

# Ali Baba

A Pantomime in 1 Act

By David Barrett

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## Ali Baba Cast List

Cow

4 Servants

Dame Ayeesha

Ali's mother

Ali Baba

Karim

Ali's Friend

Captain of the Guard

4 Guards

Thieves:

Fizo

Peszsky

Juan

Jock

Pedro

Horst

Sven

Market Traders:

Ernie

Abdullah

Hashim

Abu Dabi

Rashi

5 Stallholders

Princess Scheherazade

## Production Notes

### Suggested Songs:

SONG 1 **Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah**

SONG 2 **The Best of Friends**

SONG 3 **Yo ho ho, it's a Pirate's Life For Me** (Change the word pirate's to 'robber's' throughout)

SONG 4 Higitus Figitus (**or Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo**)

SONG 5 **Bella Notte**

SONG 6 You Gotta Rob a Sultan or Two (Use the song Pick a Pocket Or Two from Oliver)

SONG 7 **Hi-diddle-dee-dee (An Actor's Life For Me)**

SONG 8 **When You Wish Upon a Star**

'You Gotta Pick a Pocket Or Two' is by Lionel Bart, from Oliver. The songs highlighted above may be found in the book Disney, The Illustrated Treasury of Songs, published by the Hal Leonard Corporation, which can be purchased from any good music shop.

Higitus Figitus: suggested lyrics for the magic song.

Higitus figitus zum-ba-ba-zing, I want your attention ev'rything!  
Forty robbers with hearts so brave would like to get inside the cave.  
Hockety pockety wockety wack, abra-cabra-dabranack,  
Hurry up o' mighty stone, It's time we should be getting home.

### Synopsis of Scenes:

Scene 1: The Courtyard of Dame Ayesha's House

Scene 2: At the Edge of the Forest

Scene 3: The Cave

Scene 4: The Next Day, At the Cave

Scene 5: Dame Ayesha's House

Scene 6: At the Bazaar

Scene 7: At Night, The Courtyard of Ayesha's House

## Scene 1: The courtyard of Ayeesha Baba's house

### SONG 1 Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah

COW *(Servants exit leaving empty stage. Enter COW, humming a tune)*  
*(Does a short synchronised Arabian dance)* Oh what a beautiful morning, oh, what a beau ..... *(stares at audience. Goes closer and peers out)*  
My oh my, what have we here. Looks like children. Can't be though, not in this neighbourhood. You don't get many children in this far corner of Arabia. I say, you wouldn't have any grass, would you? Eh, any grass ..?  
GRASS! Oh, never mind. I bet you can't answer this: if a cow is tied to a 10m length of rope, how far can it wander .... eh, eh? As far as it likes, the other end is not tied. *(COW laughs very loudly)* Hey, you'd better not stay too long. Dame Ayeesha will be here in a minute, she does not like uninvited guests and she's got one hell of a temper. You'd better be really quiet when she arrives ..... hold on ..... I can hear someone coming now. Shhhh ..... shhhh ..... *(wanders off stage) (Enter servants)*

### DANCE 1 Servants

SER 3 *(Preparing feast and looking around nervously)* We'd better hurry up, she'll be here soon.  
SER 2 Who'll be here?  
SER 1 Ayeesha.  
OTHERS Bless you!  
SER 3 You know what happened last week when we were late with lunch.  
SER 1 Ooh, don't remind me. *(rubs bottom)* I couldn't sit down for days.  
SER 2 Should be a law against all this flogging.  
SER 4 *(Enters)* May Allah help us, I forgot the washing. *(starts to hang very large bloomers)* It's Wednesday today, the day for washing Dame Ayeesha's smalls. *(pause while others stare at the bloomers)*  
SER 1 My oh my, you certainly are getting short-sighted, my friend.  
SER 4 Ayeesha has not been in good spirits lately.  
SER 3 She thinks Ali is of an age when he should be looking for a bride.  
SER 2 One with a handsome dowry.  
SER 3 But he is too lazy to spend time looking for a girlfriend.  
SER 4 And the inheritance left to her by her poor dead husband .....

OTHERS *(hats off and sung)* May Allah rest his soul .....

SER 4 Is nearly gone.  
SER 1 Quiet, I can hear her coming. *(most servants exit quickly)*  
DAME OOOh, my feel are killing me, I must stop wearing these high heels. *(pulls out a dead fish)* No wonder, I need a new sole. *(throws shoes across the stage in temper)* What a day! I spent all morning queuing at

the bazaar and all afternoon queuing for a taxi. *(aside)* The producer told me it wouldn't matter if I missed some of the cues. Never mind ..... my nephew Ali will be home soon. He lives with me you know ..... he never knew his mother. *(aside)* Just as well if you ask me, the trollop. Ali's friend Karim lives with us too. Karim is so very clever, he was always top of the class at school *(crossly)* and Ali was always bottom.

