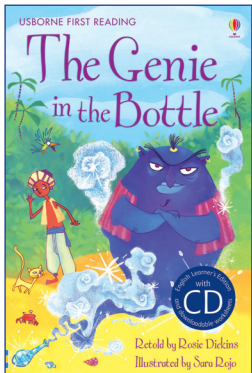


The Genie in the Bottle • Teacher's notes



Author: From The Arabian Nights, retold by Rosie Dickins

Reader level: Elementary

Word count: 194

Lexile level: 140L

Text type: Fairy tale/folk tale

About the story

This timeless story tells of a fisherman who's down on his luck. He catches seaweed, shells and a smelly sock, but no fish. Then he catches something else that looks quite useless: an old bottle. As soon as the fisherman takes out the stopper and casts it aside, however, a huge genie appears, furious at his years of captivity and threatening to eat the fisherman.

It's time for the fisherman to use his wits. He looks at the small bottle with disbelief, saying the genie could never fit in it. Indignantly, the genie shrinks back into the bottle and the fisherman puts the stopper in, trapping him once more. The fisherman returns to his fishing, and this time he succeeds in catching a fish for dinner.

About the Arabian Nights

The Genie in the Bottle comes from a collection of Middle Eastern and South Asian folk tales, known as the Arabian Nights or the Thousand and One Nights. Other tales in the collection include Sinbad the Sailor (also available as an Usborne English Learner's Edition), Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp and Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. They were gathered together over hundreds of years by authors, translators and scholars.

The framing story for the collection is that a cruel Sultan has threatened to kill his new wife, Scheherazade, the day after their marriage. To save herself, Scheherazade starts telling a wonderful story. She doesn't finish it, but keeps the Sultan in suspense, and he postpones her execution in order to find out what happens next. When she does finish a story, she quickly begins another before her husband can act on his threat. Sometimes, characters in a story will begin telling another story or stories within the first one. Finally, a thousand and one nights and hundreds of stories later, the Sultan decides to let his wife go free.



Key words

Your students might not be familiar with some of these words, which are important in the story.

genie	p8 cried (meaning "shouted")	p14 tummy
p2 fisherman		rumbled
p5 threw	p10 stopper	p15 growled
nets	p11 empty	p16 kind
p6 caught	sighed	p19 snapped
slimy	p12 suddenly	p20 fit
seaweed	smoke	whooshed
shiny	huge	p23 tasty

Key phrases

p4	Once upon a time
p5	again and again
p11	to throw away
p12	to pour out
	to turn into
p17	I don't care
p22	went on



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Before reading

Find a small bottle made of coloured or frosted glass so that you can't see inside. (Alternatively, you could find a picture of one, or draw an outline on the board.)

Ask the class what they think might be inside the bottle. Encourage unlikely answers as well as obvious ones, and list them on the board. You'll probably find that most things students suggest are small things or things that can come in small quantities. Try suggesting something bigger than the bottle, such as a cat or a house; if students disagree, ask them why not. How can something big fit into something small?

If the word GENIE hasn't come up yet, list it now. What is a genie? [A powerful spirit, originally from Arabian folklore.] Does anyone know a story about a genie? [They may well know the story of Aladdin.] Do all genies grant wishes? Show the book's cover and say that you're about to find out...

Reading or listening

You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same. After the story, there is a short selection of key phrases that can be used for pronunciation practice.

During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.

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| p2 | Do fishermen look like this today, in your country? Discuss what's different. How do you think this fisherman catches fish? Do you think he has much luck? | p10 | What do you think the fisherman was hoping to find in the bottle? |
| p3 | Think of some words to describe the genie, such as: big, angry, scary... | p14 | How long do you think the genie has been in the bottle? |
| p6 | What is the cat hoping for? Look out for the cat on other pages throughout the book. | p20 | Do you think the genie likes it when the fisherman laughs at him? |
| | | p23 | Why do you think the fisherman has kept the bottle? What would you do with it? |

Puzzles (pages 24-29)

You might like students to work on these in pairs or small groups. If so, ask the "After reading" questions before doing the puzzles.

After reading

Ask the class if they liked the story. Did anyone feel sorry for the genie?

How do you think the genie would feel if he were let out of the bottle again? [Angry, even hungrier, determined not to be tricked, etc.] On page 23, we see that the fisherman kept the bottle; students could imagine what happens if someone accidentally opens it one day.

How do you think the genie got into the bottle in the first place, and what was the bottle doing in the sea? [In the original story, he was imprisoned by King Solomon as a punishment.] What other strange things might a fisherman catch in his net?

Did you know?

In August 2012 a Scottish fisherman caught a bottle with a record-breaking 98-year-old message in it. It was a postcard promising sixpence (equivalent to about £2.40, €2.90 or \$3.30 today) to the finder.

