

WILL THE REAL ALADDIN PLEASE STAND UP?

He's the son of a Chinese washerwoman who runs a laundry in Peking. Or is he a street urchin from Baghdad who wins the heart of the sultan's daughter?

As usual with just about any kind of folk story, you can pretty much make up your own mind about what the real version is.

As far as Aladdin's concerned, people usually say that he first appeared in medieval times in the *1001 Arabian Nights* collection of fables from the Middle East. The only problem with this theory is that, actually, he didn't. His story was bunged into a translation of the *Arabian Nights* by a Frenchman in 1709. He'd heard it from a storyteller in Syria and thought it would make a great addition to his new book.

**Aladdin: Get me a fur coat.
Genie: What fur?
Aladdin: To keep me warm,
that's what for!**

To add to the confusion, that original written-down version claimed China was the setting for the tale - but then filled it with Arabic names and traditions. No wonder the pantomime that was first staged later that century was such a mishmash of ideas, locations and plots.

Walt Disney didn't help much when the studio's 1992 animated film was released. That version puts the action in a fictional Middle Eastern city called Agrabah, gives Aladdin a monkey sidekick named Abu, and portrays him as a kind of Robin Hood-type hero with a wisecracking genie to help him beat the evil sorcerer Jafar. There's no sign of his family - no Widow Twankey or Wishee-Washee in this adaptation - and the sultan's daughter, Jasmine, has been transformed into a standard Disney princess.



DID YOU KNOW?

Introduced in 1861, the name Widow Twankey is a reference to twankay, a popular green tea from the Tuon Ky region of China.



But while the rest of the world might be taken in by this attempt to remould the story, here in Britain we have pantomime. And that means there are some things that old Walt can't change.

Take Widow Twankey. No, please - take her. Widow Twankey, named after a cheap kind of Chinese tea, was one of the earliest panto dames and originally called Ching Mustapha. Say what you like about her, but at over 200 years old, she's not looking bad, is she? Even when she's played by the likes of Sir Ian 'X-Men' McKellen. And there are other characters, too, that are crucial to the panto but absent from the cartoon, such as Abanazar - the stage version of Disney's baddie Jafar - Wishee-Washee, Aladdin's brother, and the Chinese policeman (or men).

What sort of pet did Aladdin have?
A flying car-pet.

As for the three wishes, they turn up in stories all over the place. In Ireland, if you catch a leprechaun you may be granted three wishes in exchange for setting them free. In the *1001 Nights* tale of Sinbad, a genie like Aladdin's helps the hero by offering three wishes. And in the Victorian horror story *The Monkey's Paw*, the wishes lead to sadness and disaster for the couple who make them.

But don't be surprised if none of this historical stuff is anything like the Aladdin you see onstage. That's one of the great joys of panto: you can pretty much make it whatever you want it to be.

Michael Davies
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DID YOU KNOW?

Sir Ian McKellen, Christopher Biggins and Lily Savage are among the famous names to have played Widow Twankey.

Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Aladdin.
Aladdin who?
Aladdin the street who
wants to come inside.



Everybody knows that genies live in bottles or lamps and will grant three wishes. But there's a lot more to genies than that, and some of it is rather weird.

Here are just a few strange facts about genies

THE GENIUS OF GENIES

The word genie comes from the Arabic jinn, or djinn, and the idea of them began in Arabic mythology hundreds of years ago.

Controlling genies can be dangerous. Besides the legends of genies being summoned from lamps, some traditions believe they can be called up in a special ceremony, with the caller sitting inside a protective fence in a darkened room, just in case the genie doesn't appreciate being summoned.

Other versions claim genies can be lured into appearing by leaving sweets for them. This can be even more risky, though, because if the caller then fails to leave a sweet every day for the rest of their life, the genie can become rather upset and start doing unpleasant things to them. Probably best not to get involved in the first place...

Genies are said to live in everything from stones and rocks to trees, fire and even the air. But they aren't restricted like human beings, and can assume any form or shape.