KARIM *(Off stage)* Knock, knock.

DAME Ooh, I do like a good joke don't you?

KARIM *(Louder)* KNOCK KNOCK!

DAME *(Looking at the audience)* Who's there?

KARIM Bella.

DAME Bella who? *(KARIM enters)* Bella not working so Ia knocks. *(raucous guffaws of laughter from DAME)*

DAME Ooh you are a one Karim. *(slaps him on back and he staggers)* But where's Ali?

KARIM Oh, he went to hire a magic carpet. They've got a good offer on today - only 10 pieces of silver for one hour's hire.

ALI *(Flying in from the wings)* Aaaah! Hello Auntie.

DAME Hello my little Alikins ..... *(mothers him)*

KARIM *(Looking at magic carpet. Aside)* Wow, this must be the TURBAN-charged model.

ALI You must have had an awful day, you look pretty dirty.

DAME I know, and I look even prettier when I'm clean. It's getting crowded in here. You know, two's company and three's a crowd.

A & K Yes.

DAME Then what's four and five. *(they shrug)*

A & K Nine! *(groans)*

DAME Tell me, where have you been all day?

KARIM Oh, nowhere in particular, Auntie, just here and there.

DAME What do you mean "just here and there"?

ALI Well, I went to the doctor and said: 'Doctor I feel like a bird'. He said "Stay there and I'll tweet you in a minute."

KARIM And I said: Doctor, everyone keeps being rude to me and he said "Get out of here you silly idiot"!

DAME I just don't know which one of you is daftest, you're both as bad as one another!

ALI That's right Auntie, like two peas in a pod that's why we're such good friends.

## SONG 2      **The Best of Friends**

*(Bell rings off and servants enter. ALI and KARIM hide)*

DAME Ah, time to break the fast. I'm so hungry I could eat an ox. *(She sits on the rug and tucks in)*

ALI *(Coming out of hiding)* And I could eat a flaming camel.

KAR Ali, you should not swear like that.

ALI Why not, Shakespeare did.  
 KARIM Then you should stop hanging around with him.  
 ALI You are supposed to be the intelligent one and you don't even know who Shakespeare is. What else don't you know? What was the tallest mountain in the world before Everest was discovered? *(steps towards KARIM who backs off)*

KARIM Why, Everest of course.  
 DAME Alright, but I bet you don't know what a fjord is!  
 KARIM I do, it's a Scandinavian motor car.  
 ALI *(Thinks)* Er ..... name me seven animals that come from India.  
 KARIM Six elephants and a tiger.  
 DAME Enough! That's enough of this madness. Ali Baba .... it's about time you did something with your life, you lazy good-for-nothing. All you seem to do is hang around in the bazaar drinking sherbet. Tomorrow you will go and find a job ..... at last you can start to earn.

ALI What's an Arabian earn Auntie?  
 DAME Stupid boy! It's what we store our wine in.  
*(Bell rings off, boys hide, servants enter to serve wine)*

SER 4 What is it with you two? Every time the bell rings you jump. *(they serve drinks and clear plates)*

ALI We heard that all young men between the ages of sixteen and twenty four are being called up for service in the Sultan's army.  
 KARIM And we refuse to join; it's not our style.  
 SER 1 But serving in the Sultan's army is a great honour. The army is proud of its great feats.  
 SER 2 Is that why they have such big shoes ..... because of their great feats .....?  
 SER 1 Foolish boy, do you not know that a great treaty with the King of Persia has just been signed.  
 SER 2 Oh really, where was it signed.  
 SER 4 At the bottom of course.  
 SER 2 Did you hear about the karate expert who joined the army. The first time he saluted he nearly killed himself.  
 SER 3 I hope you do not mind my mentioning this, honourable Dame, but ..... on the subject of wages .....

DAME How dare you, you snivelling little wretch. *(servants begin to exit, backwards)* You dare to mention money while we are sat at table. Have you no shame?  
 SER 3 A thousand pardons my lady. We simply .....

DAME Enough. Leave my presence, at once, all of you.  
 SER 4 *(Aside)* There you are ..... I told you she had a temper.  
*(AYEESHA throws a shoe at the servants. ALI and KARIM stand and make as if to exit, backwards)*

DAME And where do you think you two are going? Clear this table and get on with the washing up. Life will be different from now on. We will have to manage without servants ..... and you can do the work. *(they stand open-mouthed. She shuts each of their mouths in turn)*

DAME Well get on with it then. *(exit Dame) (momentary silence)*

KARIM Well now this is another fine mess you've got me into!

