An introductory resource guide for the literary enthusiast, with a focus on the context of Orientalism.

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Introduction

One Thousand and One Nights, also known as Arabian Nights or ‘Alf Laylah Wa Laylah’ in Arabic, is a collection of stories of unknown authors, of Indian, Persian and Arabic origin, dating back to the Middle Ages, that has gained incredible global popularity over the centuries, generating a plethora of English language translations and adaptations, as well as inspiring a wide variety of works ranging from Novels, plays, podcasts and games to paintings and music. One Thousand and One Nights is a frame story (stories within a story) that was originally transmitted orally and developed over the course of centuries. The expression of one thousand and one indicates a large number, or an infinite number, but it was later taken literally, and stories were added to make up the number, making the One Thousand and One Nights an ever-evolving story.

Similar to the fairy tales collected by the Grimm brothers, the original stories of the One Thousand and One Nights include violence and explicit content and are far removed from the family friendly Disney adaptations, which has resulted in them being banned in some countries, and some Victorian era translations having parts censored out.

How to use this guide

This is an introductory guide about the One Thousand and One Nights, including modern translations and adaptations, resources on their history and context, as well as information on the world of the tales and Islamic art and literature more generally. The list of resources included is not exhaustive due to the sheer number of them but is a selection of resources that are of interest to literary enthusiast and is created for a UK audience. Therefore, while efforts were made to create a diverse list of resources, only ones that are easily accessible for and relevant to a UK based readership have been included.

This guide also includes a section on the context of Orientalism¹ in relation to the tales, to shed light on how and why they came to be so popular in the West, and to enable the reader to engage with them with an awareness of issues such as depicting ethnic stereotypes in works of literature, art and entertainment, and the resulting real-life repercussions. For, in order to challenge stereotypes, they must first be recognised. This is by no means intended to hinder readers’ enjoyment of the tales, but simply to raise awareness and encourage a critical approach in engaging with them. This guide is suitable for a young adult and adult audience.

This guide can be used to dip into to find a suitable translation or some interesting derivative work, or to go through more thoroughly to delve deeper into the world of the One Thousand and One Nights, to understand it in context, and crucially, to read translations, adaptations and other related work within the context of Orientalism.

¹ See Context of Orientalism section for a definition of Orientalism

Batul Alsaraji
Modern Translations

This selection includes some modern readable translations as well as some that allow the reader to delve deeper into the world of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, some of which contain additional material, introductions, and historical context.

Print Books

The frame story begins with the tale of a vengeful King named Shahryar, who as a result of the betrayal of his former wife vows to wed a different woman every day and kill her by daybreak the next day. His vizir’s daughter Scheherazade (also written Shahrazad) devised a scheme in order to save herself and all other women, by marrying the King and each night telling a story of wonders and Jinn and magic, leaving it incomplete with the promise to finish it the next morning.

*One Thousand and One Nights* by Hanan Al-Shaykh, illustrations by Holly Macdonald
Published by: Bloomsbury, 2013

The tales of *One Thousand and One Nights* are retold by the London based, Lebanese born acclaimed writer Hanan Al-Shaykh. This version incorporates the frame story of Shahrazad telling stories to the King Shahryar to save her life and recounts the tales with all their violent and sensual details, full of Jinn and magic, exploring themes of love, marriage, power, punishment, wealth, and poverty. This is a modern and readable edition of the tales.

*The Arabian Nights* translated by Husain Haddawy, and edited by Muhsin Mahdi,
Published by: WW Norton & Co, 2008

This is a new edition of the 1990 translation of the Arabic edition by Muhsin Mahdi, described as the definitive edition of *the Arabian Nights* based on a fourteenth-century Syrian manuscript, which is the oldest surviving version of the tales and considered to be the most authentic. This edition is suitable for readers interested in ‘authentic’ English translations that are close to the Arabic manuscripts.

*The Arabian Nights* translated by Husain Haddawy, and selected and edited by Daniel Heller-Roazen
Published by: WW Norton & Co, 2009

This first edition of the *Arabian Nights* translated by Haddawy includes a selection of 28 tales, examples of some of the oldest witnesses to the *Arabian Nights*, other related works, 11 wide ranging essays on the *Arabian Nights*, as well as a chronology and a selected bibliography. This is an extensive and informative text that allows the reader to both enjoy the tales and learn more about their context and history.
**The Arabian Nights: Tales of 1,001 Nights, Volumes 1-3**, translated by Malcolm Lyons with Ursula Lyons, introduced by Robert Irwin
Published by: Penguin Classics, 2010

This trilogy is a modern translation of the *Arabian Nights* with an extensive collection of stories that are structured so the sequence of stories will last 1001 nights. The introduction looks at the history of the tales, their different uses, and the various translations, and this edition also includes maps of the regions that feature in the tales. This allows the reader to not only delve into the magical world of the tales, but also the historic regions in which they originated.

