

# Alibaba

## and the Forty Thieves





# STARRING...

## Jason



# AS...

# Alibaba



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Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, lived an honest and hard-working woodcutter, Alibaba. A band of thieves had been robbing the good folk of the town recently. They had stolen Alibaba's precious family jewels too.





One day, while cutting wood in the forest, Alibaba heard a loud noise. Looking up, he saw some men on horses. Alibaba hid quickly before they could spot him. As the men rode past, Alibaba counted, 'One, two, three.....' There were forty men.





'What could these men be up to?' thought Alibaba. Their horses were loaded with heavy bags. They dismounted and stood before a huge rock.





One of the men was wearing an eye patch. He looked like their chief. In a loud voice, he commanded, 'Open Sesame.' Alibaba saw it all from his hideout.





The rock slid open like a door! The men entered the cave. Their backs were weighed down by the bags. The door closed behind them. Alibaba held his breath and watched from behind a tree. He could hardly believe what he had just seen!





A short while later the men re-emerged. They had left their bags in the cave. The chief waited for all his men to come out. Then he shouted, 'Close Sesame.' The rock slid back smoothly into place. The men galloped away.





Alibaba came out of his hiding place. He thought, 'Who could they be? They looked fierce and dangerous. I think it was a band of thieves. I will go in and have a look.'





Alibaba walked up to the rock and shouted out the magic words, 'Open Sesame.'



He had expected to see a dark and dirty cave but he was in for a surprise. As the door slid open, he gaped at the sight before him.





Alibaba entered the cave. He was dazzled by the sacks of gold coins, jewels and treasures piled high.





Alibaba also found his stolen family jewels. He had guessed right. Those men were the thieves terrorising the town. They had hidden all their loot in the cave!





Alibaba quickly filled his bags with gold coins.



He loaded the bags onto his horse. He had never seen so much treasure before.



He went back to the cave, and shouted 'Close Sesame'. The door closed behind him.





Excited about his discovery, Alibaba rode back to town.



After a long ride, he arrived back.





As he neared his house, he met his sister, Marzina and cousin, Kasim. Kasim was surprised to see the big, heavy bags that Alibaba was carrying. He persuaded Alibaba to tell him what had happened. Kasim was filled with jealousy and greed.





The next morning, even before the sun rose, Kasim headed towards the forest. Using the magic words, he entered the cave and filled up several sacks of gold.





Alas! When the time came for him to return home, he forgot the magic words. 'Open Wheat!' 'Open Rice!' 'Open Corn!' Again and again he tried, but the rock refused to budge. Kasim fell on his knees and wept.





Suddenly Kasim heard a commotion. It was the band of forty thieves returning to the cave. There was nothing he could do to escape. He would be caught red-handed.





The thieves were furious when they saw Kasim. Their secret had been discovered. The chief, named 'Zinkara', angrily asked Kasim, how he had entered the cave? Kasim shivered like a leaf in the wind. He was frightened. To save his own skin, he told them everything and promised to show Alibaba's house to them.



That very night, Zinkara sent one of his men to find out where Alibaba lived. All the houses in the neighbourhood looked similar. When Kasim showed the thief Alibaba's house, he marked it with an X, so that he would not forget which was the correct house. Unknown to him, Alibaba was watching all this secretly from the window.







What could be the meaning of this mark?' Alibaba thought. Sensing something amiss, Alibaba quickly marked all the houses nearby with the same X sign.



Throughout the night, he kept marking the houses with the X sign, till all the houses had the mark on their walls.

The next day, the thieves returned to the city. They wanted to find Alibaba and punish him. All around them were houses with the X sign on them. They were baffled. There was no way to find out which house belonged to Alibaba. Zinkara and his band of thieves had to return disappointed.





However Zinkara was not going to give up so easily. He thought of another cunning plan. This time, Zinkara disguised himself as an oil merchant. He took large pots of oil with him. Inside the pots there was no oil. Instead, a thief hid inside each pot! 'This time Alibaba will not get away,' he thought to himself.



