



*1001  
nights.*

Curriculum  
Companion  
Storybook

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## LESSON 5 - THE TALE OF TWO GENIES

Shahzaman sat before the toy castle he had just built out of wooden blocks. It had taken him an hour to build, and he was admiring it when a ball bounced past him and knocked it to the ground. He turned around and saw his sister standing there.

“Donyazad!” he yelled. “Look what you did!”

“Sorry,” she said. “It was an accident.”

“That’s it,” he said, picking up a piece of chalk and drawing a line down the center of the room. “From now on, that’s your side and this is mine. Stay off my side.”

“Fine,” she said. “Then get your stuff off my side.”

They grabbed their toys and began stacking them on either side of the line as they shouted at each other. Hearing them argue, Shahrzad stuck her head in the doorway. “What are you two doing?” she asked.

“Shahzaman says I have to stay on my side of the room,” said Donyazad.

“She knocked over my castle,” said Shahzaman. Shahrzad raised her hand, silencing them.

“I think I should tell you both a story about two genies.”

“Why?” asked Shahzaman.

“Because they tried to divide up the world just like you two are doing, and instead they ended up destroying it.”

“They destroyed the world?” asked Donyazad.

“Well, their world,” she said. “It happened a long time ago.” She went over and sat on the bed. They sat down next to her as she told them this story:

A poor merchant named Mahmood was crossing the desert when he spotted a bottle lying in the sand. He got down off his camel and picked it up. He pulled off the top and, to his surprise, a genie popped out.

“I can’t believe it!” the genie shouted. “I’m finally out!”

“Who are you?” asked Mahmood.

The genie introduced himself as Jalil. He had been imprisoned in the bottle for over a thousand years by another evil genie named Akbar. "Akbar was the most terrible genie there ever was," he seethed. Mahmood noticed something else lying in the sand. It was an old lamp. He picked it up and rubbed the dirt off it. To his astonishment, smoke billowed out and another genie appeared. "You set me free!" he said to Mahmood. "Thank you!" His jaw dropped when he saw Jalil standing there. "You!" he cried out.

"Akbar!" shouted Jalil, sneering. "I should have destroyed you when I had the chance." The two genies charged and grabbed each other by the throat. Akbar picked Jalil up and hurled him to the ground. The impact was so great that the earth shook and Mahmood was knocked to the ground. As Akbar raised his foot to stomp him, Jalil rolled out of the way and leaped back to his feet. He grabbed a boulder and hurled it at Akbar, full force. The boulder slammed into Akbar's chest and sent him flying backward into a pile of rocks. Akbar roared in anger and climbed back to his feet. The two genies flew at each other, continuing to battle, when Mahmood cried out, "Stop!" They turned to look at him. "What are you doing?!" he shouted.

"He started it," said Akbar, pointing at Jalil.

"No, I didn't," said Jalil. "You did." The genies started to go for each other again when Mahmood came between them, pushing them apart. "Either stop fighting or I'll order both of you back inside," he threatened. Both genies recoiled at that prospect. "Now, what's the problem?" asked Mahmood. "Why can't you two get along?"

"It's because of him," said Jalil, pointing at Akbar.

"It's not because of me," said Akbar. "It's because of you!" They took a step toward each other.

"All right, that's it!" Mahmood shouted. He drew a line in the sand with a stick. "Akbar, you stay on this side of the line, and Jalil, you stay on that side." Having calmed them down, Mahmood instructed them to stop their bickering and to transform the desert into a garden oasis. Disgruntled at having to work together, the two genies nevertheless did what they were told, since Mahmood was now their master.

With a wave of his hand, Jalil transformed the sand dunes into rolling hills. With a wave of his other hand, he transformed the sand into beautiful green grass that stretched to the horizon.

Not to be outdone, Akbar raised his arms, and lightning bolts shot out of his fingertips. Trees began to spring up out of the ground. They grew hundreds of feet into the air as an entire forest was formed, stretching as far as the eye could see. Proudly, he nodded to Jalil.

Jalil blinked his eyes, and the grassy hills burst forth with millions of beautiful flowers. Akbar snapped his fingers, and flocks of birds began to rise up out of the trees. Jalil waved his hands, and swirls of colorful butterflies filled the skies. Akbar lifted his arms, and a mountain rose out of the ground, stretching hundreds of feet into the air. Jalil, obviously impressed, nodded to Akbar, and then built a similar, but taller, mountain on his side of the line. Akbar nodded and built a bigger mountain. Soon, both genies were one-upping each other and building mountains rapidly. Together, the mountains majestically formed a beautiful range before them. Equally impressed, they turned to each other and smiled in satisfaction. They then together picked up a river and dragged it across the meadow spanning both sides of the line. The river was heavy, and as they carried it, Akbar stumbled. Instinctively, and without thinking, Jalil caught him by the arm and steadied him. Akbar looked at Jalil in shock as Jalil carried both the river and pulled Akbar. When they put the river down, Mahmood came to them both and offered them lemonade. Akbar was the first to take a glass. But as he held the glass to his lips, he noticed Jalil, sitting on a rock, exhausted. Rather than quenching his thirst, Akbar offered his drink to Jalil, who looked up in surprise and said, "Thank you." Soon the two genies were working together and had forgotten their quarrel. They created animals in the meadow, fruit on the trees, and a beautiful castle in the center of the meadow. When it was all completed, they turned and shook hands.

