

Aladdin's Lamp

Original Pictures for *Storynory* by Nick Hayes.



A long time ago, in Persia, a poor boy called Aladdin was playing with his friends in the streets of his city. A stranger came up to him and asked him if he was the son of Mustapha the Tailor. "I am, sir," replied Aladdin, "but he died a long while ago." When the stranger heard this, he embraced Aladdin saying: "My boy – I am your long-lost uncle." Aladdin ran home and told his mother all about this newly found relative, and she prepared supper for them all.

The next day, the uncle led Aladdin out far beyond the city gates. They journeyed onwards until late afternoon, but Aladdin did not feel tired because his uncle told him so many interesting stories. Eventually they reached the foot of a mountain.



"We will go no farther," said the false uncle – for in truth he was not Aladdin's relative, but an African magician in disguise. "I will show you something wonderful," he said. The magician lit a fire and threw some powder on it while saying some magical words. The earth trembled a little and a large boulder rolled to one side. Aladdin saw a flight of steps leading down into a dark cave. The opening was just large enough for a boy to pass through, but plainly the magician, who was rather fat, would not have managed to enter the cave himself. "Go down," commanded the magician, "at the foot of those steps you will find an open door leading into three large halls. Pass through them without touching anything, or you

will die instantly. These halls lead into a garden of fine fruit trees. Walk on until you come to a table upon which stands a lighted lamp. Pour out the oil it contains and bring it to me."

Aladdin was afraid to disobey the magician and went down the stairs into the cave. On the ground he found a ring, and despite the magician's order not to touch anything, he picked it up and slipped it onto his finger. He did not die. Then he passed through the garden where he picked fruit from the trees. Later on, he found the lamp, just as the magician had said, and he went back up the stairs to the mouth of the cave. The magician cried out: "Make haste

and give me the lamp." But Aladdin saw through his trick and understood that as soon as he handed over the lamp, the magician would replace the stone and he would be shut inside the cave, never to leave. And so, Aladdin called out: "Let me out first, and only then will I give you the lamp." The magician flew into a terrible rage, and throwing some more powder on to the fire, he said some more magic words, and the stone rolled back into its place.

For two days Aladdin remained trapped inside the cave. At last he clasped his hands in prayer, and in so doing rubbed the ring that he had picked off the ground. Immediately an enormous and frightful genie rose out of the earth, saying: "What wouldst thou with me? I am the slave of the ring and will obey thee in all things." Aladdin fearlessly replied: "Deliver me from this place!" Whereupon the earth opened, and he found himself back at home. "Alas! child," said his mother when she noticed him. "I have nothing to eat in the house. We will go hungry tonight." Aladdin soothed her saying he would sell



the lamp to get some money for food. As it was very dirty his mother began to rub it, that it might fetch a higher price. Instantly a hideous genie appeared and asked what she would have. She fainted away, but Aladdin, snatching the lamp, said boldly: "Fetch me something to eat!" The genie returned with a silver bowl, twelve silver plates containing rich meats, two silver cups, and two bottles of wine. Aladdin's mother, when she came to herself, said: "Where did you get this splendid feast?" "Ask not, but eat," replied Aladdin.

One day the Sultan who ruled the city ordered that everyone was to stay at home and close his shutters while the princess, his daughter, went to and from the bath. Aladdin was seized by a desire

to see her face, which was very difficult, as she always went veiled. He hid himself behind the door of the bath and peeped through a chink. The princess looked so beautiful that Aladdin fell in love with her at first sight. He went home and told his mother that he loved the princess so deeply that he could not live without her. His mother burst out laughing, but Aladdin at last persuaded her to go to the Sultan and request his daughter's hand in marriage for her son. She fetched a napkin and laid in it the magic fruits from the enchanted garden, which sparkled and shone like the most beautiful jewels. She took these with her to please the Sultan. After waiting several days at the palace, she was admitted to see the him. She threw herself down at the foot of the throne and waited for several minutes until the Sultan said to her: "Old woman, tell me what you want." She hesitated, then told him of her son's love for the princess, only at the last moment remembering to open the napkin that contained the magical jewels. When the Sultan saw this wonderful present he was thunderstruck, and turning to his chief adviser, the

grand Vizier, he said: "Ought I not to give the princess to one who values her at such a price?" The Vizier, who was hoping that his own son would marry the princess, begged the Sultan to delay the wedding for three months, during which time he hoped to make him a richer present. The Sultan agreed.

Aladdin waited patiently for his wedding day in three months' time, but after two months his mother, going into the city to buy oil, found everyone rejoicing, and asked what was going on. "Do you not know," was the answer, "that the son of the grand Vizier is to marry the Sultan's daughter tonight?" Aladdin, who was stunned when he heard the news. but presently he took down the lamp and rubbed it. The genie appeared, saying, "What is thy will?" Aladdin replied: "The Sultan has broken his promise to me, and the Vizier's son is to marry the princess. My command is that that you bring the princess here so that the scoundrel can't have her." "Your wish is my command" said the genie, and in an instant the princess was sitting in Aladdin's room still wearing her wedding dress. He told her not to be afraid, but she was utterly confused and quite terrified. The next morning, the genie took her back to the palace.

