

Arabian Nights Adventures

The Three Princes, the Princess & the Jinni Pari Banou



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

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*The Three Princes,
the Princess
& the Jinni
Pari Banou*

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HARPENDORRE

Published in Great Britain in 2018
by Harpendore Publishing Ltd
34 Priory Road, Richmond TW9 3DF, United Kingdom

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A Catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-911030-10-2 (paperback)

Designed by Anne-Lise Jacobsen
www.behance.net/annelisejacobsen

www.harpendore.co.uk

The Three Princes, the Princess & the Jinni Pari Banou



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*The Three Princes, the Princess
and the Jinni Pari Banou*

Once upon a time in a land of peace and tranquillity in northern India there stood the most marvellous palace. It was made of red sandstone and had countless arched doors and windows all framed with the most intricate designs. Inside the palace lived the sultan with his three sons: Husayn, Ali and Ahmed.

Husayn was the eldest and was big and strong. Ali was the middle brother and was brave and clever. And Ahmed was the youngest; he was kind and a bit of a day-dreamer.

Also at the palace lived Princess Nouronnihar whom the brothers lovingly nicknamed Nia. Princess Nia was not their sister but the daughter of a family friend who had sadly died. The four children grew up together and had the most wonderful childhood filled with water fountain frolics, stealing cakes from the kitchens, chasing tiger tails and generally causing great chaos.

However, nothing stays the same and as they grew older things started to change. Princess Nia no longer wanted to run and play with the boys. She'd rather be with other girls and giggle. The three brothers were confused at first but instead of liking Nia less, this behaviour seemed to make them like her more.

This was because they were changing too. They all grew taller and broader and stronger, but they also grew in other ways as well. Husayn became quite competitive and took everything very seriously. Ali loved to learn and focused intensely on his studies. And little Ahmed would wander for hours on his own, thinking wonderful thoughts such as what it would be like if the sky was green instead of blue, or if fish flew and birds swam.

Eventually Princess Nia got to an age that the sultan thought was appropriate for marriage.

'We shall have to find her a foreign prince to marry,' he said one morning over breakfast when Princess Nia had once again failed to get up in time.

'What?' said Prince Ali. 'You mean send her away?'

'I don't like the sound of that idea,' said Prince Husayn.

'Yes, couldn't she just stay here with us?' said Prince Ahmed.

The sultan looked at his three sons quizzically and then his face opened up in sudden understanding. In fact he wondered how he could have missed it before.

He put aside his papers and looked at the three horrified faces.

'It is clear to see that you have all fallen in love with Nia,' he said.

The brothers looked startled, first at their father and then at each other, until they too knew it to be true.

'And I suppose,' he said, 'it is highly

possible that one of you could marry her.'

'Well, clearly that should be me,' said Husayn. 'For I am the eldest and shall become the next sultan.'

'Wait a minute!' said Ali. 'Maybe she doesn't want to be a sultana. There's a lot of work involved, organising events and helping charities. Maybe she wants a simple life. With me.'

Ahmed tutted. 'I think you'll find that Nia is too young for either of you. She is much nearer my age.'

The three brothers glared at each other and then someone kicked someone else underneath the table which resulted in a fumble of kicks that made the sultan spill his drink.

'Well, you can't all marry her,' he said in irritation. 'Can't you agree on who

should be best?’

Alas, the monarch could only sink
deeper into his seat as the three
brothers continued



to fight loudly over who was better
suited to the princess until at last
the door opened and in she walked,
yawning and completely unaware.

She sat down and reached for some
fruit. Everyone was looking at her.

‘Whatever is the matter?’ she asked.
‘Have I something on my face?’



The brothers all coloured brightly and turned mute while studying their laps, completely unable to talk to Nia now that they had acknowledged their love for her.

‘What is wrong?’ she asked, turning to her adopted father, only to see him also staring at her in alarm as in reality the sultan had no idea how best to deal with this awkward situation.

Nia frowned in annoyance. ‘It is much too early for these games you play with me. I shall eat my breakfast in my room I think.’

As she left, all four of them let out a sigh of relief.

‘What are we to do, Father?’ asked Husayn.

