

Arabian Nights Adventures

The Fisherman & the Jinni



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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and the Jinni Pari Banou

The Fisherman and the Jinni

The King's Jester



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& the Jinni

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The Fisherman & the Jinni



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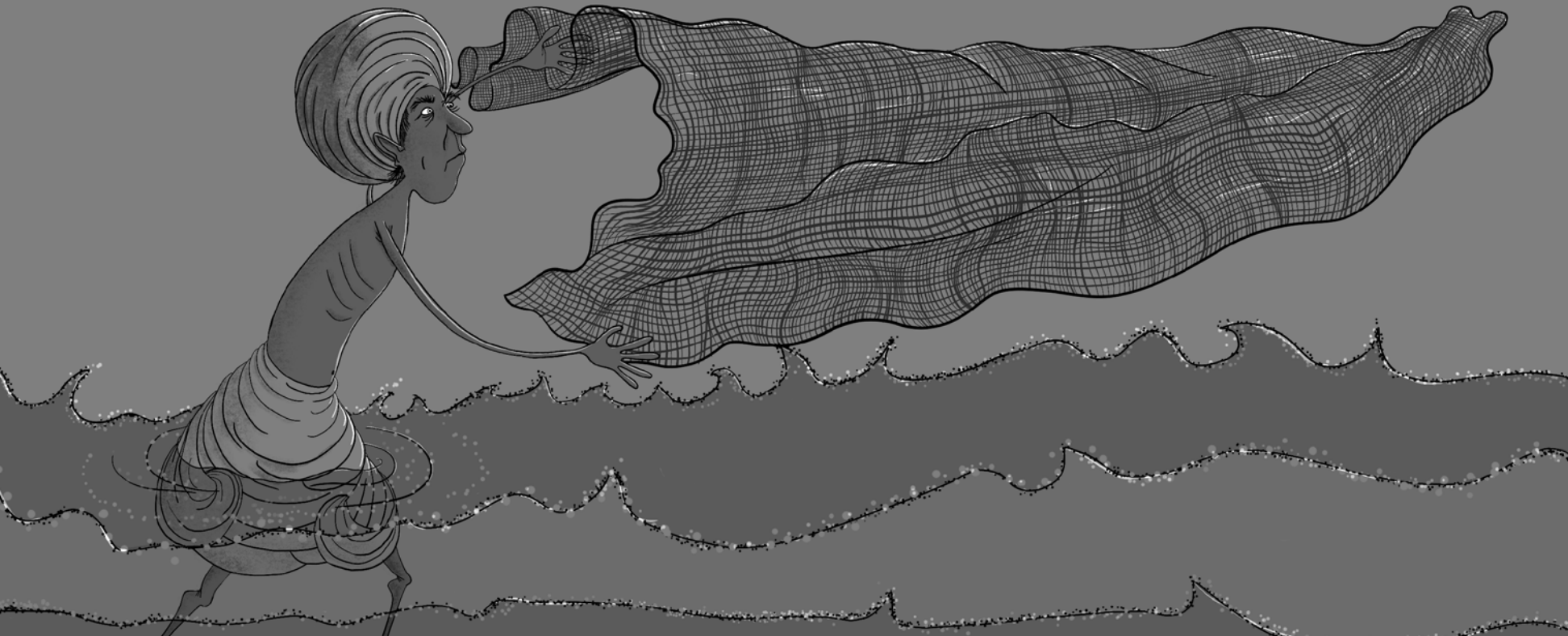


Once upon a time there was a fisherman who was so terribly old and poor that he could barely look after his family. Every day he went fishing in the sea but he was so weak from age and hunger that he could only throw out his nets four times. One particular morning the tide was such that he had to leave home while the moon was still out, and it was in the early radiant light that he made his way to the seashore. Once there he took off most of his clothes to stop them getting wet and waded out into the ocean.

He threw the first net and was merrily surprised when it soon pulled heavily in his arms.

‘At last, some luck!’ he cried. ‘My family will be so excited to see such a large fish and we will be able to sell it for a good price.’

The fisherman hauled on his net with anticipation but as the knotted rope emerged from the water he saw not a nice juicy fish but the bloated carcass of a donkey. His excitement disappeared into the sea making him cold as he dragged the disgusting, heavy load onto the beach.



It took a long time to untangle the dead beast and even longer to mend the holes it had created.

‘So much for luck,’ grumbled the fisherman, throwing his net in for a second time.

