

All about Genies



For most people, the best part of the story of Aladdin is the magical genie. There can't be many of us who haven't at one time or another wished that we too could find a genie that would make our wishes come true. Unfortunately for us, genies are just imaginary creatures that don't really exist. Or are they? Although modern science does not accept the existence of genies, in the same way as it doesn't believe in ghosts, there are many people who do believe in them and even some who say they have come into contact with them!

What is a genie?

The word genie is derived from the Arabic word jinn. Our idea of a genie is usually that of a magical servant in stories, a fictitious character. According to the Islamic religion, however, the jinn are actually a very real race of invisible, spirit-like beings who exist all over the world, living their own lives and very rarely coming into contact with humans.

Some things you should know about genies!

According to legend:

- ◆ Genies are made of 'smokeless fire' (usually translated in modern terms as 'energy'), unlike humans who are made from organic matter, or angels who are made of light.
- ◆ Genies can be good or evil, just like people. The good ones usually mind their own business and don't affect humans much, except to help them occasionally. The bad ones, however, can get up to all manner of mischief, including possessing people or making them ill!
- ◆ Genies are very like humans in some ways. They have their own nations and tribes and even families and often live in houses, although they also live in the wild. They also eat and drink and fall in love just like us!

- ◆ In fact sometimes genies are said to fall in love with humans, in which case they usually appear before their beloved in human form and ask them out! Whether they tell their new partners that they are genies or not probably depends on how they think they'll react. A child of a human and a genie is said to have magical abilities.
- ◆ In other ways, however, genies are very different from humans. They have magical powers, which allow them to change their appearance and travel great distances in a very short time. Many genies take the form of animals.
- ◆ In ancient times, King Solomon is said to have been able to control genies and tradition has it that even today, people with special wisdom can capture genies and force them to do their bidding, hence the idea of the genie and its power to grant wishes.

Beware the ifreet and the arwaah!

In some versions of the Aladdin story we come across the ifreet, which is described as particularly powerful and dangerous. According to legend, an ifreet is the most dangerous and feared type of genie. Other types of genie have special names as well: a lesser evil genie is called a shaitan, and one that lives amongst people is called an aamar. One to particularly watch out for is an arwaah, which is a genie that likes most of all to pick upon children and young people!

Listening in on heaven

According to another tradition, some genies try to make their way up to heaven to listen in on conversations between angels. If they get close enough they can hear about what is going to happen in the future and use their knowledge for mischief. If they are seen they are attacked with meteors. When we see shooting stars it is said to be heaven chasing away nosy genies!

The genie of the lamp

The idea that a genie can be found living in a lamp or other small container also comes from Arabic legend. It is said that when a genie has been particularly mischievous or harmful, or when it has possessed someone, a wise man or exorcist can use trickery or certain magical spells to capture the genie and imprison it in a lamp or bottle. The container is then buried or thrown out to sea so that no one can accidentally open it and let the genie escape. Of course, occasionally they get found...

And finally, do genies really exist? Whether genies really exist is, of course, as hard to answer as the question of whether ghosts really exist. Some people believe in them, and others don't. Over one billion Muslims in the world do believe in them, and many westerners with an interest in the supernatural suggest that eastern legends about genies are very similar to European myths about fairies, goblins and other spirits. There are even some people who think that people who claim to see UFOs and aliens are actually seeing genies!

Whatever the truth, they certainly make interesting characters in the story of Aladdin!



The story of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp is one of the most popular tales of all time. Here we find out where the story came from and how it has grown into the famous pantomime show.

Where does Aladdin come from?

Although most modern pantomime versions of *Aladdin* are set in a Chinese background, the story originated in another part of the world, the Middle East. The basic tale is many hundreds of years old, although much of the modern version has been added in more recent times.

Like the adventures of *Sinbad the Sailor* and *Ali Baba*, the story of Aladdin can be found in the famous collection of old Arabian and Eastern tales the *One Thousand and One Nights*, also known as the *Arabian Nights*.

