Act 1, Scene 1-Scherazade the Story Teller

(Music up, Scherazade comes dancing across stage to center.)

SCHERAZADE: There is nothing so strange, it cannot be true and no story so unlikely, it cannot be told. No story is a lie, for a tale is a bridge that leads to the truth. The wise will understand it, the happy will delight in it, and fools will be mystified by it. Listen and learn, my friends. My name is Scherazade. When I was a young woman, there was a kind and just sultan who ruled the land. He fell in love with a wise and beautiful woman. They were married and ruled the kingdom with intelligence and compassion for their people.

One day the Sultan discovered that his wife had betrayed his trust. Her punishment would be death. After the execution, the Sultan’s grief turned so bitter, he swore he would avenge the betrayal of his wife. The Sultan ordered his chief advisor, the Grand Vizier, to find him a maiden every day. He would marry the maiden, spend the night with her, and then have her head chopped off in the morning so she would have no chance to be untrue. After three years, no girls remained in the kingdom, except for myself and my sister.

I was a brave and learned girl who had read all the tales of the Persians, Arabs, and Indians. I had read their philosophers and poets, and knew the stories of both kings and common folk. I had a plan to save myself and my sister, and perhaps to even be a help to the grieving, bitter Sultan by marrying the him. After the marriage banquet, I would ask the Sultan if I could bid farewell to my sister. When my sister entered the room, she would ask if I could tell her one last story since this would be my last night on earth. I asked the king if that would be possible. The king had no need of earthly riches, but he was always eager to enlarge his mind with a story, so he gladly gave his permission.

I began my story and told it with great passion, as if my life depended on it, because it did. As dawn was breaking, the story had built to its climax. There would be no time to conclude the story. The sultan was so riveted by my story telling, he decided to postpone my execution for one more night so I could finish the story I had begun. This continued for one thousand nights.

Over the many nights, I had told the sultan all the stories I knew of Sinbad, Ali Baba, Genies, magic, brave kings, dragons, adventure, courage, wisdom, and romance. I had no more stories to tell. I gazed at the lamp that started to sputter and soon went out. Then it came to me, one last story. I spoke quickly, “if only we had the wonderful lamp that once belonged to Aladdin?” “What lamp are you speaking of?”, inquired the Sultan. I took a deep breath and began to tell my final story on the 1001th night. This is my tale, The Real and True Amazing Adventures of Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp!