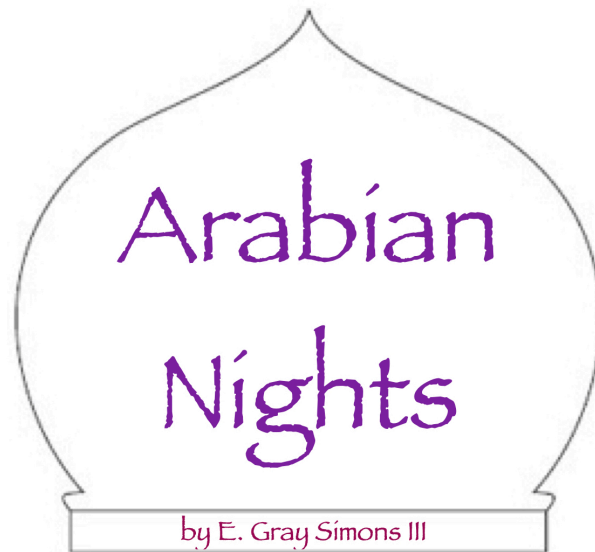


PERUSAL SCRIPT



NEWPORT, MAINE

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ARABIAN NIGHTS

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CHARACTERS — 5f 20m 11either — 36 total characters (can be doubled by as few as 5 or 6 performers)

SCHEHERAZADE

VIZIER

CHORUS 1

CHORUS 2

CHORUS 3

SHAHRYAR - The King

SULTAN

NAHIRA

ZINYAB

AHMED - Sultan's Son

HASAN - Sultan's Son (non-speaking)

BADAR - Sultan's Son (non-speaking)

PARI-BANU - The Fairy Queen

GENIE

SHARIF

GOBBY

OMAR

RAMSES - Chef (non-speaking)

INVESTOR 1

INVESTOR 2

INVESTOR 3

WAITER

NURSE

DOCTOR

MERCHANT 1

MERCHANT 2

SALIM - has a pet MONKEY (MUSTAFA — a puppet)

POLICEMAN 1

POLICEMAN 2

KAZI

ABDULLAH

ALI BABA

MORGIANA

CHIEF

THIEF

ARABIAN NIGHTS (*Tales from the Fractured Side Series*) by E. Gray Simons III. 5-6 performers of any gender can play the 36 characters in this play. **TYA** About an hour. Three tales—*Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Queen*, *The Tale of the Fool*, and *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*—from the legendary Arabian Nights. The wise young Scheherazade must renew her new husband King Sharyar's faith and manage to entertain him through the night until sunrise. Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Queen is the story of a prince who falls in love with an enchanting fairy only to be thwarted by his father's royal vizier, a cunning sorceress. The Tale of the Fool uses a royal jester to show that even he who laughs at a fool can sometimes be one. Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves risks the lives of Ali Baba and his household by tempting him with stolen riches. Part of the TALES FROM THE FRACTURED SIDE Series. **Order #3178**

Playwright **E. Gray Simons III** has worked for fifteen years as an Artist-in-Residence at BTF. In 2000, he became Artistic Director of BTF PLAYS! and has since written and directed more than a dozen original plays, among them *Aesop's Network*, *Nursery Rhyme Café*, *Mystery Sideshow 2: Strange Waves*, and *Mystery Sideshow 3: Way Out West*.

Simons made his BTF directorial debut in 2000 with *The Wind in the Willows* and in 2001 he became director of the *Summer Performance Stories*, *The Odyssey*, *The Magic Flute*, *Arabian Nights*, and *Monkey*. Other directorial credits include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Oliver!* and *Peter Pan*(2009) on BTF's Main Stage, *Where Has Tommy Flowers Gone?* and *Holiday Memories* in the Unicorn Theatre, *Robin Hood* at the Berkshire Museum, *The Who's Tommy* at Brandeis University with co-director Eric Hill, and *Big Love* at Brandeis University. His BTF acting credits include *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Peter Pan*, *Moby Dick-Rehearsed*, and *Wilder, Wilder*.