Genies are mentioned loads of times in the Islamic religious book, the Quran. Early Muslims believed they were a type of spirit, below the level of angels, that could be a force of either good or evil for human beings.

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BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR...



Some wishes are said only to come true if you tell them to another person. Others must be kept secret.

If only making wishes were easy. Whether it's just one wish - when you blow out your birthday candles, for example - or three, or even an unlimited number, it's never as straightforward as it seems.

Here are some examples of how wishes are granted, and some cautionary tales about the risks involved.

There are loads of ways wishes can be granted. You can throw money in a wishing well, blow the seeds off a dandelion, blow out the candles on a birthday cake or snap the wishbone of a turkey with your pinkie finger.

The fictional granters of wishes - whether it's a genie, a fairy, a well or simply Fate - can take things very literally. In some stories, people regret making casual remarks such as "I wish you hadn't said that" or even "I wish I weren't here". As the saying goes, be careful what you wish for.

Geppetto, the old puppet-maker in the Pinocchio story, makes a wish on a shooting star for his creation to become a real boy. Unfortunately, the wish leads to all kinds of problems and dangers before it comes true.



One real-life granter of wishes is nothing but a good thing: the Make-a-Wish Foundation. This charity, founded in the UK in 1986, grants wishes to children with life-threatening conditions, whether it's meeting a celebrity or enjoying a one-off experience.

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ALADDIN

THE LAD WITH THE LAMP

DID YOU KNOW?

The original story of Aladdin was set in China - not Arabia, as it is in the Disney version.

The person we have to thank for popularising the tale of *Aladdin* is a French archaeologist called Antoine Galland. He was the first European to translate the stories of *The 1001 Nights* from the original Arabic. From 1704 to 1717, he published his translations in 12 volumes.

This was the first time people in the West had heard these exotic stories of palaces, genies and poor Shahrazad, who has to tell a new story every night just to stay alive. It kicked off a fascination with the world of Sinbad the Sailor and Ali Baba that has lasted ever since.

The odd thing was that no manuscript version of *Aladdin* existed before Galland published it. He heard the story in 1709 from Hanna Diab, a Christian scholar from Syria, who told it from memory.

What clothes does Aladdin like to wear on his days off?
Denim genies.

