

# 1002<sup>nd</sup> Knight



By Penny Moon

1002nd Knight

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Narratives:

Scheherazade continues her tales to Sultan Shahryar in order to persuade him to postpone her execution

Mahnoor, the hero of our story

Narrator – is the observer of the story

- Exercises
- Appendices



You may remember, dear reader, the famous folk tales from the Middle East known as ‘The Thousand and One Nights’ (or the Arabian Nights). If you think you have never heard of them then you might be surprised that Aladdin was one of the best-known stories, perhaps now you are beginning to understand. Our storyteller was supposedly one of the beautiful concubines of Sultan Shahryar. Now the Sultan who had many wives was noted for

executing them when he became bored. However, our heroine Scheherazade kept the Sultan entertained for 1001 nights and by this time he had fallen in love with her. Surprisingly, so the story goes, not only did he let her live but she became his queen!

This story is a little different but I like to think if it was being told in this day and age then it might be squeezed in somewhere!

One fine night Scheherazade started her tale, her legs curled up on her favourite magic carpet as she liked to call it, so silky soft underneath with patterns seeming to weave back and forth in the firelight...now dear reader what else would you expect?

To her great relief, the next day she was called by the Sultan and so she knew she must therefore be safe from execution, thanks be to Allah the merciful, to tell him more stories and this is how they went....

Once upon a time, maybe this time and maybe some other time but not too long ago or even too far away, there lived a fisherman who had a beautiful young daughter, Mahnoor. Now Mahnoor was as happy and loving as the day was long. Her mother had sadly been carried away by the sea when she was a small child. Her father told her that her mother had returned to where she had come from, out of the mists of her secret watery world, to live on the land for a time in order to love him and to create their beautiful daughter.

Now this little girl loved the sea, it was as if the daily ebb and flow of the tides were reflected in her blood; as if she instinctively knew the phases of the moon and how to use them to call in the riches from the sea, driven in by the dolphins to provide enough sustenance, not only for her family but also to share with the rest of the village. This miracle usually happened when the moon was new, like a fine crescent boat hanging in the sky and the Milky Way, a shimmering river of light amongst the myriad of stars all dancing in the still calm water. And so it was they lived their lives in tune with the rhythms of the day and night, the monthly moon cycle and the seasons.



We will leave this little girl for the time being and indeed being and time are a mystery in themselves and for some other timely story. Stories of the future and past will inevitably weave and link together to embroider the riches of the present moment

You might like to focus your memory on stories of the Djinn. The Djinn and not the Genie, was their true name and only those who had this ancient knowledge held the power to control them for they were strong and fierce. So it is said that they sprang straight from the mouth of Shaytan himself, accursed be his name. Here, and please make a note dear reader, is the first secret, naming something is to begin to learn to have power over it! Lost already, do keep up with the wanderings of my labyrinthine mind!

According to Islamic myth there were three parts of creation, first came the angels and secondly the humans. The Djinn were the third part of creation, the hidden ones, made from fire and smoke but originally from water. They also sometimes chose to abide in dry and often sandy places where they shape shifted into oases and acted as mirrors to attract beautiful humans of both and indeed undefined gender who liked to gaze narcissistically at themselves. Humankind, as you know, being the link between the angels and the Djinn still has a similar obsession described as the selfies of the modern age, where people seek desperately to confirm their existence, avoiding