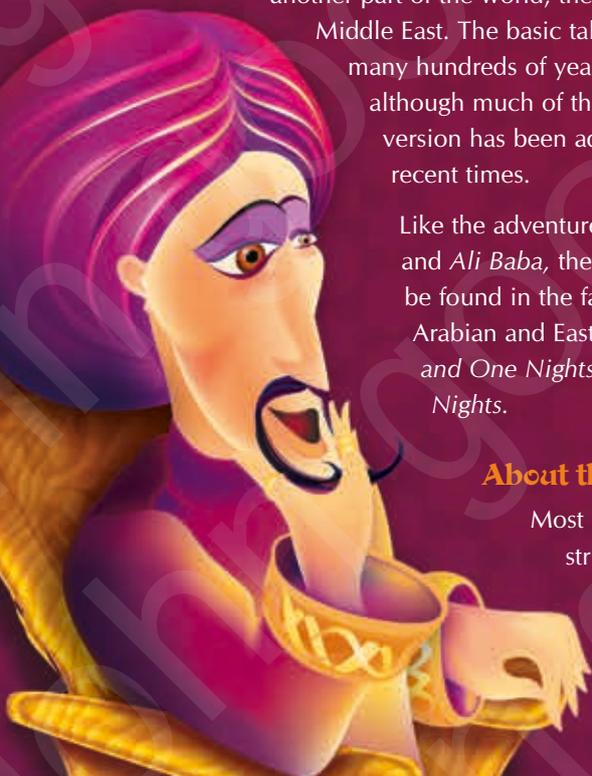
About the Arabian Nights

Most people are familiar with the structure of the *Arabian Nights*. It features a powerful, but terrible king called Shahriyar who

discovers that his wife has been unfaithful to him and, in his rage, vows to marry a new wife every day and kill her at dawn the next day.

However, things change when he marries a clever young girl called Sheherazade. On their wedding night, knowing that she only has hours left to live, Sheherazade begins to tell her husband a story. When dawn comes, she still has not finished and, so keen is the King to hear more, that he decides not to kill her until the next day. But the following night the same thing happens and, night after night, the inventive young girl keeps the King entertained with exciting tales. Finally, after a thousand and one nights have passed, the King realises that he loves Sheherazade too much to ever consider killing her and they live happily ever after.

No one knows exactly when the *Arabian Nights* was written or who the authors were. It is most likely that the linking story of Sheherazade and the King was created by one author and then hundreds of stories and folk tales from many different countries were added over the years. The complete book is said to date back to as early as 850AD. The first European translations were not made until 1704.



An illustration of a desert scene at sunset or sunrise. In the foreground, a large camel is shown in profile, facing left. Behind it, a group of five people in traditional Middle Eastern attire are standing and talking. The background features rolling hills, palm trees, and a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and red.

Were there really a thousand and one stories?

It is doubtful that the *Arabian Nights* ever contained a thousand and one stories – the best estimate is around two hundred and sixty. In fact, the phrase ‘a thousand and one’ was probably just a fancy way of saying ‘lots and lots’ in the same way that we say ‘hundreds and thousands’.

Chinese Nights!

It might seem unusual that a story written in Arabic over a thousand years ago should be set in China, but in fact many of the tales in the *Arabian Nights* come from, or are set in other countries, including India, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt and Greece, as well as China and Arabia.

This is because the stories were collected together during the height of the Islamic Empire, which stretched from Spain and Portugal in the west, right across Africa and much of Asia.

Traders from the Empire visited most of the known world (and may even have reached the Americas, according to some historians), bringing back tales and legends as well as goods and treasures.

A stylized illustration of a woman in profile, facing left. She is wearing a vibrant sari with shades of purple, blue, and yellow. Her hair is dark and styled in a bun. The background is a soft, glowing light.

The Pantomime

The first stage version of *Aladdin* was seen in London’s Covent Garden Theatre in 1788. This was followed by a comedy musical version of the tale in 1813 starring the famous English clown Joseph Grimaldi (who was like a film star back then). At the time, people in Britain were fascinated by China and the Orient; willow pattern plates were introduced, and ships such as the clipper *Cutty Sark* were doing a brisk trade importing tea and other merchandise. As a result, the story of *Aladdin* developed into a far more Chinese tale than the original, and has remained that way ever since.

Changing Names

As the pantomime of *Aladdin* changed over the years, so many of the characters we know today were added or had their names changed. *Aladdin’s* mother, for example, was known for years as Widow Ching Mustapha (a name that was part Chinese, part Arabic). In 1861, however, this was changed to Widow Twankey, named after a popular brand of Chinese tea. Similarly, the evil magician Abanazar was simply known as the ‘African Magician’ until 1813. And as for *Aladdin’s* brothers Wishee and Washee, they didn’t even exist in the original story! Along with the laundry, they were added relatively recently.

Dune Maze!

