



Aladdin and the Genie of the iPhone

Once upon a time there lived a poor tailor, whose son Aladdin was so lazy and troublesome, it broke his heart and he died.

(See? This is a PROPER fairytale, the way they used to be written, where the characters risked death or dismemberment on every page. You only got a happy ever after because there was precious little happy before).

Despite his mother's best efforts, Aladdin continued to wreak havoc in the neighbourhood and, by the time he turned 17, was the possessor of a formidable collection of ASBOs and no education to speak of.

One day, when Aladdin was on his way to his latest community service project (decorating the homes of the elderly, thus lending a whole new terror to old age), a well dressed stranger stopped him in the street.

"Are you Aladdin?" he asked, and taking the grunt as an affirmative, continued, "I am Mustapha Bahdi, your long-lost uncle, come to help you seek your fortune. I've just been to see your mother - it's appalling that you should live in such poverty. Come along with me and I shall explain everything."

As he pulled the unprotesting Aladdin away, behind them a little old lady banged desperately on the window of her home before buckling under the weight of peeling wallpaper.

Back at home, Aladdin's uncle invited himself to dinner and regaled them with fabulous tales of far off places and wealth beyond their wildest dreams. Hours later, when Aladdin was asleep, his uncle shook him awake.

"Get up, my boy. We're going to seek your fortune."

Aladdin reluctantly crawled out of bed and followed his uncle into town. They stopped outside an electronics warehouse where his uncle peered around furtively.

"Right, this is the place. Get us inside."

Still befuddled with sleep, but with the promise of incredible wealth leading him on, Aladdin picked the lock and the door swung open. They crept forward in the pitch dark until they heard the ring of metal underfoot. His uncle knelt and pulled up a trapdoor.

"OK, down you go. Now remember this! Touch nothing! Do you understand?! But somewhere in the room, you'll find a golden iPhone - bring it to me. Here," he said, pulling a lamp from under his cloak, "take this for light."

Aladdin wasn't very keen, but he allowed himself to be lowered into the inky darkness. Once he hit the floor, he lit the lamp and oh! what treasures! Laptops! Monitors! Mobile phones! He stretched a hand towards an iPad but his uncle snapped at him.

"Touch nothing I said! Are you deaf, boy?"

Hmmm, thought Aladdin. So much for the

benevolent uncle.

The lamp didn't provide much in the way of illumination, but it was enough to glint off a golden surface towards the back of the cellar. Aladdin picked his way towards it and found the golden iPhone. He put it in his pocket, then carefully inched his way back to the trapdoor.

"Well?" rasped his uncle. "Do you have it? Do you have the golden iPhone?"

"Yes, I've got it."

"Well pass it up to me and I'll pull you up."

Now Aladdin may not have had a GCSE to his name, but he was far from stupid and his uncle sounded a shade too desperate to have this iPhone.

"No," said Aladdin. "You pull me up and then I'll give you the phone."

"Wretch!!" he shrieked, stretching his arm towards Aladdin. "Give it to me now!"

"Pull me up first," repeated Aladdin doggedly.

"Stay there then!!" spat his uncle, who was really an evil magician (*don't you just hate when that happens?*), and he slammed the trapdoor shut.

Alone in the dim cellar, Aladdin was furious and began to have serious doubts about this man being his uncle at all. He tried shouting, but he knew it was useless. Worn out and hoarse, he fell to the floor, resigned to being arrested when the owners found him. Finally, exhausted, he fell asleep.

When he awoke some hours later, he was freezing. The lamp was still faintly burning, and Aladdin wrapped his hands round it, rubbing them back and forth for warmth. Suddenly *poof!* A genie appeared.

"**I am the genie of the lamp, your wish is...** just a minute, have to take this." The genie pushed a button near his ear. "Hello?"

Hello?.....Oh mother, not now..... I've been summoned..... SUMM-ONED. ...I'll sort it later, OK? Got to dash, mwaah, mwaah." He blew kisses into the air and turned back to Aladdin.

"**As I was saying, master, your wish....**" His phone beeped again. "Hello?No, they've gone... **Yourwishismycommand,**" he rattled out, just beating his phone to the punch. He sighed and clicked the button again.

"What? Who?.... Well that's just great, isn't it? I have been *summoned*, you know..... Just now..... I don't know who by." He looked Aladdin up and down. "Some kid..... Well how should I know how long I'll be? Depends what he wishes for. Look, I've got to go.... yes, bye... bye.... bye...."

He turned back to Aladdin and held his hands up.

"I know, I know. Look, I'm switching to silent, OK? So, your wish is my command and all that." The genie peered around the cellar. "What're you doing down here anyway?"

"My uncle left me down here, only I don't think he's really my uncle at all."