Again he felt the weight of something heavy and his excitement grew.

‘Surely this must be a great fish,’ he thought.

So in he hauled and he threw open the net on the wet sand to reveal not a fish but an old basket of rubbish. The fisherman cursed his luck and spent precious time picking out all the bits of litter from his net before he could throw it in a third time.

Alas, this time he only drew in stones and shells and mud. He was almost

in despair.

‘O fortune,’ he cried, ‘do not trifle with me thus! I am just a poor old man trying to make an honest living.’

With a final heavy sigh the fisherman threw his net out into the ocean one more time. This time when he hauled it in there was no pull or weight and he worried he hadn’t caught anything at all, and lo and behold there appeared to be nothing in his net.

He sat down on the sand, exhausted, as the first rays of daylight lit up the horizon in soft orange and pink.

‘If only there had been one fish,’ he sighed.

It was then that he noticed there was something in his net after all: a yellow pot about the size of his foot. He

scrabbled forward to get a better look. It was a quality pot and still sealed with presumably the owner's seal.

'I will find the owner,' he said, 'and maybe they will give me a reward.'

Out of curiosity the fisherman shook the jar to determine what might be inside. It seemed very light and made no noise. Maybe there was nothing inside? But then why would you seal an empty jar? Perhaps it was something very small, like a jewel wrapped in cloth so it didn't rattle!

The fisherman took another look at the seal. The script was in a language he had never seen before; surely the real owner was far away and would never be found so maybe he should just open it?

He got out his knife and slid it around the wax to break the seal and then he levered up the cork. Inside it was dark and he still could see nothing so he turned it upside down and thumped it on the base. Still nothing came out. Disgusted with his luck he threw the pot to the ground. It landed on the soft sand and after a moment smoke began to emerge: a thin trickle at first and then thick plumes of it, to form a dense dark grey cloud that hung over the frightened fisherman.

The smoke began to form the shape of a very large man, naked from the waist up and rippling with muscles. The creature's face was like a man's, handsome and bearded, but his eyes were unearthly and glared at the

fisherman with burning purple malice.

This could only be a *jinni*, thought the fisherman.

‘Do you have any last words before I kill you?’ the monstrous jinni boomed.

‘Kill ... kill me?’ said the fisherman. ‘But why?’ He looked at the pot. ‘Have I not just freed you?’

‘That may be so,’ said the jinni, ‘but I still have to kill you. However, as a small mercy, I shall let you decide the manner of your death.’

‘But I don’t understand,’ said the fisherman. ‘What good would it do you to kill me? Why not just let me go?’

‘I am afraid I cannot, not without breaking my word,’ said the jinni. ‘You see, long ago I displeased the great genie king and in punishment he did

put me in this pot and seal it with an enchantment to prevent my escape. Then he had the pot thrown into the sea.

‘During the first hundred years of my captivity I vowed that if anyone should free me I would make him rich beyond his dreams. But after a century no one came. So then for the next hundred years I vowed that I would make whoever released me a king or queen, but again no one came. In the third hundred years I promised to give my saviour three wishes, but again that century passed like all the others and I remained trapped.

‘At last I grew angry at being captive for so long and vowed if anyone should release me now then I would kill them. So you see I have to kill you otherwise I

will be breaking my vow.'

The fisherman was very unhappy.
'What an unlucky man I am to have
freed you!'

'I know,' said the jinni. 'But come now,
choose quickly how you would like to
die and be done with it.'

The fisherman may have been old and
poor but he was not unclever and he
began to devise a plot.

'You are right,' he said. 'We must
always keep our word, but before I
choose the manner of my death may I
have a final request?'

'As long as it's quick,' said the jinni.

The fisherman nodded. 'I'm just so
impressed that a magnificent creature
such as yourself could ever have fitted
in this tiny pot. The more I think about

it the more I disbelieve it.'

'Well, I did,' said the jinni. 'I was in
there for a very long time in fact.'

'No,' laughed the fisherman. 'I don't
believe you.'

'Of course you do,' snapped the jinni.
'You just saw it with your own two eyes.'

The fisherman shook his head. 'I think
you tricked me. You came around the
side or something.'

'I never did!' said the jinni.

'Prove it,' said the fisherman.

And so the jinni turned back into
smoke and sucked himself back into
the pot.

'See!' he said.

But the fisherman wasn't listening;
instead he quickly stuffed the
enchanted cork back into the neck of



the pot, sealing it shut. Too late the jinni realised he had been tricked.

