

Aladdin and Other Tales from the Arabian Nights

This book is an abridged version of the classic *1001 Arabian Nights*. The stories came together over the course of centuries. Various tales came from the Middle East, Asia, and North Africa, and they were put together in a collection during the Islamic Golden Age of the 14th Century. As the stories became popular in the West in the 18th Century, additional tales of Aladdin, Sinbad the Sailor, and Ali Baba were added, though they were not part of the earlier Persian versions.

The full collection does not actually have 1001 stories. The title is meant to imply there are countless tales, not literally 1001. You will notice that the stories lead one into the other, sometimes overlapping with a story within a story.

Note: The following questions are provided to help you focus on key points of the stories, but students are not expected or required to write out answers to them. Your World History teacher will evaluate your understanding of *Aladdin* after we return to school, and so it may be helpful to use these questions to make notes as you read, but the guides will not be collected or graded.

Shahriyar & Shahrazad

1. What event pushes Shahriyar into insanity?
2. What does the story tell us about a king's absolute (complete, unquestioned) power over his subjects?
3. What is the role of Shahrazad? What does Shahrazad volunteer to do? Why does she volunteer?
4. Why do you think she tells him a different story every night?

The Fisherman and the Jinnee

1. How does the fisherman find the bottle? How does the author describe the bottle?
2. How does the author describe the Jinnee? Why was he living in the bottle?
3. Why does the Jinnee want to kill the fisherman?
4. How did the fisherman avoid death?

King Yunan/ The King & The Falcon

1. How did the doctor find favor with the king?
2. How does the Vizier turn the king against the doctor?
3. Why does the king kill the Falcon? What does the story tell you about the king's power in his kingdom?
4. What did the doctor repeat over and over to the king when faced with death?
5. How does the doctor take revenge on the king?

The Enchanted King

1. Describe the relationship between the young king and his wife. Who is she? What does she do to him and to the people of the kingdom?
2. What four types of people live in his kingdom?
3. How is the young king freed?
4. What is the outcome for each person in the story?

Aladdin

1. Where is Aladdin from originally?
2. How does the author describe him?
3. Who is the magician? What does he want?

4. How does Aladdin obtain the lamp?
5. What magic does Aladdin do with the lamp?
6. How is the royal family described in this story? The vizier?
7. Aladdin is not part of the original collection. How does it differ from the other stories?

The Donkey

1. How does the thief steal the man's donkey?
2. What were the sins of the donkey?

Khalifah the Fisherman

1. Where does Khalifah live?
2. What are the monkey's instructions to Khalifah?
3. What does Khalifah's obsession over his gold lead him to do?
4. What did Lady Zubaidah do to Kut-al-Kulub?
5. What makes Khalifah a wiser man?

The Dream

1. Where does the voice tell the man to go?
2. How does the man find a fortune?

The Ebony Horse

1. The three wise men were from which countries?
2. What is the horse able to do? What do the wise men want as payment from the King of Persia?
3. The prince travels to which country? Who does he want to marry? What is the role of the King of Turkey in the story?
4. What is the outcome for the prince and princess?

Epilogue

1. How was Shahrazad able to save her own life?
2. What reason does the king give for pardoning Shahrazad?
3. When speaking with the Vizier, what does the King say that Shahrazad has done?

Analysis Questions

1. When reading the tales, try to determine the moral (key concept, lesson, etc.) of the tales. Be able to discuss the moral of at least two of the tales.
2. There are multiple rulers throughout the book. How are the rulers portrayed? From the book, can you infer what characteristics make an ideal ruler in the time period? Can you infer why Shahrazad would be telling stories about these types of rulers?
3. What is the role of women in the primary story that ties the book together? How are gender relations portrayed in the book? From the book, what can you infer about gender relations during the time period?