The princess told her mother how she had been carried by magic to some strange house. Her mother did not believe her in the least, and the Sultan ordered that the wedding should take place that evening instead.

The following night exactly the same thing happened. The Sultan was furious and even considered having his daughter's head cut off. He summoned the Vizier's son. "Plainly my daughter is hiding from you," he said. "Do you still wish to marry her?"

"Well" said the young man who was very proud and arrogant: "If the princess does not obey her father, the great Sultan, what hope is that she will make me a good wife? I give up my claim over her. Better that she marry the poorest beggar if that's what she wants."

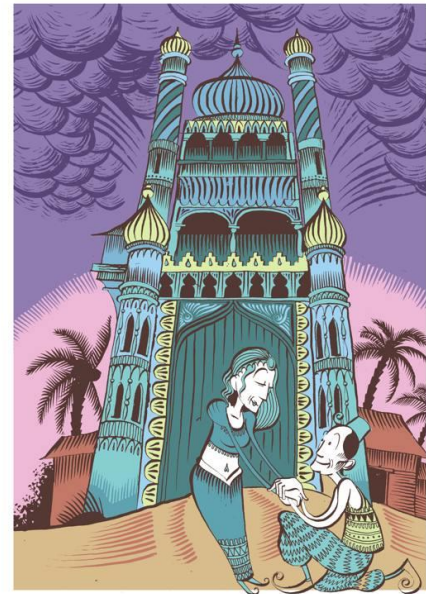
When the three months were over, Aladdin sent his mother to remind the Sultan of his promise. She stood in the same place as before, and the Sultan, on seeing her poverty felt less inclined than ever to keep his word. The Vizier advised him to set so high a value on the princess that no man living could come up to it. The Sultan then turned to Aladdin's mother, saying: "Good woman, a Sultan must remember his promises, and I will remember mine, but your son must first send me forty basins of gold full of jewels. Tell him that I await his answer."

When he heard this, Aladdin summoned up his genie and soon eighty slaves, splendidly dressed, were waiting in the alleyway outside his house. The slaves were carrying forty golden basins, brimming with jewels.

Aladdin mounted his horse and passed through the streets, the slaves strewing gold as they went. When the Sultan saw him, he came down from his throne, embraced him, and led him into a hall where a feast was spread,

intending to marry him to the princess that very day. But Aladdin refused, saying: "I must build a palace fit for her," and took his leave. Once home, he said to the genie: "Build me a palace of the finest marble, with four and twenty windows set with jasper, agate, and other precious stones.

At night, the princess said goodbye to her father, and set out for Aladdin's palace, with his mother at her side, and followed by the hundred slaves. She was charmed at the sight of Aladdin, who ran to receive her. "Princess," he said, "blame your beauty for my boldness if I have displeased you." After the wedding had taken place, Aladdin led her into the hall, where a feast was spread, and she suppered with him, after which they danced till midnight.



The metaphor of the Magic Lamp (a metaphor is a figure of speech, an allegory)

The Lamp has always been a symbol of wisdom and enlightenment. The magic lamp in this spiritual allegory represents the enlightened soul, one who follows the true religion of Nature, attains wonderful powers and becomes equivalent to the magic lamp, whose genie could fulfil any wish. Nature's religion is the true, divine religion, or true wisdom that brings total peace, prosperity and happiness to the people who follow it and become divine. The magic lamp symbolizes an empowered and divine soul that has attained complete control over matter, which includes the physical body and its senses.

The genie represents material nature that obeys the command of the enlightened soul. In the Golden Age, nature is at the beck and call of divine souls.

To continue on Sunday 18th October

But far away in Africa the magician remembered Aladdin, and by his magic arts discovered that instead of perishing miserably in the cave, he had escaped, and had married a princess. He travelled night and day until he reached the city of Persia where Aladdin lived. Half mad with rage, he was determined to get hold of the lamp, and again plunge Aladdin into the deepest poverty.



Unluckily, Aladdin had gone hunting for eight days, which gave the magician plenty of time. He bought a dozen copper lamps, put them into a basket, and went to the palace, crying: "New lamps for old!" Followed by a jeering crowd, laughing to see an old fool offering to exchange fine new lamps for old ones? One of the palace slaves said to the princess: "There is an old lamp on the cornice there which he can have." Now this was the magic lamp, which Aladdin had left there, as he could not take it out hunting with him. The princess, not knowing its

value, went and said to the magician: "Give me a new lamp for this." He snatched it amid the jeers of the crowd. Little he cared. He went out of the city gates to a lonely place where he pulled out the lamp and rubbed it. The genie appeared, and at the magician's command carried him, together with the palace and the princess in it, to far off Africa.