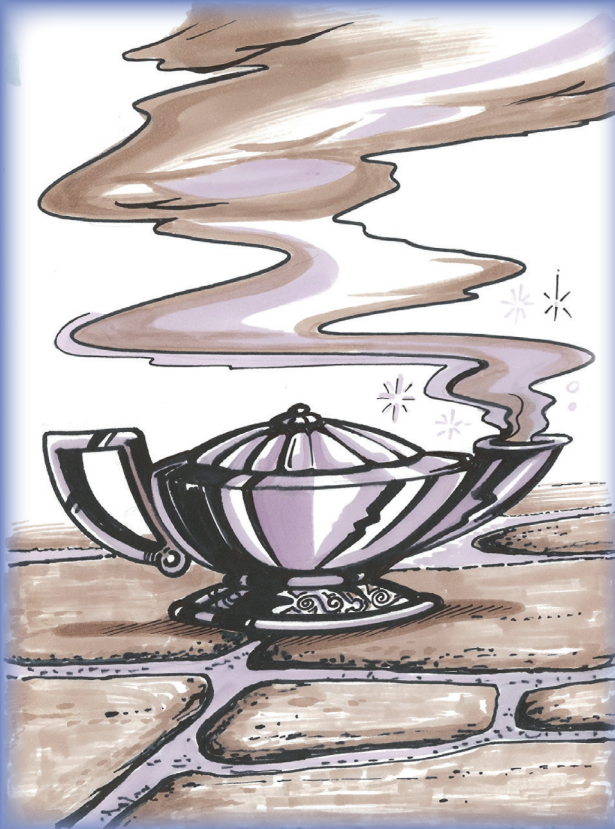
the sensory delights of the moment in their desperation to be 'acknowledged'. Additionally dear reader, and practically, there are very few ponds in cities!

Now it was 'free will' that was the preserve of both humans and Djinn as angels could only serve god and had no purpose other than that. Certain Djinn could be good or bad and others could move between these two states because of their chameleon like attributes with their immediate environment. They usually preferred their own company but when mischief came upon them, often at full moon, they enjoyed basking unseen in the worship of humans in ancient and sacred places. In ancient times they made their homes in these places, and even after other buildings were built on top, they still like to live there, hidden! They also expected acknowledgement of their existence underneath the foundations. Woe betides the hapless passer-by if there was no candle or flower left behind. For those who harmed these ancient places, as sure as night becomes day, there would indeed be a heavy price to pay.

Many things you have yet to know, dear reader, one of which is that you have been here on this exquisitely beautiful planet much, much longer than your present-day scientists have ever begun to imagine. In this knowledge also the planet has changed and the tectonic plates upon which you live now are not those of the past, where there were once oceans now mountains loom up only to be worn down again and

again. The shapes of your continents have shifted, drifted apart in some great do-zi-do dance of rock and magma, but I digress.

Now, returning to our beautiful little girl Mahnoor, who was quite lonely and liked to listen to the stories her father told. Occasionally, when the family came together at special times of the year to share food and celebrate life, she loved to gaze into the firelight and listen



to the wandering story tellers who would bring their version of events they had heard about from other villages and towns. She knew these stories changed and shifted with every telling but that was the very heart of the story itself. She especially liked to hear about stories of the Djinn appearing from ancient lamps which when rubbed to bring up their old sheen occasionally released a trapped Djinn who, so grateful for his escape would grant wishes to the rather surprised rescuer.

One night the whole village were gathered round the fire when a group of fierce Bedouin warriors came galloping into their midst shouting and waving their scimitars. Mahnoor's father stood bravely in front of the flames and put his hand up to stop them.

"What are you doing coming into our village in such a fashion, hoping to frighten us when in fact our traditions of hospitality require that we welcome all travellers?" he said.

The leader pulled up sharply and apologised, they themselves had been attacked and thought this village may belong to those who do not understand the fellowship of the desert. Shockingly Mahnoor thought she saw a female warrior with them and decided that sometime before they left, she would speak with this woman who seemed to be unusually independent and free. The woman, Nusaiba, told her of how women were as good as men and could fight just as fiercely (though this often had to be kept a secret as the men generally didn't like this idea!) She also explained the code of honour which described women who are emotional and needed men to control



their behaviour but sometimes this became too controlling and was used against women. All these things Nusaiba taught the little girl. Mahnoor had heard tales from the West of knights who defended helpless people in days of old and decided that Nusaiba was just like a knight and at that very moment Mahnoor determined that was exactly what she would also eventually become.



“Come sit by our fire, warm yourself at our hearth and share our food from the sea and the land prepared with love.” invited Mahnoor’s father and so they did.

And so, as the night wore on the

dervishes started to dance, their spinning, swirling skirts reflecting the dancing flames of the fire. The colourful patterns reminded Mahnoor of the beautiful carpet upon which she once sat, and she drifted into a dream and this was how it went....