The sultan knew there must be a

simple solution to the problem but he was so panicked by the whole event that he couldn’t think straight.

‘Oh … erm … well, one of you will have to win her hand, I suppose,’ he said.

‘How, Father?’ said Husayn.

‘Shall we fight? Swords or fists?’ said Ali.

‘Do we have to kill each other?’ said Ahmed.

‘Good heavens, no!’ said the sultan. ‘It’ll be a task. A nice simple task. Somewhere very far from each other,’ he added, worried by their blood lust; romance was such a tricky business!

‘Yes, I think it would be best if you each travelled separately to a different country and your task shall be …’

‘Battle a mighty beast?’ said Ahmed.
‘Learn the secret of eternal youth?’
said Ali.

‘Uncover a long buried treasure?’
said Husayn.

The sultan sighed; why were young men always so eager to get into trouble?

‘No,’ he said. ‘Your task will be to find something so rare and singular that everyone will be amazed by it: some extraordinary curiosity. The son who brings back the most wonderful and unique artefact will win the hand of Nia in marriage.’

‘So, it’s like a shopping trip?’
frowned Husayn.

‘Well, yes and no,’ said the sultan.
‘You get to travel to far-flung places and struggle on your own with no help from

me or your rank. You’ll have to disguise yourselves as merchants.’

‘Merchants are just glorified shoppers though, aren’t they?’ added Ali.

‘Yes,’ said the sultan. ‘But you’ll face uncertain challenges and adventures. Who knows what dangers await you?’

‘While we’re shopping?’ said Ahmed.

‘It’s not shopping!’ snapped the sultan. ‘Now enough of this! Go and pack your bags and be gone! I have much more pressing matters to deal with than you three bleating on at me about love!’

And so it was that very day all three brothers met at the city gates, dressed as merchants and carrying nothing but a purse full of money.

‘Good luck to you my brothers,’ said Husayn. ‘But let it not spoil the love

we have for each other when I return victorious and claim the hand of sweet Nia.'

'You claim her hand?' scoffed Ali. 'I think you'll find that I have the best eye for trinkets in this family. I will return with such an exquisite object that *all* the women of the land will beg me to take them as a wife!'

'Ha!' said Ahmed. 'While you two are so focused on the prize I will seek out something so rare and unique that it'll reduce your precious finds to mediocre knick-knacks and Nia will be drawn to me like a butterfly to nectar!'

'We shall see!' declared Husayn, and he reared his horse dramatically before cantering off down the road, quickly followed by his brothers before they

each split off into different directions.

On the palace balcony the sultan watched them go just as Nia wandered out.

'Are they leaving?' she asked. 'Where is it they go with such passion?'

The sultan shrugged. 'Shopping.'

'Oh,' she said. 'I wish I was going. How come nobody asked me?'

'Ah,' said the sultan. 'I never thought of that.'



Prince Husayn's Tale

Prince Husayn had heard tales about the wonders and splendour of a great city to the south east called Bisnagar, and so he bent his course towards the Indian coast. It took him three months of hard travel, joining various caravans of merchants and camels as they traversed deadly deserts and barren mountains, to reach the fabled city.

When he arrived he found it to be a truly magnificent sight with people from all over the world crowding its many streets, bringing with them

such varied cultures and ideas that Husayn was instantly confident that he would soon discover a unique item, unparalleled by anything his brothers could find.

He found himself lodgings at a roadside inn and made friends with fellow travellers so that he might learn where best to find the rarest treasures. Many he spoke to claimed the city's streets were filled with the finest treasures in all the land, but none could suggest what the greatest treasure of all might be.

Next morning, with his purse of money at the ready, Prince Husayn set out to see what he could find. And what he found was true delight! No uncomfortable hustle and bustle

with shouting stall-holders and pushy buyers. Instead the streets were cool and calm, helped enormously by their clever vaulted design that shaded them from the burning sun; and as he wandered past the stalls Husayn became deeply impressed by the sheer quality of the goods on offer.

He saw with awe the finest linens from Africa, the smoothest Chinese silks in a beguiling array of colours, the most intricately designed jewellery, and delicate porcelain that he was too scared to handle in case it broke. All this surprised him so much that he found it hard to believe that even the most mundane object here would not outshine anything his brothers might find.