ALI I'm sorry Karim; I suppose I'll just have to go out and get a job tomorrow. I know; I can always go and collect firewood - it fetches a good price in the market.  
*(Noises off: "left-right, left-right", etc.)*

KARIM Uh oh, sounds like trouble; we must be off. *(exits)*  
*(ALI lags behind and KARIM returns to grab him. Exit.)*  
*(Enter Imperial Guard. Lots of booing.)*

GUARD 1 This must be the place, boss. It looks the sort of dump where a creep like Ali Baba would live.

CAPTAIN Yea, what a stinking rat hole. Suits him, I say.

GUARD 3 He needs a spell in the army; that'll cure his laziness once and for all.

GUARD 4 So nice of him to volunteer. *(Hoots of laughter)*

GUARD 2 Place looks deserted to me; no sign of the boy or that smart Alec friend of his.

CAPTAIN Hang on a minute ..... look out there. Those children are spying on us.  
*(Point front of house)*

GUARD1 Oi you! How dare you spy on the Imperial Guard.

GUARD 2 Do you know what the punishment is?  
*(All guards mime throat-cutting. DAME AYEESHA enters discretely)*

GUARD 3 Don't worry, it's not at all painful.

GUARD 4 Bit like having a sore throat.

GUARD 1 Doesn't last long though.

CAPTAIN Hey what about that old bat, Dame ..... what's 'er name?

GUARD 3 Ayeesha!

OTHERS Bless you!

CAPTAIN That old boot must know where Ali Baba is hanging out.  
*(AYEESHA is visibly fuming)*

GUARD 2 Yea, we could torture her. She'd soon tell us.

CAPTAIN Steady lad, this is not the Gestapo.

DAME *(Revealing herself)* So ..... I'm an old bat am I? *(soldiers shrink in horror)* and an old boot? Well take that ..... *(strikes out with her handbag)* And that ..... and this ..... *(they are chased off)*

CAPTAIN Now, now Blusher, no need to get emotionally involved in this. We are simply carrying out the Sultan's orders that all able young men join the Imperial Guard.

DAME Well then young man ..... it's about time you learnt to ..... just a moment; would Ali be paid for this job?

CAPTAIN Why, of course, ..... the pay is very reasonable.

DAME Then why didn't you say so before? Say, are you free tonight? *(She gets closer and strokes his shoulder)* We could discuss this over a few drinks and maybe come to some arrangement.

CAPTAIN Yes, we certainly could. *(winks at the audience as they exit)*

## Curtain

## Scene 2: At the edge of the forest

- DANCE** Reprise of cow dance.
- COW** Well this is a right turn up! Ali Baba has never done a day's work in his life and here he is collecting wood to sell in the market. He would do anything to avoid joining the army. Who knows, he might even find himself a girl! What am I doing here, I hear you ask? Why being a horse of course, don't you know the story? Ali Baba carries the firewood on a horse, only the budget for this pantomime won't stretch to a horse and me. One of us had to go and the horse had no lines, so here I am. Hang on a minute, here comes Ali. Look boys and girls; Ali is feeling very miserable at the moment, you wouldn't help to cheer him up would you? All you have to do is shout out "Hello Ali" when he enters. Will you do that for me? *(enter ALI)*
- ALI** Oh, hello boys and girls. I wondered who it was I heard talking just now. I thought there was just me and Buttercup here and cows can't talk, can they?
- AUDIENCE** Oh yes they can.
- ALI** Oh no they can't. Etc .....
- Look, I'll prove it to you. Buttercup, you can't talk can you? *(BUTTERCUP shakes her head. ALI turns to audience)* There you are you see. *(BUTTERCUP nods behind his back)* Cows are not intelligent enough to talk *(ALI is bending towards the audience. BUTTERCUP gives him a swift kick and he falls over. Gets up and dusts himself off)* Here, what did you do that for? I'm your friend, remember. Quick, someone's coming. Let's hide here. *(Voices off, robbers enter, ALI hides and tries to hide BUTTERCUP behind a bush)*
- SONG 3 A Robber's Life For Me (Robbers)**
- FIZO** Well come on men. What're you waiting for? Another good night's looting and pillaging provides a tidy nest-egg to stow away for a rainy day. *(Takes a sack, notices BUTTERCUP'S bottom sticking out from behind a bush)* Pestering palm trees, what have we here? *(pulls her out by the tail)* As fine a specimen of cattle I've ever seen.
- PESK** Yea, boss, we sure going to eat well tonight. *(Pats her behind)*
- ALI** AAAAArgh. You villains, you'll have to take me on first. *(draws his knife. Laughter from ROBBERS as they push him around)*
- PED** You and whose army little man? *(ALI squares up to him)*
- ALI** Don't talk about the army, I HATE the army.
- JUAN** Sounds like he's our sort ..... eh lads?
- ALL** Yea .....

FIZO But we're forgetting our manners boys; we haven't even introduced ourselves.

