



Murray J. Rivette

A wacky adaptation of "Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp" from *The Arabian Nights*

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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Aladdin's Magic Lamp

CHILDREN'S COMEDY. Children of all ages will love this wildly wacky version of the story of Aladdin from *The Arabian Nights*. Times are tough for Aladdin and his mother. They don't have enough money to pay their taxes and may lose their home. So when an evil sorcerer convinces Aladdin to retrieve a brass lamp from a cave, Aladdin is eager to earn some extra money. But when the sorcerer dupes Aladdin, Aladdin refuses to hand over the lamp, and the sorcerer rolls a boulder in front of the entrance, trapping Aladdin inside. When Aladdin rubs off the lamp, a genie appears and frees him from the cave and grants him three wishes. Determined to get the lamp back, the sorcerer poses as a lamp vendor and convinces Aladdin's mother to sell him the lamp. With the lamp in hand, the sorcerer thinks the genie now belongs to him, but the genie has a little surprise for him. She just happens to be a member of the Lamp Union for Genies and it turns out legalese beats out evilese!

Performance Time: Approximately 45-60 minutes.



Left: Illustration by Max Liebert depicts a Chinese Aladdin in the Magic Garden. Right: Illustration by Albert Robida shows the Sorcerer trapping Aladdin in the cave.

About the Story

“Aladdin’s Wonderful Lamp” is a Middle Eastern folktale that is included in *The Arabian Nights*, a collection of Middle Eastern and South Asian comedies, love stories, folk tales, historical tales, and fairytales. The stories contained in the collection were collected over centuries. The earliest tales are thought to have come from India and Persia in the 8th century. Later tales are thought to have originated in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. The story of Aladdin was added by Antoine Galland to *The Arabian Nights* collection published in 1710. Galland reportedly heard the story from a Syrian storyteller from Aleppo. The story of Aladdin also appears in two Arabic manuscripts as well. In both versions, Aladdin is said to reside in “one of the cities in China.” Some scholars believe the story may be set in Turkestan. “Aladdin’s Wonderful Lamp” has become one of the most popular tales in *The Arabian Nights* and is the source of numerous theater, book, television, and movie adaptations.

Characters

(3 M, 3 F)

STORYTELLER/GENIE: Narrator of the story who later plays Genie; has light-brown hair and wears a genie costume; female.

VENEOLI (pronounced Ven-ee-oh-lee): Evil sorcerer known as "The Evil One" who wants to get his hands on a magic lamp; has a mustache; male.

ALADDIN: Finds a magic lamp and frees the genie who lives inside it; male.

MOTHER: Aladdin's mother who must come up with some money to pay her taxes or she and Aladdin will be homeless; female.

PRINCESS ZELDA: Spoiled daughter of the Sultan; female.

ACHMED: Bodyguard who has a crush on Princess Zelda; banned from using a sword after an accident with the Sultan's cook and a melon; male.

Setting

South side of Baghdad.

Set

Home of Aladdin and his mother. It is a small room with an old overstuffed chair, a small table, and a lamp. There is a partial wall on one side of the stage with window and sill.

Marketplace. Can be played on a bare stage or a backdrop may be used.

Cave. A cutout depicting a cave with an entrance large enough for Aladdin to enter.

Synopsis of Scenes

Scene 1: Home of Aladdin and his mother.

Scene 2: Marketplace.

Scene 3: Cave.

Scene 4: Home of Aladdin and his mother.

Scene 5: Marketplace.

Props

Flashlight
Big bag of coins
Genie lamp
Large fake rock to cover cave entrance
Dust rag
Small bag of coins
Plastic dagger
Legal-looking document
Plastic sword
Genie costume, for Genie
Light-brown wig, for Genie
New furniture for Aladdin's home

Special Effect

Puff of smoke, opt.

**"So you're saying
I don't get anything with this lamp,
except maybe discolored fingers?"**

—Veneoli

Scene 1

(AT RISE: South side of Baghdad, home of Aladdin and his mother. Storyteller enters.)