Having been so thoroughly

overwhelmed by his experiences Husayn found himself a quiet place to sit and recover with a hot spiced drink. His thoughts ran around the many wonderful things he had seen today and wondered which would be the most extraordinary to return home with, when along came a curious sight. There was a man with a rug draped over his arm. He was calling out the price at thirty gold pieces. Husayn nearly choked on his drink. Thirty gold pieces for such a small piece of carpet?

Husayn leaned forward and called the man over for a look. He tried his hardest to see the carpet's appeal but in the end he had to give up.

‘My friend,’ he said, ‘I fear I cannot tell why you ask so much for this simple

carpet. Is there something I am missing?’

The man looked at him with sparkling green eyes. ‘Why yes, sir, indeed you are,’ he said, leaning in so that their faces were mere centimetres apart. ‘For this carpet is magic.’

‘Magic!’ said Husayn.

‘Shhh! Yes!’ said the man, casting a wary eye around his surroundings.

‘In what way?’ Husayn whispered back.

‘It can take you anywhere you wish!’ he replied. ‘Quicker than any camel or horse. Over any terrain. Indeed, there is no obstacle that can impede this carpet’s travels.’

Well that really was a wonder, thought Husayn. It made all the other items he had seen that day pale into



insignificance in comparison. Nothing his brothers ever found could ever compare to a magic carpet!

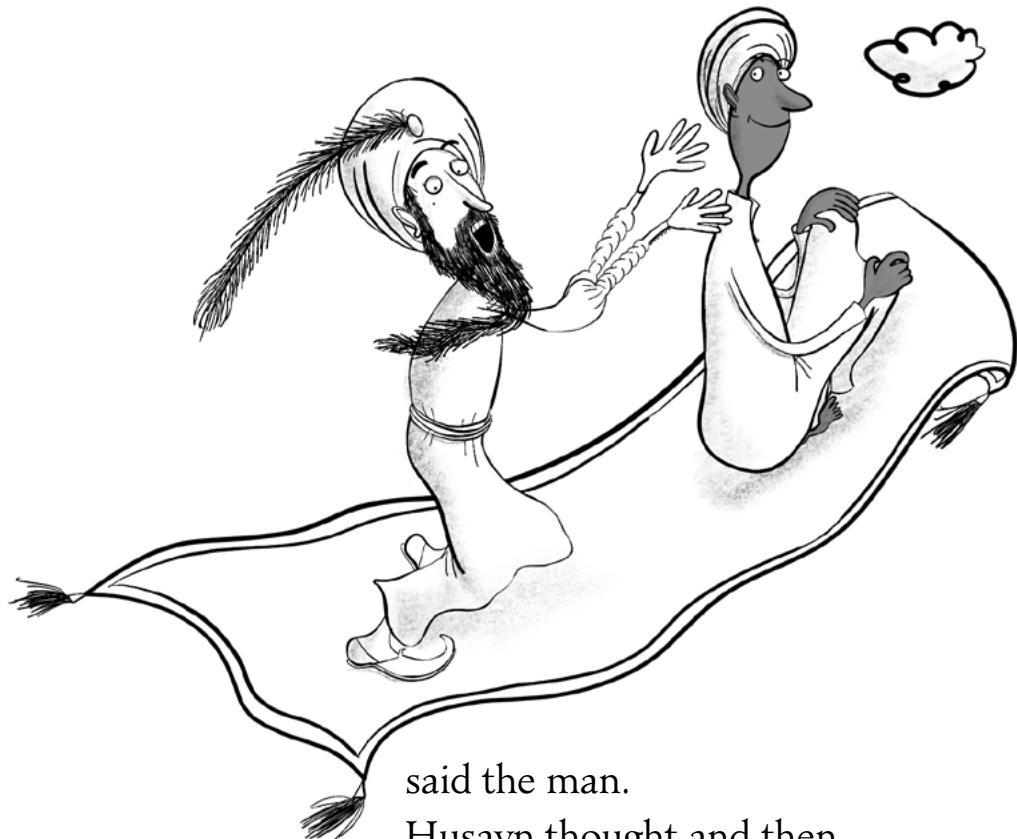
'If this carpet really is magic then the price you ask is cheap indeed,' said Husayn suspiciously.