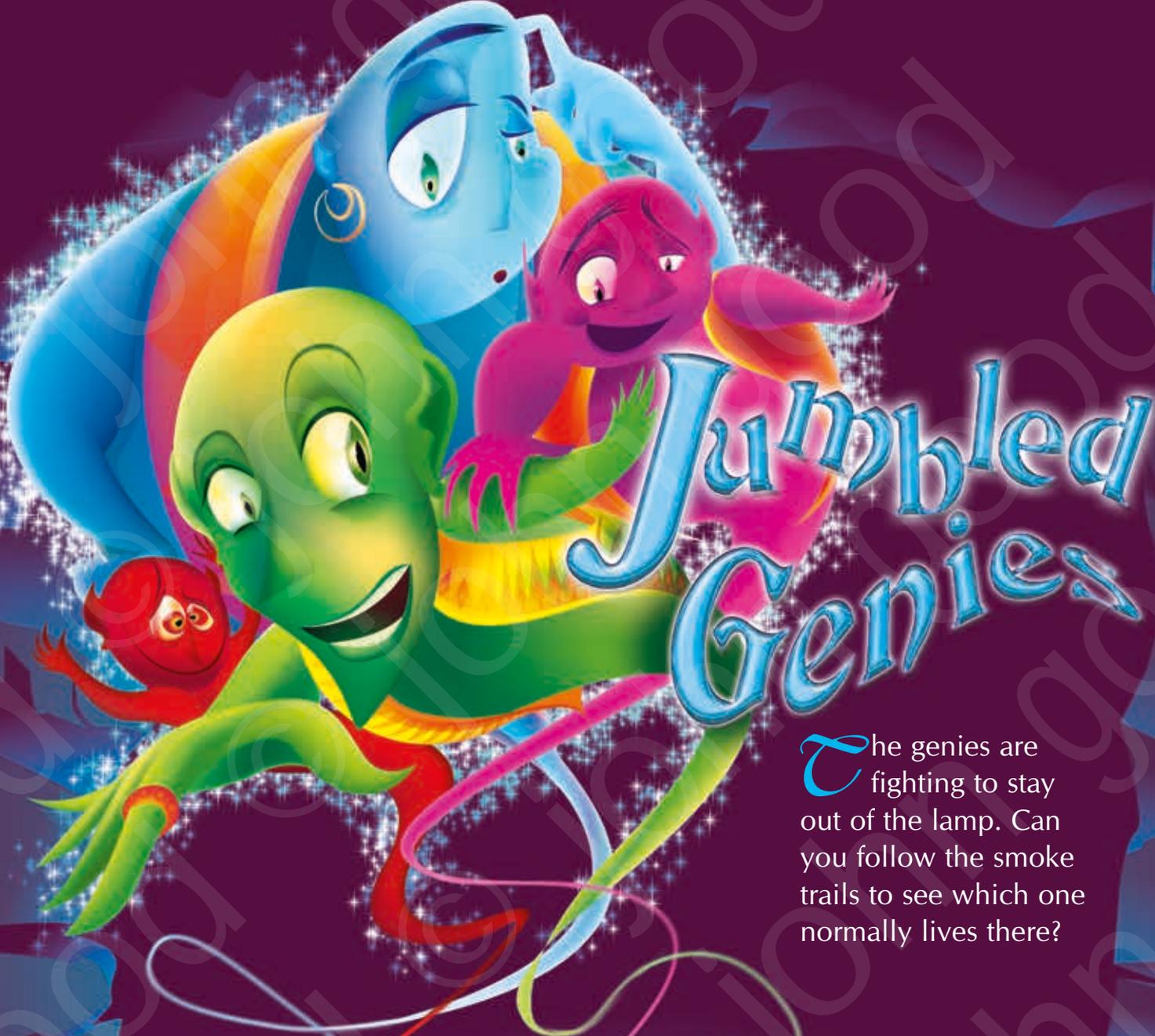


A laddin is lost in the desert, and is looking for an oasis, so he can have a nice cool drink. Can you help him find the oasis, and avoid all the dangers?

Sneaky Sorcerers

The evil sorcerer Abanazar is using his evil powers to clone himself. However, he hasn't been very successful and only two of the clones are identical. Can you find out which ones they are?





Jumbled Genies

The genies are fighting to stay out of the lamp. Can you follow the smoke trails to see which one normally lives there?