‘Ha ha!’ said the fisherman. ‘Maybe now you will reconsider killing me! Maybe now you will offer me riches or wishes instead! But no, I think it would be

better to throw you back into the sea and then build a house here on the shore to warn others who might cast their nets here about a



wicked jinni who vows to kill the man who frees him.'

At these words the poor jinni did all he could to break free but the enchanted cork held true, and try as he might he could not get out. So he attempted to talk his way back out instead.

'You are a wise and clever man indeed,' said the jinni. 'If you let me out this time I promise not to kill you.'

'No. I don't think so,' answered the fisherman. 'If I trust you I am afraid you will treat me like the Greek king treated his doctor.'

The jinni paused; everybody knows that jinn love stories.

'The Greek king and the doctor?' he said from inside the pot. 'I have not

heard this tale. Will you tell it to me?'

'I will,' said the fisherman.



The Story of the Greek King and the Doctor

In the country of Zouman in Persia there once lived a Greek king. The Greek king had a disease called leprosy and he had spent many years and much money trying to find a cure. Alas, no one seemed to be able to help him and he began to think he'd never be well again.

One day a new doctor came to court – a tall and educated man called Douban. Douban had spent his many years travelling the world, learning many of its secrets. He was fluent in several languages and knew a great deal about

herbs and medicines. As soon as he was told of the king's illness he put on his best clothes and presented himself before the throne.

'Most gracious greetings, Your Highness,' he said. 'I have been told that no doctor thus far has been able to cure you of your leprosy, but if you will follow my instructions I do believe that I can succeed where others have failed.'

The king listened to this proposal with delight.

'If you are indeed clever enough to do this,' he said, 'I promise to make you and your descendants rich for ever!'

'I do it for the service of my trade,' bowed Douban. 'It is my pleasure to heal the sick.'

And so Douban went back to

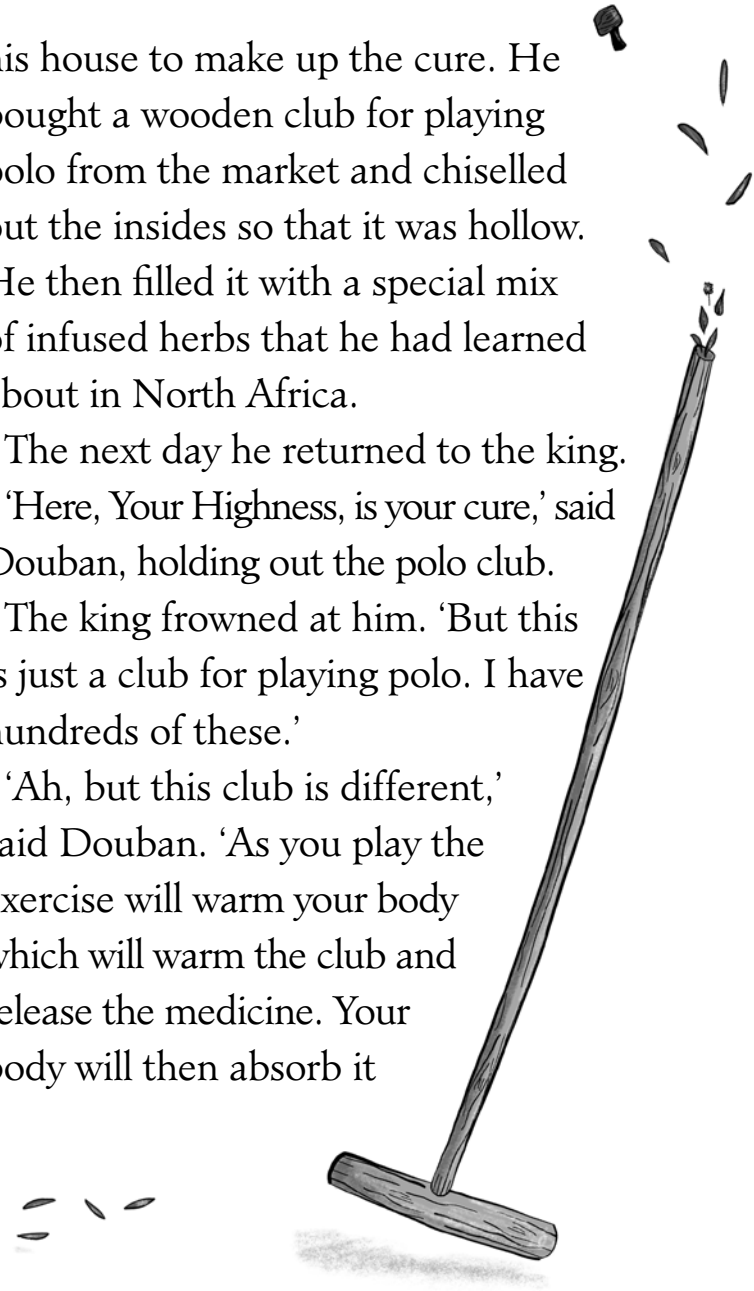
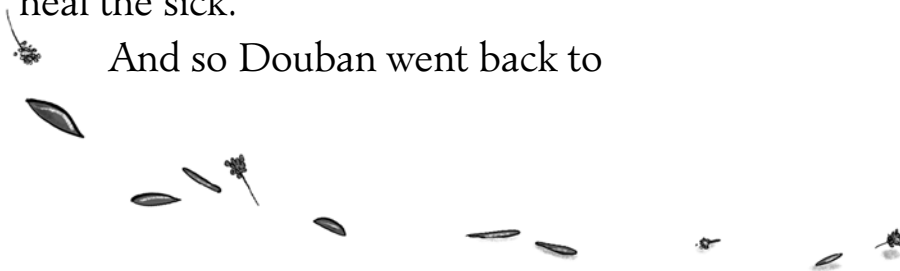
his house to make up the cure. He bought a wooden club for playing polo from the market and chiselled out the insides so that it was hollow. He then filled it with a special mix of infused herbs that he had learned about in North Africa.