'Circumstances betray me,' said the man sadly, 'and I am afraid I am in need of money, not travel, right now. Although I am loath to sell it at all, sell it I must.'

'All right,' said Husayn. 'If you can prove to me the value of this carpet I will gladly pay you thirty gold pieces.'

And so, out of sight, the men laid down the small carpet so that they could both sit upon it.

'You need only say where you wish to go and the carpet will take you there,'



said the man.

Husayn thought and then wished he was back in his rented room at the roadside inn. No sooner had the words left his mouth than the carpet did ripple and rise so that he reached forward to clasp the man in a panic.

'Do not worry, my friend,' he said. 'It

is perfectly safe.'

And then, as if gently carried upon a pillow, the carpet zipped through the sky and landed with perfect grace in Husayn's room.

It took a moment for Husayn to recover from his amazement but when he did he said, 'Sir, I shall gladly give you SIXTY gold pieces for this carpet for it is truly marvellous!'

'You are most kind,' bowed the man.

As Husayn lounged in his room admiring his new purchase which would, without doubt, secure him the hand of Princess Nia, he realised that he was now in no hurry. He could return home in the blink of an eye with this carpet – no more dangerous travels through deserts and mountains

for him! His brothers would not be so lucky, however, and would not return for weeks, possibly months. They had all agreed to meet at an inn near their home so that they might return to the palace together. He didn't fancy idly waiting there for them and he realised he could continue to explore the whole world with his magic carpet! And so he packed his bags, set off on an adventure, and was the first brother to arrive back at the inn.

Prince Ali's Tale



Prince Ali had decided to join a caravan of merchants and camels heading west into Persia. He asked the other merchants who he travelled with where to find the most unusual items and they all agreed it could be none other than the great city of Schiraz.

Far away on the coast it was exactly as remarkable as claimed: a bustling city teeming with people from everywhere. And just like his brother, Ali lost no time in setting out to see what astonishing item he might buy to win the fair of hand of Princess Nia.

The main shopping arcade was under cover in a spacious and well-built arena, arched over and supported by large pillars in between which the merchants laid out their wares. As it was still very early the city's merchants had yet to unload their stock. Ali sauntered through, admiring the high quality of the available goods. Very quickly something caught his eye. A merchant was setting out his stall and had an item slightly hidden from view, as if reluctant to sell it. It was a cylinder, carved from an elephant's tusk, about thirty centimetres long and three centimetres in diameter.

'Good day, sir,' Ali greeted the seller. 'How much for the ivory cylinder please?' The merchant pursed his lips as if

perturbed that Ali had seen it at all, but then he sighed as if in defeat.

'Thirty gold pieces,' he grumbled. 'And no less!'

'Thirty gold pieces!' Ali laughed. 'Pray, sir, are you mad? For if you are not then I am very much deceived as to me it looks like a simple piece of ivory.'

The man looked at Ali with deep green eyes.

'It is true that you are not the first to question my sanity on account of this little item, but when I tell you its secret I think you shall judge me mad still, for I ask too little for such a wondrous device!'

Ali was even more intrigued and said with wonder, 'Tell me please, what does it do?'

"Tis magic," said the man, picking it up. "See how it is furnished with glass at both ends? By looking through the tube and wishing upon what you want to see, then that is what your eyes will behold."

"Nonsense!" said Ali.

"Try it," said the man with confidence.

And so Ali held the tube up to his eye and wished to see his father, the sultan. Sure enough he saw him in perfect health, sitting upon his throne, in the midst of his council.