Berkshire Theatre Festival's year-round education program, BTF PLAYS! serves area students from kindergarten through high school. At the heart of BTF PLAYS! is a passionate commitment to bring live theatre and all its inherent excitement and creativity to children in our region. Each year, more than 10,000 students in underserved rural and inner city schools throughout Berkshire Country are reached through in-school residency programs, vacation camps, and our touring production. Over the course of the summer, BTF PLAYS! hosts vacation camps for students from grades K-6, providing opportunities to learn about acting, improvisation, storytelling, and working behind the scenes in the theatre.

ARABIAN NIGHTS

SCHEHERAZADE: *(Enters)* Long ago, there was a king called Shahryar, who ruled over all of the Arabian lands and was much beloved by his people.

(A king enters with a procession of dancers, courtiers, advisers, etc... There is a general sense of fanfare with the entrance of the king and all move with a sense of reverent celebration. The king, however, is solemn.)

CHORUS 1: He was and just and kind and saw that all his people were dealt with fairly, until one day he discovered that his wife, whom he loved dearly, had been unfaithful to him.

CHORUS 2: Overcome with humiliation and anger he had her put to death and vowed never to give his heart another woman.

CHORUS 3: From that time on the king's mood, which once shined with a light of benevolence, became dark and frightening.

(Everyone exits slowly except Scheherazade and Vizier)

SCHEHERAZADE: This behavior greatly concerned his subjects and they feared what else he might do, so after many days of doubt the king's advisers finally decided to approach the king in an attempt to revive his former good spirit.

(King Shahryar sits on his throne)

VIZIER: Sire, I can see that you are troubled. Is there anything I can do to ease your anguish?

SHAHRYAR: The only woman that I ever loved betrayed me and in my rage I have taken her life. How do you propose that I remedy this sorrow?

VIZIER: I know of nothing that could possibly erase your sorrow. I simply want to be of service to you in any way that I can. If I may make an observation, Sire... There are many beautiful women in your realm that you may-

SHAHRYAR: Are you suggesting that I take another wife? I have sworn never to love another.

VIZIER: Well, I thought that in time you might feel differently-

SHAHRYAR: In time? I am a prisoner of time and my cell is my own mind.

VIZIER: Perhaps if you open your mind and share your thoughts-

SHAHRYAR: I have no key to open my mind!

VIZIER: Someone said to me once, "Tell whoever has sorrow, grief shall never last. Just as joy has no tomorrow, so too will woe slip past."

SHAHRYAR: Who said that?

VIZIER: My daughter, Scheherazade. She has studied the stories and lessons of the wise.

SHAHRYAR: Well, perhaps, she should be my advisor. Or better yet, she shall be my wife.

VIZIER: Your wife?

SHAHRYAR: Yes, and if she displeases me in any way, she will suffer the same fate as my first wife.

VIZIER: But sire-

SHAHRYAR: Your advice has been taken and now you must live with my decision. I will marry your daughter tomorrow and she will have until the sunrise of the next day to prove her worthiness to me. You may make arrangements for my wedding immediately.

VIZIER: Yes, my king.

(Vizier bows and exits.)

SCHEHERAZADE: The Vizier had no choice, but to tell his daughter that he must marry King Shahryar immediately.

CHORUS 1: Under normal circumstances this would be a joyous occasion, but with the King obviously in a state close to madness, the Vizier feared that Scheherazade might have only one day to live and he explained this to his daughter.

CHORUS 2: Scheherazade spoke words of comfort to her father, who was beside himself with remorse.

CHORUS 3: She agreed that she must fulfill her duty to the King and the next day they were wed in a splendid ceremony.

(Courtiers, advisers and dancers enter. The King enters and is soon joined by Scheherazade, who is now wearing a veil. The ceremony concludes with a dance and the scene shifts to the King's chambers. The king is seated in a chair and Scheherazade stands nearby. She is still wearing her veil.)

CHORUS 1: After the ceremony, later that night in the king's chambers, Scheherazade stood by her new husband, who sat on his throne, disconsolate.

SCHEHERAZADE: My husband, is there any thing I can do for you?

SHAHRYAR: No, wife. You have married a helpless and broken man.

SCHEHERAZADE: No man can be helpless in the presence of hope.

