

**ALI BABA AND THE THIEVES**

by

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## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

NARRATOR

CAPTAIN

ALI BABA

ALI BABA'S WIFE

KASIM

KASIM'S WIFE

MARJANA

## **SETTING**

FOREST

A wooded area with a clearing around a mountain.

CAVE

Inside the mountain is the cave filled with treasure.

ALI BABA'S FIRST HOUSE

A modest-sized home. Comfortable but a little shabby.

KASIM'S HOUSE

A large home that showcases KASIM'S wealth.

ALI BABA'S SECOND HOUSE

A grand home with the latest conveniences and styles.

## **TIME**

This play takes place at a nondescript moment in history; during the golden age of "Once upon a time."

SCENE ONE

NARRATOR

Ali Baba and Kasim were brothers, but they were very different. Kasim had married for money. His wife was a widow who had inherited her husband's fortune, while Ali Baba had married for love. He and his wife were very poor, but they were happy together. One day, Ali Baba went into the forest to collect firewood. He walked a great distance until he came to a place that he had never been before. The wood was plentiful, and he was pleased with how much firewood he could gather in a short time. Before he could swing the ax, he heard a group of men approaching. Afraid it might be a band of dangerous thieves, he found a place to hide. The group rode right past Ali Baba, not noticing him. The men were well organized. Their Captain stopped by the side of the mountain. As the men dismounted from their horses, the Captain stepped forward and spoke loudly and clearly to the stone wall:

CAPTAIN

Open, sesame!

NARRATOR

Suddenly, the stone wall split in the middle and opened as if it had magic doors. Ali Baba couldn't believe his eyes. He remained quiet as the men entered the cave. He heard the Captain from the inside of the cave:

CAPTAIN

Close, sesame!

NARRATOR

To Ali Baba's surprise, it did! Ali Baba couldn't believe what he had just seen.

ALI BABA  
(to himself)

It's a secret cave. These men must be thieves, and this is where they hide their stolen treasure. I will stay quiet; the thieves will certainly come out the same way they went in.

NARRATOR

After a short time, the Captain's voice came from inside the cave:

CAPTAIN

Open, sesame!

NARRATOR

The cave wall again split in two, and the thieves came out without the bags they had taken inside. Once they were on their horses, the Captain turned to the cave and commanded:

CAPTAIN

Close, sesame!

NARRATOR

The cave returned to its original solid form as they rode away.

ALI BABA  
*(to himself)*

A secret treasure cave? I can't believe this! I'm going to be rich!

NARRATOR

Ali Baba slowly approached the cave as he spoke the magic words:

ALI BABA

Open, sesame!

NARRATOR

Instantly, the wall opened, revealing a treasure room, filled to the top with gold, silver, and jewels. Ali Baba stared at more riches than he could ever hope to have in his lifetime. He made a decision.

ALI BABA  
(to himself)

Since these men are thieves, it won't matter if I take some for my family. I dare not stay too long; if the thieves return and find me here, they'll kill me. I'll take what I can and return again to get more.

NARRATOR

Ali Baba filled a few bags with treasure. Then he stepped into the sunlight, turned towards the cave, and said:

ALI BABA

Close, sesame!

NARRATOR

Ali Baba went straight home to show his wife what good fortune had befallen them.

ALI BABA

Dear wife, as of today, our troubles are over!

NARRATOR

He opened the bag, grabbed a handful of coins, and laid them on the table. His wife took the bag and looked inside.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

Ali, have you become a thief? We are not so poor that you need to rob in order to eat! Give these back immediately!

ALI BABA

No, my dearest. I stole nothing from honest people. A band of thieves did the stealing, not I. I simply stumbled across their secret cave.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

A band of thieves? Did you see them?

ALI BABA

Yes, the worst sort of thieves you could possibly imagine. I hid and watched as their leader recited magic words that opened a cave. After they left, I went to the cave, said the magic words, and it opened for me. This bag is a tiny fraction of the treasure in the cave.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

We must use it wisely and make it last a long time. I don't want you walking into danger again.

ALI BABA

Yes, you're right. And we can't let anyone know about it. Not even my brother, Kasim.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

Especially not your brother, Kasim.

ALI BABA

I plan to dig a hole next to the house, bury the treasure, and plant a small tree on top of it. That way, whenever we need to dig up some coins, if any neighbors happen to see us, they will think we are cultivating our tree.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

Good idea. But let me count the coins first.

ALI BABA

Why? It should last us quite a while.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

I want to count them. We should have an accurate count: that way, we will have a good idea of how long it will last.

ALI BABA

All right, as you please. You count and I'll go to the market to buy some small leather pouches. We'll bury them in sets of 50.