JOCK Allow me, big brother. We are the bravest, dirtiest, meanest band of despicable cut-throats that ever came out of the desert.

JUAN Also the richest.

ALL Shhhhhhhhh (*JOCK puts a knife to JUAN'S throat and he backs off*)

FIZO We are all brothers, or at least half brothers for we own to descend from the one mother.

ALI Wow ..... (*starts to count them*)

HORS But each one of us has a different father. And each father was of a different nationality.

ALI Your mother must have travelled a lot.

SVEN She was an airline hostess with El Camel Airways.

FIZO Take Pezsky here, for example. (*they push him forward*) His father was a Pole.

ALI Really. Can you tell me, I've often wondered what poles do for a living?

PESK Why, they hold up the telephone wires, of course. (*groans*) And this is our brother Pedro, he's from Chile.

ALI Really, and have you seen the Andes?

PED You're kidding, they've been up my sleeves all along. Our little brother, Juan, is from Brazil.

ALI Really?

HORS Don't worry about him, he is a bit of a nutcase.

JOCK I'm from the north of beautiful bonnie Scotland.

SVEN Can't you tell? He has a padlock on his wallet.

JOCK Don't mind Sven he's very suspicious, always thinks everything's fishy.

ALI Don't tell me, he must be a Finn.

FIZO In one, my friend, you're learning fast.

HORS What about me? You haven't introduced me yet.

JUAN Horst comes from Hamburg.

ALI Then he must be .....

ALL A HAMBURGER!

FIZO And now my friends, we must make haste before the sun takes her leave and the celestial bodies begin their nightly journey from horizon to horizon.  
(*sweeping gesture*)

SVEN (*To ALI*) He means it's getting dark.

PED As for you my friend ..... you already know too much.

HORS We should either feed you to the camels or p.....luck out your tongue.

FIZO Tell me boy, have you ever looked death in the eye?

ALI No, but I was struck in the Urals by a barbarian's spear.  
(*All wince and groan. A knife is held to his throat*)

FIZO No, wait! I have grown to like this boy. I think we should give him a chance. What do you think boys and girls - should we give Ali a chance to live?

ALL Yes.

ROBBERS Oh no we shouldn't.  
 ALL Oh yes you should.  
 FIZO As I am so generous ..... I have decided to leave your fate in the hands of Allah. Tie him up, brothers. *(they tie him)* Release the snakes. *(they do so)* If you survive the night with these poisonous snakes, then fate shall have decreed that you live. Farewell my friend. *(evil laughter. They exit)*  
*(ALI struggles against the ropes but is trapped)*  
 ALI Well of all the meanest tricks ..... it's curtains for you now Ali Baba. I've got out of a few scrapes in my time but this looks like the end of the road.  
 COW I won't let you down, master. Let me see if I can free you.  
 ALI Festering fig trees, a talking cow. What sort of witchcraft is this?  
 COW I tried to tell you master but you wouldn't listen.  
 ALI Yes, well never mind that now, just untie me. *(The COW struggles with the knots)* Ouch, mind where you stick your horns, will you!  
 COW Sorry ..... there ..... done.  
 ALI Oh, thank you Buttercup, where would I be without you? *(gives her a big hug)* But look, those robbers, they've stopped by that rock. What are they doing? You stay here Buttercup while I go for a closer look.

**SONG 4 Magic Spell Song (offstage)**

FIZO Open sesame .....  
 ALI Wow, would you believe it ..... a secret cave, and they are hiding their treasure in it. Buttercup ..... we're rich. Look it's getting dark. We'll wait here until midnight and then sneak down and take some treasure from the cave. I'll never need to work again. Well, actually I've only ever worked for half a day anyway. Come on, we might as well get some sleep while we're waiting. *(they settle down to go to sleep)* What a beautiful night, I'd swear I can count every star in the heavens.

**SONG 5 Bella Notte**

*Curtain*

### Scene 3: The Cave

*(BUTTERCUP is snoring loudly. ALI tiptoes off into the dark leaving her asleep.)*

ALI This must be the place. I remember that overhanging rock ..... I think the entrance is around here somewhere *(feels the rock)*. Now what was that secret word? Open peanut ..... no, that's obviously not right. Open mustard seed ..... no. I know, it was open chicory ..... well, perhaps not. Can you help me boys and girls? What was that open SESAME. Are you really sure? Nothing's happened yet. Let's all try shouting it really loudly, after three, ready ..... one, two, three ..... OPEN SESAME. No, still no good. Wait a minute! I believe those robbers SANG the magic word. Can you help me ..... singing's not my strong point.

**SONG 4** Reprise *(The cave opens)*

ALI Wow, that's fantastic, beyond my wildest dreams. All that treasure; it must have taken years for those robbers to collect all this lot. Just think, my family and I will never want for anything ever again and there is plenty. *(whistles)* Come on Buttercup, come and help me will you. I can't carry this lot on my own.