SHAHRYAR: You have hope? Will your hope save your life when it has not mended mine?

SCHEHERAZADE: I only have hope for you. As for my life, that is only for me to live while I may.

SHAHRYAR: Are you not afraid of me?

SCHEHERAZADE: No, my king, my only fear is that I may not know your heart.

SHAHRYAR: I would like to see your face.

(Scheherazade removes her veil.)

You are beautiful. But, outer beauty does not equal sincerity.

SCHEHERAZADE: True, outward beauty may disguise peril and inward majesty may be hidden in a common vessel. I have a story concerning this matter. Would it please you to hear it?

SHAHRYAR: If that is how you would like to pass the night, be my guest.

SCHEHERAZADE: The story is called “Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Queen.”

SHAHRYAR: Fairies aren’t real.

SCHEHERAZADE: In this story they are. And, if I am to be your guest passing the night telling stories, then you are committed to be my audience.

SHAHRYAR: I should most definitely be committed. Continue.

SCHEHERAZADE: In a kingdom far, far away, there lived a Sultan...

(Sultan enters.)

CHORUS 1: He was wise and far-sighted for he listened carefully to all opinions and weighed them in his heart.

CHORUS 2: The Sultan had three sons

(Sons enter)

CHORUS 3: Prince Hasan, the eldest, Prince Badar, in the middle and, Prince Ahmed, the youngest.

CHORUS 1: He also had an adopted daughter, Nahira, for whom he cared as his own.

(She enters)

CHORUS 2: Nahira’s father had been the Sultan’s closest adviser, but he had died from an unexplained illness.

CHORUS 3: The Sultan raised all four of his children with compassion and care and he did his best to pass on his wisdom to them.

CHORUS 1: One day he noticed that his adopted daughter had grown up to become very beautiful. Indeed, he had never seen such a lovely girl.

SULTAN: *(To Nahira)* My dear, daughter, your loveliness is unmatched even by the new jasmine

blossoms in palace's spring garden.

NAHIRA: Thank you, your highness.

CHORUS 2: Shortly after, he realized that his sons had also noticed that she was beautiful and every time she passed them they would sigh a thousand sighs.

(As she passes, they sigh)

CHORUS 3: And then fall into arguing over who should be able to ask for her hand in marriage.

(They argue)

So the Sultan decided that he would call his chief adviser, Zinyab, to his chamber for council.

(As the Sultan sits on his throne, Zinyab enters.)

ZINYAB: You called you, your highness?

SULTAN: Mistress Zinyab, I was just thinking about calling you. Sometimes I think you can read my mind.

ZINYAB: Well, I do my best, your highness. May I be of service?

SULTAN: I have just discovered that Nahira has grown to become a lovely young woman.

ZINYAB: Quite a revelation, your highness.

SULTAN: Well, more amazingly I believe that all of my sons are in love with her. I had never even considered the possibility of one of my sons marrying Nahira, but as she was not my natural daughter, I think it's a splendid idea. There's just one problem...

ZINYAB: Deciding who will be the lucky prince?

SULTAN: Exactly. There you go reading my mind again. What do you think? I believe they are all worthy. And I wouldn't want to disappoint any of them.

ZINYAB: Perhaps a competition might resolve the problem.

SULTAN: Perfect! A simple contest. You have such wonderful way of clearing the fog from my mind, so my thoughts may find the right path.

ZINYAB: Yes, your highness, I can be absolutely...pathological.

SULTAN: *(Laughing)* Oh, that's good, that's good! Thank you, Zinyab. I don't know what I'd do without you. I'm going to go arrange this contest right away.

(Exits)

CHORUS 1: The Sultan had indeed come to depend on Zinyab for all his decision-making, which was

just the way she liked it.

CHORUS 2: Before Zinyab had risen to chief adviser, she was the Sultan's expert physician.

CHORUS 3: In fact, Nahira's father had been in Zinyab's care and to the amazement and dismay of the Sultan she could not heal him and when he died she took his position.

ZINYAB: I must think about which prince I would like the lovely, Nahira, to wed. They are all equally honest and loyal, but there may be some benefit in controlling the outcome of the contest.