"Well, I don't know kid. Uncles can be

funny. My Uncle Yangtze, he liked painting cows." He sighed. "It was a bugger to wash the paint off them again, I can tell you. So, any immediate wishes springing to mind here?"

"Yes! Get me out of here!"

Poof! Aladdin found himself back outside the warehouse. There was no sign of his uncle, which he was half relieved and half annoyed about, but nor was there any sign of the genie. He rubbed the lamp again and the genie popped up, pacing the air.

"No of course I'm not done! How could I be done already?..... Well, send Ghangli.... Oooooooh, nasty.....An acid bath? Just 'cause his lamp was a bit grubby? Ouch.....

OK, OK, I'll see what I can do.... I will.... Yeah..... Yeah.... Bye." He sighed at Aladdin.

"What now kid? We're a bit stretched in the genie department, ya know?"

"My uncle promised me money and jewels, and travel, and endless women...."

"Whoa there kid! How was he going to come up with all those?"

"I just had to get him this," said Aladdin, pulling the golden iPhone out of his pocket. The genie was astounded.

"That's the Golden iPhone!! Don't you know what that is? It's only the most powerful object there is, that's all. It's got its own djinn."

"I prefer Bacardi."

"No, a djinn... a genie, like me, but *waaaay* more powerful."

Aladdin rubbed the iPhone dubiously. "No, no, no," scolded the genie. "You don't rub it. It's an iPhone!"

"I don't understand."

"Well there's an app for it, isn't there? Look, there it is." The genie leaned across and pointed at the relevant app. "Go on - I'm all excited... look, I'm even turning my phone off, see?"

Aladdin selected the app. Suddenly there was a cloud of purple smoke and a huge genie with a green turban appeared.

"**I am the djinn of the Golden iPhone,**" he intoned, "**and I grant you three wishes.**"

Aladdin looked petulant. "How come," he asked the lamp genie, "you grant all my wishes and he only does three?"

"Well, he does a better class of wish. If you want money and jewels and travel and women and stuff, he's your djinn. But be careful what you wish for 'cause I can't undo anything he does."

Aladdin stood, deep in thought. "OK, wish number one. I want to be fabulously wealthy."

The earth shifted and Aladdin was sucked up into the purple cloud. When he came down and the cloud cleared, he was in a palace, dressed in clothes woven with gold and bedecked with jewels. The lamp and the Golden iPhone were beside him.

He looked around, nodding.

"Awesome!"

He picked up the iPhone and chose the app again. The purple djinn appeared.

"**I am the djinn of the Golden iPhone,**"

he rumbled, "**and you have two more wishes.**"

Aladdin shuffled his feet.

"Well.... the thing is... there's this girl...." His scuffling foot scraped against the lamp and the genie popped up, in mid-conversation as usual.

"...so what's this charge?... *Roaming* fees? Every time I leave the lamp?!..." Suddenly he noticed where he was. "I'll ring you back!" He looked around and whistled silently.

"Way to go, kid! What's next?"

"There's a girl....," began Aladdin, blushing furiously.

"And?"

"But she's really rich and she never looks at me."

"Well but you're really rich now too. What's her name?"

"Princess Aurora (*what?! It's a perfectly good name! Disney don't have all the rights to it... er, do they?*) She lives in the Diamond Palace on the hill."

Across town, in the Diamond Palace, Princess Aurora was just preparing for bed, when out of a sudden purple cloud, the djinn appeared.

"What on earth are you?" she cried.

"**I am a large djinn.**"

"Hmmm. Well it's been a long day and I could certainly do with one."

"**Ah. A pun. Yes. I believe the proper response is ...LOL? I am here to take you to your new husband. You are his second wish.**"

"Indeed?" she retorted, "and what was his first?"

"**To be rich enough to be worthy of you.**"

"Good answer."

Now when the evil magician heard about Aladdin's sudden wealth, he knew exactly where it had come from and he was furious. He was determined to reclaim the Golden iPhone.

Disguising himself as a humble merchant, he wandered in the direction of Aladdin's palace, shouting "New phones for old!" As he had hoped, some of the maids from the palace came down with their old phones, and he dutifully swapped them for newer models.

"Any others?" he wheedled, but they shook their heads.

The next day, he was back again. "New phones for old!"

The maids were incredulous. "But you were here only yesterday!"

"Ah yes," he said craftily, "but fashions change so quickly. Yesterday's must-have is today's junk. Did you want to trade up again? Or perhaps your mistress has an old phone to exchange? Something garish maybe? Bling is so last year."

"She has just such a phone," confirmed one of the maids. "A flashy thing, but hopelessly out of date. It will be a nice

surprise for her to have something newer."

