

Welcome to Storytime with Dad. Today, we will be reading Aladdin and the Enchanted Lamp.

In a city long ago, there lived a poor widow and her only son, Aladdin. One day, a sorcerer came looking for something in that very city. He knew what it was that he was looking for, but he needed someone very small and quick to get it for him. And when he saw Aladdin dodging around the bazaar and helping himself to fruit off the stalls, he knew he had found exactly the right person.

He pretended to be his long-lost uncle and promised him a carpet shop if he would help him. Aladdin couldn't believe his luck! Neither could his mother.

"You haven't got an uncle," she told him. "But this man looks as if he's got more money than sense! Bring him in." So the next day, the sorcerer took Aladdin for a walk and ended up in a chrysanthemum garden.

"Ah, at last!" the sorcerer sighed. "I've come all the way from Morocco to find this garden, now you can help me."

He asked Aladdin to gather twigs and light a fire, then he threw a pinch of incense into the flames. The sky grew dark and the earth was covered with sweet smoke. And when the smoke cleared, there was a marble slab with a golden ring right in front of them.

"Lift the slab," the sorcerer said. "Only you can do it."

The slab looked very heavy, and Aladdin's muscles were the size of peas! But he did as he was told, reciting his name and his mother's as he pulled. And up came the slab as if it were made of paper!

"Now," said the sorcerer, clapping his hands. "There are caves full of treasure down there. I want you to go down and walk through four caverns. Each will contain four gold chests. Don't touch them or anything around them or you'll be turned into stone. Go through into the fourth chamber and out into a garden of fruit trees. Through that up some stairs, you will see a lamp hanging. Bring it to me. You can take whatever fruit you like from the trees, but nothing else."

The sorcerer took off his ring and put it on Aladdin's finger. "This will keep you safe. You are a man now."

Fearful and proud and excited, Aladdin did as he was told. He went down into the dark cave and into a cavern with walls crusted with green emeralds, and another crusted with red rubies, and another crusted with blue amethyst, and another with shimmering diamonds so bright that you would think the stars had fallen out of the sky. In each of the caverns there were chests overflowing with gold coins. But Aladdin hurried past them all and came into a garden where the trees were loaded down with glowing fruit. He hurried past, then climbed up the steps at the end and there he found the lamp.

There was nothing special about it. In fact, it was battered and rusty but he tucked it under his shirt. When he came to the fruit, he remembered that he could take some, but as soon as he touched them the apples, and the lemons, and the pineapples, and cherries all turned into glass,

every one. The colors were so rich and beautiful that he wanted to show them to his mother, and he took them anyway, and stuffed them into his pockets and down his shirt and up his sleeves. He could hardly move, and when he reached the way out he couldn't climb up to it.

"Uncle, give me a hand!" he called up.

"Pass the lamp up, pass the lamp up!" the sorcerer hissed.

"I can't, I'm stuck! Help me out first."

Well, the sorcerer was sure that Aladdin was trying to steal the lamp from him, "Once a thief, always a thief" he snarled in a rage. He slammed the slab back over Aladdin's head and sealed him underground.

Aladdin didn't know what to do with himself. He wrung his hands in despair, and by chance he rubbed the ring that the sorcerer had given him. At once, there was a puff of smoke and a little fat genie appeared, sitting cross-legged about two feet off the ground, arms folded and smiling like a cat.

"I am the genie of the ring. Tell me your wish your master."

"Get me out of here!" No sooner had Aladdin said it than he was back in the bazaar telling his mother about the wonderful things he had seen in the caverns. She didn't believe it.

"So much fuss over a rusty old lamp," she said. "Well, the best thing I can do is sell it! I won't get much for it. I'll just give it a bit of a polish and see if I can brighten it up." She rubbed it with an old cloth and - flash! - another genie appeared! Pouring himself, like reeds of smoke out of the mouth of the lamp, rising higher and higher above them until he was taller than the temple. Aladdin's mother fell to her knees in fright, but by now Aladdin knew what genies could do.