CHORUS 1: What the Sultan did not know about Zinyab was that she controlled a variety of the comings and goings in his kingdom.

CHORUS 2: She was cunning sorceress and could sway a person's thoughts with mysterious potions and the enchanting tone of her voice.

CHORUS 3: She knew many dark secrets that she kept to herself and for now she was satisfied with her position, orchestrating from the shadows, but her power was growing and the Sultan was getting old and weak willed.

CHORUS 1: She felt that there might come a time when her magic was strong enough to reveal some of her dark secrets.

ZINYAB: I will have Badar, the middle son win. The middle child usually has the least amount of confidence and would therefore be the easiest to manipulate should he for some unusual and tragic reason become Sultan.

(She exits)

CHORUS 2: The next day a host of people gathered in the field outside the palace grounds.

(The Sultan, three princes and excited spectators enter)

CHORUS 3: Word of the contest had spread quickly and there was a great sense of excitement.

CHORUS 1: The three princes were to compete in an archery contest, since the Sultan thought they were very evenly matched at that skill.

CHORUS 2: Each prince did feel that he had a chance to win; little did they know that the outcome had already been determined.

CHORUS 3: Zinyab positioned herself fairly close to where the competitors took aim.

SULTAN: The rules of this contest are simple. Each of my sons will have one shot. Whichever one can shoot his arrow the farthest will win my blessing to ask the princess, Nahira, for her hand in marriage. Whether she says yes to the winner is up to her. Good luck my sons. Hasan, as you are the eldest you may shoot first.

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(Hasan steps forward, stretches his bow and fires an arrow. Upon his firing, Zinyab unobtrusively motions to make the arrow fall short. The crowd gasps and then moans disappointedly, indicating the mediocrity of the attempt.)

Badar, you may shoot next.

(Badar steps forward, stretches his bow and fires his arrow. Upon his firing, Zinyab motions to make his arrow fly far. The crowd gasps and then claps and murmurs excitedly.)

Ahmed, you may now take your turn.

(Ahmed steps forward, and fires. As with Hasan, Zinyab motions to redirect the shoot. The crowd gasps and then...)

I don't see where the arrow has landed.

CHORUS 1: The Sultan and all the onlookers strode out into the field to find the shot, but there was no evidence of the arrow.

CHORUS 2: Even Zinyab could not explain the disappearance, however the outcome was still as she desired.

SULTAN: Ahmed, I am confused by this, but the rule was one shot only. Since we cannot find your arrow you cannot be judged, so Badar has won.

AHMED: Yes father, I understand.

SULTAN: I'm sorry, my son.

(He exits)

CHORUS 3: Prince Ahmed was disappointed by his loss, but mostly he was puzzled by the utter disappearance of his arrow.

CHORUS 1: He was determined to find it so he traversed the field scanning the ground as he went and when he reached the end of the field he trudged up a slope and wandered toward the hill country in the north.

CHORUS 2: He had traveled often in the past and did not fear losing his way now, but after a few days he found himself climbing through a rocky region he had never seen before.

CHORUS 3: Then, from somewhere nearby, he heard beautiful music...

(The Fairy Queen, Pari-Banu, enters with her attendants. She moves around Prince Ahmed carefully observing him.)

PARI-BANU: Are you looking for something?

AHMED: Three days ago I shot an arrow north. I didn't see where it landed so I went to find it and I

have been searching ever since.

PARI-BANU: You have gone far for one arrow.

AHMED: It was shot with the intention of winning the love of a beautiful princess.

PARI-BANU: And if you find it, will you win her love?

AHMED: I believe her love is beyond my reach. Whether or not I find the arrow, I must find love somewhere else.

PARI-BANU: Then I will give you what you seek.

(She gives Ahmed his arrow.)

AHMED: Thank you. Where did you find it?

PARI-BANU: I didn't find it. I took your arrow out of the air the moment it left your bow.

AHMED: How did you do that?

PARI-BANU: I have powers beyond your human knowledge. I am the Fairy Queen, Pari-Banu, and I kept your arrow in the hope that you might come looking for it.

AHMED: Why?