Next morning the Sultan looked out of the window toward Aladdin's palace and rubbed his eyes, for it was gone. The Vizier put the strange disappearance of the palace and his daughter down to black magic, and this time the Sultan believed him. He and sent thirty men on horseback to fetch Aladdin in chains. "False wretch!" said the Sultan. "Where is my palace and my daughter?" Aladdin had no answer but begged to be given forty days to discover the cause of the disaster. This the Sultan granted. For three days Aladdin wandered about like a madman, asking everyone what had become of his palace, but they only laughed and pitied him. He came to the banks of a river, and knelt down to say his prayers before throwing himself in. In so doing he rubbed the magic ring he still wore. The genie appeared and asked his will. "Save my life, Genie," said Aladdin, "bring my palace back." "That is not in my power," said the genie. "I am only the slave of the ring; you must ask him of the lamp." "Even so," said Aladdin, "but thou canst take me to the



palace, and set me down under my dear wife's window." He at once found himself in Africa, under the window of the princess.

That morning the princess rose early and opened the window, and at the noise she made, Aladdin looked up. She was astonished and delighted to see her dear husband's face. After he had kissed her, Aladdin said: "I beg of you, Princess, in God's name, tell me what has become of my old lamp. "Alas!" she said, "I am the innocent cause of our sorrows," and she told him of the exchange of the lamp.

Aladdin comforted her and gave her a small bottle containing a certain powder. "Put on your most beautiful dress," he said to her "and receive the magician with smiles, leading him to believe that you have forgotten me. Invite him to supper with you, and say you wish to taste the wine of his country. He will go for some and while he is gone, I will tell you what to do."

That evening she received the magician, saying, to his great amazement: "I have made up my mind that Aladdin is dead, and that all my tears will not bring him back to me, so I am resolved to mourn no more, and have therefore invited you to supper with me, but let us try some wine of Africa." The magician flew to his cellar, and the princess put the powder that Aladdin had given her into his cup. When he returned the magician made her a speech in praise of her beauty, but the princess cut him short, saying: "Let us drink first, and you shall say what you will afterward." She set her cup to her lips and kept it there, while the magician drained his to the dregs and fell back lifeless. Aladdin came into the room, went to the dead magician, took the lamp out of his clothes, and bade the genie carry the palace and all in it back to Persia. This was done in an instant.

The Sultan, who was sitting in his chamber, mourning for his lost daughter, happened to look up, and rubbed his eyes, for there stood the palace as before! He hastened over to it, and Aladdin received him with the princess at his side. He told him what had happened, and showed him the dead body of the magician, that he might believe. A ten days' feast was proclaimed, and it seemed as if Aladdin might now live the rest of his life in peace; but it was not to be.

The African magician had a younger brother, who was, if possible, more wicked and more cunning than himself. He travelled to Persia to avenge his brother's death and disguised himself in skirts and veils so that he looked exactly like a famous holy woman called Fatima. Then he went toward the palace of Aladdin, and all the people, thinking he was the holy woman, gathered round him, kissing his hands and begging his blessing. The princess, who had long desired to see Fatima, sent for her. She showed Fatima the palace and asked what she thought of it. "It is truly beautiful," said the false Fatima. "In my mind it wants but one thing." "And what is that?" said the princess. "If only a roc's egg," replied he, "were hung up from the middle of this dome, it would be the wonder of the world."

After this the princess could think of nothing but the roc's egg, and when Aladdin returned from hunting, he found her in a very ill mood. She told him that all her pleasure in the hall was spoiled for the want of a roc's egg hanging from the dome. "If that is all," replied Aladdin, "you shall soon be happy." He left her and rubbed the lamp, and when the genie appeared commanded him to bring a roc's egg. The genie gave such a loud and terrible shriek that the hall shook. "Wretch!" he cried, "is it not enough that I have done everything for you, but you must command me to bring my master and hang him up in the midst of this dome? You and your wife and your palace deserve to be burnt to ashes, but this request does not come from you, but from the brother of the African magician, whom you destroyed. He is now in your palace disguised as the holy woman. He, it was who put that wish into your wife's head. Take care of yourself, for he means to kill you." So saying, the genie disappeared.

Aladdin went back to the princess, saying his head ached, and requesting that the holy Fatima should be fetched to lay her hands on it. But when the magician came near, Aladdin, seizing his dagger, pierced him to the heart. "What have you done?" cried the princess. "You have killed the holy woman!" "Not so," replied Aladdin, "but a wicked magician," and told her of how she had been deceived.

After this Aladdin and his wife lived in peace. He succeeded the Sultan when he died, and reigned for many years, leaving behind him a long line of kings.

And that was the story of Aladdin's Lamp from 1001 Nights.

According to other sources, the story ends by saying that the clever princess broke the lamp into little pieces. Some she burned, some she buried and the rest she cast into the sea. She did this because she feared human envy, wickedness and the desire for power, for they can often be stronger than goodness.

Do you think it was a good idea to destroy the lamp?

What did the princess worry about?

What would you do if you owned a magic lamp like this?