One of the strangers said that he had heard that music and dance were forbidden as were women in company with men but her father said, You are mistaken, all are equal here and men must learn to control their inner desires rather than the women who they feel they own.' The stranger looked and said no further words on the matter but gazed thoughtfully into the flames...

Another of their visitors showed Mahnoor the most beautiful oil lamp and suggested she should light the wick if she needed to go off into the dark. Now the oil from the lamp was of such a sweet fragrance that it reminded her of a beautiful forest she had visited once, an oasis with a cool breeze. She heard strange and beautiful music mixed with the song of birds, a delight to her ear. Then came the sound of water falling gently into a lake of flowers more beautiful than she could ever have imagined.

Suddenly there appeared from the depths of the water, a most beautiful reflection not dissimilar to herself. The sunlight shimmering on the water seemed to draw out of those cool blue depths the spirit of the pool. The spirit was of similar height and shape to herself yet somehow seemed much older. She had a twinkle in her eyes as she laughingly reached out to our hero Mahnoor who was now getting decidedly nervous.

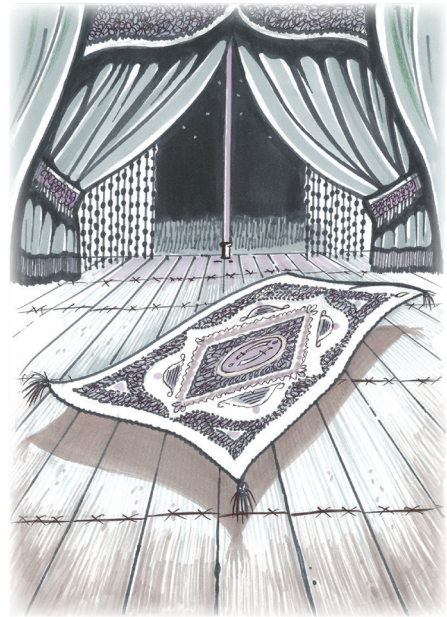




‘Do not be afraid dear one, for you have called me from my sleep and I am here to help you. Take my hand and your three wishes that are written deep within your soul where only I can read them as yet, will all come true but maybe not quite how you expected them to! Trust me now for we shall go on a journey to help those in distress, to wake their sweet souls with a kiss or an occasional pinch. Lay on this beautiful carpet and only when you are completely calm will you find it beginning to fly.’

With that Mahnoor found herself sinking into the pile of a rich and beautiful carpet, half awake and half asleep, wondering whether she had been dreaming. As you might have guessed by now, she was a girl always up for an adventure and so she thought ‘what’s the harm’ even though now all signs of the magical spirit seemed to have evaporated.

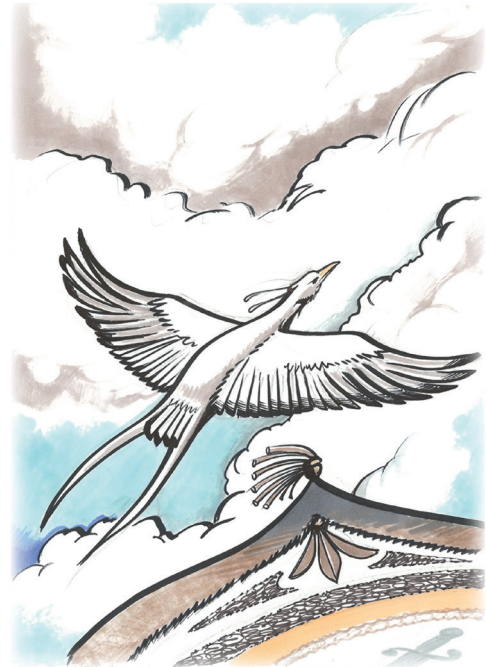
And so she did as she had been asked and placing her hand on her heart, took some deep breaths and relaxed even more whispering silently a big thank you to her heart for all the hard work it had done. She then began to count and breathe in to 5 and out to 5 and after only a short while she could feel the carpet lifting underneath her.



