

Arabian Nights Adventures

The  
Adventures  
of Prince Camar  
& Princess  
Badoura



Retold by  
Kelley Townley



Illustrated by  
Anja Gram



# Arabian Nights Adventures

Many moons ago a great king  
sentenced his innocent wife to death,  
but every night she tells the king a  
story, leaving the tale unfinished until  
the next night so that the king would  
spare her life to hear the ending.  
This lasted for one thousand and one  
Arabian nights, until the king finally  
released her. This is just one of  
those tales ...



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The Three Princes, the Princess  
and the Jinni Pari Banou

The Fisherman and the Jinni

The King's Jester

*Arabian Nights Adventures*

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# The Adventures of Prince Camar & Princess Badoura



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## Chapter 1

### *The Abandoned Tower*

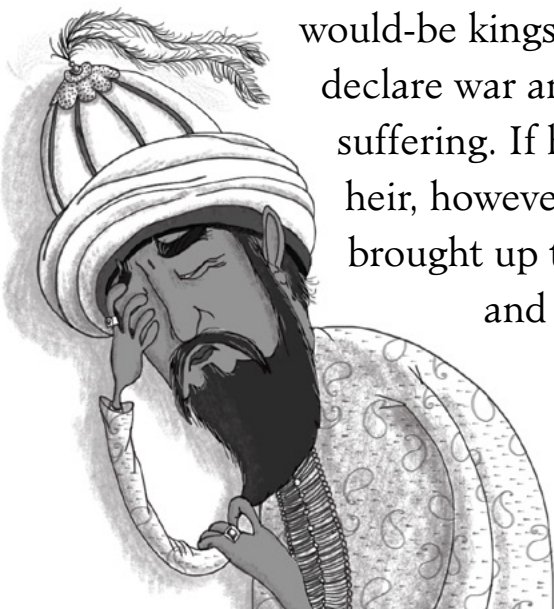
In times gone by a large chunk of the land west of India was called Persia; and if you were to hop aboard a sailing boat and travel from the coast of Persia for twenty days you may have found yourself amongst the Islands of the Children of Khaledan.

These beautiful isles were divided into several different lands, each of which had large flourishing towns. Together they formed an important kingdom that was governed by a sultan whose name was Shah Zaman.

The people were lucky because their

sultan was one of the most peaceful and kind rulers ever known in that part of the world. He was also good at governing and so the kingdom was prosperous and everyone was well looked-after. In fact the only unhappy person in the whole region was the sultan himself because, alas, he was childless.

Without any children Shah Zaman worried his peaceful kingdom might suffer after he died. Ambitious would-be kings might declare war and cause great suffering. If he had an heir, however, someone brought up to be good and fair, then the sultan might



rest assured that his people would continue to prosper even after his death.

Every ruler needs a good and wise counsellor to help him and so the sultan turned to his old friend, the Grand Vizier, for advice.

‘Worrying will not help,’ said the Grand Vizier. ‘Only the good Lord can grant your desire for a child. In the meantime I would advise you to lead a happy and healthy life so that you can meet life’s challenges with a strong heart and a good soul.’

The sultan took his friend’s advice to heart and placed his trust in God; and within a year, in answer to all his prayers, a beautiful baby boy was born! The sultan and his wife were

overjoyed and named the bubbly new prince Camar al-Zaman, which means 'Moon of the Century'.

The child grew happy and strong. Long athletic legs carried his boisterous body around the great gardens and his sparkling, curious eyes shone out of a frame of jet-black hair.

As the only child of a great ruler you might expect the prince to have been spoiled and indulged as he grew up – every whim catered for, every wish granted – but not so. It is true the prince was given the best of everything, but he was also taught all the things a good ruler should know, like how to be kind and just, thoughtful and wise. It also helped that Prince Camar was exceedingly

charming and was able to put a smile on everyone's face, even the stoic old Grand Vizier.

As the prince grew into a charismatic and spirited young man, the sultan watched with the adoring gaze of a proud father.

