

Aladdin and the Enchanted Lamp

Next morning the Moor called early and took Aladdin to the baths, where they washed and perfumed themselves, and then they went to the tailor's, where the Moor paid for a suit of clothes for Aladdin – the finest he'd ever seen.

After that they went to the bazaar, where all the rich merchants gathered to sip coffee and exchange their news, and the Moor joined in, talking of prices and qualities with such an air of knowledge that the other merchants took him for an important man, and bought him spice-cakes and flattered him. Aladdin was included in all his lordly talk, and he felt no end of a fine fellow.

When they left the bazaar, the Moor said, "Now, I've got something very special to show you, Aladdin. Come with me and you'll see a garden full of wonders, something no-one else has ever seen."

The Moor could do nothing wrong now as far as Aladdin was concerned. If he wanted to look at gardens full of wonders Aladdin was only too happy to go along.

"Where is the garden, Uncle?"

"Up in the mountains, my boy. No-one knows of it

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but me. Step out, now. We've got a long walk ahead of us."

The Moor's long legs set off like scissors, and Aladdin had to trot fast to keep up with him.

After many hours they were so high up in the mountains that they could no longer see the city. Finally the moor stopped, and looked around carefully, and measured the distance from a certain rock to a bush close by, and stepped out four paces beyond that.

Aladdin watched, mystified. This was no garden; it was a hideous, barren place with nothing but sand and dry bushes and lizards.

"Uncle, where is the garden?" he said. "I can see nothing but—"

Thwack!

The Moor fetched Aladdin such a crack round the head that he thought his brains would run out of his ears.

"Ow! What was that for? Not even my father hit me that hard! Ow!"

"That was to teach you a lesson," said the Moor, smiling sharply. "The magic I'm going to perform is extremely dangerous. Watch, say nothing, and learn."

The Moor gathered some sticks, struck a light with

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his tinderbox, and blew it into a flame. When it was burning brightly he took a handful of powder from a pouch at his belt and sprinkled it on the fire.

At once there was a puff of green smoke and a modest clap of thunder, and when the smoke had cleared there was a large flat stone set in the ground where the fire had been.

“There,” said the Moor proudly. “Lift the stone, Aladdin.”

“What? By myself?”

“Aha! Just read what it says.”

Aladdin bent down, and saw, carved into the ancient stone, the words:

**THIS STONE CAN BE LIFTED ONLY BY
ALADDIN, THE SON OF MUSTAFA.**

“Well!” said Aladdin. “Well, that’s amazing!”

He took hold of the ring in the stone, and up it came as if it were made of paper.

“Now listen carefully,” said the Moor. “Go down these narrow steps and you’ll find yourself in a passage with a door at the end. Open it and go through, and you’ll be in a beautiful garden with trees bearing all

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kinds of fruit. Whatever you do, don't touch them, or you'll certainly be turned at once into a black stone, d'you understand? Go through this garden to a terrace at the end, where you'll see a lamp hanging from a chain. Take down the lamp and empty the oil out of it, and bring it back to me. On the way back you can pick the fruit, if you like. Now, in you go. Once I have...
Once we have that lamp, the world is ours!"

Aladdin couldn't wait. He dived into the hole like a terrier. It was narrow and dark, and stuffy and dusty,

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and he banged his head and scraped his elbows, but he was too excited to mind that. When he got to the bottom, he felt his way along the passage, and it was just as the Moor had said: there was a door at the end. Aladdin felt for the handle and turned it.

The Moor had told him what to expect, but when he opened the door he could hardly breathe for astonishment. He took a little shaky step and held on to the door-frame, looking all around with eyes as wide open as his mouth.

There under the ground was a beautiful garden spreading out on all sides, lit by red, white and pink blossoms on the oleander trees, on each petal of which sat a family of fireflies, sipping nectar and glowing like lanterns. There were tall cypresses and wide-spreading cedar trees, there were vines and roses and pergolas trailing with sweet-scented jasmine, there were fountains and streams and gazebos, and a nightingale sang in the dark night air.

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