NARRATOR

Ali Baba left and his wife began counting.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

*Starts to count.  
(to herself)*

1, 2, 3, 4, 5...this will take all afternoon. It would be faster to weigh them with a scale. Oh, but I sold our scale last month to buy these cushions. No matter. I'll go to Kasim's house and borrow a scale from my sister-in-law.

NARRATOR

Ali Baba's wife walked across the yard to Kasim's house and knocked on the door.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

Hello? Hello? Are you home?

KASIM'S WIFE

Hello, darling sister-in-law. Come in. Please sit and join me for tea.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

I am sorry, but I can't stay. I'd like to borrow your scale, if I may.

KASIM'S WIFE

My scale? Why yes, of course. Here you are, dearest sister-in-law. Happy measuring.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

Thank you. I'll return it soon.

*Kasim's wife retrieves the scale from a shelf. She hands the scale to Ali Baba's wife.*

NARRATOR

Ali Baba's wife made her way back home just as her brother-in-law returned from work.

KASIM

Who was just here?

KASIM'S WIFE

Your sister-in-law. She came to borrow our scale.

KASIM

Our scale? What could Ali Baba possibly have that needs to be measured? The dust on his floor? The dead flies on his windowsill?

KASIM'S WIFE

We may be able to discover the truth without asking any questions! Before I gave the scale to her, I put a fresh piece of wax on the bottom. Perhaps some of what she measures will stick to the wax and she won't notice.

KASIM

That was brilliant.

KASIM'S WIFE  
*(smugly)*

Thank you, my dear.

NARRATOR

It wasn't long before Ali Baba's wife finished weighing all the gold and went to return the scale.



ALI BABA'S WIFE

Good afternoon, Kasim. I've come to return your wife's scale.

KASIM

Ah, thank you dearest sister-in-law. We hardly missed it. Did you finish your weighing, then?

ALI BABA'S WIFE

Yes, thank you kindly for the loan. Good day!

*Exits.*

KASIM'S WIFE

Well, shall we have a look?

NARRATOR

Stuck to the bottom of the scale was a gold coin!

KASIM

My brother has been measuring gold coins?! Impossible! He's as poor as a peasant! I'm going to pay Ali Baba a visit right now and find out what's going on!

NARRATOR

Angrily, Kasim marched over to Ali Baba's house and pounded on the door.

KASIM

Ali Baba!

ALI BABA

Brother, greetings to you! Please, come in.

KASIM

Ali Baba, what is the meaning of this measuring business? How dare you act as though you are barely surviving when in reality, you have so much gold that you must measure it with scales!

ALI BABA

I...I don't know what you are talking about.

KASIM

Don't play games with me, Ali Baba. My wife stuck a piece of wax on the bottom of the scale. When the scale was returned, there was a gold coin on the bottom. You've been measuring gold!

ALI BABA

Yes, Kasim, I confess, that is the truth. My wife and I were measuring gold coins. But we only got them just today. That's the honest truth.

KASIM

Ali Baba, I should report you to the authorities. You are a thief!

ALI BABA

No, Kasim, I did not steal anything. I promise I did not steal them!

KASIM

Then tell me how you have become rich in one day.

NARRATOR

So Ali Baba told Kasim about the band of thieves, the cave's location, the secret password, and the treasure. He warned not to go to the cave alone; it was far too dangerous. Kasim promised not to go alone, but that was precisely what he intended to do. The next day he gathered up as many bags as he could carry and headed to the cave without Ali Baba. By noon, he arrived at the cave and said the magic words:

KASIM

Open...sesame.

NARRATOR

The stone wall parted and revealed the treasure hidden inside. Kasim ran into the cave and began packing his bags full of gold and riches, hardly noticing the wall closing behind him. When he finished and had more than he could carry, he turned to face the cave wall.

KASIM

Uh-oh. Ah... Um... Open, barley!

NARRATOR

Nothing happened.

KASIM

Open...chestnut!

NARRATOR

Again, nothing.

KASIM

Open...poppy seed! Open...couscous! Open...sorghum! *(pause)*  
Open...falafel! Open up, you stupid doors! Open! Argh!

NARRATOR

Kasim heard the thieves outside the cave doors.

CAPTAIN

Open, sesame!

NARRATOR

The cave opened and revealed all the bags that Kasim had filled stacked just inside the door.

CAPTAIN

Someone has discovered our cave! He might still be inside at this very moment. Men, arm yourselves. Prepare to catch a thief!

NARRATOR

At that moment, Kasim bolted out of the cave at full speed. But unfortunately, he ran right into a line of thieves, and they captured him.

CAPTAIN

Take him into the cave and kill him!

NARRATOR

The thieves dragged the screaming Kasim back into the cave.