Oh, it'll be a surprise all right, thought the evil magician, and urged the maid to fetch it. He gleefully handed her a smartphone with flowers on the case - "so pretty, like your mistress" - and tucked the Golden iPhone into his pocket before scurrying away.

When Aladdin discovered the loss of the Golden iPhone, he was panic-stricken. Intensive questioning of the hapless maid gave Aladdin a pretty good idea of who had it now, and he feared the retribution would be swift.

He'd scarcely formulated the thought when the purple cloud descended. Thinking quickly, he grabbed the lamp. When the cloud cleared, he was on an extremely small desert island, dressed in rags.

Aladdin rubbed the lamp. As usual, the genie was in mid-conversation as it popped into existence.

"... Hello? Hello? ... You still there?" He stared at his phone and muttered "seem to have lost the signal..." Then he took stock of his latest surroundings and sighed. His gaze moved from Aladdin to the very tiny patch of island they were standing on, and out onto the endless expanse of sea. He shook his head slowly.

"Us lamp genies, we were running a book on what you'd go for on the final wish. I bet eternal youth. Jighli, he bet you'd go for a cloak of invisibility. Ghangli, well Ghangli did witter on about lots of icy cool water, but we put that down to the after-effects of his acid bath. Jammy sod will still probably claim he won."

"What? No!" snapped Aladdin. "I didn't wish to be here! My uncle or whoever he is stole the iPhone and the djinn dropped me here on his command. Get me back to my palace and my wife!"

The genie shook his head. "Didn't I tell you? I can't undo anything the djinn does. Too powerful."

Aladdin slumped in the sand. "Then I am doomed."

"Cheer up," chirped the genie. "I may not be able to take you back, but I can help you to get yourself back." He clicked his fingers and a carpet appeared, hovering six inches above the sand.

Aladdin sprang up in delight. "A magic carpet! I always wanted one of these!" He jumped on and sat cross-legged, because that's the way you're supposed to sit on magic carpets. "How do I make it go?"

"Just use the auto-pilot," explained the genie. "All the new carpets have it. It's woven into the pile. Here....," he pushed at a circle of black threads and a section of the carpet slid back.. A mist rose from the hole, coalescing into a semi-transparent pilot, who turned and beamed at Aladdin.

"*Welcome aboard Magic Carpet Airways, your first choice for deep-pile aviation. Your destination today is...STATE DESTINATION....*"

"My palace," yelled Aladdin.

"*Your destination today is YOUR PALACE. Please sit back and enjoy your journey. First,*

we must ask you to listen to a brief safety announcement....."

A second spiral of mist took on a vague female outline. The auto-pilot piped up again.

"*Your emergency exits are being pointed out to you now.*"

The female wraith stood with her arm pointing straight out, spun 360 degrees and fell over, giggling. Aladdin glanced towards the genie, who mimed a drinking gesture and mouthed, "duty-free."

The auto-pilot continued with his recitation.

"*In the event of an emergency, the procedure for evacuation will be demonstrated to you now.*"

The wraith was still flat out. She held up one finger to command their attention, hiccupped, rolled off the side of the carpet and disappeared.

"*Please remember to throw any less able passengers off first before attempting to leave yourself. They will make your landing softer....*"

They raced along at a terrific speed and it was no time at all before Aladdin caught sight of his palace below. Wary of his welcome, he had the auto-pilot land in the gardens.

"*We hope you have enjoyed this flight with Magic Carpet Airways and we look forward to travelling with you again. In the interests of safety, please do not smoke until you are well away from the carpet. It hasn't been Scotch-Guarded.*"

Aladdin crept up to the palace doors. They were locked, but he hadn't forgotten how to pick a lock. He hastened to his rooms and found the evil magician asleep in his bed, with poor Aurora curled up on the rug beside it. He woke her, hushing her quickly, and drew her out into the corridor.

"*We'll gloss over the tender reunion. It's not that kind of story.*"

Aladdin rubbed the lamp and for once, the genie appeared with his entire attention focussed on Aladdin.

"I've held my calls," he shrugged. "This is exciting."

"Bring me the Golden iPhone," Aladdin instructed the genie. "I still have one wish left..."

The genie dematerialised for a moment, then reappeared carrying the iPhone. Aladdin took it from him and a moment later, the djinn swam into being out of the smoke.

"**Oh. It's you again. You have one wish remaining.**"

"I wish for the magician to be transported to the desert island where he put me, and to remain there for the rest of his days with no reprieve, magical or otherwise."

And so it was done, and Aladdin and Aurora lived happily ever after with the genie of the lamp pandering to their every whim.

(It would be nice to think that Aladdin remembered his poor old mother and made her declining years easier, but in fact he remained a selfish little sod and did nothing of the sort).

The End

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