**Tales from the Thousand and One Nights (Arabian Nights),** translated and introduced by N. J. Dawood
Published by: Penguin Classics, 1973

This edition features a selection of some of the best-known tales. Dawood introduces the tales with a discussion on their origin and their distinctions from Classical Arabic literature and examines the English translations of the tales since the 18th century.

**The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night, Volumes 1-4, 2nd ed.** translated by Powys Mathers, from the French by J, C. Mardrus
Published by: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 1986

These four volumes are the English language rendering of the French text which was translated from Arabic by the Syrian French author J C Mardrus and published between 1898 to 1904. It is one of the earliest complete collections of the tales in the English language. This edition will be of interest to anyone looking into early translations of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, or a complete collection of the tales.

**eBook**

**THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS Vol 1, translated by EDWARD WILLIAM LANE,** edited by Edward Stanley Poole, illustrations by William Harvey.
Published by: Chatto & Windus, 1912 - Available via [Gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)

This is a freely available eBook version of an early translation by Lane, provided by Project Gutenberg, which is a digital library that provides free content by digitising and archiving cultural works. Other early translations are also available on the website. Note that this is a somewhat ‘censored’ translation that was created to suit a Victorian audience, leaving out explicit sexual content.

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Audiobook

The Arabian Nights Entertainment, translated by Jonathan Scott
Published by: Pickering & Chatto, 1890; recording 2021 - via PodBean.com

An audio recording of the text by Jonathan Scott, another early translation that is now in the public domain, and therefore no longer subject to copyright. Of interest to anyone looking for a freely available audiobook, or anyone interested in the earlier translations of the tales.

Collectors’ Editions

These editions have been included for readers interested in illustrated works. These have a smaller selection of tales but are of value for aesthetic appreciation and would be a suitable choice for a gift.

The Illustrated Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp, translations by Andrew Lang
Published by: Book Press, 2019

This illustrated edition tells the story of Aladdin and the wish-granting Genie and includes 120 illustrations by twenty different artists from the period dubbed the ‘Golden Age of Illustration’ lasting from before the 1880s to the 1920s.

ISBN 9781851245017

A Thousand and One Nights, illustrated by Kay Nielsen, edited by Noel Daniel, contributions by Cynthia Burlingham, Margaret Sironval, and Colin White
Published by: Taschen GmbH, 2018

This limited-edition collection includes 21 exquisitely colourful illustrations of the One Thousand and One Nights by the Danish, early 20th century illustrator Kay Nielsen, and a multilingual (English, German, French) companion book containing image descriptions, essays, and other rarely seen artworks. This edition will be of particular interest for art lovers and collectors.

ISBN 9783836532266

Sindbad the Sailor & Other Stories from the Arabian Nights, illustrated by Edmund Dulac, translated by Laurence Houseman
Published by: Bodleian Library, 2018

This collectors’ edition tells the stories of Sindbad the sailor, Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp, the Story of the Three Calenders and the Sleeper Awakened, each one accompanied by beautiful watercolour illustrations by Edmund Dulac.

ISBN 9781851245017
1001 Nights: Illustrated Fairy Tales from One Thousand and One Nights, edited by Robert Klanten and Hendrik Hellige
Published by: Gestalten, 2005

A young adult illustrated collection of tales from the One Thousand and One Nights. This edition combines traditional texts with contemporary illustrations by a variety of artists of different backgrounds employing a variety of styles. A suitable choice for young aspiring literary enthusiasts and fans of fairy tales.

ISBN 9781851245017

About the One Thousand and One Nights: Historical Context

These resources include insightful information and historical context of the tales and allow the reader to gain a deeper understanding. Some of these resources are more detailed and extensive, while others are brief introductions, which covers a variety of purposes, be it some leisurely reading or more purposeful research.

Monographs

The Islamic Context of The Thousand and One Nights, by Muhsin al-Musawi
Published by: Columbia University Press, 2009

In this book, al-Musawi shows how deeply Islamic heritage and culture is embedded in the tales of the One Thousand and One Nights, by reading the tales against Islamic schools of thought and historical evidence to highlight the tales’ underlying narrative of the protagonists’ journey from corruption to redemption.