CAPTAIN

We'll leave his body here as a warning to anyone else who dares to enter our cave! Now, let us depart on another venture!

NARRATOR

Kasim had been gone a long time, and his wife began to get worried that something terrible had happened. Ali Baba promised her that he would go and try and find him. He was convinced that Kasim had gone to the cave alone.

ALI BABA

Kasim? Kasim? Open, sesame!

NARRATOR

Sadly, inside the cave, Ali Baba found his brother lifeless. Oh, Kasim! I told you not to come alone! You silly brother! I must get you back home. I will give you a splendid funeral. But wait a minute, I'll need gold to pay for the funeral. So Ali Baba took one bag of gold and gave Kasim a splendid funeral. He also spent money on himself: he bought new clothes, a larger house, and a servant to help his wife with

the housework. The servant's name was Marjana, and she turned out to be the best investment that Ali Baba would ever make.

*MARJANA enters.*

NARRATOR

Many days passed, and Marjana settled into the household and became very dear to Ali Baba and his wife.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

So that's what happened to poor Kasim. Although I must say, he brought it upon himself.

MARJANA

What happened to the band of thieves?

ALI BABA'S WIFE

They're still out there robbing caravans. They don't know about Ali Baba. They think Kasim was the only person to discover their cave.

MARJANA

But surely they saw that the body of Kasim was gone from the cave.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

They probably thought a wild animal dragged it off.

MARJANA

Wild animals can't say "Open, sesame."

ALI BABA'S WIFE

But perhaps there is another way into the cave. Ali Baba mentioned a crack in the ceiling that let in some light.

NARRATOR

Just then, Ali Baba returned and heard what the two women were discussing.

MARJANA

Would you be able to recognize any of the thieves if they came into town disguised as merchants?

ALI BABA

No, I don't think I could. I might recognize their leader, but not any of the thieves. They were all too far away when I saw them.

MARJANA

So how would we know if they were there?

ALI BABA

We'll just keep our eyes and ears open. That's the best we can do. I'm going to the market now. I'll be back before sundown.

NARRATOR

Meanwhile, the thieves noticed that Kasim's body, and even more of their treasure, was missing from the cave. They realized that someone other than Kasim had discovered their cave. The Captain decided to disguise himself and go into town to ask the villagers if they knew anyone who had suddenly become wealthy in recent months. After questioning a few people, he had success! One of the townspeople told him that Ali Baba must have had a considerable windfall because he bought a new home, new clothes, and now had a servant. He asked where this new home was, and the townspeople gladly showed him the way. The Captain crept to the far side of the house and peered into the window.

CAPTAIN

I recognize that vase! That's mine! So help me, Ali Baba, I'll get every last treasure back from you! But I must think of a plan to get my men in here without making anyone suspicious. Hmm....

NARRATOR

The Captain walked to the door and knocked.

CAPTAIN

Good afternoon. Is your master at home?

MARJANA

No, but my mistress is. He trusts her in everything. Would you like to speak to her?

CAPTAIN

Yes, thank you.

*MARJANA leaves and ALI BABA'S WIFE comes to the door.*

Madame, I am a wheat merchant. I have come to your town today to offer you and your neighbors a once-in-a-decade deal on wheat. You see, my fields produced an unexpectedly large harvest this season and I have sacks of grain for sale at only two dinars a piece.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

Two dinars for a sack of grain? That's marvelous! How many sacks can I buy?

CAPTAIN

I can offer you 10 sacks.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

Well, I'll take all of them.

CAPTAIN

I will return tomorrow to deliver the sacks of wheat and collect my payment.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

We'll be expecting you.

CAPTAIN

Thank you for your business. Until tomorrow.

NARRATOR

The Captain bowed and disappeared through the crowd. He hurried back to his band of thieves, and they made their preparations. He told his thieves to sneak into town in the middle of the night and go to Ali Baba's house. Each thief would hide in a grain sack. Then, when the Captain came to collect payment from Ali Baba the next morning, he would give the signal. They would all jump out, kill everyone in Ali Baba's household, and haul away the treasure in their sacks. Now it happened that Marjana woke up very early that morning—before the sun came up.

MARJANA  
*(to herself)*

I think I'll get an early start on my work today. Maybe I can finish early and have some free time this evening. Hmm... Maybe I should sweep along the side of the house and clear a place for the sacks of grain that will arrive this morning.

NARRATOR

Marjana was very surprised to see that the sacks of grain had been delivered in the middle of the night. This seemed suspicious to her, and she decided to investigate. She poked the first bag and a voice inside said, "Captain, is that you? Is it time?" Marjana was startled but kept her wits about her. She whispered in a very low voice:

MARJANA

No, not yet.