*(He loads up the cow. They exit to music)*

*Curtain*

### Scene 4: Next day, at the Cave

**SONG 3** Reprise (Robbers)

FIZO Another good day's work me merry band of dastardly law-breakers.  
JUAN I'd like to see the Sultan's face when he realises he has been relieved of some of his best gold and silver.  
HORS I'd like to be fly on the palace wall.  
PED If you were a fly on the palace well, I would swat you. *(mimes swatting)*  
HORS Not before I had the chance to bite you and give you malaria.  
PED Why you good-for-nothing ..... *(a fight starts)*  
FIZO Stop this men ..... it's been a long day. Let's get this treasure unloaded and we can go for some refreshment.



## Scene 5: Ali's house

### SONG 2 Reprise (Karim)

*(KARIM sits alone in the parlour, reading a scroll of accounts. Enter ALI)*  
ALI Good day to you Karim.  
KARIM *(Jumping up)* Ali, where in Allah's name have been all night? You haven't ..... found a girl, have you?  
ALI *(Looking around)* Where's that silly cow?  
KARIM She just popped out to the bazaar to buy a new handbag.  
ALI I mean Buttercup, you fool, not Auntie Ayeesha. *(BUTTERCUP wanders in, loaded with treasure)*  
KARIM What the ..... Ali, we're not that hard up yet. You did not have to turn to crime.  
ALI No, let me explain Karim, I did not steal those jewels; I met a dastardly band of cut-throats. Forty of them, all brothers with the same mother.  
KARIM Sure you did Ali, and I'm the Shah of Persia.  
ALI Alright, if you don't believe me, ask Buttercup. She's an honest cow. *(KARIM stares in disbelief)*  
KARIM Ali, I think you should go and lie down; I'll call the doctor.  
ALI *(Gets on his knees)* Please, Buttercup, please tell him. *(BUTTERCUP shakes her head. KARIM leads ALI off. Exit COW)*  
KARIM Come on, Ali. A nice quiet lie-down. *(Enter DAME from other side)*  
DAME Ooh hello boys and girls, are you still here? I said hello boys and girls. That's more like it. Now let me see, where was I? I'm so thirsty I could do with a drink. *(she mixes an enormous drink with all sorts of ingredients)* Now all it needs is a good sheikh. *(enter KARIM)*  
Well, you're not a sheikh but you'll do.  
KARIM Auntie, I think we have a serious problem.  
DAME Tell Auntie about it, little sweetie-pie. *(she takes a long drink)*  
KARIM Well, you see it's Ali; he's turned to crime and he's started talking to animals. *(she chokes)*  
DAME Oh no, my poor little Ali-wali. Talking to animals! Turned to *(she spots the gold)* CRIME! Oh do look Karim. The answer to our prayers. *(claps and servants enter)*  
KARIM But we CAN'T keep it Auntie, it would be unlawful.  
DAME *(Cross)* Unlawful, my breeches. There never was any harm in re-distribution of wealth. We can share this with all the neighbours.  
KARIM But what about the forty thieves? They won't let Ali get away with this. *(enter ALI)*  
ALI Oh there you are Auntie. I was about to tell Karim about this magic cave filled with priceless gems .....  
DAME There, there my little one, don't upset yourself. *(he takes a long drink from AYEESHA'S cup and chokes)* I'm sure we can come to some

arrangement about the money. (*sound of bell off. ALI and KARIM hide in opposite wings*) (*AYEESHA quickly stuffs coins down her chest*)

FIZO Quickly old woman, we have urgent business. (*off stage*)  
DAME Old woman? ..... old ... did you hear that boys and girls? (*really crossly, teeth grating*) I'll teach him to call me old woman. (*putting on good manners*) Do come in your honour, travellers are always welcome in my house. (*aside*) Not vermin like you though. (*enter FIZO and ten ROBBERS*)

HORS We are not travellers, you dim woman. We see retribution.  
DAME Well you've come to the wrong house. There's no-one of that name here.  
JUAN We seek a young man by the name of Ali Baba who has ..... acquired some property of ours.

DAME AAArgh. (*aside*) These must be the bloodthirsty criminals.  
FIZO I beg your pardon wench.  
DAME I .. I .. I merely said ..... it's nearly time to feed the animals. But where are the other thirty?

SVEN How do you know there are forty of us?  
DAME Oh, just a lucky guess, that's all. (*they close in on AYEESHA in threatening manner*)

FIZO Well, I don't believe you, you old bag. You see, Ali has our money and I believe you know all about it. Without our money we are nothing. Money will buy you everything. There is no official in this kingdom who will refuse me anything when his palm is crossed with silver.

