Act 1, Scene 4-A Stranger from Africa Arrives

(Another morning in the home of mother and Aladdin.)

MOTHER: You would think a normal boy of 15 would feel compelled by the loss of his father to be ambitious to help his poor mother. Instead, you are found to roam the bazaar, consort with idle companions, and devote little energy to useful pursuits or your future.

ALADDIN: Mother, you worry too much. My stomach growls. Where is breakfast?

MOTHER: Maybe you should worry about that. You eat and do little else. Haven’t you learned that Allah helps those who help themselves?

ALADDIN: Work does not suit me, Mother. A great future lies ahead for me. Just yesterday, old Azzezah, the fortune teller, predicted that I would be rich, famous, and a powerful prince with a lovely princess as my bride. We would live in a splendid palace and you would not have to spin cotton anymore.

MOTHER: The lack of food has affected your mind. Take our last few coins to buy bread and come straight home.

ALADDIN: Oh, Mother, the sky is blue and the sun is warm. I feel this will be the day that will change our lives forever. I shall be back soon. (Leaves through down door for the Grand Bazaar which is alive with activity. Lights up. Stops to visit the baker woman.)

AHLAM: Good morning master Aladdin. You are early today! Why it is almost noon. I see that you are not quite a rich and powerful prince yet. How can I serve you?

ALADDIN: Be patient, these things take time. A loaf of bread please for our humble breakfast.

AHLAM: Certainly, my young prince. Nothing but the best for you.

ALADDIN: Thank you and good day. (Turns away.) Ah, my friends. Hakeem! (Crosses to join friends. Sorcerer crosses to Ahlam from where he has been observing Aladdin.)

SORCERER: That young lad you were just speaking to, do you know him well?

AHLAM: As well as I know my own son. What concern is he to you?

SORCERER: I am a stranger to your city, traveling many miles from my home in Africa. I seek a boy interested in making something of himself.

AHLAM: Aladdin is not the boy you seek. He is the son of Mustapha, the poor tailor, who has been dead for 5 years. Aladdin broke his father’s heart with his laziness. My advice is search for someone other than Aladdin. The boy will do no work.

SORCERER: Thank you, kind woman. You have been very helpful. (Crosses to Aladdin and his friends. Calls to Aladdin.) Aladdin, I need to speak with you of weighty matters. Is your father called Mustapha the tailor?

ALADDIN: Yes, sir, but he has been dead for five years now.

SORCERER: (Breaks in tears and embraces Aladdin.) Alas, my nephew, your worthy father was my brother! I have been many years abroad and now I arrive home with hopes of reuniting with Mustapha only to discover he is dead. This is a dark day indeed. When I saw you across this bazaar, you reminded me so much of my brother. The resemblance is striking. Take these coins to your mother. I will come visit this evening that I may have the satisfaction of seeing where my brother lived.

ALADDIN: (Shocked and amazed.) Thank you, Uncle. Fortune undeniably shines upon me this day! (Runs home quickly and enters from down door.) Mother, Mother, I have great news!

MOTHER: I don’t want to listen to a lazy boy who refuses to take on the responsibilities of a man to help his poor mother….

ALADDIN: Then listen to this lovely music (jingles coins).

MOTHER: Do not tease your impoverished mother. Show me what you have that jingles so sweetly (he shows her the gold coins). Allah be praised! Where did you get that money?

ALADDIN: From my uncle who has arrived from Africa!

MOTHER: But you have no such uncle.

ALADDIN: I undoubtedly do for I saw him with my own eyes. He will be here to visit tonight. Can you believe our good fortune? (A knock on the door).

MOTHER: Who can that be?

Al: (Aladdin answers door.) It is Uncle with a basket of wine, bread, and fruit.

SORCERER: Greetings, my sister. I wish to honor the wife of my departed brother.

MOTHER: You are sadly mistaken. Mustapha had a brother long ago who died as an infant. He never mentioned another brother.

SORCERER: My good sister, do not be surprised at your never having heard of me. I left home when Mustapha was but a baby. I have traveled the world these last 40 years, finally settling in Morocco. I always remembered fondly my native country and desired to reunite with my brother one day only to find I arrived too late. (Mother starts to cry and Uncle comforts her.) Let us not give in to our grief but look ahead to a bright future.

MOTHER: You speak wisely. Come let us enjoy your generous feast. Please sit.

SORCERER: Thank you, kind sister. So, Aladdin, what business do you follow?

MOTHER: He is of little use to anyone. Aladdin does not listen to the wise counsel of his mother, or anyone else, except fortune tellers.

ALADDIN: (Mumbles.) The work of a tailor did not suit me.

SORCERER: That is understandable for a young man of your talents and potential. My affection for you as a dear uncle moves me to help you in any way I can. Perhaps you would like to be a merchant?

ALADDIN: I know many merchants in the bazaar. That might be more to my liking.

SORCERER: Then it is settled. I will call on you tomorrow morning. I will send proper clothes this evening. Tomorrow morning I will take you to acquaint yourself with the successful merchants of the city.

MOTHER: You are too kind, my dear brother. You honor greatly the memory of my cherished husband. I can never thank you enough.

SORCERER: It is the least I can do. Aladdin, you must honor the memory of your father by being a help to your mother. I will see you in the morning when we begin a new chapter in your life. Good evening.

ALADDIN: Thank you dear uncle. (Sorcerer departs.) Oh, Mother, I believe my dreams are coming true sooner than I ever hoped. Tomorrow can’t get here soon enough. (Goes to hug mother.)

MOTHER: It does sound perhaps too good to be true. Maybe this is all a dream.

ALADDIN: My destiny finally come true! (Lights down.)