NARRATOR

She then poked each of the bags. Every one of them had a thief waiting inside, and when they asked if it was time, she told them:

MARJANA

No, not yet.



NARRATOR

Marjana knew that she would have to find a way to get rid of the thieves without making any noise. If one of the thieves jumped up and sounded the alarm, Ali Baba's household was doomed. But sometimes good and bad are like the two sides of a coin. Just three days ago, Marjana had discovered rats destroying their garden. She had purchased a remedy from the apothecary: a large bottle of rat poison.

MARJANA  
*(to herself)*

The apothecary told me this works "quickly and quietly." Just what I need. I'll poison some rats, all right—human rats!

NARRATOR

Marjana needed to protect Ali Baba and his family, so she quickly poured the poison into the sacks. The thieves rolled around and then they were still inside the sacks. The Captain arrived at dawn.

CAPTAIN

Men, the time has come!

NARRATOR

There was no response from the sacks.

CAPTAIN

Men, up and ready, this is the signal! Attack!

NARRATOR

The Captain opened the first sack.

CAPTAIN

What?! How can this be? Who has done this? Ali Baba, you'll pay dearly for this. I'll avenge the deaths of every one of my comrades before the sun sets today!

NARRATOR

Marjana cleverly told the townspeople that the sacks were full of rats and other vermin she had poisoned in their garden. She asked them to help her get rid of them. Of course, no one wanted to open the bags and see dead rats! They just took the bags, threw them into a pit, and covered them. And that was the end of the thieves.

MARJANA

Thank you all for your help. Good riddance of these vermin! May your homes and gardens never be infested with the likes of these!

NARRATOR

Ali Baba and his wife had no idea how narrowly they escaped certain death. Marjana prepared breakfast and they sat down to eat.

ALI BABA

That wheat merchant you were telling me about—when did he say he would arrive?

ALI BABA'S WIFE

He just said he would be back in the morning.

ALI BABA

Where are we going to put that many sacks of grain? Our storage pits are already full.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

I suppose we'll have to dig another one. Or better yet, let's build an above-ground chamber made of brick, so the rats can't get in.

ALI BABA

Good idea. The vermin have been a problem lately.

NARRATOR

There was a knock at the door and Marjana let the merchant in.

CAPTAIN

Ali Baba?

ALI BABA

Yes, I am sorry I missed you yesterday. Please, come in.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

Do you have the grain? I'll have Marjana fetch your payment right away.

CAPTAIN

Ah, yes. About the grain... You see...a... It seems that there's been some kind of miscommunication. I expected to see the sacks of grain already delivered and sitting outside your house. I ordered that they be delivered very early, you see.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

Marjana, do you know about any delivery of sacks of grain?

MARJANA

Oh yes, I took care of them. Every-- one-- of-- them.

NARRATOR

Marjana stared at the Captain.

ALI BABA

Well, then. They've been taken care of. Please join us for refreshments and perhaps we can discuss another deal.

CAPTAIN

You bought the last of this year's harvest.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

What else do you sell? Do you cultivate barley or oats?

CAPTAIN

Ah... No, actually...I...ah...I specialize in sesame.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

Oh, I do appreciate good sesame oil. Ali, let's buy some sesame oil.

MARJANA  
(to Ali Baba)

Master, would you care for some entertainment while you eat? I could dance for you?

ALI BABA

Yes, that would be wonderful. Thank you, Marjana. We'll entertain our guest.

NARRATOR

Marjana began to dance getting closer and closer to the Captain. She suddenly pulled out a dagger and stabbed him.

ALI BABA

Marjana! What have you done? You have ruined us!

MARJANA

I have saved you! This man is none other than the leader of the band of thieves!

NARRATOR

Marjana pulled off the Captain's disguise and revealed the dagger he had hidden under his cloak.

MARJANA

This man came here to kill you and take back all the treasure! I discovered his men inside the grain sacks early this morning.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

What did you do?

MARJANA

I poured poison into the sacks to protect you, and then I pretended that they were sacks of rats and had them dragged out of town and buried.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

All before breakfast?

MARJANA

Yes. Then when this so-called "merchant" showed up at the door, I knew he would discover his men gone and would resort to killing you himself.

ALI BABA

Marjana, how can I ever repay you for saving our lives? I must free you immediately.

MARJANA

I am in no hurry to leave you, master. I have no desire to work for anyone else.

ALI BABA

But you must not be a servant any longer. I must make you part of our family.

ALI BABA'S WIFE

We have a nephew just about your age. And he's VERY available...

ALI BABA

Splendid idea! Let's go and pay him a visit!

NARRATOR

And so the humble servant girl, Marjana, saved her master's household and became part of their family. They lived happily ever after, keeping the secret of the cave.

THE END