'Look at my son,' he said to his Grand Vizier. 'He has such energy and passion. Would he not make a great ruler of our people? I am not as young as I used to be, maybe I should retire and let him take my place.'

The Grand Vizier pursed his lips. It was true the prince was full of enthusiasm and energy, but there was something else he lacked.

'Although I agree with you, sire,' replied the Grand Vizier, 'I fear



the prince is still very young and it would not, in my humble opinion, be advisable to burden him with the weight of a crown so soon. He needs to explore life a little and gain true wisdom about the world.'

'You are right,' agreed the sultan. But alas the sultan was very protective of his only child; and although the Grand Vizier had meant for the prince to go travelling and see how other people on our vast planet lived, the sultan could not bear the thought of the prince leaving in case some harm came to him. Instead he brought the world to his son with visits from foreign traders who brought exotic fabrics and ornaments and travelling minstrels who sang about adventures in

far-flung places.

Far from satisfying the prince's curiosity about the world, this only increased his desire to travel. The older he got the more restless he became. He begged his father to let him go out into the world but the sultan only tried to distract him with some new type of fruit or strange new animal.

'I know!' cried the sultan one day. 'I'll get my son a wife! That will distract him. A happy family to keep him safe and close at hand!'

The Grand Vizier smiled at his friend but feared this would not be the solution he hoped for, and he was not wrong.

'Married!' cried the prince when his father told him the news. 'But I don't

even know anyone to marry. I'm barely allowed to leave the palace!'

'That's okay,' smiled the sultan, blind to his son's outrage. 'Your mother and I will pick a suitable wife for you. She'll be beautiful, charming and ever so nice.'

Even the prince's mother looked awkward. 'But Father,' the prince pleaded. 'I can't possibly be expected to marry someone I've never even met.'

'Of course you'll meet her before you marry,' laughed the sultan. 'We'll have a great feast the night before the wedding!'

The prince opened his mouth to protest but his mother stepped forward and steered the sultan away.

'We'll leave Camar to think on it for a

while,' she said to the sultan. 'It'll take us some time to find a suitable bride anyway.' The sultan nodded as she led him away.

The prince was left feeling completely trapped. He longed to leave the palace and see what the world was like beyond its borders but he couldn't disobey his father who only wanted what was best for him.

As time went by the prince grew into a man and the sultan gave him more and more duties to help govern the land and keep him busy, but still the prince was often caught gazing out towards the horizon, yearning for a taste of the unknown.

One day, as the prince looked longingly at the many boats that came

and went in the harbour, his father approached him with great enthusiasm.

‘My dearest son, you will be excited to hear that your mother and I have found the perfect bride for you! Perhaps we can start to plan your wedding.’

The prince was so much overcome by these words that he remained silent for some time. At length he said, ‘Dearest Father, I know you think what you are doing is what’s best for me but I am unable to accept this wife. I am still so young and long to reach out and find my own place in the world. I am not ready to settle down – and definitely not with someone I have never even met.’

The sultan was greatly distressed.

Why was his son so against the idea? Was it not every man’s greatest desire to have an important job and a happy family? This was what the sultan had been blessed with. Why was this not good enough for the prince? The more the sultan thought about it, the angrier he became.

As usual with a tricky problem the sultan sent for his Grand Vizier. The Grand Vizier listened patiently to the sultan’s woes and then said, ‘My great and good friend, in all of your work you are often able to see straight and clear to the best answer to a problem, but with your own child I fear you are too close. Your judgement is clouded by your own strong love for the prince. I fear you need to look beyond your

own desires to achieve what is best.'

'You are right!' cried the sultan. 'The boy will not listen to me alone. I will bring him before the council and request, before everyone gathered there, that he marries this girl. He would never dare to refuse me in front of so many people!'

So it was that Prince Camar was summoned before the council, the most important and learned men and women of all the land. The prince stood before his sultan and the gathered council and awaited their words.