PARI-BANU: Because I could not bear to see you love anyone but me. I have watched you from afar and longed to meet you.

AHMED: So you stole from me, brought me here by magic and ruined my chance to wed the princess? You don't even know me.

PARI-BANU: Your name is Prince Ahmed and you are the Sultan's youngest son. You like spending time walking in the palace garden, you write beautiful poetry and you sleep with a beige, stuffed camel, that your father gave you when you were six.

AHMED: And you've been spying on me!

PARI-BANU: Please forgive me. I only did these things because I love you and I was afraid to reveal myself to you, but when I saw your love for the princess my jealousy was too much and I had to bring you here.

AHMED: Do you expect me to return your love? Well, it doesn't matter. I suppose a fairy can make anyone fall in love.

PARI-BANU: To guide your love is not within my power and if you choose to leave, you may. But, you have traveled far and you must need rest and food. Please, join me in my home.

AHMED: I am weary. Where do you live?

PARI-BANU: Under the earth.

AHMED: That sounds... charming.

PARI-BANU: It is. Come, you'll see.

(Ahmed takes Pari-Banu's hand and follows her offstage)

CHORUS 1: Pari-Banu led Prince Ahmed far underground to her hidden dwelling.

CHORUS 2: When Ahmed saw the glittering caves and vaulted chambers of the fairy world he thought "charming" was very much an understatement.

(Ahmed and Pari-Banu enter.)

CHORUS 3: Even though it was far below where any sunlight could reach it glowed with a pleasing radiance that cleared his troubled mind and soothed his unhappy heart.

CHORUS 1: He sat and ate and talked with Pari-Banu and he discovered that, although she was a fairy and he was a man, they had similar interests.

CHORUS 2: He found himself sharing feelings that had forever been only his own.

CHORUS 3: And the more they talked and listened and laughed, the more he realized that he had lost track of the time and that she was beautiful and that he was in love with her.

AHMED: Pari-Banu, I think that you have put a spell on me, but I don't care. If this is a dream, I don't want to wake up.

PARI-BANU: Life is a mysterious dream, and truth is revealed only in the creation of ones own illusion. Your will is your own, but I would have you stay here with me forever.

AHMED: That is my will for I love you more than the world. But before we begin our new life, I must first visit my father. I'm sure my long absence has worried him. I just need to let him know that I am healthy and happy and then I will return as quickly as I can.

PARI-BANU: Of course you should go to your father, but I must ask you never to tell anyone of this place. My father is a great and powerful jinnee and has never allowed us to become entwined with the affairs of humans. I had to plead with him many days before he allowed me to meet you. He finally gave in after he saw that he would have no rest from my imploring.

AHMED: I am thankful for your persistence.

PARI-BANU: My only other request is that you take some gifts with you. Your father will marvel at their splendor and he will know you are living in a place of beauty and prosperity.

AHMED: Thank you, my dearest. I'll return to you in nine days.

PARI-BANU: My happiness will rest upon your return.

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CHORUS 1: Ahmed took leave of his Fairy Queen. Instead of traveling on foot he made his way back to his father's kingdom on horseback.

CHORUS 2: He had escort but other horses, burdened with treasure galloped behind him.

CHORUS 3: When he arrived home he discovered that many had guessed he had wandered off in depression over losing the contest and had perished in the wild.

CHORUS 1: The Sultan was overjoyed to see Ahmed and remarked at how happy and healthy he looked.

CHORUS 2: He was also impressed with the abundance of gifts that his son had brought.

(The Sultan and enters with Ahmed)

SULTAN: Tell me my son how you have come by such extraordinary treasures. And how you have kept your health.

AHMED: Father I have met a powerful queen and have fallen in love with her and she returns my love with great passion.

SULTAN: A queen? Of what land? I must meet her and thank her for caring for my youngest son.

AHMED: I'm sorry, I am sworn to keep the whereabouts of her and her people secret. You must understand that I have no choice in this matter, but in every other matter I am content and prosperous.

SULTAN: I guess I will have to accept your need for secrecy, but it is a small matter to me now that I know you're alive and well.

