

ALI BABA AND THE THIEVES

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NARRATOR

CAPTAIN

ALI BABA

ALI BABA'S WIFE

KASIM

KASIM'S WIFE

MARJANA

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 leader, a man dressed as a 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 group of 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 hid their stolen treasure.. I will stay quiet; the thieves will certainly come back out the same way they went in.

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

CAPTAIN: Open, sesame!

Commented [AT1]: This is an entertaining story. The primary edits were to simplify language and correct spelling. We feel that these changes help focus the audience's attention on the most important aspects of the story, leading to a more enjoyable viewing experience.

Commented [AT2]: Adding a brief character description could help the actor understand their role a little better.

Commented [AT3]: This opening paragraph seems a little too long. We recommend reducing redundant or "filler" words (such as some instances of "very") in order to make the introduction easier for the audience to understand.

Commented [4]: "Sesame" is not a proper name, so we suggest changing this from upper to lower case. We made this change throughout the script.

Commented [AT5]: Stage directions such as these would help the actor know how to deliver their lines so that the audience can understand the story better.

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!

Commented [AT6]: Stage directions such as these would help the actor know how to deliver their lines.

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, I will be killed. So, I'll take what I can and return again to get more.

Commented [AT7]: Stage directions such as these would help the actor know how to deliver their lines.

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 using a scale? (mocking) 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?

Commented [8]: This play has several different scenes. We recommend adding stage directions to mark scene changes. Even though the audience won't be able to tell the difference, this could help the actors understand the action of the script.

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. So 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!

Commented [9]: Since "sesame" is not capitalized, these words are not capitalized either.

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: The sound of the band of thieves could be heard outside.

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.

HASSAN: Take him into the cave and kill him!

NARRATOR: The thieves dragged the screaming Kasim back into the cave.

HASSAN: 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.

NARRATOR: 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 sundance.

Commented [10]: Is this word supposed to be "sundown?" Please confirm.

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, the thieves noticed Kasim's body, and even more of their treasure was missing from the cave. They realized 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. Unfortunately, **good and bad are sometimes 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.

Commented [AT11]: We removed one idiom but kept the reference to coins. This seems fitting, since the story is about wealth and treasure.

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 morrow.

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 transaction.

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.