ISBN 9780231146340

The Arabian Nights in Historical Context: Between East and West, edited by Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum
Published by: Oxford University Press, 2008

This book includes a collection of essays by various authors and discusses the Arabian Nights in historical and cultural contexts, and the wide-ranging literary scholarship engaging with the tales, their place in modern orientalism, their influence in Enlightenment and Romantic literature and their newfound popularity in the contemporary Arabic novel.

ISBN 9780199554157
The "Arabian Nights" Encyclopedia, by Ulrich Marzolph and Richard Van Leeuwen  
PUBLISHED BY: ABC-CLIO, 2004

This two-volume set is a comprehensive encyclopaedia of the Arabian Nights with over 800 detailed entries, an introduction, a variety of essays and an extensive bibliography. This text would be of interest to anyone wishing to engage more deeply with the tales or working on a research project.

Articles & Blogs

The Thousand and One Nights  
PUBLISHED BY: Britannica.com, 2021

This is a brief introductory article about the tales of the One thousand and One Nights and their history and presence in the West. It is an accessible, informative, and quick read. Britannica is an online encyclopaedia and a valuable resource with fact checked information which is updated on a daily basis. It has articles for different ages and reading levels which contain free to reuse media. It is suitable for both leisurely browsing and purposeful research.

5 Creepy Things from The Thousand and One Nights  
PUBLISHED BY: Britannica.com

Readers new to the original tales of the One Thousand and One Nights might not be familiar with their eerie and more violent details. This short article lists five chilling details from the tales, including haunted houses and other supernatural beings, that will come as a surprise to anyone only familiar with the family friendly Disney adaptations or children's book versions.

The History of the Arabian Nights – One Thousand and One Nights  
Blog post available at Book Press

A short introduction to the history of the One Thousand and One Nights, including their origins, the themes featured in the tales, as well as a number of illustrations, and many editions of illustrated Arabian Nights books. This website will be useful for readers shopping for illustrated editions of the tales.

Scheherazade's Web - The Thousand and One Nights and Comparative Literature, by Jack Ross  
Blog, available at dinarzade.blogspot.com

This blog discusses the history and context of the One Thousand and One Nights with an incredible amount of detail and insight. This blog is an ideal place to browse for the serious One Thousand and One Nights fan.
A Thousand and One Nights: Arabian Story-telling in World Literature, by Muhannad Salhi
Blog post, available at 4 Corners of the World

A library of Congress blog named 4 Corners of the World in which curators and reference specialists write about the Library’s special collections. This short post talks about how the One Thousand and One Nights came to be popular with Western audiences.

A New Translation of the Arabian Nights, by Jack Ross
Blog post, available at The Imaginary Museum

A blog post that talks in some detail about the various translations of the Arabian Nights and their individual approaches and criticisms thereof. Of relevance to readers trying to decide on which translation to choose.

The Humanist Message Hidden Amid the Violence of One Thousand and One Nights, by Joe Fassler
Article published by The Atlantic, 2013

Article exploring the sophisticated narrative of the tales and the Humanist message embedded within them in an interview with the writer and journalist Hanan al-Shaykh, author of the book One Thousand and One Nights, a retelling of the tales. (see Hanan Al-Shaykh book on page 3)

Obscenity and Orientalism: How Burton’s Arabian Nights Challenged the Victorian Stance on Sexuality by Devon Gibbons
Article from Refract Magazine

Article discussing issues around the sexually explicit content in the Arabian Nights and how Victorian era translations dealt with it and readers’ reactions and attitudes at the time. Relevant to readers interested in Victorian literature.

The Arabian Nights: a thousand and one illustrations, by Robert Irwin
Article by: The Guardian, 2011

This article discusses the story of illustrated versions of the Arabian Nights, from 18th century drawings to Disney’s adaptation. It looks at some of the earliest illustrations that appeared alongside the tales and moves to subsequent works, discussing their development and significance. Of relevance to devotees of literature and art alike.
Radio & Podcast

**In Our Time: The Arabian Nights, presented by Melvyn Bragg**
Radio Programme available at BBC Sounds, 2007

A radio discussion series that explores a variety of historical topics. In this episode the host Melvyn Bragg discusses with his guests the myths and legends of the *Arabian Nights*.

