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Dramatic Publishing

ALI BABA AND THE MAGIC CAVE

by
WILLIAM GLENNON



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(ALI BABA AND THE MAGIC CAVE)

ISBN: 0-87129-057-X

ALI BABA AND THE MAGIC CAVE

A Play in Three Acts
For Six Men and Two Women
(Plus four extras)

CHARACTERS

ALI BABA

FRIENDS* of Ali Baba, three young boys

CAPTAIN of the palace guards

MORGIANA a young girl

BADOURA

BO-BADOURA brothers, and thieves

BO-BO-BADOURA

LEADER. of the thieves

CASSIM uncle to Ali Baba

MOTHER of Ali Baba

*May be girls dressed as boys.

TIME: Long ago.

PLACE: Ancient Persia.

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ACT ONE

SCENE: *As the house lights dim, a great gong is heard, followed by mysterious Eastern music and the curtain rises on a dimly lit stage. A FIGURE appears, darting in quickly. He wears a black cloth to hide part of his face. He looks about, tense and excited. Suddenly ANOTHER FIGURE enters similarly dressed. He signals the first figure. There is a whistle heard in the distance and they are BOTH alerted. One of them quietly returns the whistled signal and they BOTH hide in the shadows. Brief pause. A MAN carrying a small bag enters. He wears a cloak and a turban. He moves cautiously across the stage. Another MASKED FIGURE enters, following. He stops and calls softly to the MAN.)*

MASKED FIGURE *(in a sinister voice)*. You there!

MAN. What's that? Who are you?

MASKED FIGURE *(taking out a dagger)*. What have you there?

MAN. Keep away! Keep away or I'll call for help!

MASKED FIGURE *(slowly approaching)*. There's no help for you here, stranger. What's in the bag?

MAN. Nothing of any value.

(The OTHER TWO MASKED FIGURES begin to move slowly towards the MAN. They are behind him and he doesn't see them.)

MASKED FIGURE. Let's see!

MAN. No!

MASKED FIGURE. Don't be stubborn. You might get hurt.

MAN. So might you! *(Takes out a dagger.)* Keep away.

MASKED FIGURE. You want to play? Well, I'm willing!

TWO MASKED FIGURES *(who are now crouching close to the MAN)*. So are we! *(The MAN turns startled. The TWO MASKED FIGURES begin to close in. The MAN backs away and finally turns and tries to make a run for it. He is stopped by ONE of the FIGURES. At first it looks as though the MAN will be easily overcome, but he demonstrates surprising strength and agility. One by one he disarms the three FIGURES of their knives. Finally he is holding them at bay in a corner with the daggers.)*

(CAPTAIN of the Palace Guard enters and sees what's happening.)

MAN. One move from any of you and it will be your last!

CAPTAIN. Ho there! What's going on? In the name of the Caliph, answer!

ONE MASKED FIGURE. A guard from the palace!

ANOTHER. Are you sure?

MAN. Who goes there?

CAPTAIN *(approaching, carrying a short sword)*. Captain of the guards at the Caliph's palace. What's the trouble?

MAN. Nothing much really.

CAPTAIN. Are those thieves you hold at bay?

MASKED FIGURES. Thieves?

CAPTAIN. I'll take charge here. Were you attacked, sir?

MAN. Who? Me?

CAPTAIN. The Caliph deals swiftly with thieves. Come along! You must go with me too, sir, to give testimony.

MAN. But they're not thieves.

MASKED FIGURES. Not us! Don't call us thieves! I'm not a thief!

MAN. They're my friends.

CAPTAIN. Friends?

MASKED FIGURES (*unmasking*). Do I look like a thief? We're not thieves! See?

CAPTAIN. Indeed! (*Looks at them and they giggle.*) Why, by the fire of dragons, they're boys! (*They giggle.*)

MAN. Yes, they're my friends. (*Goes to him.*) My name is Ali Baba.

CAPTAIN (*angry*). And what was going on here a moment ago?

ALI BABA. We were playing.

CAPTAIN. Playing? In the middle of the night?

ALI BABA. Well, it's more fun at night. No one's around to bother us.

CAPTAIN. Except me!

ALI BABA. You see, we take turns. One of us carries this (*Shows the bag.*) and the other three try to rob him, just like real thieves. Except our daggers are made of wood. See? (*They poke ONE of the FRIENDS.*) And we've really got nothing to steal, we're all too poor. It's just a game. I won tonight because I got the better of them.

FRIENDS. Yes, he almost always wins the game.

CAPTAIN. Well, let's see who wins my game.

ALI BABA. All right!

CAPTAIN. I'll count up to ten.

ALI BABA. What'll we do? Hide?

CAPTAIN (*overly patient*). No. Each of you goes home and goes to bed and stays there. Understand?

ALI BABA. Playing thieves is more fun.