STORYTELLER: *(To audience.)* Welcome weary travelers, to the mysterious city of Baghdad, home to wondrous delights as told in the fabulous stories of the “Arabian Nights.” I almost lost my head—literally—because I angered the Sultan. I made a joke about him being ugly. I said that he was so ugly, when he was born, the doctor slapped his parents. Then I told him that he was so ugly, he made onions cry! Apparently, he doesn’t like ugly jokes. I stopped him from banishing me by telling him I had so many stories to tell that I couldn’t leave without telling him at least some of the better ones. So for one thousand and one nights, that’s what I did. That’s over two years of stories! After 800 straight nights, I started reading Dr. Seuss to him—he never noticed the difference. By the time I finished, he had forgotten about my bad jokes and I was off the hook. But, boy, was my throat sore! Anyway, I will be your tour guide. Please keep your arms and legs inside the car at all times. Ha! I always wanted to say that! Sorry. *(Gesturing.)* This is the home of Aladdin, a poor, young beggar and his mother, who is also very poor but is too proud to beg. She works as a noodle maker at Panda Express in the Baghdad Mall. Baghdad was once a thriving metropolis with a lovely downtown area—a huge, bustling shopping mall filled with stores like the Islamabad Gap. At one time, this district of the city was called Shopping *Bagh*-dad. Ah, but those days are gone forever. The Sultan of Baghdad has placed such high taxes on all the shopkeepers that they are beginning to turn a once beautiful shopping mall into a place that no one will ever want to come to visit again...like downtown [Insert name of city.] Some even say it is beginning to look like a

Trash *Bagh*-dad! In this story, you will meet a really bad dude named Veneoli, the Princess Zelda, and Achmed, her bodyguard. Our story opens in the home of Aladdin and his mother, where they are discussing finances. The time to pay taxes is almost upon them, and they are nearly flat broke! I'll let them tell you themselves. *(Starts to exit.)* Oh, I almost forgot. I'll be back later on in the story, too...as a genie! Watch for me!

(Storyteller exits. Mother and Aladdin enter.)

MOTHER: Aladdin, my dear son, we will soon be living on the street if we don't get some money to pay our taxes.

ALADDIN: What do you want me to do, Mother? Should I stay out on the streets longer to beg for more dinars?

MOTHER: I don't want you to be on those streets any longer than you have to. I was hoping that you would consider getting an inside job of sorts...perhaps at MeccaDonald's Restaurant or Burger Sultan.

ALADDIN: Oh, Mother, you know how I hate to work for "The Establishment." Can you picture me— your only son— asking people, "You want fries with that?"

MOTHER: Aladdin, if we don't do something soon, you and I will wake up to the sun shining in our faces, but not through any window...directly on our faces because there will be no roof over our heads!

ALADDIN: Oh, come on. Things can't be that bad. I don't want to go back to the nine-to-five grind anymore. I hate it.

MOTHER: Excuse me, but when did you ever work at a job that was nine to five? You've always been out on the streets begging for handouts.

ALADDIN: Oh, no. Remember when I was nine? I worked at the Magic Carpet Store.

MOTHER: What? You must have dreamed it. You never worked at a Magic Carpet Store.

ALADDIN: Sure, I did.

MOTHER: No, you didn't.

ALADDIN: Yes, I did.

MOTHER: No, you didn't.

ALADDIN: Yes, I did.

MOTHER: No, you didn't.

ALADDIN: Did.

MOTHER: Didn't.

ALADDIN: Did.

MOTHER: Didn't.

(Storyteller enters.)

STORYTELLER: Hold it! *(Aladdin and Mother freeze. To audience.)* I'm not the Genie yet, but I've got to put a stop to this right now. This actually goes on for about two more minutes with Aladdin saying he *did* and his Mother saying he *didn't*, and it's just ridiculous. So, let's just say, for argument's sake, that he didn't work anywhere but the streets...and he knows it. He lies sometimes, but he means well.

(Storyteller exits. Aladdin and Mother unfreeze.)

ALADDIN: Well, Mother, I could have sworn that I did.

MOTHER: There will be no swearing in this house, so knock it off.

ALADDIN: I'm sorry, Mother, but I just hate that nine-to-five drag.

MOTHER: Well, we need to get some money rolling in here or we are out on the street in cardboard boxes. I don't want to be homeless, Son. Please...do something.

ALADDIN: I'll go downtown to the marketplace right now and see if I can get some rich merchants to contribute a few dinars.

MOTHER: All right, Aladdin, just do your best. That's all I can ask of you.

