

In a town in Persia there lived two brothers named Cassim and Ali Baba. Cassim married a rich woman and lived with everything he wanted. Ali Baba worked hard as a woodcutter.

One day, when Ali Baba was in the forest, he saw a troop of 40 men on horseback, coming toward him in a cloud of dust. He was afraid they were robbers, and climbed into a tree for safety. They unbridled their horses and tied them to trees.

The captain of the forty thieves went a little way among some bushes, and called out, "Open, Sesame!"

A door opened in the rocks, and the thieves all went inside, the door swinging shut behind them. They stayed some time inside, and Ali Baba, fearing they might come out and catch him, was forced to sit patiently in the tree. At last the door opened again, and the Forty Thieves came out.

Every man bridled his horse and mounted, the Captain put himself at their head, and they continued on their way.

Ali Baba climbed down and went to the door concealed among the bushes. He whispered, "Open, sesame!" Nothing happened. Peering around to be absolutely certain no one was nearby, he called out, just as the captain had, "Open, sesame!" and the door opened.

Inside, Ali Baba saw riches beyond his wildest dreams: fabric and other merchandise, and gold and silver in heaps, and money in leather purses. He went in and the door shut behind him. He brought out as many bags of gold as his donkeys could carry, loaded them with the bags, and covered it with the wood he had cut.

Arriving home, he carried the money-bags to his wife, and emptied them out before her. He bade her keep the secret, and he would go and bury the gold.

"Let me first measure it," said his wife. "I will go borrow a scale, while you dig the hole."

So she ran to the wife of Cassim and borrowed a scale. Knowing Ali Baba's poverty, the woman was curious to find out what sort of grain his wife wished to measure, and artfully put some glue at the bottom of the scale. Ali Baba's wife went home and weighed out the gold. She then carried the scale back to Cassim's wife, without noticing that a piece of gold was sticking to it.

Cassim's wife noticed the piece of gold, and told her husband, "Cassim, your brother is richer than you. He does not count his money, he weighs it."

She showed him the piece of money and told him how she found it. Cassim was very jealous, and went to speak to his brother. "Ali Baba," he said, showing him the gold piece, "you pretend to be poor and yet you measure gold."

Ali Baba realized what had happened, and offered to share his gold with Cassim.

"Of course you must share," said Cassim; "but I also must know where to find the treasure!"

Ali Baba told him of the cave and of the password. Cassim rose early next morning, and set out with ten donkeys loaded with great chests. He soon found the place, and the door in the rock.

He said, "Open, Sesame!" and the door opened. He entered, and the door swung shut behind him. He worked quickly to gather together as much of the treasure as possible; but when he was ready to go he was thinking

so much of his riches, he could not remember what to say to open the door. "Open..... Donkey?" The door remained closed. "Open.... Monkey!" The door still did not open. He thought it might be a food. "Open Banana!" He started pacing up and down the floor of the cave, thinking as hard as he could... aha! Not just a food, but a grain! "Open Barley!" "Open Oatmeal!" He named several different sorts of grain, all but the right one, and the door still stuck fast.

Soon, the thieves returned to their cave, and saw Cassim's donkey outside. They knew someone had discovered their secret, and got ready for a fight.

Cassim was ready for them, because he had heard the feet of their horses approaching. When the door opened he leaped out and tackled the captain. There were too many thieves, though, and they quickly overpowered and killed him. They left his body in the cave as a warning to anyone else who might try to steal from them, and went away in search of more treasure.

When Cassim didn't come home that night, his wife asked Ali Baba for help in finding him. Ali Baba knew where to look. The first thing he saw on entering the cave was his brother's body. With great sadness, he put the body on one of his donkeys, and bags of gold on the other two, and, covering all with some wood he had cut, returned home, and took Cassim's body to his wife.

The door was opened by the servant Morgiana, who was very smart and quick-thinking. He said to her, "This is the body of Cassim, but we must pretend he has simply died in his bed. " Ali Baba took Cassim's wife to his own house, where she promised to keep the secret as well.

Morgiana went to an apothecary and asked for some medicine that would be used only for someone who was very sick. The next evening, Cassim's wife and Morgiana pretended they had just found him dead.

The Forty Thieves, on their return to the cave, were much astonished to find Cassim's body gone.

"We are certainly discovered," said the Captain, "we must find out who knows our secret. Two men must have known it; we must now find the other. Go into the city and see if you can discover who may have done this.

Two thieves went into the city where Ali Baba lived, and learned that Cassim had recently died. They learned that Ali Baba was Cassim's brother, and had just bought a bigger house. They learned where Ali Baba lived and marked his door with white chalk, then hurried back to their Captain to tell him what they had learned.

Meanwhile, Morgiana, returning from the market, noticed the white mark on the door of the house. She quickly marked several other doors in the neighborhood with chalk in the same manner, making it impossible to know which door belonged to Ali Baba.

Another thief was sent by the Captain to discover which was the right house, and he marked the door with red chalk, but again, Morgiana was too clever for them, and she marked every house in the city in the same manner.

The Captain decided to go himself, but instead of marking the house, he memorized what it looked like. He told his men to each hide in a barrel, and disguising himself as a merchant, brought them all into the city on a cart.

The Captain stopped his cart in front of Ali Baba's house and knocked on the door. "I have brought some goods from far away to sell at the market, but it is now so dark I do not know where to go. Can you please give me shelter for the night?"

Ali Baba did not recognise him, and welcomed him into his home. He asked Morgiana to prepare a bed and supper for his guest.

The Captain went into the yard where his men were hiding and whispered to them, "I will come down once everyone else is asleep to tell you when it is time to come out."

He returned to the house, and Morgiana led him to his chamber. Suddenly, her lamp went out, and she needed to go to collect more oil from where it was stored in the yard.

When Morgiana walked past the cart where the men were hiding, she heard a man whisper, "Is it time?"

Now, many people would have been startled and screamed at this unexpected event, but remember that Morgiana was very quick-witted. She thought of a plan, and answered quietly, "Not yet, but soon."

Working quickly, Morgiana harnessed a horse to the cart and moved the robbers out of the yard. When she came to a stream, she pushed the barrels into the water, where they would be carried away.

In the middle of the night, the captain of the thieves woke up and went to rouse his men. Finding them missing, he knew his plan was discovered. He climbed over the wall and made his escape. Morgiana saw all this, and, pleased with her success, went to bed and fell asleep.

When Ali Baba awoke the next morning, he was surprised to find the merchant and his goods missing. Morgiana told him what she had discovered and reported the events of the night. Ali Baba was grateful to her.

The Captain returned to his cave, which seemed lonely to him without his lost companions, and resolved to try again. He disguised himself once more and went into the town, where he set up a small merchant's shop near the shop of Ali Baba's son, using the goods he had stored away in the woods. He soon became friends with Ali Baba's son, and through him with Ali Baba.

Ali Baba invited him into his house for dinner, thanking him for his kindness to his son.

Morgiana recognised him, however, and once again, thought of a cunning plan.

After supper, Morgiana put on a dancing costume, and offered a performance as entertainment for the guest. She was a skilled dancer, and soon had the Captain entranced by watching her. When Ali Baba went to refill their drinks, she danced over to the Captain and told him that she knew who he was. She gave him a choice: He could either leave the family alone forever, or she would go to the police and tell them who he really was.

As soon as Ali Baba and his son returned, the Captain thanked them for dinner and said that he must leave. The following day, they saw that his shop was closed up, and they never saw him again.