'Prince Camar al-Zaman,' began his father, 'for the benefit of the people and the happiness of our kingdom it is time that you were married. The

council has approved a good match for you and we propose that you are wedded to her at the next new moon. Do you agree?'

The sultan was smiling from ear to ear. He was sure the prince would never refuse such a request before the entire council. But then the sultan's smile began to falter. The prince was looking concerned. He then shook his head ever so slightly and opened his mouth to speak ...

'Be warned!' the sultan added sternly. 'A refusal of such an important request from your sultan and father would mean treason and result in your imprisonment!'

But these words hardened the prince's resolve and his eyes grew cold.

‘I am already a prisoner if I am not free to leave the palace or choose when to marry.’

The council was stunned into silence. The sultan went pink, then red, then purple with rage. ‘You will see what real imprisonment is like!’ the sultan thundered, rising to his feet. ‘From now on you will be confined to the tower!’

The prince’s mother and quite a few of the council gasped, but there was nothing to be done – the sultan had spoken and his word was final. Two guards took the prince to the edge of the palace grounds where an old tumbled-down tower stood, with rotting wooden doors and holes in the walls that the wind and mice liked to

leap through. The prince was taken to the topmost room and locked away with nothing but an old bed and a pile of dusty books to amuse him.

Now it so happened that this abandoned tower wasn’t quite as abandoned as everyone believed. A magical genie – or a *jinni* as this being was known throughout the kingdom – liked to visit the waters there. She often came to spend warm evenings, watching the birds and bats swoop down and gobble the insects that buzzed above the liquid surface. Her name was Maimoune and when she came one night in her glistening robes and gem-trailed hair she was astonished to see two guards outside the tower door and inside the tower a sleeping

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prince. At first she thought to poke him until he awoke and left the tower, but when she moved a lock of hair from his face she was quite taken by his features.

‘My,’ she said to no one in particular. ‘Your aura is full of passion and fire. Whatever are you doing hiding in my tower?’

Then she checked the door and saw that it was locked.

‘A prisoner!’ she remarked. ‘What terrible crime have

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you committed to make the people take away your freedom thus? I find it hard to imagine a thing of such fine spirit could ever be so bad?’

She decided to let the curious prince remain sleeping and drifted out into the night to think what she might do.

Just then there was the sound of beating wings and she spotted another of her kind, but not the nice kind. This was a jinni called

Danhasch who had a wicked sense of mischief. He was the type to hide your left shoe or spoil your milk, just because he could, and find your frustration funny.

When Danhasch saw Maimoune he



panicked for she was more powerful than he was in every way. If he could he would have flown away quickly, but it was too late for she had already spotted him. He could either fight her, or bow to her, and although bowing to her would be deeply humiliating fighting would be even worse.

‘O good and glorious Maimoune.’ He bowed deeply. ‘Your beauty does grow every time I see you ... which means you must have been a very ugly baby!’

He rolled in the air with laughter at his own joke while Maimoune narrowed her weary eyes at him.

‘You are a wretched creature,’ Maimoune chided. ‘And for your insult you must tell me something very interesting or I will beat you

black and blue!’

Danhasch swallowed his laughter. He really ought to learn to keep his mouth shut. Now he had to come up with something interesting to please Maimoune or he really would be in trouble.

‘Let’s see,’ he said, coiling into a thinking position. ‘There were some singing frogs back east?’

Maimoune frowned. That didn’t sound very interesting.

Danhasch thought some more. ‘Or the maid who could spin straw into gold?’

‘I’ve heard of her before,’ Maimoune said, folding her arms impatiently.

