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Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

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In a city in Persia, very far from here, lived two brothers Kassim and Ali Baba. Kassim was rich, but Ali Baba had to work hard to provide for his wife and son. One day as he was cutting wood in the forest, he saw a group of horsemen in the distance. Quickly Ali Baba hid in the bushes. Soon he saw that they were with no less than forty men. The man with the finest clothing walked a little further into the bushes and called out loud and clear, "Open Sesame! A door in the rock wall opened and closed again once all the robbers were inside.



Ali Baba was amazed at what he had just seen. He remained in the bush until the robbers came out again. The robber chief said, "Close Sesame!" and then all forty of them rode away. Ali Baba could not resist taking a look at the robbers' hideout. He walked up to the rock wall and said, "Open Sesame!" and to his surprise the door opened. Inside he saw a room full of treasures.

Ali Baba took as much gold as his donkeys could lift. Satisfied, he went back home. He told the story to his wife and said, "This must remain a secret! But his wife was anxious to know how much gold they had and went to borrow a scale from Kassim's wife. Because Kassim's wife wanted to know what Ali Baba had to weigh, she put a little grease in the bowl of the scale. When Ali Baba's wife came back very happy to return the scale, there was still one gold piece stuck in it.



When Kassim heard this, he became very jealous. Angry, he went to Ali Baba: "Why are you pretending to be poor, while you are weighing gold pieces! Ali Baba decided to tell the truth and shared the location of the cave. 'We can share the treasure,' he said to his brother. But Kassim did not want to share anything and he secretly went to the cave by himself.

Without any problems Kassim entered the cave, but when he wanted to leave he couldn't remember the spell. He tried everything, but nothing worked. A little later the robbers arrived at the cave and they killed Kassim. As soon as Ali Baba heard that his brother had not come home that night, he went to look for him. At the cave, he found his brother's body. He took it back to the city.

Arriving at his brother's house, he said to the brave maid Morgiana, "No one must know how Kassim was killed. Devise a ruse so that everyone thinks he died in bed." And so Morgiana did. They buried Kassim and Ali Baba moved to his brother's house.

Meanwhile, the robbers were furious. Since Kassim's body had disappeared, they knew that someone else knew the location of their hideout. Therefore, the robber chief devised a ruse. He had his robbers crawl into sacks and smear them with oil. In one sack he actually put oil. All the sacks he loaded onto mules and so he walked to town. He found out at which house he had to be. There he stopped and asked for shelter for the night as an oil merchant. He planned to kill Ali Baba in his sleep.



Morgiana had to take good care of the guest, but the oil lamp had gone out and there was no more oil in the house. So she decided to get some oil from the merchant's pockets. She immediately discovered that there were men instead of oil in the bags and understood who the merchant was. Brave as she was, she immediately devised a plan to save Ali Baba. She killed all the robbers in the bags with hot oil. As soon as the robber chief discovered this he fled.

The robber chief wanted to take revenge on Ali Baba. He devised a plan and went back to the city. Here he became friends with Ali Baba's son. He was invited by Ali Baba to a meal. 'That's all right, but I won't eat salt,' he said. According to an old custom, if you want to be friends with someone, you have to eat salt. When Morgiana heard this strange request, she became suspicious. After one look at the guest, she knew what was going on. She immediately recognized him as the robber chieftain and devised a plan to kill him. Fortunately, this worked out and Ali Baba was saved.

Ali Baba was so grateful to Morgiana and allowed her to marry his son, something they all wanted. The secret of the cave was passed down from generation to generation and Ali Baba's family lived happily ever after.



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