ALADDIN: I will, Mother. Don't hold supper for me. I'll just nuke something when I get home. *(Exits.)*

MOTHER: All right, dear. *(To herself.)* Sometimes, that boy just aggravates me to no end. Oh, well, at least he's a good boy and doesn't get into any trouble...at least none that I'm aware of. Ahhh, kids!

(Blackout.)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: The marketplace. Aladdin is walking around in circles and speaking out loud but to no one in particular.)

ALADDIN: Please help a starving family. Help a boy whose mother is slowly dying of a horrible disease.

(Aladdin crosses to SL and stops. Veneoli enters DSR.)

VENEOLI: *(To audience.)* What is this I see? A young boy begging for alms? I bet I can get him to help me in my quest for power and riches.

ALADDIN: *(To audience, indicating Veneoli.)* Did that man over there just say that he wants my help?

VENEOLI: *(To audience.)* I am too big to fit in the cave entrance, but he seems to be the perfect size.

ALADDIN: *(To audience.)* Did you hear that? I am perfect! At least the perfect size for whatever it is he wants!

VENEOLI: *(To audience.)* I am sure he can do it...then I'll be rich and powerful beyond belief!

ALADDIN: *(To audience.)* Rich and powerful, huh? Well, I would sure like a piece of that action, whatever it is, as long as it's legal.

VENEOLI: *(To Aladdin.)* Hey, kid. Come here, please.

(Aladdin crosses to Veneoli.)

ALADDIN: Yes, sir?

VENEOLI: I would like to—

ALADDIN: Have my help?

VENEOLI: Have your help, yes. I need you to—

ALADDIN: Squeeze myself into some cave for you because you are too big?

VENEOLI: Squeeze yourself into a cave because I am too big, yes. So that—

ALADDIN: So that you can have riches and power beyond belief?

VENEOLI: Yes, so that I can have riches— *(Realizes.)* Hey! How do you know all this before I tell you? Are you a magician of sorts?

ALADDIN: No, you were speaking out loud, and you were only ten or 12 feet away.

VENEOLI: Aha. I see. My name is Veneoli. Just call me “Big V.” And yours?

ALADDIN: Aladdin. Just call me...Aladdin. So, what can I do for you, and what can you do for me?

VENEOLI: Ah, ask not what I can do for you. You will have to wait and see. And if you will accompany me to a cave just outside of town, I would like you to enter that cave and retrieve a beautiful brass lamp that I lost there some ten years ago.

ALADDIN: A lamp?

VENEOLI: Yes, a lamp. There are other things in the cave, which *you* may have, but I just need the lamp. Will you do it?

ALADDIN: Well, sir, as I asked you before...what can you do for me?

VENEOLI: Oh, as I said, you can have the other things in the cave.

ALADDIN: Are there any valuables...like money?

VENEOLI: Oh, yes, absolutely. Lots of money...and jewels...and silks...and spices. Things like that. All I want is that lamp.

ALADDIN: But if there're money and jewels and silks and spices, why do you just want an old lamp, Big V?

VENEOLI: *(Thinking.)* Um... *(Obviously lying.)* ...because it was a wedding gift from my dear Aunt Sophie just before she passed away. It has a lot of sentimental value...been in the family for generations.

ALADDIN: Oh, I am sorry to hear that she died. Did she suffer much before she passed on?

VENEOLI: (*Annoyed, shouts.*) No! She didn't suffer at all! She simply fell asleep and never woke up! It was her time! Geez!

ALADDIN: How old was she when she died?

VENEOLI: (*More annoyed, shouts.*) She was 100! Okay?! She was 100 years old!

ALADDIN: Wow! That's pretty old. Was she in good health before she passed away?

VENEOLI: (*More annoyed, shouts.*) She was in terrific health! She even had a personal trainer! She worked out twice a day, for crying out loud!

ALADDIN: Gee, it must have been a terrible shock, if she was so healthy and then all of a sudden—

VENEOLI: (*More annoyed, shouts.*) Yes, yes, yes! It was a shock...a terrible shock! (*Pause. Calmly.*) Look, she's gone, so let's just leave it at that, okay?

ALADDIN: Oh, sure, if that's what you want. (*Sighs.*) Poor Aunt Sophie...

VENEOLI: (*Annoyed.*) Poor Aunt Sophie. Let's do this thing, okay? Let's head to the cave, okay? Are you okay with that?

ALADDIN: Oh, sure. Let's head to the cave.

(Veneoli and Aladdin exit. Blackout.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]