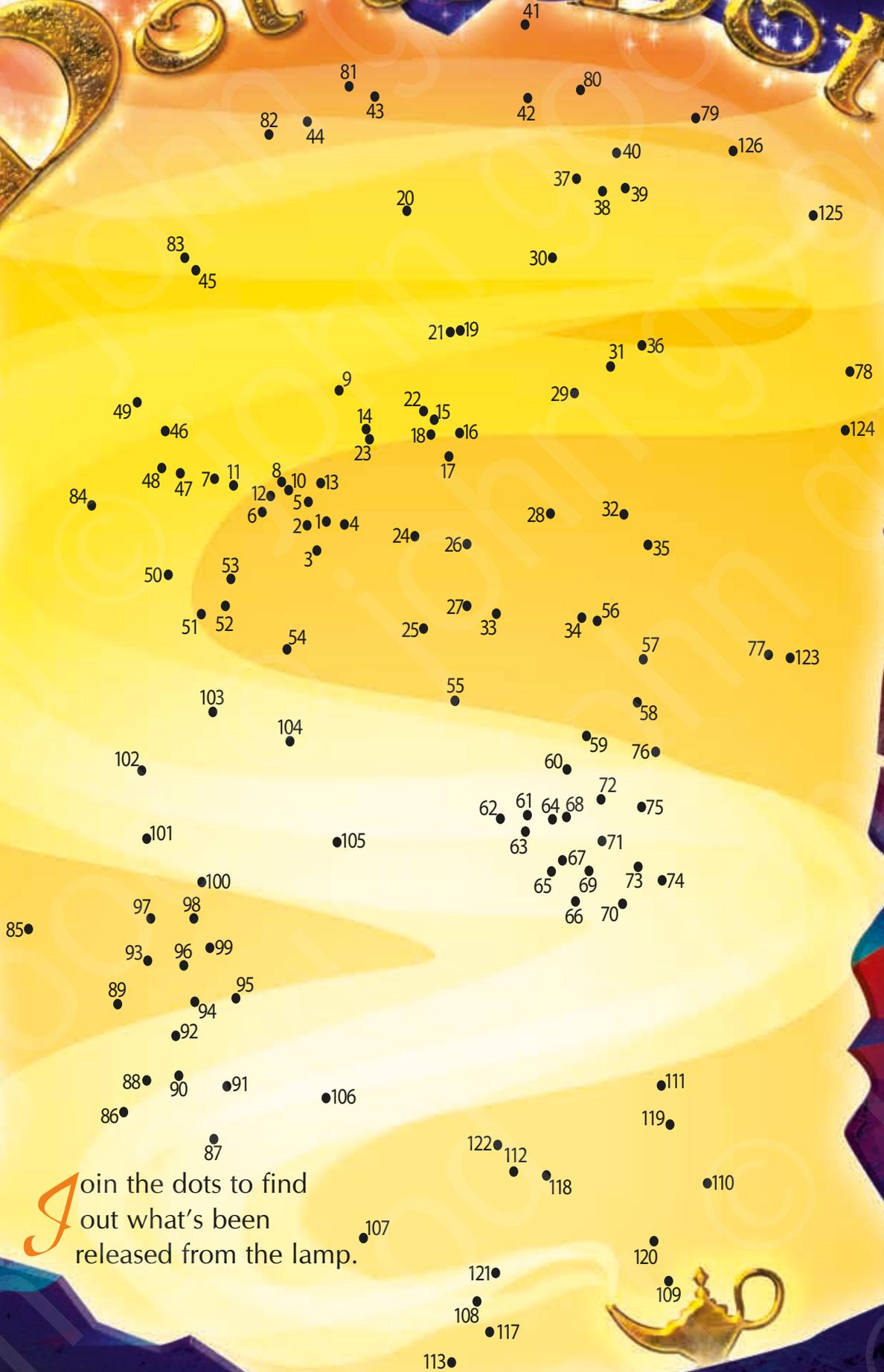


Dot to Dot

What is everybody looking at? Join the dots to find out.