CAPTAIN. And if I ever catch any of you out again at this hour, you won't sit down for a week.

ALI BABA. But look. If we learn to think like thieves, maybe someday we'll be able to capture the real ones.

CAPTAIN. One...

ALI BABA. We've heard all the Caliph's caravans have been looted.

CAPTAIN. Two...

ALI BABA. Not one piece of gold has reached the palace in months.

CAPTAIN. Three...

ALI BABA. And they say the royal treasury is almost at rock bottom...

CAPTAIN. Four...

ALI BABA. And if something isn't done soon...

CAPTAIN (*grabbing him*). Something's going to be done very soon...FIVE!

ALI BABA. The Caliph will be as poor as we are.

CAPTAIN. Six...

ALI BABA. We're only trying to help.

CAPTAIN. Seven...

ALI BABA. Perhaps we'll succeed where the palace guards have failed.

CAPTAIN. Eight, nine, ten! Failed, have we! I'll show you! (*He advances, whacking them with the flat of his sword and they scatter and exit.*) Little fools!

(ALI BABA sticks his head in.)

ALI BABA. I'll capture the thieves yet, you'll see! *(CAPTAIN makes a lunge and ALI BABA vanishes. CAPTAIN grunts and slowly goes out.)*

(ALI BABA looks in, watches CAPTAIN go, then he returns, laughing softly.)

ALI BABA. I can just see it now. After I capture the thieves I'll go to the Caliph and say, "Most noble Caliph, your worries are over! The thieves have been captured. By me! Oh, it was nothing really. I don't mind risking my life for such a noble Caliph. A reward? That much! May the seeds of good fortune bloom in your garden forever."

(Suddenly a young girl, MORGIANA, runs in behind ALI BABA and jumps on him, hanging on to his neck.)

MORGIANA *(trying to disguise her voice)*. Aha! A victim!
Your gold! Quickly or I'll slay you!

ALI BABA. I do believe there's a bug on my back.

MORGIANA. I'm a thief!!

ALI BABA *(moving away and letting her fall)*. You're a bug.
A bothersome little bug. And worse than that, you're a girl! Go away, Morgiana.

MORGIANA. I won't go away!

ALI BABA. Very well, if you won't, I will! *(He exits, whistling. She is still sitting.)*

MORGIANA *(getting up and calling)*. Ali Baba, you wait for me! You hear? Or I'll tell your mother! A bug, huh? I'll show him. *(An owl hoots three times, and she*

looks around, frightened.) What's that? *(Three more hoots.)* You can't scare me, Ali Baba, not by hooting. *(Three fast hoots, then a very low one.)* Maybe they're real. *(She starts out and sees something off.)* Maybe they're not! *(She retreats into the shadows and waits.)*

(The hooting continues. A call, an answer and then another. THREE THIEVES, who are also brothers, enter from different directions and finally meet together. They speak in stage whispers.)

BADOURA. Who's there?

BO-BADOURA. Who's there?

BO-BO-BADOURA. Who's there?

BADOURA. I asked first!

BO-BADOURA. It is I, brother, Bo-Badoura, your brother.

BO-BO-BADOURA. And I, Bo-Bo-Badoura, brother Badoura.

BADOURA. Give the secret word!

BO-BADOURA. But I'm your brother, Badoura, Bo-Badoura.

BO-BO-BADOURA. And I'm Bo-Bo-Badoura, brother of both Badoura and Bo-Badoura, believe me brothers!

BADOURA. Brothers or not! The secret word! You say it or I'll tell our leader.

BO AND BO-BO-BADOURA. Not that! Seseme!

BADOURA. That's better. Now listen, Bo-Badoura and Bo-Bo-Badoura, listen carefully.

BO AND BO-BO-BADOURA. We'll all ears, Badoura.

BADOURA. Tonight, just before dawn, we meet with the loot on the hillside, near the Singing Tree.

BO-BADOURA. Just before dawn...

BO-BO-BADOURA. With the loot...

BO-BADOURA. On the hillside...

BO-BO-BADOURA. Near the Singing Bush.

BADOURA. Tree, Bo-Bo-Badoura, tree!

BO-BO-BADOURA. Tree, Bo-Bo-Badoura, tree!

BADOURA. No, no.

BO-BO-BADOURA. Bush?

BADOURA. No, tree! But I'm not Bo-Bo-Badoura, I'm
Badoura. You're Bo-Bo-Badoura!

BO-BO-BADOURA. Tree!

BADOURA. Right! Exercise caution! Till dawn,
Bo-Badoura!

BO-BADOURA. Till dawn, Badoura!

BADOURA. Till dawn, Bo-Bo-Badoura!

BO-BO-BADOURA. Till dawn, Bo-Bo-Badoura!

