wished first to clean it. No sooner had she begun to rub it than there appeared Another hideous Jinn who roared in a voice of thunder:

"What wouldst thou have? I am ready to obey thee as thy slave, and the slave of all those who have that lamp in their hands."

Greatly terrified, Aladdin's mother fainted; but Aladdin quickly seized the lamp and said boldly:-

"I am hungry. Bring me something to eat." The Jinn disappeared, and presently returned bearing a large silver tray holding 12 covered silver dishes filled with delicious food, two flagons of wine, and two silver goblets/ In their humble cottage the mother and son then partook of a feast fit for a king.

In spite of the fact that they had an inexhaustible source of riches in the lamp, and that Aladdin had come to realize the value of the "glass stones" which he had brought home, he and his mother continued to live very simply. One day, however, as Aladdin was strolling about the town he chanced to see the beautiful Princess Buddir al Buddoor, the daughter of the sultan. Charmed by her grace and beauty, he fell deeply in love with her, and resolved to win her in spite of his humble station.

Hastening home, he commissioned his mother to take all his jewels as a gift to the sultan and ask of him the hand of the Princess for her son. The sultan was amazed at the beauty of the gems, and replied without hesitation:

"Go tell your son that I wait with open arms to embrace him; and the more haste he makes to come and receive the Princess, my daughter, from my hands, the greater pleasure he will do me."

Aladdin, overjoyed at his mother's success, summoned the Jinn of the lamp and said: "Jinn, build me a palace of porphyry, jasper, agate, lapis lazuli, and the finest marble. Let its walls be of massive gold and silver bricks, and let the lattices of the windows be enriched with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. Let there be an inner and an outer court, and beautiful gardens. But above all things provide a safe treasure house and fill it with gold and silver. Let there be also kitchens and storehouses, stables full of the finest horses, with their masters and grooms, and hunting equipage, officers, attendants and slaves, both men and women, to form a retinue for the Princess and myself."

The next day the marriage was celebrated with great splendour and ceremony, and Aladdin led his Princess to the wonderful palace built overnight by the Jinn.

Several years later the magician, who had returned to Africa after imprisoning Aladdin in the cave, decided to learn whether Aladdin had perished. He set out for the capital of China and soon after arriving learned of the boy's wealth and happiness. Filled with rage, he bided his time until Aladdin one day went hunting. Then purchasing 12 bright new lamps, he walked past the palace crying:

"New lamps for old! Who will exchange old lamps for new?"

The Princess, who heard him, sent one of her slaves to fetch an old lamp which she had noticed in her husband's robing room, and bade her exchange it for a new one. Little did she realize that this old lamp was the source of all their wealth and prosperity! The magician

snatched the lamp eagerly, summoned the Jinn, and ordered the palace and all its occupants to be transported into the heart of Africa.

The Princess, the Palace, and AU!

Aladdin was frantic when, upon his return, he learned that his palace and his Princess had disappeared with a clap of thunder. The sultan, very angry at the disappearance of his daughter, at first ordered Aladdin to be executed; but finally agreed to allow him 40 days in which to find her. In his grief Aladdin forgot the magic ring upon his finger, until he accidentally rubbed it, whereupon its attendant spirit appeared.

"Transport my palace to the place where it first stood," commanded Aladdin.

"Only the Jinn of the lamp can do that," replied the spirit.

"Then I command thee, by the power of the ring, to transport me to the spot where my palace now stands."

At once Aladdin found himself in the presence of Princess Buddir al Buddoor, who told him all that had befallen. Learning that the wicked magician kept the lamp always in his waistband, Aladdin formed a plan for its recovery. He got the Princess to invite the magician to dine with her that night. Then, purchasing a powder which would mean instant death to anyone who swallowed it, he gave it to the Princess to put in her guest's wine goblet.

Aladdin hid under the table during the repast, and as the magician drank his wine and instantly fell forward senseless, he sprang out, snatched the lamp, and quickly rubbed it.

"Jinn" he cried, "I command thee to transport this palace instantly to the place from which it was brought hither."

Immediately the palace and its occupants were carried back to China. Joy and gladness succeeded grief at court, and the happy sultan, as he embraced his daughter, begged Aladdin's forgiveness for distrusting him. Within a few years the old sultan died. The Princess Buddir al Buddoor succeeded him, and she and Prince Aladdin reigned together in great prosperity for many years.

Retold from " The Arabian Nights."

THE END