(Zinyab enters with a chalice)

Look Zinyab, my son has returned.

ZINYAB: Yes, welcome back Prince Ahmed. You have flourished in your absence.

AHMED: I believe I have found my dreams come true.

SULTAN: Ahmed, you must go and visit your brothers. They have missed you almost as much as I have. They are in the stable preparing to ride.

AHMED: Then I'll go right away to catch them and we'll ride together.

(Exits)

SULTAN: It's a miracle that he has returned.

ZINYAB: It is quite a marvel, your highness.

SULTAN: I was afraid that I would never see him again.

ZINYAB: I know his return has been a joyful event, but nevertheless a shock, so I have prepared something to calm your nerves.

SULTAN: Than you, Zinyab, that's very thoughtful of you.

(Sultan takes the cup and drinks)

ZINYAB: I was particularly surprised by the extravagant gifts the prince had to present.

SULTAN: Yes, I've never seen such splendor.

ZINYAB: Where do you think he could have come by such precious things?

SULTAN: He said that he has been in the care of a powerful queen.

ZINYAB: Very interesting. If they are to get married I guess that would make him a sultan, like you.

SULTAN: I guess it would.

ZINYAB: A sultan with such wealth must have considerable power behind it. Does this not concern you?

SULTAN: What are you saying?

ZINYAB: That a sultan with great power can always decide that he needs more wealth. He might even decide that he needs your wealth.

SULTAN: That could not be. Ahmed loves and respects me.

ZINYAB: Ah, how quickly you forget that you denied him a chance to wed the princess Nahira because his arrow disappeared.

SULTAN: That arrow was never found and besides, now he has a new love.

ZINYAB: One that affords him the opportunity for revenge.

SULTAN: Revenge?

ZINYAB: I think it would be wise to secretly follow Prince Ahmed back to his queen. Then his intentions might be exposed to us.

SULTAN: Yes, that is wise. But who would go?

ZINYAB: I will go, personally, and then report back to you.

SULTAN: All right, thank you, Zinyab. Your foresight is greatly valued.

ZINYAB: It is only in service to you, your highness. I can see you are taxed by these deliberations. You must rest.

SULTAN: Yes, rest is good. Thank you.

(Exits)

CHORUS 1: Zinyab was not sure what she would find out by following prince, but she had a felt that whatever it was she could use it to her advantage.

CHORUS 2: A week later the prince made ready to depart.

CHORUS 3: He promised his father he would return in a few months and left the palace.

CHORUS 1: And, Zinyab, disguised as an old beggar woman, slipped out after the prince like a malevolent shadow.

CHORUS 2: The prince rode quickly to the north and after a few days he was again in the rocky area where her first met Pari-Banu.

CHORUS 3: The plotting sorceress stayed close behind him, but was careful to keep herself concealed.

CHORUS 1: Just outside the entrance to the cave the fairy queen was waiting expectantly for her prince as nine days had passed.

CHORUS 2: Zinyab witnessed there meeting, saw the unearthly look of the fairy, Pari-Banu, and hurried back to the palace to report to the sultan.

(The Sultan enters and sits in his throne. Zinyab enters with a chalice and gives it to the Sultan)

CHORUS 3: She brought him a drink to soothe his nerves and told him of the amazing sight she saw.

ZINYAB: Your highness, your son is in the company of a fairy queen. Surely, you realize that the magical power he now has is overwhelming and that he is only biding his time before he uses it to gain control of your kingdom.

SULTAN: What am I to do?

ZINYAB: You must get him to give you a gift to show faith. Something from the fairy.

SULTAN: Something from the fairy...

ZINYAB: But be wary. We cannot disclose what we know of his new life. But you must make him prove his loyalty to you.

SULTAN: His loyalty to me...

CHORUS 1: In her new zeal to obtain a gift from the fairy world, Zinyab was all but putting words into the Sultan's mouth.

CHORUS 2: She was anxious for the prince's return, but she remained patient and fed the sultan potion and whispered words into his ear that clouded his mind.

CHORUS 3: Several months passed and once again Ahmed rode up to the palace and he presented more gifts to his father.

(The Sultan enters with Ahmed following. Zinyab enters and stands nearby.)