"It's beautiful!" said Mahmood, applauding them. "You two should be very proud of yourselves." The genies smiled and slapped each other on the back. "I'm going to go and look at this paradise in more detail. You stay here and be nice to each other," said Mahmood. "Nice job," said Jalil.

"You too," said Akbar.

"Now that's what I like to see," said Mahmood. "Two genies getting along." He climbed onto his camel and headed out to look at their beautiful handiwork. The two genies stood admiring what they had created.

"We did do a great job," said Jalil.

“I love those rolling hills of yours,” said Akbar. “And that grass is gorgeous.”

“Those pine trees you put against the skyline are breathtaking,” said Jalil. Feeling a thaw between them, the two genies decided to have lunch together. They placed a picnic blanket on the dividing line between them and sat down to eat. Jalil snapped his fingers, and a sumptuous feast appeared before them. “You’re going to love my hummus,” he said.

“Ooh, that is good,” said Akbar, tasting it. “Here, try some of my olives.” He reached up to an overhanging tree branch and plucked some olives from it. He handed them to Jalil, who tasted them.

“They are indeed delicious,” Jalil said. “Of course, you do realize those aren’t your olives,” he added.

“Excuse me?” said Akbar.

“The tree is on my side of the line, so the olives belong to me,” Jalil said.

“Yes,” said Akbar, “but the branch hangs over onto my side, so those olives are mine.”

Jalil frowned. “If they come from my tree, then they’re my olives.”

Akbar’s eyes narrowed. “Well, then keep your olives off my side.”

“Fine,” said Jalil. He zapped the overhanging branch and it fell to the ground. Akbar gasped in horror.

“You just killed my olives!” he said.

“They weren’t your olives, they were mine,” said Jalil. “I can do whatever I want with them.”

“Not on my side you can’t!” Akbar shouted. “You just encroached on my olives!” He zapped the tree trunk, and it fell over on its side, dead.

“My tree!” Jalil screamed turning to Akbar. “That’s it!” He jumped at Akbar and grabbed him around the throat. The two genies fought furiously, slamming each other against trees and knocking down the forest. They tore up the grass, destroyed the flowers, and chased away the birds and wildlife. Jalil picked up Akbar and hurled him through the air, where he crashed into the palace and knocked it down. In only a few

minutes, the two genies had destroyed everything they worked so hard to create.

“Stop it! What are you doing?” shouted Mahmood as he came racing up on his camel. He looked at the devastation around him. “Look what you’ve done. You’ve ruined it all.”

“It was his fault,” said Akbar, pointing at Jalil.

“No, it wasn’t,” said Jalil. “He took my olives.”

“He cut down my branch.”

“It wasn’t your branch.”

“It was on my side!” shouted Akbar.

“Enough!” shouted Mahmood. “I’m going to get to the bottom of this.”

A few minutes later, they were all seated on chairs facing one another. The genies sat with their legs crossed and arms folded tight. Mahmood sat across from them. “I want to know why you two are fighting,” he said.

“Fifteen hundred years ago, his father insulted my father,” said Akbar.

“That’s because his grandfather insulted my grandfather,” said Jalil.

Akbar pointed at him. “Well, that’s because your great-uncle stole his goat.”

“Only because he cheated him when he sold him that cow.”

“It was a fair price,” said Akbar.

“But it gave sour milk.”

“Because he fed it bad grain.”

“No, he didn’t!”

“Wait a minute,” said Mahmood. “You mean to tell me that you two are fighting over something that happened fifteen hundred years ago?”

“It was sixteen hundred years ago!” said Jalil.

“No, it wasn’t,” said Akbar. “It was fifteen, you son of a one-eyed vulture.”

“Sixteen, camel brain.”

“Stop it,” said Mahmood. “The truth is, you two don’t even know why you’re fighting anymore, do you?”

“All I know is that my Jinnfolk and his Jinnfolk have never gotten along,” said Jalil.

“And we never will,” said Akbar.

“We can’t stand your kind,” said Jalil.

“What are you talking about?” asked Mahmood. “His kind?”

“Isn’t it obvious?” said Jalil. “We’re just too different.”

“Different?” said Mahmood. “You’re both genies, you have the same history, you come from the same place – how are you different?”

“You’re kidding, right?” said Jalil. “Don’t you see? Genies from his people live in lamps.”

“And genies from his people live in bottles,” said Akbar.

“Stupid lamp genies,” said Jalil.

“Barbaric bottle genies!”

“Take that back.”

“No, you take it back.”

The genies flew at each other and began to fight again. They battled ferociously, tearing up the countryside and destroying everything in their path.

“That’s it,” said Mahmood. “Back in your lamp!” he shouted, holding up the lamp. Akbar turned in surprise as he was sucked back inside.

“Nooo!” he screamed. He disappeared in a puff of smoke as the lid snapped shut with a clang. Jalil breathed a sigh of relief and turned to Mahmood with a smile on his face.

“Nice going,” he said. “I told you he was no good.”

“You too,” said Mahmood. He popped the lid off the bottle and Jalil was sucked back inside.

“No!” screamed Jalil, but it was too late. He disappeared inside the bottle, and Mahmood slammed the lid back on. He looked at the lamp and the bottle, shook his head, and said, “Maybe in another thousand

years.” He tossed the lamp and bottle back into the sand, hopped on his camel, and rode away.