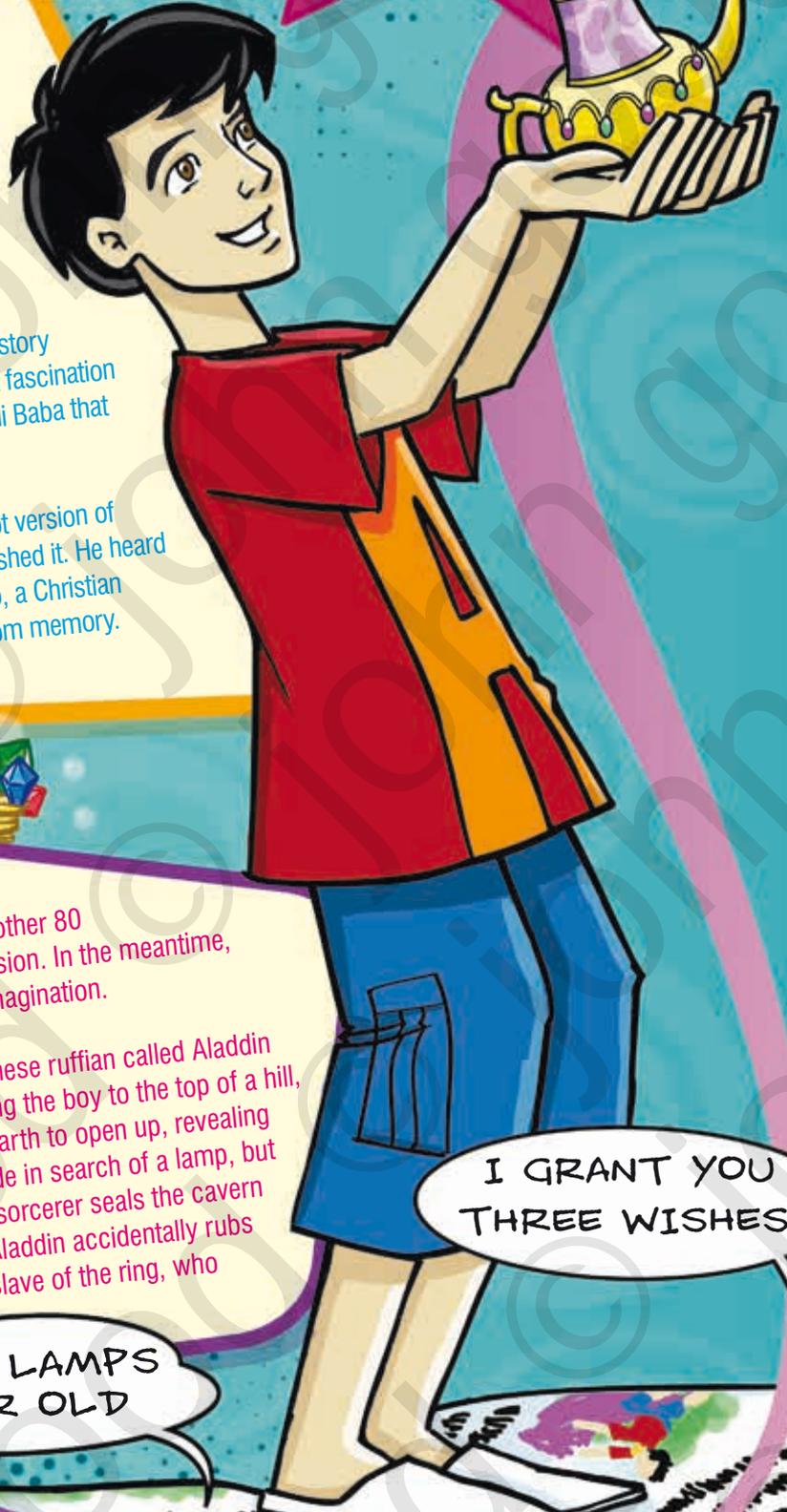
Where it came from before that, who can say? It didn't appear in Arabic for another 80 years, translated back from Galland's version. In the meantime, Aladdin had taken hold of the European imagination.

As Galland told it, the story is about a Chinese ruffian called Aladdin who is tricked by an African sorcerer. Taking the boy to the top of a hill, the sorcerer casts a spell that causes the earth to open up, revealing a cave full of riches. He sends Aladdin inside in search of a lamp, but when Aladdin has difficulty getting out, the sorcerer seals the cavern and leaves him to his fate. Trapped inside, Aladdin accidentally rubs the ring on his finger and summons up the slave of the ring, who releases him.

OPEN SESAME!

NEW LAMPS FOR OLD

I GRANT YOU THREE WISHES!



Some time later, Aladdin's mother decides to polish the dirty lamp her son has brought home with him. In doing so, she summons the slave of the lamp, whom Aladdin instructs to lay on a feast which keeps them eating for days. When Aladdin sets eyes upon the sultan's daughter, he determines to marry her. He orders the slave of the lamp to build him a lavish palace to impress the princess and her father. The plan works and Aladdin marries her.

Hearing of Aladdin's wealth, the evil sorcerer disguises himself as a tradesman offering "new lamps for old" and gets the magic lamp for himself. He commands the slave of the lamp to transport the palace to Africa with Aladdin's wife in it. When he finds out, the sultan threatens to kill Aladdin, but instead gives him 40 days to get his daughter back.

With the help of the slave of the ring, Aladdin joins his wife in Africa. He persuades her to drug the sorcerer and reclaim the lamp. Aladdin then kills his enemy and instructs the slave of the lamp to get them home to China, where he is welcomed back by the sultan. After another scrape with the sorcerer's brother, he lives happily ever after.

DID YOU KNOW?

It was not until a Covent Garden production in 1813 that the evil sorcerer was given the name of Abanazar.