"What is your wish, master," the genie asked in a voice that rumbled like the heart of a volcano.

"Slave of the lamp!" Aladdin said as if he were the sultan himself, "fetch us some food."

Puff! The genie disappeared. A flash or two later, he was back with a silver tray loaded with so many plates of food that Aladdin and his mother didn't stop eating for a month. Then, Aladdin sold the silver plates, and after that the tray, and he and his mother were better off than they had ever been in their lives. But then something even more wonderful happened to Aladdin, he fell in love.

It was quite easy to see that this happened because he stopped eating or sleeping, and mooned around the bazaar singing and sighing until at last his mother said, "Tell me who she is, Aladdin. This girl who has stolen your heart away. Who is she?"

"The sultan's daughter," he said gloomily. "The beautiful Princess Jasmine. I thought all women looked like you mother, but now I've seen her and I know what real beauty is."

"Well!" gasped his mother. "What a thing to say!"

"I want to marry her, mother. Marry the sultan's daughter."

"Are you mad? He'll have your head for a cannonball if you ask him to give you his daughter!"

"That's why I want you to ask him for me," Aladdin said. "What gifts can I send?" And then he remembered the glass fruits that he had brought from the cave as he unwrapped them. I saw them for what they really were, not glass at all but rubies, diamonds, emeralds, topaz, and amethyst all glittering and sparkling and flashing like fishes in the stream.

"Take these to the sultan!" Aladdin begged his mother. "And ask if I can marry the Princess Jasmine."

And his mother did. She had to go to the golden palace everyday for a week and line up with all the other people who'd brought gifts, but at last the sultan agreed to see her. He was so impressed with her wealth that he agreed that his daughter would marry Aladdin in three months time. Aladdin's mother rushed home and danced all around the bazaar with her son. But the sultan didn't keep his word. A month later the Princess Jasmine was married to the son of the sultan's grand vizier. Aladdin was mad with despair. He snatched up his enchanted lamp and rubbed it, and - flash! - up billowed the genie in a cloud of green smoke.

"What is your wish, oh master?" he rumbled, bowing to the ground.

"Bring me the princess and that sappy-faced husband of hers!" Aladdin ordered, and it was done. No sooner had the princess and the son of the grand vizier climbed into bed for the night, when the bed whizzed out of the window and over the town, and landed in Aladdin's house. He threw the grand vizier's son out onto the dung heap. This happened night after night until at last the Princess and the grand vizier's son were so fed up with this treatment that they decided the marriage was definitely off. Within the next day, poor Aladdin's mother was knocking at the palace door demanding to see the sultan.

"You promised the princess to my son," she reminded him.

"So I did," said the sultan. "Well, it looks as if she isn't married after all. Tell your son that if you can bring me 40 times the jewels he brought before, with 40 times as many servants to carry them, he can marry my daughter."

Aladdin's Mother trenched home with the news. "I wish you'd never set eyes on that princess," she said. "How are you going to get all that stuff Aladdin?"

He picked up his enchanted lamp and rubbed it and - flash! - up billowed the genie, bowing low.

"What is your wish, oh master?" Before Aladdin's mother had time to tidy up the house, it was full of servants staggering under the weight of their trays of jewels. She led them off to the palace at once, and this time the sultan welcomed her with open arms. She ran home to Aladdin and they danced around the bazaar and all the way up to the palace with more servants and jewels sent up by the helpful genie. The sultan himself came out to meet them and flung his arms around Aladdin.

"What a splendid son-in-law you'll make! Of course, you can marry my daughter. Why didn't you ask me before?" But Aladdin had a request to make.

"I can't marry your daughter until I have a beautiful palace for her," he said. "May I have this plot of land, just in front of yours?"

"Of course, but won't it take a little time?"

"Leave it to me," said Aladdin. When he got home, he rubbed his enchanted lamp and called up the genie, and during the night the most exquisite palace sprung up as golden as the sun itself, and glittering with jewels that were every color of the rainbow. The sultan's palace looked quite small behind it.