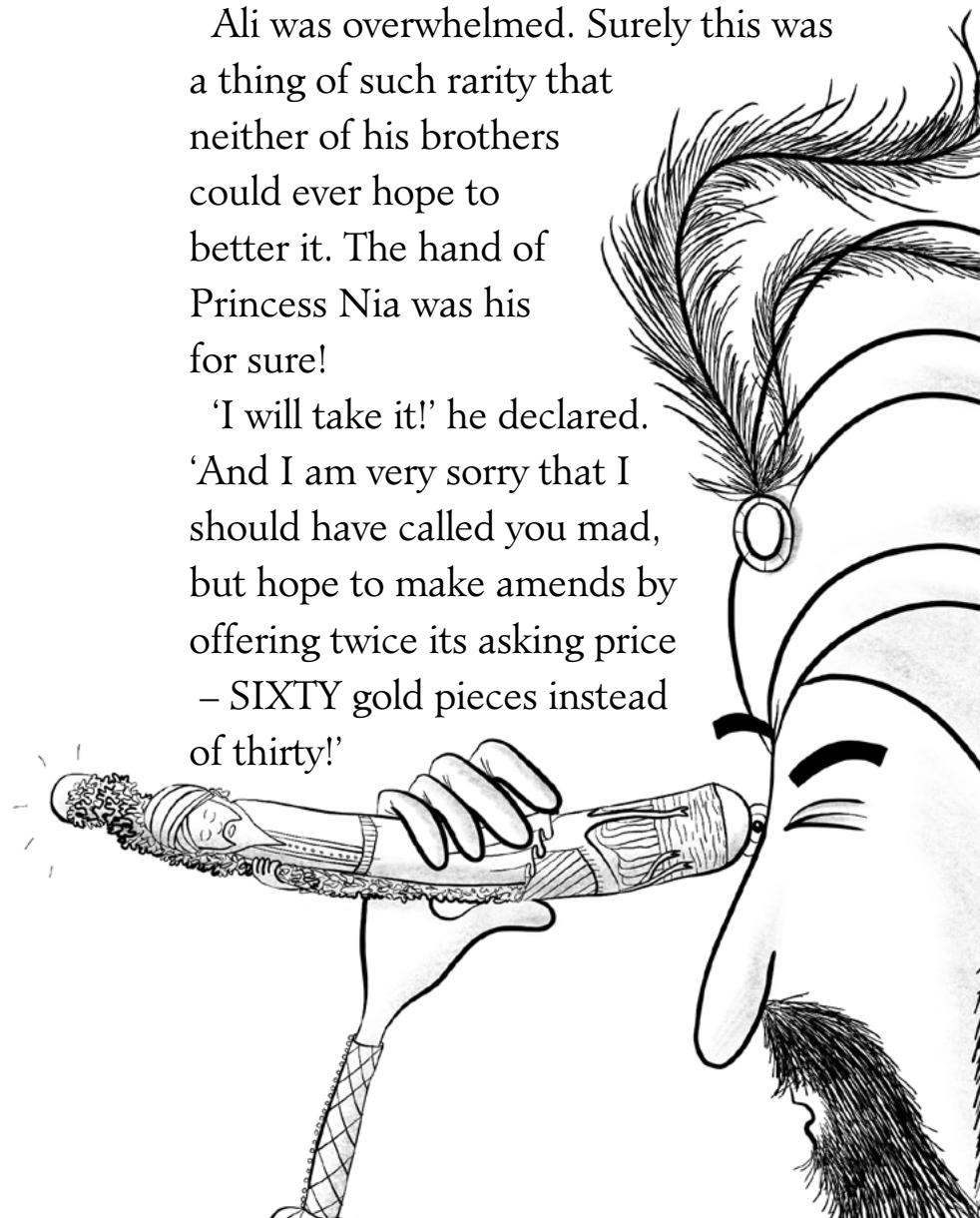
"Oh!" said Ali in amazement. "Tis magic indeed!"

After this he had another turn and wished to see Princess Nia. Instantly she appeared in the spyglass, laughing in a pleasant manner with her maids

roundabout the palace gardens.

Ali was overwhelmed. Surely this was a thing of such rarity that neither of his brothers could ever hope to better it. The hand of Princess Nia was his for sure!

"I will take it!" he declared. "And I am very sorry that I should have called you mad, but hope to make amends by offering twice its asking price – SIXTY gold pieces instead of thirty!"



'You are most kind,' bowed the man with a smile.

Prince Ali was overjoyed with his purchase. He was sure his brothers could search for a lifetime and never find anything that would rival his magical spyglass. Not only that, but it had happened so quickly! His brothers would not be ready for many more months; there was no need to rush home. In fact he had a whole month to await the merchant caravan that would be headed back home and so he decided to stay and explore this wonderful city for a while.