At first just a slight ripple which shocked her for a moment then she continued her breathing and as elegantly as a bird the carpet drifted upwards higher and higher in the arms of the wind. Very soon she floated towards the crescent moon hanging like a boat sailing across an indigo ocean.

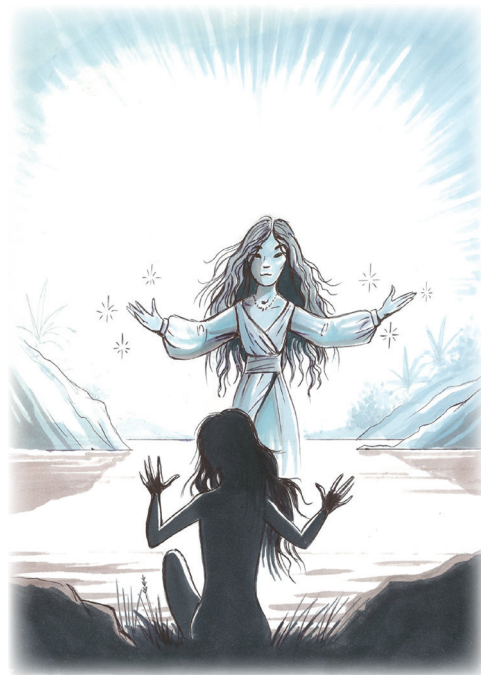
Quite quickly she became brave enough to peep over the edge and there underneath her was the most beautiful white bird and if a bird could smile and say hello, so it did. Her heart knew she had now met the first companion on her adventure whatever else would be revealed in the mystery of time.

Then suddenly that sound again, like a sweet flute which rippled like a harp making wind song in the treetops. Then a gentle touch on her shoulder made her jump so much so she fell off the carpet and started to tumble down and down when a very strange and stretchy arm grabbed hold of her and hauled her back on board. 'It's me silly, no need to be afraid' and there it was, the spirit of the water which suddenly rippled into a tiny version of itself, now appearing as a pixie sitting in the palm of her





hand. 'What is going on?' wondered Mahnoor, 'could it be the fragrance of the oil making me hallucinate?' The spirit, who we shall now call Trifsi laughed out loud. Then taking 3 deep breaths changed into smoke assuming a giant shape that covered the stars themselves and booming with thunderous laughter immediately shrunk quickly back down onto Mahnoor's hand in her Trifsi guise. Mahnoor was completely stunned sitting staring with her mouth hanging open. Trifsi smiled and with a lengthening finger gently closed her mouth and said, "Don't worry, you will soon get used to my shape shifting games, they can come in useful sometimes and I will teach you some of the skills you can adapt to your human body."



'I will teach you to be all you can possibly be and mostly what you have never even thought of. It will be an exciting adventure and an honour that you have chosen me to be your companion on this sacred journey.' This was all too much for Mahnoor and exhausted, she simply curled up on the carpet and fell into the deepest sleep that she had ever experienced.

**F**lying high now through the clouds, huge cumbersome clouds full of lightening and rolling thunder, they finally came out on top to see a rainbow being formed. 'Come fly through the rainbow and I will show you how it will leave you with a flavour and fragrance of colour and thread to weave a magical coat which will make you invisible to all except those with eyes to see...and sadly enough there are few of them!'

'And now I think you are ready. I am here with you as your companion to teach, guide and protect you whether I am a towering giant, a magic carpet, a pool or a waterfall, white bird or Trifsi, you know I am with you. At first I will point out people who need your help but very soon you will develop your own sense of where you are needed. The colour and fragrance of distress and fear stains the rainbows around people and ripples on all around for endless ages.

Here is a practical tip for you; when flying through deserts and to enable you to breathe, you will need to mask your face with this



beautiful rainbow scarf, but only if there is a sandstorm and they are rare indeed. Otherwise let people see you, for you were not made to be hidden away. Fear nothing and no-one.

You are a fine courageous and strong female with a mind so clear and bright that can discriminate where darkness lies even when it is often wrapped in pleasant smiles. Do not believe it, be part of your environment wherever you are, be confident in your wonderful Self, have no shame in the petty laws of those who seek to control you and make you smaller than you are, for you are great indeed and brimming with kindness and love. There are those who are foolish to believe love to be weak when in fact it is the most powerful energy on Earth. Now you have your beautiful cloak to shade your light from others who may be frightened at first, as well as love enough to save the world. Let us start our adventures. Now I wonder where we should begin.