## SONG 6 **You've Gotta Rob a Sultan Or Two**

(*During the song, one robber at a time is hit on the head by BELISHA and dragged off-stage to one side or the other by ALI and KARIM. FIZO is confused*)

FIZO Where have my men gone?  
DAME Young men have no stamina these days ..... they just can't stand the pace, you know.

FIZO (*Nervously*) Look .... I .. I'd better be going (*sternly*) but don't think you've heard the last of me yet. I'll be back. (*As he exits AYEESHA grabs her rolling pin and follows him off. Screams and sounds of violence off. Enter boys*)

ALI Phew, that was close. Good old Auntie .... she saw them off.  
KARIM Don't be so sure ..... I think they'll be back.  
ALI (*Ponders*) Karim ..... I've had an idea.  
KARIM Oh no, Ali. Not again.  
ALI Please listen, Karim.  
KARIM Oh alright, go on ..... what is it?  
ALI I have a friend who works in the bazaar as a soothsayer, a sort of magician.  
KARIM A MAGICIAN.

ALI Yes, and if we paid him well, which we can now, I'm sure he would help us. Look he gave me his business card.

KARIM *(Looking at card)* I dunno Ali, it could go wrong you know. You can't trust magic.

ALI Please let's give it a try Karim. Next time we bump into these chaps, we might not be so lucky.

KARIM Oh, alright, but let's be quick, I don't want to miss Eastenders again tonight.  
*(They exit chatting excitedly. Enter Sultan's guard. Boos)*

CAPTAIN Curses, we're too late. The birds have flown the nest.

GUARD 1 How come we always arrive after they've left boss?

GUARD 2 Because you ain't got the brains to get one step ahead of them, you idiot. You're an imbecile.

GUARD 1 Why thank you, that's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me.

GUARD 3 Hey look, this is a nice business card. I think I might have one like this printed for myself: .....

CAPTAIN Let me look at that. You fools. You wouldn't recognise a clue if it hit you in the eye. Ernie Strauss, soothsayer, conjurer and magician, stall 37, the old bazaar. This must be where they're heading.

GUARD 4 Let's go. There's no time to lose.

CAPTAIN The fools. I feel victory is within our grasp. This time they will not escape our clutches.

### *Curtain*

## Scene 6: At the Bazaar

### SONG 7 **Hi-diddle-dee-dee (An Actor's Life For Me)**

Stall-holders, market traders and shoppers

ERNIE Come, my friends; we cannot spend the day idly in song. We have work to do - money to make.

ABD Ernie's right folks, back to your stalls.  
*(General hubbub centres around RASHI who begins entertaining the crowd with the Arabian rope trick)*

HASH Wow, look at that, it's magic!

DABI How do you do that Rashi? That's really clever.

RASH It's very simple, my friends. I project myself astrally onto an alternative plane through meditation, then I am in contact with the ether. *(ALI and KARIM enter discretely)* Inanimate objects are subjected to my will and will move in response to my psychic energy. *(ALI produces a pair of scissors and cuts a cotton thread supporting the rope)*

ALI Sorry, Rashi, I noticed your rope had caught on that thread there.  
*(laughter from others)*

ABD You fraud Rashi, you've tricked us.

HASH Get out of here. *(he is kicked back to his stall)*

ERNIE *(Approaching)* Well done lad, I see you've a shrewd sense of judgement. I could use talents like yours.

ALI Gee thanks, Ernie, but I can't do any of that magic stuff that you do. Looking into the future, making things disappear and all that.

ERNIE My dear friend, the only skills I employ are deceit and quickness of the hand. These are enough to fool most people. Folks believe what they want to believe.

KARIM Tell me, soothsayer, what is your strange accent? Do you hail from Persia as most mystics do?

ERNIE Nah, I'm from Peckham, Sarf London, mate, and the only thing I have ever hailed was a taxi.

KARIM But where did you learn the mystical secrets of the orient?

ERNIE Chinatown on a Saturday night. I used to own a second hand car business 'til the old bill got on to me. Plenty of deceit and shady dealing in second hand cars. Look I'll show you ..... Oi, Rashi, come 'ere.

RASH Yes, Ernie, what can I do for you?

ERNIE Be a sport, Rashi, lend us ten pieces of silver will you.

RASH But Ernie, that's all I have left.

ERNIE Trust me Rashi. *(RASHI gives him silver)*

RASH 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 ..... 10.

ERNIE Thanks mate. Now did you say you're skit.

RASH That's right Ernie, I have no money left.

ERNIE I'll tell you what I'll do ..... here, I'll lend you five pieces of silver .....  
1, 2, 3, 4 .....5.