Returning to the city, he asked a little boy the way to Alibaba's house. The sun was setting, by the time he reached there. 'I have brought oil to sell at the market tomorrow. If it is not too much trouble, can I spend the night at your house?' the chief requested Alibaba.





Alibaba was very kind. He welcomed the guest into his house and asked his sister to cook a delicious meal for them. Alibaba and Zinkara sat talking about the prices of oil and other goods in the market. His sister went into the kitchen to cook.



To her horror, she realized that there wasn't enough oil for cooking. It was quite late and the shops were closed. 'How will I cook without oil?' she sighed. Then she had an idea. The oil merchant had brought large pots of oil with him. She would borrow a little oil from one of the pots.





She tiptoed quietly into the courtyard, where the oil pots were kept. When she opened the lid, Marzina was in for a surprise. There in the pot, slept a man. He snored gently. She realized that something was wrong. She would have to get help!



She mounted her horse and galloped away towards the kings' palace, fast as lightning. She knew she had to act quickly to save Alibaba's life!





It was way past midnight, when she knocked at the palace door. The king was not pleased to be woken up from his sleep at such a late hour.



But when he heard their story, he realised that this was his chance to catch the notorious band of thieves, who had been looting the people in his kingdom. He immediately ordered his soldiers to go to Alibaba's house.



As the thieves slept, the king's soldiers arrived at Alibaba's house and arrested them all. Alibaba promised to show the soldiers, where the thieves had hidden their loot. Alibaba and Marzina watched as the chief was led away by the soldiers.

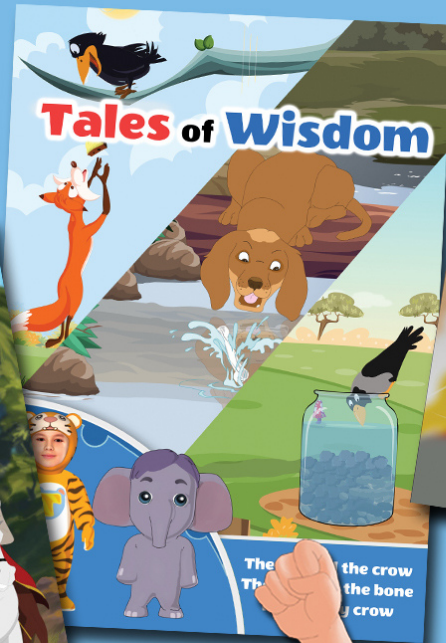
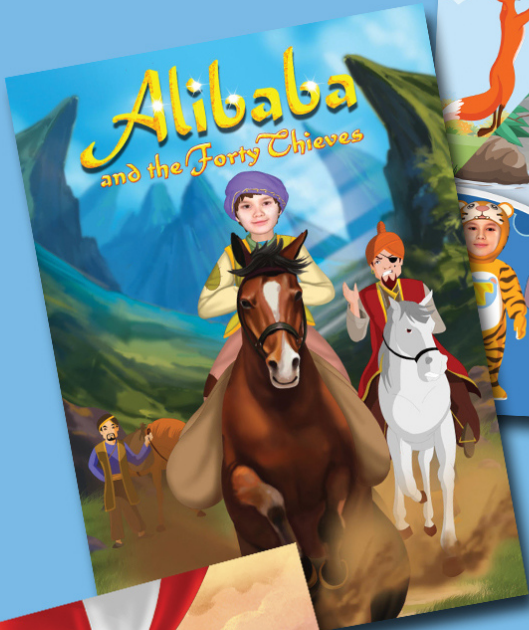




Alibaba thanked his sister. Her presence of mind and quick action had not only saved his life but helped to catch a band of thieves as well! Zinkara, the chief of the thieves was put behind bars. Filled with anger, he wanted revenge but it was time to pay for his crimes.



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