**1001 Nights at the Cinema, hosted by Chris Gratien, with Samhita Sunya,**
Podcast available at Ottoman History Podcast, 2019

This episode explores the impact of the *One Thousand and One Nights* on the history of cinema in many different cultures, from Japan and South Asia to Iran and the Caucasus and highlights the connection between these regions, also touching on issues of Orientalism and Exoticism in the imagery and cinematic representation of the tales.

**The One Thousand and One Nights, presented by Rajan Datar**
Radio Programme The Forum available at BBC Sounds, 2007

This radio programme discusses the interesting history and nature of the *One Thousand and One Nights* with Wen Chin Ouyang, Professor of Arabic at SOAS, Dr Sandra Naddaff, senior lecturer in Comparative Literature at Harvard University; and the Iranian TV producer Shabnam Rezaei, as they also discuss their personal connection to the tales.

**The Book that Changed Me, Zarah Hussain on the Arabian Nights,**
Episode 3 of 5
Radio Programme The Essay available at BBC Sounds, 2007

The British artist Zarah Hussain who specialises in Islamic geometric art tells of her first encounter with the tales of the *One Thousand and One Nights* and how they have inspired her as an artist.
The World of the One Thousand and One Nights: A Look into Islamic Art and Literature

This section includes resources that explore the world of the One Thousand and One Nights more generally, looking at the art, culture, and literature of that period.

Print Books

A Thousand and One Nights: The Art of Folklore, Literature, Poetry, Fashion and Book Design of the Islamic World, by Hiroshi Unno
Published by: PIE Books, 2017

A beautifully illustrated and vibrant introduction to Islamic art and culture. This is a visual art collection including European illustrations of the stories of the One Thousand and One Nights and others, as well as ancient Islamic manuscripts and art on which these illustrations are based, Islamic book design, ornaments and costumes of the time.

ISBN 9784756248169

Harun Al-Rashid and the World of the Thousand and One Nights, by André Clot, translated by John Howe
Published by: New Amsterdam Books, 1992

Harun al Rashid, the caliph from Baghdad portrayed in the Thousand and One Nights, was not a fictional character, but the most famous caliph of the Abbasid dynasty who reigned for a quarter-century. This book gives account of his development as a ruler and serves as an introduction to the Abbasid era in general and gives a glimpse into that era of the Arab world.

ISBN 9780941533652

Tales of the Marvellous and News of the Strange: A Medieval Arab Fantasy Collection, translated by Malcolm Lyons, introduced by Robert Irwin
Published by: Penguin Classics, 2016

Some of the earliest known Arabic short stories, dating as far back as a millennium ago, translated from a single manuscript found in a library in Istanbul, some of which were included in The One Thousand and One Nights, and others never translated into English before. This book makes for a fitting accompaniment to the One Thousand and One Nights.

ISBN 9780241299951
The Travels of Ibn Battutah, by Ibn Battutah, edited by Tim Mackintosh-Smith
Published by: Macmillan Collector’s Library, 2016

The great fourteenth-century Moroccan scholar, jurist, and explorer Ibn Battutah recounts his 75,000 miles journey across many countries reaching as far north as the Volga, as far east as China and as far south as Tanzania. This book allows the reader to get to know the historical setting of the Islamic world.

Sweet Delights from a Thousand and One Nights: The Story of Traditional Arab Sweets, by Habeeb Salloum, Muna Salloum, and Leila Salloum Elias
Published by: Bloomsbury Publishing (UK), 2013

In a blend of cooking with culture and recipes with history, this book introduces recipes of sweet desserts of saffron and rose water from medieval Arabic texts and adapts them to be recreated in a modern kitchen. This is a culinary journey through the world of the One Thousand and One Nights and a delightful and entertaining way to learn more about the culinary art of the medieval Arab world.

Articles

Islamic Arts: Popular Literature
Published by: Britannica.com, 2019

This Britannica article gives a very readable introduction to the world of Islamic arts, including Arabic literature and information about the One Thousand and One Nights. The ‘popular literature’ and the ‘Islamic literatures and the West’ section are of particular relevance, but the entire article would also be of interest for anyone looking for further information about Islamic literature in general.

TV

The Man Who Walked Across the World
Published by: BBC Four, 2007

A Documentary in which Tim Mackintosh Smith follows in the footsteps of fourteenth century Moroccan scholar and traveller Ibn Battutah, visiting various places and many people, from medieval trance music in Morocco, and the world’s oldest university in Cairo, to Taters in Crimea and a clan in China who trace back their ancestry to Arabs.