BADOURA. No, no! *(Slaps his hand.)*

BO-BO-BADOURA. Sun-up?

BADOURA. Allah give me strength! Don't forget to exercise
caution.

BO-BO-BADOURA. I'll make him skip rope.

BADOURA. Who?

BO-BO-BADOURA. Caution. To exercise him. You said,
"Exercise caution."

BADOURA. Get him out of my sight, Bo-Badoura.

BO-BADOURA. Yes, Badoura! *(They execute a special
handshake and depart.)*

MORGIANA *(stepping forward)*. ...We meet with the loot on
the hillside near the Singing Tree! Wait'll I tell Ali Baba!
*(She exits very cautiously calling softly but with excite-
ment.)* Ali Baba! Ali Baba! Ali Baba!

(MOTHER enters from the other side, also calling softly.)

MOTHER. Ali Baba? Ali Baba? Ali Baba? *(During the following speech the scene is shifted to suggest two dwellings, indicated by draped doors perhaps, one rather drab, the other a little grander.)* Ali Baba? Oh, dear, I may wake up the neighbors. Well, I'll just sit here in front of our house and wait. And weep. Quietly, of course, lest I awaken dear Uncle Cassim next door. Oh, Ali Baba, your mommy's upset beyond belief. *(Weeps.)* See? *(More weeping, softer.)* Where can he possibly be? The moon has already passed the dome on the holy temple; the night is half gone! The poor boy is probably lying in agony in some deserted street, the victim of thieves and robbers! *(She wails a bit.)*

(CASSIM comes out of his house, fully dressed, carrying a large cloth bag.)

CASSIM *(seeing her)*. Uh oh.

MOTHER. Cassim! You've come to help me! May Allah bless you! *(CASSIM immediately tosses the bag back inside the house.)*

CASSIM. Help you? What's the matter?

MOTHER. How good of you to hear a mother's cries! May the joys of heaven be yours forever! That a man of great wealth should heed the likes of me!

CASSIM. What makes this mother cry at so late an hour?

MOTHER. Her son, that's what! Her son who has not been home all day and night!

CASSIM. Lazy Ali Baba, eh? Playing around again, no doubt.

MOTHER. You're his uncle, you must speak to him!

CASSIM. But first we've got to find him.

(ALI BABA runs in, stops and sees them and starts to sneak out slowly. CASSIM sees him.)

CASSIM. Well, that was easy. Ali Baba! Come here!

MOTHER. There you are! Where have you been? Have you lost all sense of time? The fingers of dawn are almost ready to poke the sky, and you're just getting home!

CASSIM. Your mother is upset, Ali Baba. And so am I.

ALI BABA. Yes, Uncle Cassim.

MOTHER. Well? Where have you been?

ALI BABA. Playing, sort of.

MOTHER. Playing!

CASSIM. I thought so.

ALI BABA. And learning how to capture thieves.

MOTHER. You see what I have to put up with?

CASSIM. You will go to bed, Ali Baba. Later on I shall have a long talk with you.

MOTHER. You listen to your uncle, Ali Baba. He's a man of great wealth, and a merchant respected throughout the city. Tell him now, Cassim; don't wait.

CASSIM *(looking around)*. No, it's too late. We should all be in bed.

MOTHER. Well, all right. In the house, naughty boy! And just remember, you'll hear from your uncle later. *(MOTHER and ALI BABA exit.)*

(CASSIM pretends to go, waits till they're off, takes the bag and starts to leave, but is stopped when he sees MORGIANA entering. He goes into his house. MORGIANA enters and listens. Offstage, MOTHER is heard.)

MOTHER *(off)*. What's to become of us if you go on like this? Playing half the night, sleeping half the day. You'd never get away with it if your father were alive.

(MORGIANA whistles softly and in a moment ALI BABA sneaks out. She whispers to him, as MOTHER continues to talk.)

MOTHER *(off)*. Not that I'm complaining. I don't object to working night and day, not at all; I expect that. But to find that my only son is growing up to be an irresponsible no-good who roams the streets at night is too much for me to bear. Are you listening to me, Ali Baba? *(Pause.)* Ali Baba? *(ALI BABA and MORGIANA rush out.)* Asleep already, eh? Well, that's what comes from staying up half the night. Amazing, I can barely hear him breathing. Still, it's a great comfort to know that you're there in the dark, safe in your own beddy-by in your own house. Sleep well, dear boy.

(CASSIM comes out of his house carrying that large bag, looks about very carefully.)

CASSIM. This way. Yes, this way. As usual...*(CASSIM exits.)*

(Mysterious music rises and the scene is shifted to the hillside with the cave, the tree and the hiding place. As this is going on, ALI BABA and MORGIANA enter on the other side from CASSIM's exit. A MAN at prayer raises his voice.)

MORGIANA. Listen. Someone's at prayer.