‘Oh! I know,’ said Danhasch. ‘Far, far away, in a great and powerful land

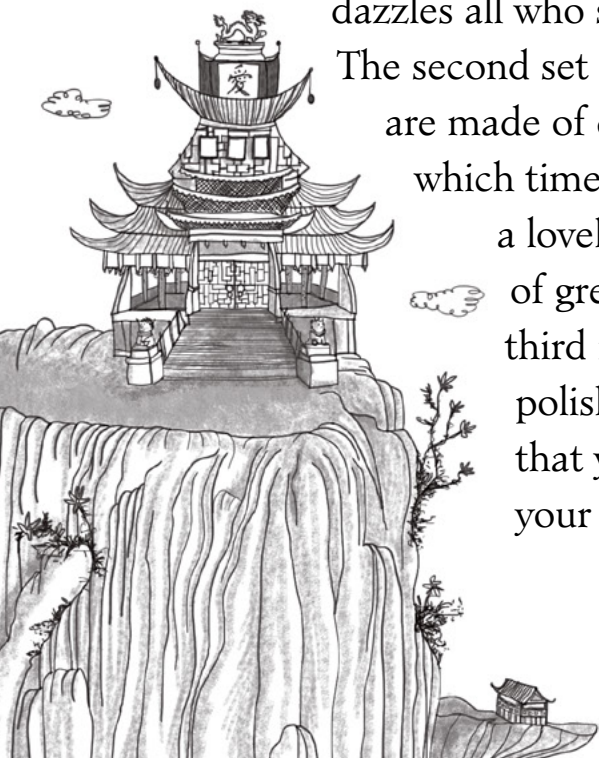
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called China, there is an emperor with only one daughter. This king is so consumed with love for his precious child that he has built her the most wondrous palace, seven layers all within each other.

‘The outer walls are made of transparent rock crystal and the beautiful white quartz

dazzles all who see it.

The second set of walls are made of copper, which time is turning a lovely shade of green; the third is of fine polished steel that you can see your face in, the



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fourth of fiery bronze, the fifth of black marble streaked with silvery threads, and the sixth is of pure silver itself. This leaves the inner palace which is made of pure gold and set in the most perfectly exquisite gardens filled with fine flowers, beautiful songbirds and sparkling water features.’

‘That is quite interesting,’ said Maimoune.

‘There’s more,’ smiled Danhasch with a twinkle in his eye. ‘The story of such a fine princess who is so wonderful that she is kept safely within such an amazing palace spread far and wide and many have come to ask for her hand in marriage. Her father was delighted and picked out the best men for her to choose from but she would



not choose.'

'Not any of them?' asked Maimoune.

'Not one,' said Danhasch. 'Filled with sadness, her father dropped to his knees and asked why she would not pick a husband. "Dearest Father," she said, "why ever would I pick a husband I know nothing about when I can live here in my special palace and have everything I desire?"'

Maimoune laughed. 'The old fool had spoiled her so much she never wanted to leave!'

'Indeed, and now he grows old with no grandchildren to look forward to. So confused is he by her actions that he has declared her ill and confined her to her room!'

'That *was* an interesting story. Thank

you,' said Maimoune.

Danhasch did bow then. 'No other story is more interesting than that!' he added proudly, which spoiled Maimoune's good mood.

'Well, actually, I too have an interesting story, just as good as that, if not better!' she declared. 'Just now I came from a tower where a goodly prince is held against his will for no just reason that I can fathom.'

'If he is imprisoned in a boring old tower he can't be as interesting as my princess in her palace of seven walls!' frowned Danhasch.

Maimoune felt even more annoyed. 'I think you'll find that my prince is clearly more interesting than your silly princess! She is just a pretty girl locked

in her fancy bedroom. My prince is locked in a dreadful tower with only mice and the song of the wind to keep him company!’

Now it was Danhasch’s turn to feel annoyed. ‘Truly, there is only one way to prove my princess is superior to your prince. You must accompany me to China to see her for yourself.’

Maimoune tutted. ‘I will not go all the way to China. You must bring her to me and I will bring my prince. We shall lay them down together and see which one lives up to their interesting tale the most.’

‘It is agreed!’ said Danhasch, and he disappeared in a puff of blue smoke soon to return with the sleeping princess in his enchanted arms.

Maimoune had prepared a magical bed of strong vines hung with roses and tulips, poppies and pittosporum flowers and dressed it in the finest white silk sheets. The prince already lay in the bed, lost to a magical slumber, and he never stirred as Danhasch lay the princess next to him.