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2 Here Islamic art is defined as works produced by Muslim peoples, whether it is connected with their religion or not.
Context of Orientalism

In the face of negative representations of Arabs and Muslims in Western media, and the presence of stereotypical and exaggerated imagery, a critical approach in viewing and examining translations and adaptations of the *One Thousand and One Nights* is essential to create awareness and understanding that these images are simply that, a stereotype, and not a factual or authentic representation of the group of people being depicted. These resources therefore serve as a necessary accompaniment to the other material, to allow readers to enjoy the tales and other related content while also being aware of the issues raised in this section.

Monographs

**Orientalism, by Edward W. Said**
Published by: Penguin Books Ltd., 2003

Said’s Orientalism, first published in 1978, examines European representations and attitudes of the East, and represents an ideological approach via texts, film, or images, to view the East from a Eurocentric lens in which the ‘other’ is exoticized. This book has since sparked a lively debate on this topic, it has been highly acclaimed and also heavily criticised, and the concept of Orientalism is now often discussed alongside topics relating to the Middle East to encourage critical thinking and examination.

**Edward Said: Continuing the Conversation - A Critical Inquiry**
Book, edited by Homi K. Bhabha, and W. J. T. Mitchell
Published by: The University of Chicago Press, 2005

A continuation to Said’s Orientalism, this collection of essays elaborates further on his ideas and includes applications of his thought to new problems. Of interest to readers who would like to read about the idea of Orientalism and its influence in more detail.
Articles

The imperial Gothic, by Suzanne Daly
Published by British Library, 2014

The British Library holds some manuscripts and illustrations of the One Thousand and One Nights and is a valuable and vast source of information. Online, readers can read about digitised collection items as well as articles on various topics. This article draws on Said’s ideas of Orientalism in the context of the Gothic Novel, in which characteristics such as mysticism, degeneracy, irrationality, and barbarism came to define the non-western ‘other’ in 19th-century Britain.

Exoticism in 19th-century literature, by Julia Kuehn
Published by British Library, 2014

This article can be read alongside the previous one as they are similar in theme. Here the author examines the One Thousand and One Nights among other titles and discusses the Victorian fascination with literary depictions of the exotic.

How the Arabian Nights stories morphed into stereotypes by Katherine Bullock
Article by The Conversation, 2019

Article discussing the real-world implications of stereotypes and stereotypical imagery in media and popular culture, with a focus on the One Thousand and One Nights.

Did Disney shape how you see the world? By Richard Gray
Published by BBC, 2019

Article discussing the influence of Disney’s adaptations of tales, arguing that these depictions and the stereotypes within them have shaped how audiences see the world. This article explores through examples how while these films appear to be harmless entertainment, they have a lasting impact on stereotypes.

The fraught cultural politics of Disney’s new Aladdin remake, by Aja Romano
Published by VOX, 2019

Article discussing the complicated history of the tale of Aladdin and the issue of ethnic stereotypes within the various translations and adaptations, focussing on the 2019 Disney live action adaptation.
Videos

Orientalism and power: When will we stop stereotyping people? | A-Z of ISMs Episode 15
Available via the BBC Ideas YouTube channel, 2019

This is a bite sized video clip introducing Said’s Orientalism and talks about the consequences of viewing people through the lens of Orientalism, from negative depictions in the media to policies that affect the lives of a large group of people.

Edward Said on Orientalism
Interview available via YouTube

In this 1998 interview Professor Sut Jhally of Massachusetts University talks to Edward Said about his books. Said argues that the negative and stereotypical representation of the Middle East in the West generates a deeply distorted image of the diversity and complexity of the millions of Arab peoples.

Adaptations & Works Inspired by the Tales

This selection of resources is a testament to how far reaching the influence of the One Thousand and One Nights has been, generating a plethora of diverse works inspired by the tales. It is of relevance to readers in search for Arabian Nights themed content.

Novels and Short Stories

Arabian Nights and Days by Naguib Mahfouz
Published by: Anchor, 1995

The Egyptian literary Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfouz reimagines the tales in his own style, telling stories of genies and flying carpets, including familiar characters Aladdin, Sinbad, and Ali Baba, and many other stories from the tradition of The One Thousand and One Nights. In this novel he touches on topics of obsessive love, corruption, and social injustice. While this novel can be enjoyed in its own right, it would also serve as an imaginative addition to the original tales.