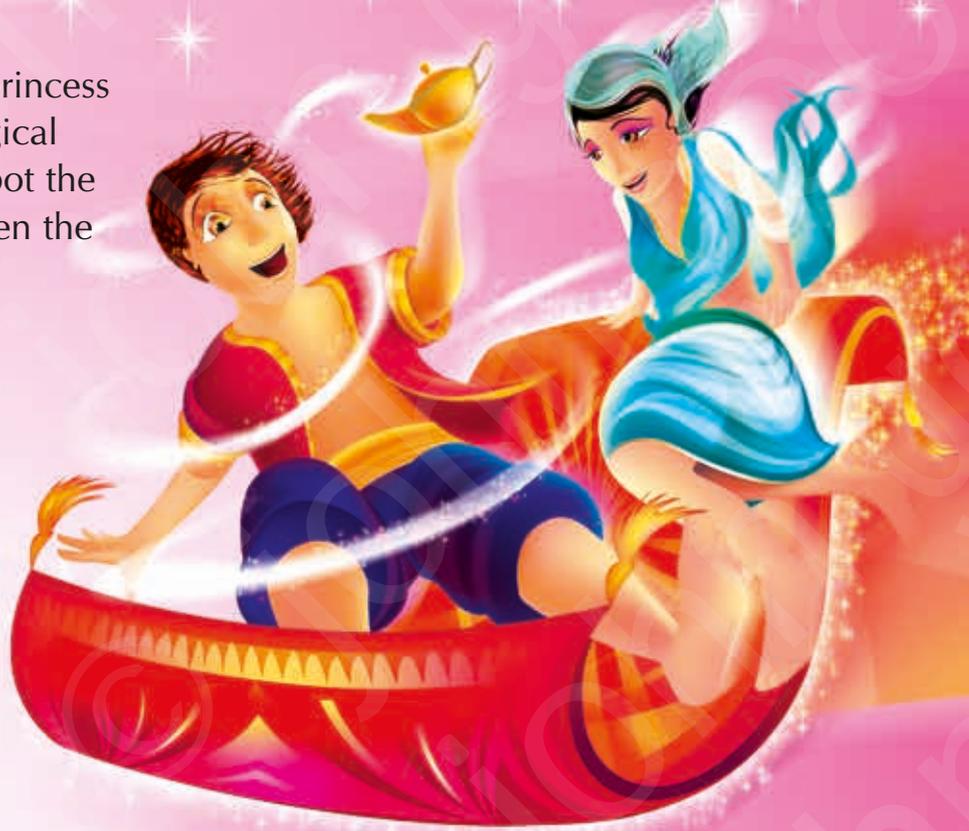
Dot to Dot



Join the dots to find out what's been released from the lamp.

Spot the Difference

A laddin and the princess are taking a magical carpet ride. Can you spot the nine differences between the two pictures?



Bazaar

Wordsearch

I	F	S	T	R	J	G	F	S	C	J	Y
Q	D	K	A	E	B	J	E	I	N	E	G
H	X	R	B	Z	P	T	K	M	K	W	P
S	P	U	J	A	C	R	Z	N	S	E	R
D	A	B	A	N	A	Z	A	R	P	L	I
N	J	I	S	Y	A	W	A	C	I	S	N
O	W	E	J	A	T	K	I	J	C	X	C
M	W	S	E	W	Q	M	H	U	E	R	E
A	G	U	O	R	A	G	T	O	S	P	S
I	N	D	A	G	I	J	U	Q	M	I	S
D	I	C	I	N	I	D	D	A	L	A	Q
W	R	C	R	B	O	M	L	D	L	E	Y
Z	Q	B	L	Y	R	D	N	U	A	L	O

There are many treasures to be found in Aladdin's local bazaar but can you find them in the word grid above?

ABANAZAR
GENIE
PRINCESS

ALADDIN
JEWELS
RING

CARPET
LAMP
RUBIES

DIAMONDS
LAUNDRY
SPICES

GEMS
MAGIC
WIDOW TWANKEY

Colour Me In

Colour in this picture of Aladdin releasing the genie from the lamp.



Answers

Jumbled Genies



Dune Maze!



Sneaky Sorcerers



Answers

Spot the Difference



Bazaar Wordsearch

I	F	S	T	R	J	G	F	S	C	Y
Q	D	K	A	E	B	J	E	I	N	G
H	X	R	B	Z	F	T	K	M	R	W
S	P	U	J	A	C	R	Z	N	S	E
D	A	B	A	N	A	Z	A	R	P	L
N	J	I	S	Y	A	W	A	C	I	S
O	W	E	J	A	T	K	I	J	C	X
M	W	S	E	W	Q	M	H	U	E	R
A	G	U	C	R	A	G	T	O	S	S
I	N	D	A	G	I	J	U	Q	M	S
D	I	C	I	N	I	D	D	E	L	A
W	R	C	R	B	O	M	E	D	L	E
Z	Q	B	L	Y	R	D	N	U	A	O

Answers

