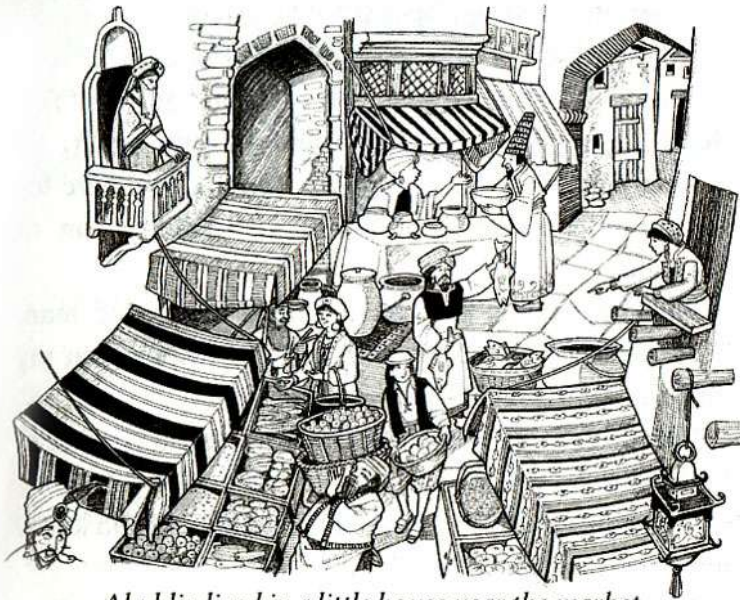


1

Help from a rich man

Many years ago, in a city in Arabia, there was a boy called Aladdin. He lived with his mother in a little house near the market, and they were very poor. Aladdin's mother worked all day, and sometimes half the night, but Aladdin never helped her.

He was a lazy boy and he did not like to work. He only wanted to play all the time. Every morning he ran



Aladdin lived in a little house near the market.

through the streets to the market. There, he talked and laughed and played with his friends all day. Then in the evening he went home for his dinner.

And every night his mother said to him: 'Oh, Aladdin, Aladdin! You are a lazy boy – a good-for-nothing! When are you going to do some work, my son?'

But Aladdin never listened to his mother.

One day in the market there was an old man in a long black coat. Aladdin did not see him, but the old man watched Aladdin very carefully. After some minutes he went up to an orange-seller and asked:

'That boy in the green coat – who is he?'

'Aladdin, son of Mustafa,' was the answer.

The old man moved away. 'Yes,' he said quietly. 'Yes, that is the boy. The right name, and the right father.'

Then he called out to Aladdin: 'Boy! Come here for a minute. Is your name Aladdin? Aladdin, son of Mustafa?'

Aladdin left his friends and came to the old man. 'Yes,' he said, 'I am Aladdin, son of Mustafa. But my father is dead. He died five years ago.'

'Dead!' said the old man. 'Oh, no!' He put his face in his hands and began to cry.

'Why are you crying?' asked Aladdin. 'Did you know my father?'

The old man looked up. 'Mustafa was my brother!' he



The old man went up to an orange-seller.

said. 'I wanted to see him again, and now you tell me he is dead. Oh, this is not a happy day for me!' Then he put his hand on Aladdin's arm. 'But here is my brother's son, and I can see Mustafa in your face, my boy. Aladdin, I am your uncle, Abanazar.'

'My uncle?' said Aladdin. He was very surprised. 'Did my father have a brother? I didn't know that.'

'I went away before you were born, my boy,' said the

old man. 'Look.' He took ten pieces of gold out of his bag, and put them into Aladdin's hands. 'Go home to your mother and give this money to her. Tell her about me, and say this: "Her husband's brother wants to meet her, and he is going to visit her tomorrow."' "



He put the ten pieces of gold into Aladdin's hands.

Ten pieces of gold is a lot of money and Aladdin was very happy. He ran home quickly and gave the gold to his mother. At first she was afraid.

'Where did you get this, Aladdin? Did you find it? It isn't our money. You must give it back.'

'But it *is* our money, Mother,' said Aladdin. 'My uncle, my father's brother, gave the money to us. Uncle Abanazar is coming to visit us tomorrow.'

'Who? You don't have an uncle Abanazar.'

'But he knows my name, and my father's name,'

Aladdin said. 'And he gave ten pieces of gold to me. He's very nice. You must make a good dinner for him.'

The next day Abanazar arrived at Aladdin's house.

'My sister!' he said and smiled. 'My dead brother's wife! I am happy to find you and Aladdin.'

'Sit down, Abanazar. We're happy to see you in our poor home,' Aladdin's mother said. She put meat, rice and fruit on the table. 'But I don't understand. Why did my husband never speak about you?'

'I'm sorry, my sister. When we were young, my brother and I were not friends for many years. Then I went away to a far country. I am an old man now and wanted to see my brother again and take his hand. But



Aladdin's mother put meat, rice and fruit on the table.



Abanazar had tears in his eyes.

he is dead, and I cannot speak to him or say goodbye to him now!

Abanazar had tears in his eyes and Aladdin's mother began to cry too.

'But I am home again now,' the old man said, 'and I can help my brother's wife and his son, because I am a rich man.' He looked at

Aladdin. 'Aladdin, my boy, what work do you do?'

Aladdin did not answer and his face was red.

'Oh, don't ask Aladdin questions about work!' his mother said. 'He never works. He plays with his friends all day, and only comes home when he is hungry.'

'Well, my boy, tomorrow we must get a new coat for you. Then we can talk about work. Would you like to have a shop in the market perhaps?'

Aladdin smiled. 'A shop,' he thought, 'and me, a rich market-seller. Why not?'