Men Without Women: Scheherazade by Haruki Murakami
Published by: Vintage, 2018

In this collection of short stories by Murakami, the tale Scheherazade revolves around a man who cannot leave his house and is regularly visited by a woman who he dubs Scheherazade. She brings him supplies, but also sleeps with him, and after each session tells him stories. Crucially, each time she stops at a cliff hanger to be continued the next visit, paralleling the technique used by the Scheherazade in the original One Thousand and One Nights.
**The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor, by John Barth**

Published by: Little Brown and Company, 1991

In this book, Barth, an American postmodernist, and metafictional writer, tells the story of an American journalist who is lost overboard and finds himself in the house of Sinbad the Sailor. What follows is a recounting of voyages and adventures, and a weave of stories within stories.

ISBN 9780316082518

**The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherazade by Edgar Allan Poe**

Published by: Independent, 2020

A satirical short story by the American author Edgar Allan Poe, first published in 1845. As a continuation of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, the story tells of the eighth and final voyage of Sinbad the Sailor—the Thousand and Second tale—as he encounters various mysteries. This is a humorous take on the tales and in that it is different from the other works listed in the novels and short stories section.

ISBN 9798632518642

**Comics and Manga**

**The Sandman, Distant Mirrors: Ramadan by Neil Gaiman**

Published by: Vertigo, 1993; Genre: Dark Fantasy, Mythology, Horror

As part of DC Comics’, *The Sandman* series by Neil Gaiman is a collection of tales under the *Distant Mirrors* banner that revolves around emperors and the nature of power. Among them is the tale *Ramadan* which has several references to *One Thousand One Nights*, and starts with the Caliph Harun al-Rashid who rules over the brilliant city of Baghdad, and cuts at the end to modern-day war torn Baghdad, implying that the legendary Baghdad is preserved in legend forever.

**Green Lantern: 1001 Emerald Nights by Terry LeBan, Art by Rebecca Guay**

Published by: DC Comics, 2001; Genre: Superhero

This comic book edition is a mash up of the superhero *Green Lantern* and the tales of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, in which a genie is summoned instead of using the Green Lantern rings and stories are told by a character named Scheherazade.
**Magi: The Labyrinth of Magic, Vol 1** by Shinobu Ohtaka
Published by: Viz Media, Subs. of Shogakukan Inc, 2013; Genre: Adventure, Fantasy, Coming-of-age

A Japanese fantasy adventure manga series that is based largely on various stories from the One Thousand and One Nights including the characters Aladdin and Ali Baba. The manga series has also been adapted into an anime with the same title, and a spin-off manga series titled: *Magi: Adventure of Sinbad*. This manga is suitable for young teen audiences and older.

**One Thousand and One Nights: Vol 1** by JinSeok Jeon, art by SeungHee Han
Published by: Yen Press, 2008; Genre: Fantasy

A Korean Manhwa that reimagines the world of the One Thousand and One Nights with a twist. The character of ‘Scheherazade’ is a boy who is trying to save his sister’s live from the Sultan’s vengeance. This is the first part of eleven volumes.

**Film and TV**

**Aladdin**
Disney, 1992

Disney’s Aladdin is an animated musical film that is a family friendly adaptation of the story of *Aladdin and the magic Lamp*, one of the tales of the *One Thousand and One Nights*. It tells the story of a common thief who falls in love with a princess, but he cannot be her as he is not a prince. Disney also released two sequels, *The Return of Jafar* in 1994, *Aladdin and the King of Thieves* in 1996.

In 1993 a video game based on the 1992 film with same name was published by Sega.

An animated TV series of the same name was released in 1994.

A musical theatre adaptation titled *Aladdin* followed in 2011.

Disney’s adaptation of Aladdin has been incredibly successful and well known globally. It has also been criticised for employing ethnic stereotypes and drawing people with exaggerated characteristics.

**Aladdin**
Disney, 2019

This is the live action adaptation of Disney’s 1992 Aladdin, directed by Guy Ritchie. Based on the 1992 classic, Disney tried to recruit a more diverse cast and remove some of its mor problematic imagery and lyrics, but they also faced criticism for some their casting choices and depictions of stereotypes.
Podcast

**Arabian Nights: I’ll Most Likely Kill You in the Morning**
Podcast available at mythpodcast.com

Episode 82A is the first episode of two from the Myths and Legends Podcast that retells the story of *One Thousand and One Nights* and looks specifically at the frame story technique used by the character of Scheherazade. This podcast brings listeners folklore that has been impactful and has fascinated people for centuries. The tales are retold and presented in podcast format. The second episode, episode 82B, is titled *Arabian Nights: Show Me What You Got.*

Music

**Scheherazade, Op.35**
Composed by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, 1888

The tales have also inspired musicians over the centuries, such as the symphonic suite by the Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov that is inspired by the tales of the *One Thousand and One Nights* and is intended to invoke images of the Orient.