"Wonderful!" breathed the sultan, gazing at it out of his window. "How on earth did he do it?"

"By magic," his grand vizier said. "Only magic could do this. Believe me."

So the Princess Jasmine and Aladdin were married at last, and then moved into the shimmering palace with Aladdin's mother and were very, very happy. But that isn't the end of the story. Far away in Morocco, the sorcerer heard about that wonderful palace that had sprung up as if by magic, and he came all the way to look at it. As soon as he knew that Aladdin was living in it, he guessed what it happened. He disguised himself as an old man, and had some lamps made and went around the streets calling out the strangest thing: "New lamps for old, new lamps for old!" Everyone thought he was mad.

The princess heard him and sent her maid to fetch him in. "Give him that rusty old lamp of Aladdin's," she said. "I'll surprise him with a nice new one!" But there was no time for that. As soon as the maid came out with the lamp, the sorcerer snatched it out of her hands and rubbed it - flash! - the genie appeared.

"What is your wish, oh master?"

"Take me and this palace, and the princess, to Morocco right away." And it was no sooner said than done. The palace and the princess disappeared as if they had never been, and the sultan and was furious. He sent his guards to find Aladdin and flung him and his mother into prison.

"Now see what you've done!" his mother moaned. But the sultan's anger was even greater.

"I've had enough of your magic tricks! Find my daughter or I'll throw your head on the dung heap, and your mother's!" So Aladdin was freed for 40 days, but he had no idea what to do or where to look. He went to wash himself in the stream so he could think clearly, and as he wrung his hands together he rubbed his ring. Suddenly - puff! - a cloud of smoke and the forgotten fat genie of the ring appeared.

"What is your wish, oh master?" Aladdin could have wept for joy.

"Take me to my wife," he begged. "That's all I want."

The genie stroked his wispy beard. "I can get you there but I can't get you back," he said. "It'll use up all my magic as it is."

Aladdin found himself being lifted up and floated over the temples and mountains nearby, and over the blue oceans and over the golden deserts of Africa, and at last he was in the arms of his princess.

"Tell me where my lamp is," he asked her, "and we can go back home."

"Your lamp? But I gave it to the maid, and she gave it to the old man. He's the one who brought me here."

Aladdin knew at once who it must be. The sorcerer was fast asleep, snoring away in Aladdin's own bed. Aladdin crept up to him and stole the lamp from inside his shirt, rubbed it quickly and - flash! - there was his genie, towering over him and bowing to the ground.

"Take us home!" Aladdin asked. "Oh wonderful genie, take us home."

The palace was returned back home. Aladdin gave the sultan the sorcerer's head instead of his own. The sultan embraced his daughter, and his son-in-law, Aladdin's, mother was released from prison and they all lived in great happiness. And that is the end of the story. The end.



The story of Aladdin has a few different versions, but the one I just read seems to have a pretty nice message behind it. Aladdin in this version is just a guy who falls in love with a princess, and defends the people he loves (his mother and wife), from the terrible plans of an evil sorcerer. Aladdin seems like a pretty solid guy.

I like how he didn't let any obstacles stand in his way. He could have said to himself that the princess Jasmine was better than him and out of reach. But instead, he came up with a plan to get her to fall in love with him.

Later, when the sorcerer stole the genie lamp and princess away from him, he didn't give up and let the bad guy win. He got a little lucky, but outwitted the sorcerer and took back everything that was his in the first place.

It may be something personal to me, but I love seeing other people do difficult things because they believe it is worth the effort. In general, if something is hard and requires effort from us, it's usually worth doing. Cleaning up our room or our house, studying for a test, having awkward difficult conversations with other people are all examples of this. Another way of thinking about it is: don't be lazy.

Now, don't think that just because something hard that it's going to pay off. We still have to do it well. But, the first step is being brave and strong enough to try. Aladdin did this, and thankfully he did it well enough in each situation that he had great results. When you make a decision, think about it, and if it seems like it going to be hard to do, that may mean that it's something worth doing. Give it a thought next time.

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