This story - or something like it - first appeared as a pantomime in 1788 with a production at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden. As well as Aladdin's mother, it featured stock characters from the popular Italian comedy tradition of commedia dell'arte, including Harlequin, Pantaloon and Pierrot.

DID YOU KNOW?

Before the Disney cartoon popularised the name of Princess Jasmine, the character was usually known as Princess Badroulbadour.

After that, *Aladdin* only gained in popularity. By the middle of the 19th century, audiences were becoming fascinated with China thanks to the proliferation of tea houses supplied by the new clipper ships, as well as Chinese laundries. That's how Widow Twankey came to be in charge of a laundry and also why many productions are set in London's Chinatown. Her second son, Wishee Washee, was introduced around this time too.

Aladdin's magic flying carpet was also a later addition. It does not appear in the original story from *The 1001 Nights*, although you can find flying-carpet stories going all the way back to the Parthian Empire. One dates from 130 BC and is about King Phraates II flying on a cloth to get a look at his enemy. The magic carpet was too good an idea for *Aladdin* not to use.

And three hundred years after Galland's translation, all the signs are that *Aladdin* will be flying for a long time to come.

Mark Fisher © John Good



PANTO PUZZLERS

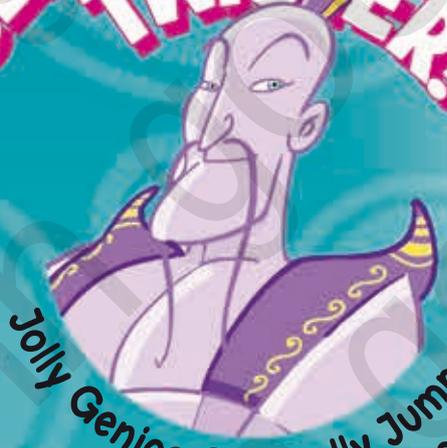
GREETINGS!

Aladdin likes to say hello to children from all over the world. See if you can help him by working out which greeting on the left matches the language on the right.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------|
| Hola | German |
| Guten Tag | Arabic |
| Konichiwa | Russian |
| Witaj | Japanese |
| Bonjour | Italian |
| Buon Giorno | Hindi |
| Namaste | Spanish |
| Al Salaam A'Alykum | Polish |
| Zdraveite | French |



GENIE TONGUE TWISTER!



Jolly Genies Generally Jump
Jealous Giraffes Gently

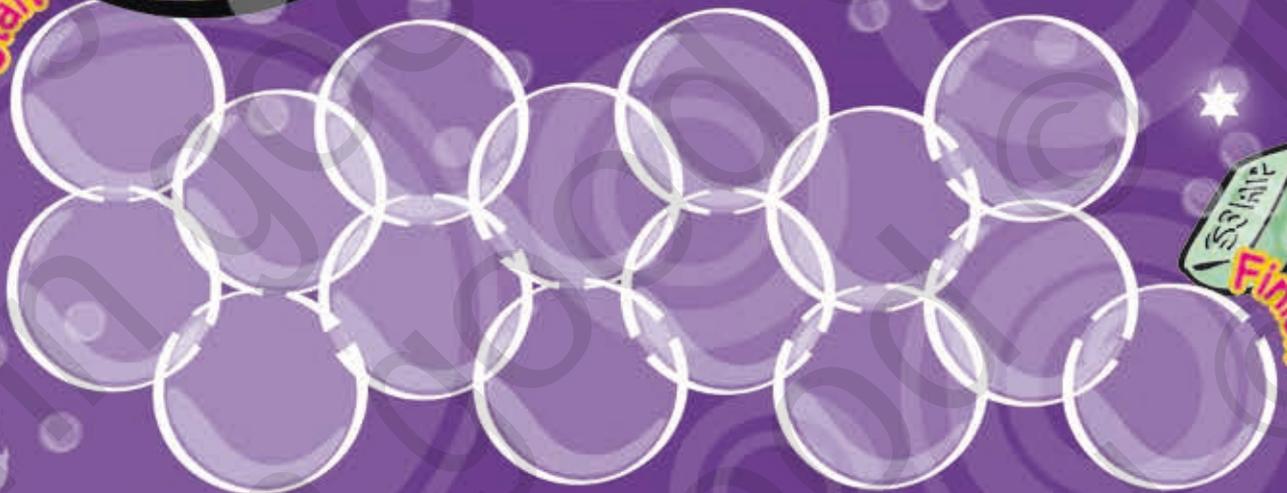
See how quickly you can say this without getting muddled!