Art

**Scheherazade: the story of a storyteller**
Website, art collection, available via artuk.org, 2018

An article that discusses the role of Scheherazade as a story teller which includes some noteworthy 19th century paintings by Albert Goodwin and Sophie Anderson.

**The Art of the 1,001 Nights**
Bog post, available via blairmahoney.medium.com, 2020

This post introduces a selection of some of the paintings and illustrations inspired by the tales from the One Thousand and One Nights accompanied by excerpts from the Lyons translations. It is a selection of some bold and vibrant visualisations of the tales, and includes works by artists such as Ferdinand Keller, Sophie Anderson, Kay Nielsen, Edmund Dulac, and Maxfield Parrish.
One Thousand and One Nights
Online encyclopaedia entry, available at en.wikipedia.org

Wikipedia does not only provide various entries related to the One Thousand and One Nights, but it also houses a significant number of digitised images of paintings, illustrations and manuscripts related to the tales, that are available in the public domain or under a creative commons license. This allows readers interested in this or any other given topic to find images they can reuse, for instance for projects and studies or for inclusion into fan sites, wikis and blogs etc.

Fandom

The tales of the One Thousand and One Nights have entertained and fascinated many readers over the centuries. One place for fans to share their devotion and express their own creativity inspired by the tales, and to connect and share ideas with other fans are online fan sites.

Aladdin Central: A Disney’s Aladdin Fan Site
Website available via aladdincentral.org

A fans site that includes a Disney’s Aladdin fanfiction archive “The Library of Agrabah”, a shopping guide and news and updates among other things. This site is relevant to anyone particularly interested in Disney’s adaptation of Aladdin.

Arabian Nights Wiki
Website available via arabiannights.fandom.com

This is an Arabian Nights themed fan wiki, collecting and providing information about the various tales in the One Thousand and One Nights tradition and the different characters within them, as well as blog posts, images and videos. This is a useful, informal information source ideal for leisurely research on the tales, and a place to engage with the Arabian Nights fan community.

Literature Wiki
Website available via literature.fandom.com

A literature wiki that features content on the One Thousand and One Nights. This wiki is about literature in general. It archives and edits hundreds of articles based on literary works, all fan generated. The One Thousand and One Nights entry includes information on the origin of the tales, some of the best known tales within the collection, illustrations and links to other relevant content available via this site. While this has a number of relevant entries related to the Arabian Nights, this site is of interest also to readers who love literature and reading in general and would like to learn more about their favourite literary content and authors.
Locations

Anyone interested in exploring Islamic and Middle Eastern art, history and culture can visit one of the many rich and informative locations in London, from museums and libraries to specialist bookstores.

**British Museum**
Visit online via [britishmuseum.org](http://britishmuseum.org)

The British Museum has a wealth of information, collections, and exhibition on Islamic art and the art and history of the Middle East, India and Persia among many other things. Visit Room 34 Islamic world to discover objects from this vast area of the world. The museum can be explored virtually via [Google Arts and Culture](https://artsandculture.google.com).

**Reflections: contemporary art of the Middle East and North Africa**
Available online via [britishmuseum.org/exhibitions](http://britishmuseum.org/exhibitions), TBA

An upcoming exhibition that weaves together works of art by people from or connected to the Middle East and North Africa, with themes ranging from the Syrian uprisings to the burning of the National Library of Baghdad, touching on topics of gender, identity, history, politics, and poetic traditions.

**British Library**
Visit online via [bl.uk](http://bl.uk)

The British Library houses a large number of Middle Eastern manuscripts, printed books, periodicals, newspapers and a range of other materials. Details for many of these can be accessed via the [online catalogue](http://www.bl.uk), or the [Archives and Manuscripts catalogue](http://www.bl.uk). Some items are available to read at the library, such as Arabic manuscripts that can be read in the [Asian and African Reading Room](http://www.bl.uk).