Ah yes, over there perhaps? Do you see that mysterious ruin, ancient temple of a god whose name is long forgotten?"

As evening quickly changed to night Mahnoor was amazed at the appearance of a temple magically silhouetted against the evening sky. Looking more closely she saw flickering silver light from behind one of the pillars.



As they got closer still she saw what looked like a little boy curled up in a corner. She approached him and asked his name. He had strange



pale skin with red blotches and an ancient, faded symbol she recognised tattooed on his arm. (Later on, he told Mahnoor his father had been furious as the tattooist had mistakenly done it backwards, a sign of wellbeing in ancient religions). It was also the symbol of peace in ancient Hindu scripture as her father, being a saintly man, had explained.



The strange little boy's large eyes opened looking much older than his years but he still kept silent. Mahnoor reached out her hand to him but he flinched back into his corner.

'Don't be afraid of me. I haven't come to do you harm' said Mahnoor. Eventually, as his silence continued, she stood back and said 'Well now as you don't even seem to have a name I shall have to decide what to call you.'

'My name is Peter' he finally told her 'and I came from Germany our home a long way away where it was very cold with my father in search of treasure. I was the only one who survived when we were attacked by some mysterious creatures when we were digging in these ruins.

I hid in a tunnel and have been here ever since and shrinking down to the size I am now from a grown man. I am really frightened and

do not understand what has happened. My family always said I was the best and handsomest of men then after the attack strange things happened to me as well as shrinking to the body of a child. Just look at this.' Immediately he stood up and to her astonishment she saw he had a shadow which was made of light. A moonlit shadow is quite contrary to normal shadows and as he walked, he seemed to leave a trail of moonlight footsteps.

Now extremely puzzled about him or even if it was a 'him' for the features were quite translucent and classically beautiful. She asked what treasure his father was looking for and this is what he said.

'My father had been sent to find magical objects for his fuhrer. He killed the guardians of this sacred site where people had been coming on pilgrimage since the dawn of time. Not long afterwards he, himself, was horribly murdered by some passing thugs in long black robes. In complete terror I ran and hid. After what seemed like many days had passed a magical creature appeared from the shadows and told me he would be my personal Djinn whatever that meant. It was he who had saved me with this gift of a moonlight cloak of invisibility otherwise I would never had survived.

When this happened many years ago now, I had been a very beautiful young man always gazing at myself and my reflection in the lily pool. I became so vain that my beauty caused me to fall in love with myself.

The only good use after the tragedy was that it prevented me from becoming lonely as at least I could talk to myself!" he smiled wryly. 'However, the price of my vanity was that time began to go backwards and from being a man I got younger and younger, gradually becoming the size you see me now, as a small boy whose only companion was himself. I was dreadfully lonely and plagued by a longing to be with women who had loved me when I was older.'

Mahnoor felt saddened by this story forgetting that Djinns were mischievous and loved to trick hapless humans into believing their shape shifting fabrications. So, she invited him to come on an adventure with her to help save people in trouble, to guard the sacred places and leave some of his light in the darkness for their fellow travellers...

And so off the pair flew seeking out those who were frightened or sad. They were always ruled by kindness as they ventured into the darkest places. They almost forgot who they were until something reminded them of their light, a forgotten tap on a



shoulder, a dancing light in a fire or rainbows lighting up the clouds. The signs are all around, all they had to do was hold their heads up high and breathe with all their heart and suddenly they would remember their great SELVES!



And so it was that Scheherazade noticed that Sultan Shahryar's head was beginning to nod as he started drifting to sleep, letting her slip away to dream more dreams and call down the infinite songs and stories of the universe.