A happy month passed and the caravan with which he had travelled was once again ready to depart. The journey was long and tedious but he

arrived without incident at the place of rendezvous, where he found his brother, Prince Husayn, already there and they settled in to await the return of their youngest brother, Prince Ahmed.



Prince Ahmed's Tale

Prince Ahmed took the road north to Samarkand. This was one of the oldest cities in existence and was on a major crossroads for people travelling through Central Asia. It was a melting pot of many different cultures and everywhere you went people greeted you with grace and tolerance.

Just like his brothers Ahmed headed straight for the markets to see what treasures he could unearth. There were many unusual objects on offer, many of which Ahmed had no idea what to do with. He spent countless hours in a

happy haze of intrigue, learning all sorts of new techniques and ideas. He was in fact having such a lovely time that he began to forget what he was doing there.

At last his stomach reminded him of earthly needs and he bought some fragrant rice to eat. After he'd finished he leaned against a shady tree thinking about a sweet treat for dessert when a man walked past selling apples.

'Here!' called Ahmed. 'I will buy an apple.'

The seller nodded and hurried over. In his hand he held out a single red apple.

'That will be thirty gold pieces please,' said the seller.

'Thirty gold pieces!' said Ahmed. 'For an apple?'

'Ah, no,' said the seller. 'You see, this

is no ordinary apple. Although it may look quite normal from the outside, if you could grasp its greatness and benefit to all mankind then you would think thirty gold pieces cheap indeed!'

'Whatever do you mean?' said Ahmed.

The man smiled wider and stepped in closer to explain.

'He who possesses this apple is master of a great treasure,' he said, 'because it can cure all sickness. Even if the patient is dying it will restore them to perfect health!'

'How so?' marvelled Ahmed. 'Do you need to eat it? Does it have but one use or can you cut it and give it to many?'

'All that needs be done is to smell the apple and your health will be restored, unless you are actually dying and then

all it takes is a bite.'

'Say I were to believe you,' said Ahmed suspiciously, 'then the virtues of this apple would be greater than anything else in the world. Why would you offer up such a treasure for a mere thirty gold pieces?'

'Ah, it is clear that you are not from around here,' said the seller. 'For the apple here is well known and comes from a tree where others may be gathered. Indeed, ask any of the merchants here present, and hear what they have to say; several of them would not be alive this day if not for this excellent fruit. It is the result of the study and experience of a celebrated philosopher of this city, who applied himself all his life to the knowledge of

plants and minerals. But alas he died quite suddenly himself, before he could apply his own remedy.'

Ahmed scratched his chin. 'I admit that I am still sceptical of your bold claim, but if you can prove to me that this apple is truly as magical as you claim it to be, then I will pay you TWICE the amount you ask for it, for it would easily be worth much more than that; if any price could be put on it at all!'

The seller nodded happily and led Ahmed through some back streets where they called out for anyone in need of a healer. It wasn't long before a worried-looking woman came up to them and took them to a house. Inside there was a man ill upon his bed. The seller leaned forward so that the man

could smell the apple.

The sick man took a deep breath and fluttered his eyelashes as if something strange was happening to him and then he looked up with clear eyes and an expression of wonder he had lacked before.

‘I feel much better,’ he claimed with surprise and the woman came to hug him tightly.

The experiment completed and the qualities of the apple proved, Ahmed counted out the sixty pieces of gold he had promised the seller.

‘You are most kind.’ The seller bowed with twinkling green eyes and went on his way.

With his apple safely tucked into the folds of his robes Ahmed prepared to

travel back home. He joined the first caravan headed south and arrived in perfect health at the inn where the princes Husayn and Ali were waiting for him.



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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Arabian Nights Adventures

The sultan of the Indies has a suspicion. Could it be that Ahmed his son and Ahmed's wife wish to dethrone him and take over his kingdom? As a test of their intentions the sultan, egged on by the sorceress Shahd, makes various demands of the pair. But how will Ahmed and his wife respond as these requests become more and more outrageous?

Drama, intrigue, magic, mischief and sorcery are all aplenty in this incredible tale from *The Arabian Nights*.

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