**Al Saqi Books**
Visit online via [alsaqibookshop.com](http://alsaqibookshop.com)

Established in 1978, Al Saqi Books is a Middle Eastern specialist bookshop, which houses a comprehensive range of books on the Middle East and North Africa in English as well as books on all subjects in Arabic. Over the years, it has become a cultural hub for people from the Middle East, with many visiting it from around the world to purchase items that are unavailable or banned in their countries. Some of the resources listed in this guide can also be purchased here.

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Glossary

Jinn
Plural of Jinni, more commonly known in the West as genie, from the Arabic jinni. A supernatural spirit below the level of angels and devils.

Manga
Comics or graphic novels originating from Japan.

Manhwa
South Korean comics.

Wiki
A website or database developed collaboratively by a community of users (such as fans), which allows any of the users to add and edit content.

Reflection

Why I chose this topic

I had a personal reason for choosing to do a resource guide on the One Thousand and One Nights. My dad, an Iraqi exile would tell me stories of Sinbad the Sailor who hails from Baghdad, partly based on the traditional stories and mostly from his own imagination, and it was a way for us to feel connected to our Iraqi heritage. However, it was the connection of the tales with Orientalism that was my main motivation in choosing this topic. Growing up watching Disney’s Aladdin it was a very mixed experience; on the one hand it was one of the only or very few representations of Arabs or people from the Middle East in the media that I had encountered and I was glad to see any representation at all that was not terrorism related, but on the other hand, the imagery in Aladdin looked nothing like the Arab world that I knew and the way characters were dressed felt alien and confusing. I knew, of course, that it was simply a work of fiction loosely based on something real, but my friends at the time took it rather as a literal representation of Arabs and the imagery within that film was the only reference to the Arab world that they were familiar with.

Years later, as a university student in London, I learned about Edward Said’s Orientalism and gained a much better understanding of the repercussions of employing ethnic stereotypes and exaggerated features in works of entertainment, art, and literature, as I discovered that there was a word that explained my lived experience. That is why I decided to create a guide that includes resources on Orientalism, as inevitably readers would come across such stereotypes within the resources listed here. This would allow readers interested in the tales to engage with them critically and with awareness.

Challenges & Decisions

I have thoroughly enjoyed creating this guide, even if it was more time consuming than I had anticipated, and I learned a lot in the process. One of the main challenges in creating this guide was deciding what to add from the plethora of resources related to the One Thousand and One Nights. My goal was to create an informative guide that allows readers to learn more about the history and development of the tales and understand the context in which this content was created, as well as giving a list of interesting works inspired by the tales. In this it serves two purposes, information acquisition and entertainment.

Batul Alsaraji
First, I decided on the user group. As I saw that some educational resources already exist, I decided to create one for literary enthusiasts. This is a heterogeneous group of people with different backgrounds who are connected through their love of literature and stories and the specific interest in the tales of the One Thousand and One Nights. Resources were also narrowed down to content suitable for a young adult and adult audience and therefore material targeted at very young audiences was excluded. I did however include content such as Disney’s Aladdin, manga and comics. As a manga, comic, and animation film fan myself, I am aware that many adults also enjoy these.

Therefore, I have decided to include varied resources, some more academic or detailed in nature, and others offering bite sized information or purely for entertainment, to cover a variety of purposes and interests. The guide might also be useful for educators who would like to have an overview of local and other sources beyond texts. I also made the decision to only include resources that are relevant and easily accessible for a UK based readership, which means only resources that are available in English and are easy to find and buy in the UK were included. A short glossary was added to define words that I felt might not be commonly known, to make it more accessible.

Another decision was to largely include material that is relatively recent, due to the inaccessibility of older material and also, as much of it contains outdated and racist imagery that is no longer deemed appropriate. However, older content is discussed in some of the resources included in this guide, often with the context stereotypical depictions, racist attitudes, or censorship. For example, see the text “Obscenity and Orientalism: How Burton’s Arabian Nights Challenged the Victorian Stance on Sexuality” by Devon Gibbons. Also, I did include some older translations that might not be as accessible and relevant in terms of language and style but are freely available in the public domain. This gives the readers of the guide more options, as well as allowing for comparison between earlier and later translations of the tales.

Page Design

The images used in this guide were either available freely in the public domain or under a creative commons license (CC) or title covers, and image credit was attributed where required. Where I could not find free to use images, I used icons from MS Word to maintain consistency in the layout. Efforts were made to create a guide that is easy to read and follow, and hyperlinks were added for online content. I have added the ISBN and title cover of the most common edition currently available in UK bookstores. Resources were grouped by type of resources and area of focus to facilitate navigation and create structure.

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