**The Tale of the Three Apples**

A man wrongly kills his wife, cuts her into pieces and throws her into the river Tigris. He did so because a slave tricked the man in believing she was his mistress. The slave had a rare apple which the man had brought to his wife and the slave uses this as proof. The Wazir (Ja’afar) finds out it was one of his slaves but asks the Caliph’s pardon, because it is not as wondrous as one of his tales.

Caliph Harun al-Rashid summons his Wazir Ja’afar and tells him he wants to question the common folk. They meet an old man with a fishing net lamenting over something. The Caliph wants to help him and says he will give the man hundred gold pieces, but during his next catch the Caliph will get what’s in the net. It turns out to be a heavy chest. Its contents is palm-leaves, a carpet, a woman’s mantilla and a woman cut in nineteen pieces.

The Caliph demands the murderer to be found. When Ja’azar gets the assignment to find the murderer within three days he cannot fulfil this task because he can never be certain who is the murderer. After three days the Caliph commands Ja’afar to be hanged with forty of his family and companions for not obeying his orders. However, when Ja’afar is about to be hanged a young and an old man claim both they are the one murderer of the lady. When brought before the Caliph they still claim either of them is the murderer. But the younger man gives details of the contents of the chest and the Caliph asks the story behind it.

He tells the Caliph that the woman was his wife. One day she fell ill and she asked for an apple. The man could not find any apples, although he was willing to pay a high sum for them. Then he was informed that the Commander of the Faithful at Bassorah has apples in his Garden. He travelled for fifteen days to get them and brought three apples to his wife. She had grown weaker and could not eat the apples.

Some time later the man saw an ugly slave with an apple, and he asked how he got it. The slave told him he got it from his mistress who told him her husband had brought them. Upon hearing this he cut the throat of his wife, hewed off her head and her limbs in pieces, put it all into a chest and threw it into the river Tigris.

When he went home he found this son crying. He told his father that he took one of the apples from his mother and went playing.

Then a slave came to him and stole his apple. He cried giving him the details of the story of the apples. Knowing the true content of the slave’s story, the man had mourned for the last five days.

Now, he is asking the Caliph to kill him for the unjustly deed. But the Caliph spares his life and asks Ja’afar to find the slave and if he does not find him in three days, again, Ja’afar will be killed. Knowing he cannot fulfil this task Ja’afar waits for three days and awaits his fate. However, when he says farewell to his family he finds an apple with his daughter who tells him Rayhan, their slave, sold it to her for two dinars. On the apple was written the name of the Caliph. When the slave is summoned he tells the whole story (he did not steal it from the Caliph’s Gardens but from a boy). He then takes the slave to the Caliph and tells him the story of the slave. But Ja’afar also says that the story is not as wondrous as the tale of Wazir Nur al-Din Ali of Egypt and his brother Shams al-Din Mohammed.

The Caliph asks him to tell the story and will spare his slave if the story is more wondrous than the story of the three apples.

**Aladdin’s Wonderful Lamp**

Aladdin is a truant child, living with his mother in poverty in a Chinese town. His father is dead.

One day, an African magician approaches Aladdin while the boy plays in the streets. Claiming to be the boy's uncle, he recruits Aladdin to work with him, insisting he will be able to turn the boy into a wealthy merchant afterward. Aladdin's mother also believes the lie, and gives her permission.

Aladdin agrees, and the magician leads him to a booby-trapped cave. There, he instructs Aladdin to fetch an oil lamp from within, not explaining that the cave's spells require the magician to receive the lamp from another. He grants the boys one of his magic rings as protection.

However, after finding the lamp, Aladdin refuses to send it to him before he leaves the cave. In a fit of rage, the magician traps Aladdin inside, still holding the lamp. After two days miserable and alone, Aladdin accidentally rubs the ring the magician gave him, and a jinn (or genie) appears. At the boy's mercy, the ring jinn asks what Aladdin wants, and the boy asks to be brought home. The spirit complies.

Back home, Aladdin's mother attempts to clean the lamp so they can sell it. When she rubs it, an even more powerful jinn appears, promising to do their bidding. They request something to eat, and the lamp jinn brings them an amazing feast. Though Aladdin's mother fears they are cavorting with devils, Aladdin insists they take advantage of their good fortune.

They live in prosperity for years in this way, until one day Aladdin catches sight of the sultan's daughter, and decides he must marry her. He sends his mother to the sultan's palace with some jewels conjured by the lamp jinn, to impress the sultan into approving the marriage with the beautiful princess. Amazed by the display of wealth, the sultan agrees, though the sultan's greedy vizier convinces him to wait three months, hoping his own son can woo the princess with an even greater gift during that time.

Two months later, Aladdin learns the vizier's son has indeed won the princess for his bride. Outraged, he demands the jinn transport the bride and groom to him on the night of their wedding. The couple is transported in their bed, and the jinn sends the vizier's son outside while Aladdin spends the night with the princess. The next morning, the bed is transported back and the son returned. The process is repeated for a few nights, terrifying the married couple. Believing themselves cursed, they tell the sultan what has happened, and decide to separate.

One month later (at the end of the original three month period), Aladdin's mother reminds the sultan of his promise, and he marries his daughter to Aladdin, who has the lamp jinn create a magnificent palace for their home.

From his home in Africa, the magician hears of this story, and realizes that Aladdin must have survived and kept the lamp. So one day, when Aladdin is away, he travels to the palace disguised as a merchant who is trading new, polished lamps for old ones. The sultan's daughter falls for the ruse, and gives him the magic lamp. The magician immediately uses the lamp jinn to transport the palace and princess to Africa.