SULTAN: Ahmed, I am pleased to see you, but I am disappointed with the gifts.

AHMED: The gifts? I am sorry I have displeased you, father. What gift would be satisfactory?

SULTAN: These gifts are very nice, but I was hoping to get something from your queen that would help me to understand more about... her realm.

AHMED: Her realm?

SULTAN: Yes, where you live now.

AHMED: Father, I cannot tell you about the place I now live. It must remain a secret.

SULTAN: What are you hiding from me?

AHMED: I hide only what I must. If I were permitted to tell you I would. It is my desire to have you meet my queen and become acquainted with her, but...

SULTAN: Well, bring me something so that I may know more about her. I will expect an appropriate gift on your next visit.

AHMED: I will try.

(The Sultan exits, followed by Zinyab)

CHORUS 1: Prince Ahmed was distressed with his father's behavior.

CHORUS 2: He had never known him to act in such way and nine days later when he returned to Pari-Banu, she could tell that he was troubled.

(Ahmed and Pari-Banu enter.)

PARI-BANU: My dearest, since the first day I met you, I have not seen you in a more unhappy state. Please share your thoughts with me so that I may ease your sorrow.

AHMED: I am sad, but also puzzled. I explained to my father when I first returned to him that your world must remain a secret and he seemed to understand, but on this last visit he pressed me to bring him a gift that might give him some indication of where I now live. It was as if he had some knowledge of you that he was keeping from me. He was not like himself at all. I know I cannot give him what he desires, but it pains me to displease him.

PARI-BANU: I think I know how I can help you, my prince. If you are sure of your father's good character, I will give you a gift to take to him. But you must be sure.

AHMED: I believe there is something dark guiding his wishes. He is a kind and gentle man and has never asked for anything but my love.

PARI-BANU: Then you should present him with this.

(Two fairies bring in a small oil lamp.)

This is the most precious thing that I own.

AHMED: But this is just an old lamp.

PARI-BANU: In this lamp is hidden a magic that can reveal the deepest secrets of the human soul. Give this to your father and tell him to polish its surface and the cause of his illness will be known.

CHORUS 3: Prince Ahmed took the lamp and once again journeyed to his father's palace.

(The Sultan enters and sits in his throne. Zinyab enters with a chalice. The Sultan appears to be in a haze.)

CHORUS 1: When he arrived the Sultan was not there to greet him, so he went to his fathers chambers. There he found the Sultan with Zinyab.

AHMED: Father, I have returned.

ZINYAB: Prince Ahmed, home so soon?

AHMED: Yes.

ZINYAB: Your father is not well and his affliction is because of your secrecy.

AHMED: I have brought him the gift that he desires.

ZINYAB: What gift?

AHMED: This.

(Ahmed takes out the lamp)

ZINYAB: What is this meaningless piece of junk? The Sultan is slipping away and you bring him a tarnished old lamp? You need to go back to your queen and fetch something that is worthy of his request.

(Ahmed notices the cup in the Sultans hand, takes it and turns to Zinyab)

If it weren't for my care and medicine the Sultan would be dead by now.

AHMED: *(Kneels close to Sultan)* Father, I have brought you a gift.

SULTAN: Ahmed? Is that you?

AHMED: Here, I have brought you a lamp. It's old and tarnished, but you may polish it. This may help

you.

SULTAN: Thank you, my son.

ZINYAB: The Sultan has a thousand lamps! How could one more possibly help him?

(The Sultan polishes the lamp and Genie appears)

GENIE: Who disturbs the rest of the Jinnee of the lamp?

(Pointing to the Sultan.)

You?

ZINYAB: No! I summoned the Jinnee of the lamp and now you must do my bidding!

(Zinyab moves to take the lamp from the Sultan.)

GENIE: Only the one who rubs the lamp may ask of me. You may ask nothing of me.

ZINYAB: But this is all part of my design. I should have been the one to rub the lamp.

GENIE: I know the evil in this room is your design because I can see into the deepest secrets of your soul.

ZINYAB: I must know of your magical arts.

