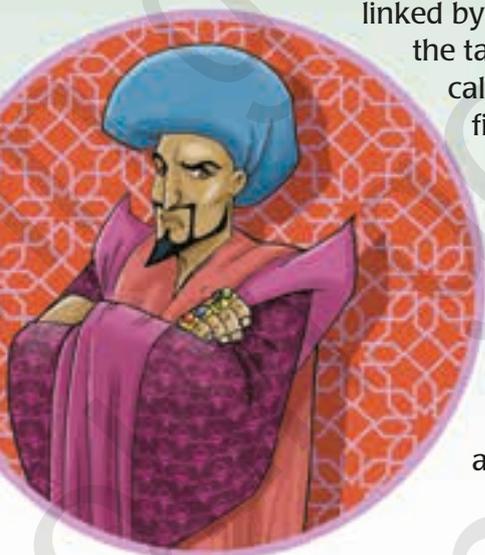


The story of Aladdin and his magical lamp is one of the most popular tales of all time. But where did this story come from?

Aladdin appears in lots of pantomimes around Christmas time, including the one you're watching now, but he originally appeared in a bigger collection of stories called the *1001 Nights*, also known as the *Arabian Nights*.

The original *1001 Nights* was written hundreds of years ago in Asia and made up of lots of stories. No one is quite sure who wrote the stories, but most people seem to think the stories and folk tales were added from different countries over the years. The tales in *1001 Nights* are set in China, Arabia, India, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt and Greece, and they were told by traders from these countries who travelled across the vast Islamic Empire, which stretched from Spain and Portugal in Western Europe to Africa and Asia.

All the stories in *1001 Nights* are linked by a bigger story. It tells the tale of a powerful king called Shahriyar who finds out that his wife has been unfaithful to him. He gets so angry that he vows to marry a girl every day and then kill her at dawn the next – she doesn't even get a honeymoon!



However, the king meets his match when he marries a young girl called Sheherazade. On their wedding night, knowing that she will be killed at dawn, Sheherazade decides to tell her new husband a story. When dawn comes, she is still telling the story, but the king wants to know how the story ends so he delays killing her until the next day. But clever Sheherazade does the same thing the next night, and every night after that, making up tales to keep the king entertained. Eventually, after 1001 nights have passed, the king has fallen in love with Sheherazade and gives up the idea of killing her, and the pair live happily ever after.



It isn't likely that the original *1001 Nights* did contain that many stories; it was just a different way of saying 'lots and lots', in a similar way to us saying 'hundreds and thousands'. Originally, there was probably only around 260. That's still more than *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* books combined!

The most famous stories in *1001 Nights* are *Sinbad the Sailor*, *Ali Baba* and, of course, *Aladdin*. However, most people reckon that Aladdin wasn't part of the original tales. The first *1001 Nights* were probably written in India around the first centuries AD, in an ancient language called Sanskrit. They were then translated into Arabic around the 10th century, and in 1704 the European translations were made by a Frenchman called Antoine Galland. It's likely that it was Galland who added Aladdin to *1001 Nights*; he said he heard the story from a Syrian friend, but some people say he came up with the tale of Aladdin all by himself.



The first time Aladdin appeared onstage was in a performance at London's Covent Garden Theatre in 1788, although it took several years before it became the Aladdin we know and love today. In 1813, the English clown Joseph Grimaldi starred in *Aladdin or The Wonderful Lamp* at the Covent Garden, playing a character called the Dumb Slave. That character doesn't appear in Aladdin any more, but it was the first time a comic role appeared in the story. It was also the first time *Aladdin* featured the villainous Abanazar, known as simply 'African Magician', and also the dame or Widow Twankey's character.

Widow Twankey appeared again in an 1836 production, under the name of Ching Mustapha (a name that combined Aladdin's Chinese and Indian origins. She went through some interesting names, including Wee-Ping, Chow-Chow and Tan-Kin, before becoming Widow Twankey in

1861, named after a brand of Chinese tea. If she were named today, she might be called Widow Typhoo, Widow Tetley or Widow Twinings!

The 1813 performance of *Aladdin* was the first to recognise British people's fascination with things from the Orient. China was cool in the 19th century: the *Cutty Sark* clipper (a type of ship) was bringing in tea from China, and Chinese willow pattern plates were in fashion. With Galland's *Aladdin* being set in China, it made sense to play up the Chinese aspects of the story, which has remained that way in pantomime versions ever since. Chinese laundries were also popping up around the country, which gave Widow Twankey her occupation (she was originally just a seamstress).