RASH  
ERNIE Thanks Ernie.  
Now you lent me these five pieces of silver .....and I lent you those.  
OK, so now we're quits. Thank you Rashi, that'll be all. (*RASHI walks off counting his money and looking confused*) You've gotta keep the customer happy you see ..... make him think he's getting a good deal.

ALI Let's get down to business Ernie. (*stands on ERNIE'S right*) You see, we came here to ask you for help.

ERNIE (*Mobile rings*) Hang on a minute! What, I thought I told you no more than a thousand gold pieces. No buts, you sell them back right away ..... and make sure you get double what you paid. (*puts phone away*)

ERNIE Now where were we?

KARIM You see, the problem is that Dame Ayeesha wants Ali to get a job.

ERNIE Right-o.

KARIM The Sultan wants him in the army .....

ERNIE Right-o.

KARIM Forty bloodthirsty ruffians are trying to kill him.

ERNIE Right-o.

KARIM And ..... he needs a bride with a handsome dowry.

ERNIE Right-o.

ALI Why does he keep saying that?

ERNIE 'Cos you're standing on my right toe, you fool.

ALI Sorry Ernie. (*moves away*)

ERNIE (*Pause*) Is there anything else?

ALI Nope.

ERNIE No sweat, I'll have that lot sorted by sunset today. Trust me.

KARIM (*To ALI*) Isn't that what he said to Rashi. You saw what happened to him.

ALI Thanks Ernie, you're a great pal ..... see you later ..... come on Karim, let's go. (*they exit*)  
(*Enter ROBBER CHIEF in disguise*)

ERNIE (*Aside*) Aha, unless I'm greatly mistaken, this is one of the robbers.  
Good day to you, sir.

FIZO Never mind the small talk, where's the boy?

ERNIE Dabi, come here son, you're wanted.

FIZO No, not that boy, I mean Ali Baba, you idiot.

ERNIE Idiot am I? We'll soon see who's the idiot. Dabi, I think your special powers are called for here.

DABI Special powers, what do you mean? (*ERNIE winks and makes hypnotic gestures with his hands*) Ah yes, special powers. (*hypnotic gestures at FIZO*) You are beginning to feel very sleepy ..... sleepy .....

FIZO Nonsense, I'm not at all ..... yes, that's strange. I do feel kind of tired.  
(*he clicks his fingers and FIZO'S head jerks to one side in a trance. Sounds of marching, offstage. Enter soldiers of the Guard*)

DABI Your name is Ali Baba. What is your name?

FIZO Ali Baba.

DABI Good. Now, when I click my fingers you will wake up. Is that clear?

FIZO Yes, master.  
DABI 1, 2, 3 (*click*)  
CAPTAIN Does anyone here answer to the name of Ali Baba of Baghdad?  
FIZO Yes, you snivelling creature, I do. What business is it of yours?  
CAPTAIN At last, the fool has fallen into our trap. Arrest him. (*the soldiers grapple with FIZO and overpower him*)  
GUARD 1 The Sultan would like a word with you. A small matter of national service in his army.  
FIZO No stop, there has been some mistake. I'm not Ali Baba.  
GUARD 2 Who are you then, Tommy Cooper?  
FIZO My name is (*all hold breath*) .....ALI BABA. (*sigh with relief*)  
GUARD 3 A joker with it. Come on, you're coming with us.  
GUARD 4 And if anyone tries to follow they will be punished ..... by death. (*all mime throat-cutting and catch breath. Solders drag FIZO off and exit*)  
DABI (*To CAPTAIN as he exits*) Hey Captain, if it's men you want, I can easily find you thirty-nine more. Allow me to come with you and I'll point them out to you.  
CAPTAIN Alright, boy, but if you fail me ..... it will be the worse or you!  
(*They exit*)  
RASHI Cor, that was close .....but I think we got away with it.  
(*hubbub starts and trading continues. ERNIE sings short snatch of In This Life. Suddenly all goes quiet and all heads turn to face left. DRUM ROLL. All bow deeply as SCHEHERAZADE enters*)  
HASH Wow, look at her. Who is she?  
RASH She's dressed in regalia of royalty, she must be a princess.  
ABD Your Highness, we are honoured that you choose to visit our humble bazaar.  
SCHEH Well it's certainly better than all those church halls.  
SH1 Your Highness, may we beg the honour of knowing your name and which household you are from.  
SCHE Certainly you may. My name is Scheherazade (*gasps*) and my father is the Sultan of Makkannesh.  
SH2 Then you must be ..... a SULTANA.  
SCHE I prefer to be called a princess.  
SH3 Don't you know the tales of the Arabian nights, you fool.  
SCHE I have been cursed by the evil Magi of Sanwhalla to wander the earth in search of a husband. (*gasps*) It is written that a certain Arabian boy who goes by the name of Abab Ila shall be my bride-groom. According to legend he is a boy of humble birth but noble in spirit.  
SH1 And so far you've no met anyone by that name.  
SCHE Sadly, I have not.  
SH2 Just how long have you been searching, Princess?  
SCHE So far, a thousand years. (*gasps from the crowd*)  
SH3 The prophecy decrees that time and the ageing process shall stand still while I search.