WHERE'S MY SOAP?

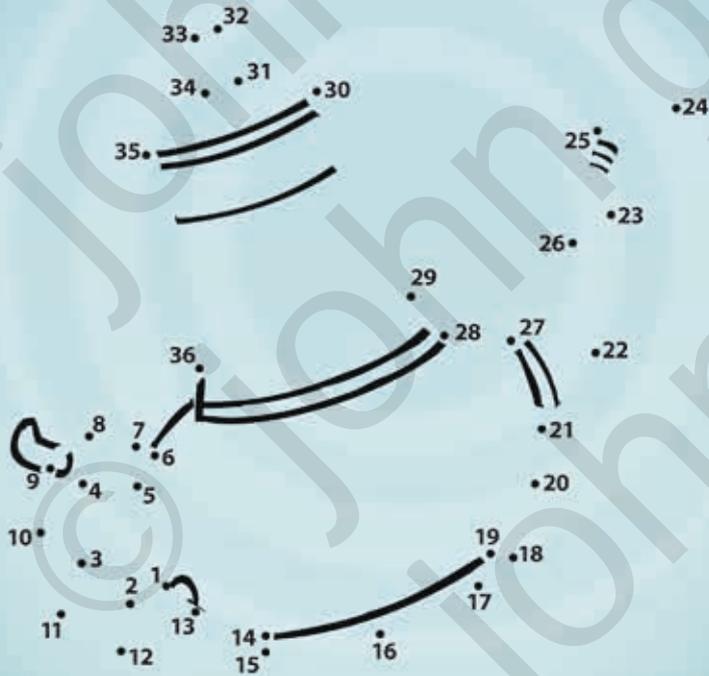
Help Widow Twankey find a way through the bubble maze to find her soap.

Start



Finish

DOT TO DOT



PANTOMANIA!

Unscramble the titles to find out which are Aladdin's favourite pantomimes!



FIRST KISS

Or just an illusion?

Relax your eyes and stare at the space between Aladdin and the Princess.

Slowly bring the page towards your face and see them share their first kiss!



Try again if it doesn't work the first time.

ALADDIN'S CODEBUSTER!

Crack the code and work out the secret message from Aladdin!

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

Secret message:



There are 6 genies, 2 magic rings and 1 lamp hidden on these pages. Can you find them?



SPY!



MUDDLED GENIES

All the genies have got themselves in a muddle. Can you find which one of them belongs to the magic lamp?



Also, there's a hidden message written on the lamp, can you work out what it says? (Here's a hint, you might need a mirror).



DOUBLE TROUBLE

Can you spot the 8 differences between these two pictures?

Colour a lamp in each time you spot one.



STRAW ME IN?

The evil Abanazar has sucked all the colour out of this picture. Help Aladdin by putting colour back in!



COLOUR CARPET CONUNDRUM

EVERYTHING MUST GO!

Can you make out what animal Aladdin has hidden on his magic carpet?

You'll need to pick three colours for the star and circle shapes and colour them in to see what it is.

THEY'RE LITERALLY FLYING OUT OF THE SHOPS



SALE MUST END TODAY!

FREE UNDERLAY



CAN YOU SMASH ABAN AZAR'S GATE CRASH WORD MASH?

Can you find the following words written on Abanazar's Palace Gate?

Words can go forward, backwards, and even diagonally.

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

Also, there's a monkey hiding somewhere on the page, can you find him?