Wishee and Washee, Aladdin's brothers, were also later additions to the story, introduced to help (or hinder) Widow Twankey in her laundry. Sometimes they are just one character, Wishee Washee.

Other characters, like the Chinese policemen, were added more recently.

Whatever form Aladdin has taken, it's always been the tale of one lad and his lamp, and this in-genie-us story will be rubbing audiences up the right way for generations to come!

Paul Bovey
© John Good



Dreaming of Genies!

One of the most important characters in Aladdin's story is the magical genie. Like the Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella*, the Genie is the character who makes Aladdin's dreams come true. And there can't be many of us who haven't dreamt at one time or another that we could have our own personal genie to make our wishes come true. But do genies really exist? Modern science might tell us no, but there are some cultures who do believe that genies aren't imaginary and some people believe that they've even had direct contact with them, like ghosts.

What is a genie?

The word genie comes from the Arabic word *jinni*, which is from the ancient Persian, meaning 'hidden from sight'. More than one *jinni* are called *jinn*. According to Islamic mythology, the *jinn* are actually intelligent spirits, not unlike angels, who exist all over the world. They're also able to appear in human or animal form, and have the power to possess humans! That's a bit different from our idea of a genie as a fictitious character or servant in stories.



Djinn

Some things you should know about genies!

Genies are said to be made of a kind of 'smokeless fire' (which we might describe as 'energy'), unlike humans who are flesh-and-blood and angels who are made from light.

Just like humans (but not angels), genies have free will and can be good or evil. The good ones usually keep themselves to themselves and don't affect humans much, except to help them occasionally. Watch out for the bad genies though - they can get up to all sorts of tricks, including possessing people or making them ill.

There are five main kinds of genies:

The Marid: The most powerful kind of genie. They are large, arrogant and proud; able to perform all sorts of incredible magical abilities.

The Ifrit: Huge and powerful, and often made of fire, ifrit are usually cruel, mean-tempered, and ruthless.

The Shaitan: Sly and cunning, these *jinn* whisper into the hearts of humans and other *jinn*, urging them to do evil. The most powerful of the *shaitan* (and possibly all *jinn*) is Iblis, the Islamic version of the Devil.

The Djinn (the *d* is silent): They can be good and evil, and in general are the most like us in outlook.

The Jann: The weakest of the *jinn*, they have very little magical ability and prefer to spend their time in amongst garbage or rubbish!



Ifrit



Jann

There are genies that specialise too: one that lives among people is called an *aamar*. The *arwaah*, however, prefer to pester children and young people - a bit like an invisible bully! The *qarin* stay with you your whole life, from birth to death, and although often helpful, sometimes seek to trick you, so watch out!

Genies share some human attributes. They can live in their own tribes and countries, the most well-known of which is the magical realm of Djinnestan. They often live in houses but they also live in wild places, like caves or ruins. They can eat and drink just as we do, and even fall in love!

In fact, sometimes genies are said to fall in love with humans, although they normally take human form if they want to date a human they fancy (such as in the 1960s American sitcom *I Dream of Jeannie*). Sometimes the genie will keep their real identity a secret, in case their human beloved might react badly. A child of a human and genie is said to have magical powers.

In other ways, however, genies are very different from humans. They possess magical powers, which allow them to change the way they look and travel long distances in a short space of time. Some genies take the form of animals.

In ancient times, King Solomon is said to have had the ability to control genies (as well as birds and animals). In some traditions, it's still believed that wise people can capture genies and force them to do what they ask, hence the idea of a genie granting wishes.

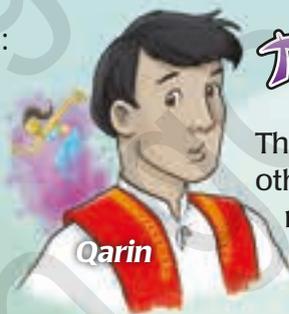
Hearing in on heaven

Some particularly nosey genies try to make their way up to heaven to eavesdrop on conversations between angels. It's said that if they get close enough, they can hear about future events and use this knowledge to get up to no good. If they get too close and are spotted, then they get pelted with meteors. When we see shooting stars in the sky, they are said to be heaven chasing away snooping genies!