SH4 Well, perhaps we can help you; many hands make light work, so they say.  
ERNIE You fools, you just can't see it can you? *(they all look round)*  
SH4 What?  
ERNIE The prophecy was found on a scroll written in the ancient language of Sanskrit.  
SH5 Well, what difference does that make?  
SH1 We read from left to right.  
SH2 But Sanskrit reads from right to left.  
SH3 Therefore the name Abab Ila needs to be read backwards.  
SH4 Now let's see, Abab Ila ..... A .. LI ..BABA.  
SH5 Ali Baba.  
SH3 Ali Baba, Ali is the chosen one.  
ALL Hooray for Ali.  
ERNIE Well what're you waiting for? Let's go and tell him the news.  
*(a great commotion as they exit)*

### *Curtain*

## Scene 7: Ali Baba's Courtyard That Night

*(The robbers creep into the garden)*

PES This looks like the place.  
JUAN How can you be so sure?  
PES Well look at this sign: "To all robbers and soldiers: this is NOT Ali Baba's house, so GO AWAY".

PEDRO The fool, did he think we would be taken in by that?  
JOCK This is quite ridiculous. How can we all hide in this one oil jar?  
HORS Sorry, but it's the best I could do at short notice.  
SVEN Quick, let's hide here, there's someone coming.  
*(Enter soldiers from opposite side)*

CAPTAIN Are you sure this is the place, it certainly looks familiar to me.  
DABI Quite sure, if we wait long enough the robbers are sure to come for their revenge and you will have 39 volunteers .....

GUARD 1 Surely this is Ali Baba's house - we were here yesterday.  
CAPTAIN If this is a wild goose chase, you will lose your head.  
GUARD 2 Shhh, someone's coming.  
*(Enter ALI, KARIM and DAME with servants in attendance)*

DAME Let me get this straight, Ali, he asked to borrow 10 silver pieces ..... and then what happened?

GUARD 3 Did you hear that, she said Ali.  
GUARD 4 But surely we arrested Ali Baba yesterday ..... unless .....  
GUARD 1 Quiet you idiot, they'll hear us.  
KARIM You should have seen his face, it was a picture .....  
PEDRO On the count of three we attack ..... ready, 1, 2, 3 .....

*(The robbers charge at ALI and KARIM)*

CAPTAIN There they are ..... let's get them lads ..... *(much noise)* *(The robbers stop in their tracks and turn to fight the soldiers. More noise, then SCHEHERAZADE enters with ERNIE and stallholders. Silence, and they all bow deeply.)*

SCHE Stop, stop this petty squabbling at once.  
CAPTAIN Your Royal Highness, a thousand pardons, please forgive us. May I be so bold as to ask your name?

SCHE I am Scheherazade, daughter of the Sultan of Makkannesh. *(gasps)*  
GUARD 3 Then you must be a ..... SULTANA.  
*(GUARD 4 gives him a swipe round the head)*

CAPTAIN I feel it is my duty to warn you that your life is in danger, Your Highness. You are in the company of thieves and tricksters. *(sounds of dismay)*  
Take Ali Baba, for example; he is the laziest, most good-for-nothing .....  
SCHE Enough, little man. I've had enough of you. Get out of my sight before I have you beheaded. *(he backs out bowing deeply amidst cheers. from ALI and stallholders and throat-cutting gestures)*  
And as for you *(gestures towards thieves)* you are henceforth members of the Sultan's Army, but not his personal guard. You will be sent to guard

the northern frontier .....in THE DESERT!

DAME Oh. Your Highness, how can we ever thank you?

SCHE I don't believe I have had the honour of an introduction, Madam.

DAME I am Dame Ayesha, your worship.

SCHE I beg your pardon?

DAME *(Louder)* AYEESHA!

ALL Bless you!

DAME Aunt and guardian to Ali Baba here.

SCHE Ah well, in that case there is just one thing you can do for me. I have journeyed for a thousand years to find my husband.

DAME No!

SCHE I would like to ask you for the honour of your nephew's hand in marriage.  
*(Ali faints and is caught by Ernie and Karim)*

COW Hurray, hurray!  
*(All stare at Cow)*

KARIM Crikey, she can talk, after all. *(All laugh)*

DAME Your ladyship, I would be delighted.  
*(Ali comes round in time to be embraced by Scheherazade. Lots of cheers)*

ERNIE Well, there we are boys and girls. And they all lived happily ever-after.

**SONG 7 Reprise**

**SONG 8 When You Wish Upon a Star**

**THE END**