Shocked, the sultan threatens to kill Aladdin if he does not bring the princess back within forty days. Aladdin still has the magic ring, so he uses its jinn to transport him to Africa. There, he and the princess prepare a plan. She dresses alluringly one night and swears she has forgotten Aladdin. Excited, the magician pours some fine wine, which she then drugs to kill him. The couple then steals the lamp and returns home to China with the palace.

All is not well yet, though; the magician has a brother, who is even more wicked. Bent on revenge, the magician's brother disguises himself as a holy woman and visits the palace. There, he convinces the princess that the place would benefit from having a hanging roc's egg. She begs Aladdin to request this from the jinn, which he does.

However, this request angers the jinn, since the roc is his master. He threatens to destroy the palace, but quickly surmises that Aladdin has been tricked by the magician's brother. He warns them of the danger, and Aladdin kills the impostor once and for all. They live happily ever after, and Aladdin eventually becomes sultan himself.

**The Fisherman and the Jinni**

**(An Arabian Tale)**

Once upon a time, an old fisherman and his wife lived by the sea. Each day, he cast his net into the sea four times, drawing out of the water what he could. He did well enough, but one day, he cast his net and hauled up a dead horse. Horrified, he threw out the net again. The second time, he pulled up only an urn filled with sand. The third time, he pulled up shards of a pot.

"Bring me good fortune," he prayed to Allah. "This is my last throw. I must have better luck." And he cast his net.

This time, a small copper bottle was trapped in the net. The fisherman noticed the flask was sealed with a stopper on which holy words were written. Curious, he opened the bottle and found it empty. "Just my luck," he muttered and prepared to toss it away when smoke poured out, and a monstrous-looking jinni appeared out of the smoke.

"Mighty Solomon, thank you for releasing me!" the jinni roared.

The fisherman was terrified. He was not King Solomon. Shivering, he said softly, "King Solomon died 1,000 years ago. I'm only a poor fisherman."

The jinni began to laugh. "Well, if that is so, prepare to die!"

"But, sir! I saved you -- you owe me gratitude."

The jinni howled. "Solomon imprisoned me, and for the first 100 years, I vowed whoever released me would live happily ever after. No one came. In the next 100 years, I promised three wishes to whoever freed me. Still no one came. I have had another 100 years to grow angry. I shall kill you!"

The fisherman thought fast. "Kill me if you must, but in the name of Allah, tell me how a great jinni like you fit inside such a small bottle. I believe you came from somewhere else."

"You're a fool!" the jinni spat. "You saw me emerge from this bottle."

"There was smoke in my eyes," the fisherman said.

"Then first, I'll show you my magic, and then I'll kill you," and with that the jinni evaporated into a cloud of smoke and poured himself into the bottle."

The fisherman quickly stopped up the bottle.

The jinni's voice, tiny and tender, called, "Please, I will reward you richly if you free me."

"You wanted to kill me," said the fisherman, "and now I shall throw the bottle into the sea."

"Please, it was only a test. I promise, in the name of Allah, I shall reward you."

"I'm no fool," the fisherman said, "this is merely another tale of the ungrateful king."

"I don't know that story," said the jinni. "Will you tell it to me?"

So the fisherman told the story of a king who had a terrible disease no one could cure until a doctor appeared and healed him. In gratitude, the king made him the royal doctor. But this aroused the vizier's jealousy, so he whispered to the king, "That man could poison you."

Fearing the doctor's power, the king sentenced the doctor to death, but just before he was to die, he told the king of a magic book he possessed that contained all the wisdom of the world. The king looked through the book, but the pages were blank. It turned out the pages were coated with poison, and the king died.

"And that," said the fisherman, "is how Allah will repay you if you kill me."

"Our story is not like that," said the jinni. "It's like the prince and the ogre." And so he told a different story.

The afternoon went on that way, the men trading tales.

Just before sunset, the jinni said, "Please, I promise I will help you if you release me."

And since they had become friendly, the fisherman let out the stopper. The jinni then led the fisherman into the woods.

Soon they came to a beautiful lake surrounded by mountains. "Throw your net in here once a day and take whatever you catch to the sultan," the jinni said. He then stamped his foot, the earth opened, and he disappeared.

The fisherman caught four fish, each one a different color and each one more beautiful than the last.

But he knew he must keep his promise, and so he took them to the sultan's palace, where there seemed to be much sadness.

"Those fish, where did you find them?" the sultan asked. "Can you take me there?"

The fisherman agreed to take the sultan to the lake, of course, and so the sultan told the tale of the sorceress and the Prince of the Western Islands.

"The prince married the sorceress, believing her to be a good woman. But she put his kingdom under a spell, turning the surrounding town into a lake, the Western Islands into mountains, the sea into a desert, and the people of the islands into ruby, yellow, blue and white fish that inhabited the lake."

The sultan, who had never been able to find the lake, found it with the fisherman's guidance. And near the lake, they also found a gloomy castle, where they found the sorceress inside.

The sultan used his wiles to destroy the sorceress, and when he did, the lake turned back into a town, the mountains turned back into islands, the desert turned back into a sea, and the fish turned back into people.

Where once there had been only gloom, the castle filled with flowers and light and joy, and the people began to praise the sultan.

"It is the fisherman we must honor," the sultan said, and so the people cheered the fisherman.

So the sultan bestowed many riches on the fisherman and his wife.

The old fisherman and his wife spent the rest of their days in comfort. He no longer needed to fish, though some days he could not resist.