The genie of the lamp

The notion of a genie living in a lamp or other small container also comes from Arabic mythology. It is said that when a genie has been naughty or harmed someone, or even possessed someone, a wise man or exorcist can use magic or trickery to capture the genie and incarcerate them in a lamp or bottle. The trapped genie is then buried or cast out to sea so that no one can accidentally open the bottle and release the genie. But sometimes they get found, and when the lamp is rubbed or the bottle opened... well, I don't want to ruin the show. You'll find out soon enough!

© John Good



Aladdin's Amusing Antics!



Abanazar's Awesome Magic!

Dot to Dot

Something else is living in the lamp! Can you find out what it is?

Why not try one of Abanazar's magic tricks when you get home?

You will need:

A watch (that you wear), two pencils.

Before The Trick:

Slip one of the pencils under the watch strap, so it sits against your palm.



The Trick:

Tell the audience that you have the amazing ability to be magnetic to pencils. Produce a pencil from your pocket, and gently slide it under your palm, where it is held in place by the other pencil. (Make sure you do not show anyone your palm.) The pencil seems to float in mid-air as if by magic.

Hey Presto! You're magnetic to pencils!



Bubble Trouble!

Wishee Washee washed the lamp in soap and now it's full of bubbles!

Can you find the way to the genie?



Assisting Abanazar!

Abanazar is making Aladdin search through this cavern for the magic lamp.

Which path must Aladdin take to get to the lamp?

Which path must he take to get out again?



Say It With Socks!



When Widow Twankey is busy in the laundry, and needs to contact Aladdin across town, she hangs out socks in a secret code!
Can you tell what she has written out today?



Looking for the Lamp!

Can you help Aladdin get to the lamp?
He mustn't cross in front of
any evil genies or ogres!



Double Trouble!

Aladdin's pals have started a new trend by all dressing like their hero!
They all tried to dress EXACTLY alike, but only two of them managed it!

Can you find out who they are?



CHONG



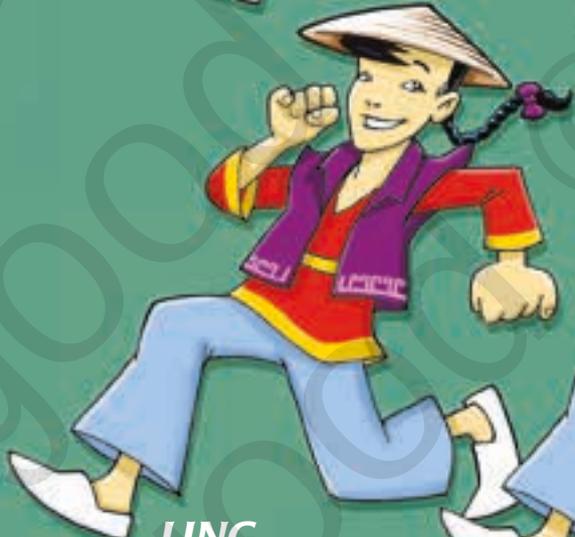
ZHANG



PING



WING



LING



FENG



MING



DENG

Wonderful Wordsearch!

All the words below are things that have been invented by those clever Chinese!

They may run up, down, across, backwards and even diagonally!

Can you find them all?

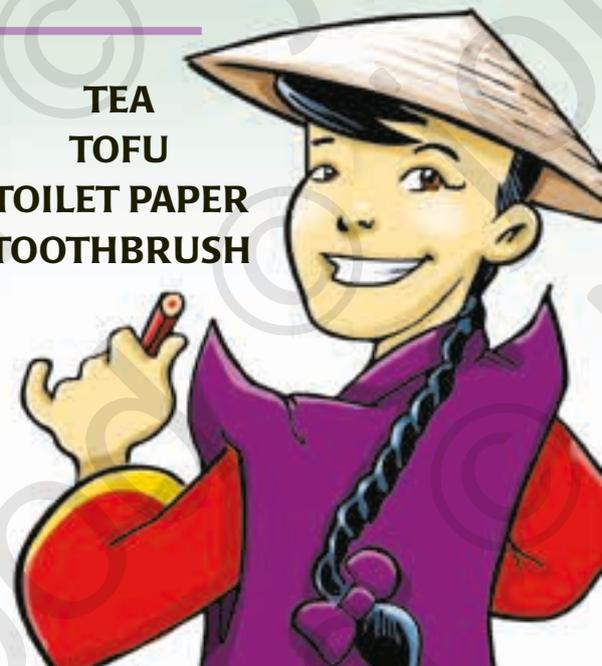
When you have found them all, there will be ten letters leftover, which will spell out quite an important magic phrase!