PRINCESS

CAVE

WIDOW TWANKEY

SORCERER

WISHEE WASHEE

LAMP

CARPET

ALADDIN

ABANAZAR

GENIE

TREASURE

MAGIC

PALACE

JEWEL

WISHES

RING

ALADDIN OR ALADDOUT?

Make this funky sign and stick to your bedroom door to let everyone know if you're in or out!



Badge



Finished Sign



Sign



Instructions

1 Cut out this page and glue it onto thin card.

2 Cut your door sign, badge and tab along the (colour) dotted lines.

3 Fold the sign in half and very carefully cut along the dotted lines in the middle. (Ask an adult to help you with this).

4 Stick the badge on to the sign. Draw in a picture or add your own photo!

5 Write your name on the door sign and stick it on your door.

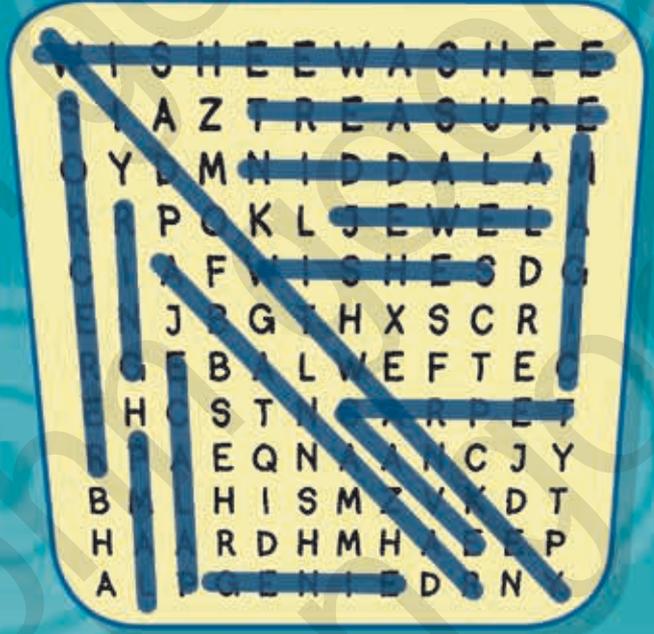


ANSWERS

GREETINGS!



ABANAZAR'S GATE CRASH WORD MASH



WHERE'S MY SOAP?



COLOUR CARPET CONUNDRUM

IT'S A
FLION
CARPET

RAAAAAA!

ALADDIN'S CODEBUSTER!

Answer:

HAVE FUN AT THE PANTO

ANSWERS

DOT TO DOT



PANTOMANIA!



IT IS I, THE YELLOW
GENIE WHO BELONGS
IN THE MAGIC LAMP

DOUBLE TROUBLE

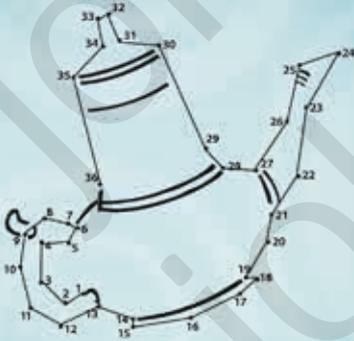


MUDDLED GENIES

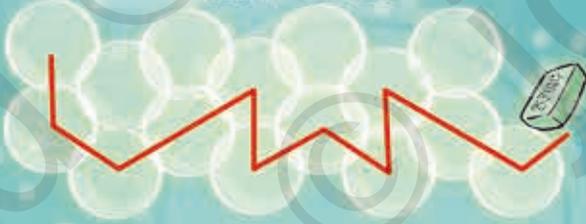
The Secret Message Reads:
OPEN SESAME

ANSWERS

DOT TO DOT



WHERE'S MY SOAP?



PANTOMANIA!

Ego Smoother = Mother Goose
Net Paper = Peter Pan
Wit When So = Snow White
Landel Rice = Cinderella

COLOUR CARPET CONUNDRUM

IT'S A
FLION
CARPET

RAAAAA!

DOUBLE TROUBLE