The next day he returned to the king.

'Here, Your Highness, is your cure,' said Douban, holding out the polo club.

The king frowned at him. 'But this is just a club for playing polo. I have hundreds of these.'

'Ah, but this club is different,' said Douban. 'As you play the exercise will warm your body which will warm the club and release the medicine. Your body will then absorb it



and you will feel its glow penetrate throughout your insides. Next you must return to the palace and take a long hot bath. Follow this with a good night's sleep and when you awake in the morning you will be cured.'

The king was sceptical but willing to try anything and so he followed all of Douban's instructions. He mounted his horse and played polo. Striking the ball with the special bat he worked up a good sweat and indeed felt a warm glow travel up his arm and around his entire body. When the game was finished he returned home to have a bath and then went to sleep.

The next morning, to his great delight and astonishment, the king woke to find that he was completely cured.

When he entered his council chambers later that day, looking healthier than he had in years, all his courtiers were overcome with joy and relief.

Douban was eagerly called for and when he entered the chamber he bowed low to the ground in respect. The king, however, cried out in outrage and demanded that such an intelligent man should come and sit by his side, for a man as wise as he must be seated next to the king himself so that he might advise him at all times. Douban was greatly overwhelmed by this mark of honour and accepted gracefully.

Now the king already had an advisor, a Grand Vizier, who did not like that his place beside the king had been taken by another man. He began to think bad

thoughts about Douban and tried to think of a way to get rid of him.

A few days later the Grand Vizier met with the king in private.

‘May I have a word with you, my liege?’ said the Grand Vizier. ‘I have something very important to tell you.’

‘Of course,’ smiled the king who was always in a happy mood now that he was so healthy.

‘Sire, if I may,’ said the Grand Vizier, ‘as your most loyal and trusted advisor I must warn you against building such a close relationship with the doctor, Douban. It is most dangerous for such a powerful man as yourself to confide in a man whose faithfulness is not proved. For all we know he could be a traitor come here to assassinate you!’

The king scoffed. ‘I am confident that Douban is a kind and honest man, indeed the most faithful and virtuous of men! If he was sent here to assassinate me then why did he cure me? Cease to speak against him again, if you please. I see what it is you are about: you are jealous of him. But do not think that I can be turned against him, for I remember well the story that the Grand Vizier Nameh told his king to demonstrate how you should always consider a person’s words from all angles before responding to them.’

‘A thousand apologies, Your Majesty,’ said the Grand Vizier, ‘but I have never heard this tale. Will you tell it to me?’

‘I will,’ said the king.

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



A sparkling lake set amidst lovely hills is full of fish of an unusual beauty. But when the sultan orders his cook to prepare some, the task is trickier than it seems.

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