The two jinn stood back and gazed at the two mortals. Both had the same long black hair that shone with the lustre of the night sky after a rainstorm, both had strong features that spoke of determination and spirit, and both had bright skin that proved them energetic and curious. Indeed they both looked very much alike.

Danhasch frowned. ‘Well, how are we supposed to tell from this?’

Maimoune stood straight with her shoulders back. 'It is clear to see that my prince is the more interesting.'

The prince snuffled a bit.

Danhasch pulled a face. 'I don't think so. It is perfectly clear that my princess is the most interesting.'

At which point the princess rolled over in her sleep.

'Ha! No, she is not!' said Maimoune.

'No less than your snoring prince!' snapped Danhasch.

Irritably both jinn stared again at the sleeping mortals.

'This is getting us nowhere,' sighed Maimoune. 'What we need is an independent and unbiased judge.'

'You speak the truth,' agreed Danhasch.

So Maimoune struck the ground with her foot and called forth an old friend. The ground rumbled and then cracked open to release a billow of dark purple smoke that trailed out and dissipated to reveal a truly ancient jinni with six horns on his head and clawed hands.

'Who calls for Caschcasch at this hour while he sleeps before the fire?' he grumbled, which is not unusual behaviour for an aged jinni with aching bones and an intolerance of cold draughts.

'Great Caschcasch,' said Maimoune. 'We are in need of your wise counsel, for Danhasch and I are in disagreement. Pray look upon these here mortals that lie sleeping and tell us which of them is the

most interesting.'

Caschcasch took a step forward and peered into the flowery bed. He had to look quite closely for even a jinni will lose their eyesight when age takes its toll. After a short while he pulled back.

'Well?' asked Danhasch in great excitement. 'Who has won?'

'Neither,' tutted the great and aged Caschcasch. 'How did you ever expect to find out how interesting a person is when they are asleep? Youngsters today! They know nothing!' he grumbled. 'You need to see them awake. See the true soul behind their eyes.'

Without a moment's hesitation Maimoune turned herself into a

mosquito and flew to the prince's exposed neck where she bit him with a start and he woke instantly from his magical sleep. Not to be outdone Danhasch also turned himself into a mosquito and quite rudely stung the poor princess on her arm to wake her.

The prince and the princess yawned and stretched in mild confusion and then stopped in surprise when they saw each other.

The old jinni shook his head and tutted. 'I didn't say to actually go ahead and do it! Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should. Who knows what this meddling will do.'

And with that he disappeared into the ground and back to his nice, warm fire.

Maimoune and Danhasch were delighted, however. Which of their champions would be the winner? They couldn't wait to find out.

The prince was the first to speak.

'Oh!' He blushed at the girl in his bed. 'At first I thought I was looking in a mirror but now I see you are someone altogether different.'

The princess reached out and gently touched his face. 'Ah, you are real and not a dream after all!'

Hidden from the mortals' view, Maimoune and Danhasch watched in anticipation as the two young people talked together.

'When will we know who has won?' Danhasch whispered.

'I'm not sure,' said Maimoune.

The two jinn waited for hours for the truth to be revealed, but all they saw were the prince and princess laughing and chatting with each other. At one point the prince took off his ring and offered it to the princess.

'You must take this ring and wear it as a symbol of our friendship.'

Danhasch frowned in bewilderment as the princess turned bright red.

'Does that mean I have won?' he asked Maimoune who had practically dozed off in the waiting.

'Oh no!' she exclaimed, but then felt relief as the princess in turn removed one of her own rings and gave it to the prince.

'And you must have this ring in return. Now we shall be forever

linked together.'

'Oh piffle. I've had enough of this,'  
said Danhasch.

'Me too,' said Maimoune, and with  
a quick snap of her fingers both  
mortals fell once more into an  
enchanted sleep.

'Let us return them to their beds and  
say no more about it,' she yawned.  
'I've quite forgotten how this all  
started in the first place!'