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

ALCOHOL
 BANKNOTES
 BELLS
 BELLOWS
 CHOPSTICKS
 COMPASS
 FIREWORKS
 GUNPOWDER
 HARMONICA
 INCENSE

INK
 KITE
 LACQUER
 MATCHES
 NAIL POLISH
 NOODLES
 PLAYING CARDS
 PAPER
 PRINTING
 STIR-FRYING

TEA
 TOFU
 TOILET PAPER
 TOOTHBRUSH



Colour Me In!



Answers!

Assisting
Abanazar!



D to get the lamp, E to escape

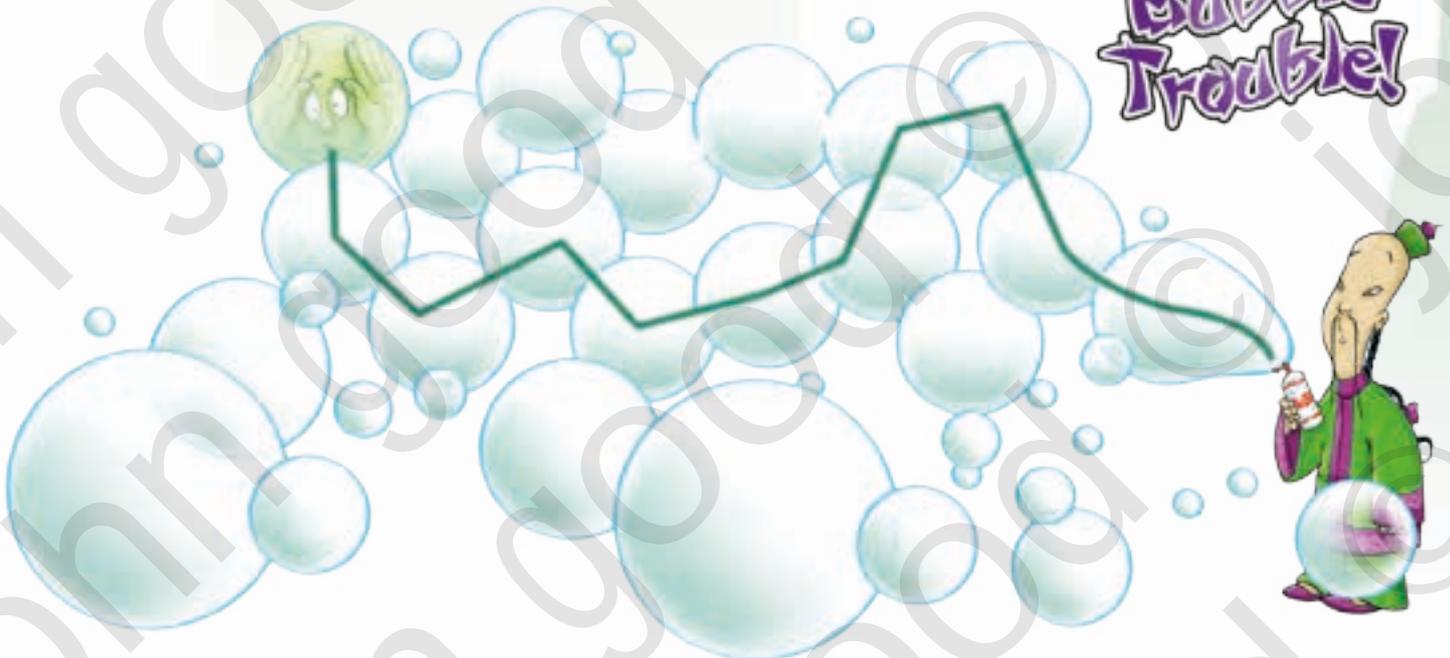
Dot to
Dot



A Carpet
to Dye For!



Bubble
Trouble!





Wonderful Wordsearch!

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

OPEN SESAME

Not-So-Great Wall of China!



D does not fit

Double Trouble!

CHONG



MING

Say it With Socks!

ALADDIN
HURRY UP
AND GET
MORE SOAP
FROM MR
WONG WE'VE
RUN OUT