## **Part the second – Now it is your turn!**

Part the second is where you accompany the companions on their adventures, spreading kindness and love to all living things as well as respect to what has gone before both on sacred sites and in people's homes. Maybe you will meet other adventurers gazing at the stars or hiding in the most unexpected places. Maybe you will find ruins where people have come for pilgrimage as they believed something in the dawn of memory, something quite extraordinary happened when the gods came in their ship of light to bring gifts to the people of the Earth.

Imagine that you have rubbed a magic lantern and a Genie popped out offering you 3 wishes.

### **Describe or draw the:**

- The Lamp
- The Genie
- Their special powers

### **Questions:**

What do you like best in the story?

How does it make you feel?

What does the story mean to you?

### **Read the 1001 Nights:**

- Who is Scheherazade?
- Aladdin
- What is a 'Djinn or Genie?
- Would you like a Magic Carpet, if so where would you go?
- Who is Narcissus? What is vanity?

## **What are Sacred Places?**

- Pyramids
- Churches
- Fairy wells
- Burial mounds – Stonehenge

## **Symbols?** what are they and why are they useful?

- How can some get twisted from the original meaning?
- What does this one mean and how can it be distorted to mean the opposite?
- Look up the Caduceus, who generally uses it and what different forms does it take?
- Who was Hermes and Mercury? Who was Asclepius?

## **Words:**

Sultan; concubine; shaytan; myriad; labyrinthine; free will; chameleon; oasis; fabrication; original;

## **Appendix**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOVdjxtnsH8> - choir of angels (800% slowed)

Useful information for your own story. **Sacred places –**

**<https://sacredsites.com/>**

Since the beginning of time and maybe before, for nobody really knows when we began or when we will end, there have been places on the earth that people believed were very special, places where they would instinctively worship and gather at whatever the time in history, whatever the gods that were understood to be around at the time... Some think it was the intense beauty of nature, the awesome views, the strange and unexpected shapes of haphazard rocks or mountains, the man made patterns reflecting

the stars; others thought the dark and mysterious caverns were where the gods landed their space ships aeons and aeons ago. And as the first gathering reasons slipped into the dawn of time men would leave flowers and eventually build cathedrals and beautiful places of worship that we see in modern times. But the Djinn did not forget for they were there first whilst man still slept and long before man began to re-member themselves and their place and reason for being on the Earth.

Islamic belief divides sentient beings into three categories. In order of creation, they are: the angels (malayka), the hidden ones (djinn), and humankind (nas or banu adam).

Archangel Gabriel with Mohammed

*'Allah has created angels who have reason but no desires; animals with desires but no reason and man with both reason and desires. Therefore if reason is stronger than desires he is like an angel whilst if his desire is stronger than his reason he is like an animal.'*

What does this comment mean?

1. Angels (Malayka) are made out of light, djinn out of fire, men out of earth (sometimes translated as mud or clay). Angels are considered neither male nor female and have no free will.
2. Djinn, like humans, are gendered, and have free will. (This is why, in Islamic thought, Satan is a djinn, not an angel; it would be impossible for an angel to disobey the will of God.) Djinn may be benevolent, evil, or neutral, but are generally regarded as less trustworthy and more prone to trickery than people, even if they are benign.
3. In addition to the types of djinn mentioned here, there are many lesser varieties of djinn that appear in local legends that vary from place to place. For example, in Egypt, there are thought to be female djinn who inhabit the canals and tributaries of the Nile and lure men to their deaths, much like sirens, but they don't appear elsewhere in the Arab world.

**MARID** (pronounced MAA-rid)

Large and imposing, the marid are considered the most powerful tribe of djinn. They are the classic genies of folklore, often portrayed as barrel chested men with booming voices.

Originally sea-spirits, they are often associated with water, and thought to take sanctuary in the open ocean.

**EFFRIT** (pronounced eff-FREET)

Intelligent and cunning, the effrit are thought to live in complex societies similar to those of humans. They are said to prefer caves and underground dwellings. Though ostensibly demonic, they are portrayed as changeable in nature, and capable of becoming pious and good. In the Quran, King Solomon is said to have had power over a tribe of Effrit, who performed various tasks for him.

Use this page to start your story: Play with the font and colours, get pictures from the internet let yourself feel free to have adventures.

One day when I was..... I met Mahnoor and Peter...