And so the prince and princess were  
each returned to their own beds and  
slept until morning when they awoke  
with beguiling new memories and a  
sweet song in their hearts.

'Guards!' cried the prince on  
waking. 'Guards!'

The guards rushed into the prince's

room expecting trouble at such an  
alarming cry, but all they found  
was Prince Camar caught up in his  
bedding as he tried to hurry out  
of bed.

'Sire? Are you well?' asked one of  
the guards.

'Take me to the girl!' he cried. 'I will  
agree to my father's demands and  
marry her! If only he had introduced  
her to me first none of this would have  
happened. He has chosen a wonderful  
wife and was so clever to bring her  
to me last night. Quick! Quick! Go  
fetch someone!'

The guards exchanged a startled look.

'But, sire, no maid came to see you  
last night. We were both on duty and  
saw no one.'

‘Don’t punish me further!’ wailed the prince. ‘I admit I was wrong. I will marry the girl my father has chosen for me. Go! Fetch me water to wash in and clean clothes to greet her in! Go! Hurry!’

Hopelessly confused, the guard ran to the sultan.

‘Oh, Your Majesty! I fear the imprisonment has caused the prince great mental harm. He is talking of a night-time visitor he wishes to marry!’

Worried, the sultan sent his trusted Grand Vizier to investigate. The vizier anticipated great noise and anguish on the prince’s part, such was the description of the alarmed guard, but when he entered the prince’s room he found Camar patiently waiting.

‘I am glad to see you are well, my prince,’ said the vizier.

‘Is she ready? Can I see her?’ he asked.

‘See who?’ asked the Grand Vizier.

‘The woman my father wishes me to marry who he snuck into my room last night in order to gain my favour. He was right! I would do anything for her. I must see her again! Right now!’

‘But there is no girl,’ frowned the Grand Vizier. ‘All the suitors left after you were brought to the tower.’

‘But I was with her last night,’ frowned the prince. ‘I must see her at once!’ And he stood from his chair and advanced on the Grand Vizier with such determination that the poor man had to quickly make his exit and hurry

back to the sultan.

‘Well?’ asked the sultan as soon as the Grand Vizier returned. ‘How was he?’

‘Alas, I fear the guard was right. The prince has slipped into madness. He speaks of a mysterious young woman appearing to him on a bed of roses and pittosporum flowers!’

So then it was the sultan’s turn to visit his son.

‘Oh wise Father!’ said the delighted prince. ‘You were right after all. The woman you and Mother have picked for me is the most exquisite creature ever and I would be happy to have her as my bride. Please, no more teasing. Take me to her so that we may always be together.’

The sultan sat heavily on the edge of

the old dusty bed.

‘Dearest child of mine, I fear your words are misspoken for I truly know of no girl. I blame myself of course: locking you in this dreadful place has obviously led you to have such a vivid dream.’

The prince shook his head. ‘It was no dream, Father. How else could I have this?’

At that he lifted his hand to show a dainty silver ring set with precious green jade and surrounded by small red carnelian gemstones on his smallest finger. A woman’s ring for sure and an expensive one too; such impeccable craftsmanship was not known in these isles.

‘The woman who owns this ring is the



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only woman I shall marry!' declared the prince.

The Grand Vizier raised an eyebrow, which was as much of a reaction you could ever hope to get from him, and the sultan clutched his son's hands.

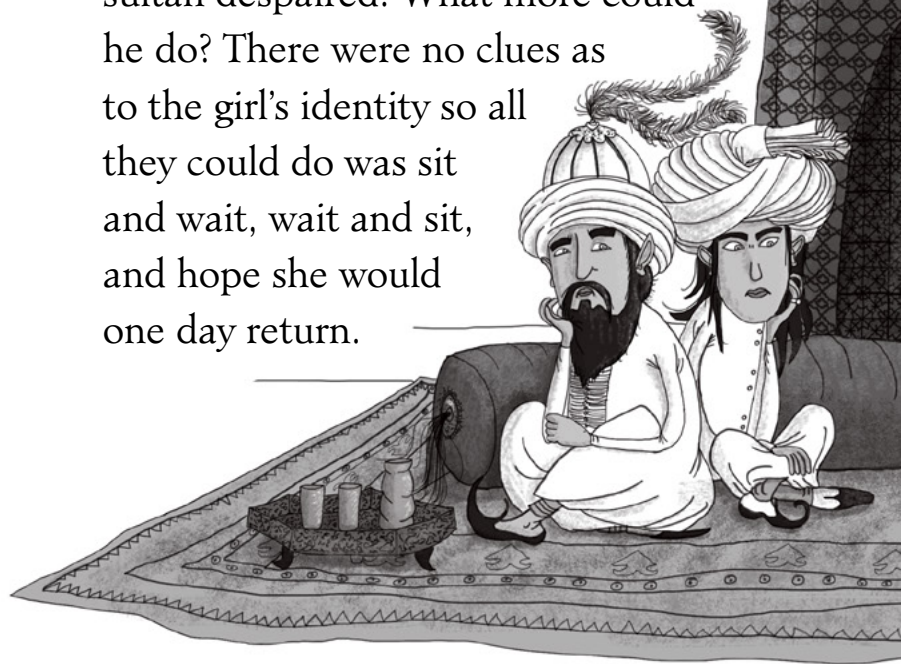
'I see this ring and can no longer doubt your words! But how and from where did the lady come I cannot imagine! Without a way to track her we can only wait and hope that she returns.'

So saying, the sultan took Camar by the hand and led him back to the palace to await the return of the mysterious lady. For this the prince was naturally grateful, but sitting and waiting were not his style. He was determined to trace her himself, right now, any way

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he could; but the sultan wasn't sultan for nothing and he knew what his son was like so he set a watch on the prince so that he might never leave; and he distracted him with work while promising he was doing everything he could to track down the lost princess.

But as time went by and the princess was not found the prince began to wilt in gloom and the sultan despaired. What more could he do? There were no clues as to the girl's identity so all they could do was sit and wait, wait and sit, and hope she would one day return.



## About this series

The Arabian Nights tales are some of the most enduringly entertaining stories ever written. Compiled in Arabic during the Islamic Golden Age, numerous tales depict legends, sorcery and magic intermingled with real people, places and events. Some tales are framed within other tales while others are perfectly self-contained. The result is a superb collection of richly layered narratives; whether adventure, historical, tragic, comic or romantic, they have delighted audiences for centuries.

Arabian Nights Adventures is a wonderful collection of children's books that brings this rich heritage to life. Instead of a vast compendium of stories, each book in the series is devoted to a single tale from The Nights. The best tales have been selected. There are traditional favourites such as *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp*, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* and *The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor*, and less well-known gems such as *Gulnare of the Sea*, *The Enchanted Horse*, *The Merchant and the Jinni* and more.

Kelley Townley provides masterful contemporary renderings of these ancient treasures while Anja Gram's illustrations are full of the spice, wit and magic of the stories themselves. The series style is

fresh and vibrant and the print inside is clear and beautifully typeset. When placed on bookshelves the distinctive spines reveal a wonderful image that grows as new stories are added: a design made specially for one thousand and one nights' tales! And with the highest of editorial standards and attention to detail, this series will delight readers everywhere and bring the Islamic Golden Age gloriously to life.

## About Kelley Townley

Kelley Townley trained as a teacher and gained her MA in creative writing with distinction from Bath Spa University. She may be found either writing children's stories – happily losing herself in the dream world of the human imagination – or plotting new ways to engage readers, which are the same things really. Kelley lives near Bath with her family, the writer's obligatory cats and an ever growing number of woodlice.

## About Anja Gram

Anja Gram has illustrated numerous children's books and magazines. Her highly distinctive style captivates and endears readers around the world. She lives and works in Copenhagen, Denmark.

# Arabian Nights Adventures

*Kelley Townley*  
*Illustrated by Anja Gram*

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