GENIE: You will soon know more than you wish. You will be my slave in the realm of the lamp for the grief you have caused this innocent man. Come along puppet.

(Genie moves Zinyab around the room like a puppet on strings and then she disappears into the lamp. Then he turns to Ahmed and the Sultan. He points to Ahmed.)

Prince Ahmed, my daughter, Pari-Banu, holds you in a light of great affection.

AHMED: I am in love with your daughter and hold her in the same regard.

GENIE: She has chosen well and I am pleased to meet you.

AHMED: I am humbled by your presence.

GENIE: The cause of your father's illness is gone and he may resume his duty as Sultan of this land. And you may return the lamp to my daughter.

AHMED: Yes, mighty one.

GENIE: I must return to my realm.

(Genie exits as King Shahryar enters.)

CHORUS 1: The Sultan was soon healed and quickly returned to his former state of kindness.

CHORUS 2: Prince Ahmed returned the lamp to Pari-Banu and they lived blissfully to the end of their days.

CHORUS 3: And evil sorceress, Zinyab, was never seen in this world again.

SCHEHERAZADE: And, so ends the story of Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Queen.

SHAHRYAR: Wondrous.

SCHEHERAZADE: It is wondrous, but no more so than the other stories that I could tell.

SHAHRYAR: You know more?

SCHEHERAZADE: Yes, would you like to hear another?

SHAHRYAR: What is it about?

SCHEHERAZADE: It is called “The Tale of the Fool”.

SHAHRYAR: What is so wondrous about a fool’s tale?

SCHEHERAZADE: This story reminds us that anyone and everyone can be a fool. It begins near the ancient city of Giza, on the west bank of the Nile...

(Sharif enters.)

CHORUS 1: The city was ruled by a great Sharif, who delighted in all things humorous. And constantly sought to be amused.

SHARIF: Someone, make me laugh.

CHORUS 2: His favorite comic was a fool named Gobby.

(Gobby enters.)

GOBBY: Hey folks, I just got back from Iraq.

(Holds up a sack)

Guess what I got in the bag, Dad!

CHORUS 3: Indeed the Sharif felt that Gobby was his personal jester and refused to allow him to work anywhere but the “Pyramid Cafe”, the Sharif’s favorite social gathering place.

CHORUS 2: Gobby performed nightly at the Pyramid and the Sharif was there almost every night.

GOBBY: Hey, it’s great to be back at the Pyramid. You know the first time I came into this joint to get dinner the chef asked me “Gobby, what’s your favorite dish?” and I said “A clean one!”

(The Sharif roars with laughter)

Hey, seriously, Chef Ramses runs a sparkling kitchen, now if he would just work on his personal hygiene we could all be friends with him.

(Sharif laughs again)

Hey, chef you know I mock you because I love you. And, because you haven't figured out that falling into the Nile River doesn't count as a bath.

(Sharif laughs.)

Thank you, I'll be here all year.

(Sharif approaches Gobby)

SHARIF: Gobby, you slay me.

GOBBY: Well, Sharif, you know I used to be an executioner. That's where I learned how to really knock 'em dead.

(Sharif exits laughing, as the chef Ramses enters with a big knife.)

Hey, Chef Ramses... That's a big knife.

(Ramses glares at Gobby and exits)

CHORUS 1: Gobby occasionally rubbed people the wrong way, but it was always in an effort to keep the Sharif entertained so usually no one complained.

CHORUS 2: In fact, most people found Gobby's brand of humor to be most appealing and many restaurant owners were dismayed that they could not have the talented prankster perform at their establishment.

CHORUS 3: On this particular night, a man named Omar was at the Pyramid. He was the owner of a brand new club called the Casbah.

(Omar enters)

OMAR: Excuse me, Mr. Gobby.

GOBBY: That's me.

OMAR: May I have a word with you?

GOBBY: Okay, but only one. Just kidding.

OMAR: My name is Omar and I have opened a new club. I was hoping to obtain you services...

GOBBY: Sorry pal, I can't do any other clubs. The Sharif wouldn't like it. If he found out that I played somewhere else, I might lose a limb. Or all my limbs. Let's just say I don't want to go out on a limb.

OMAR: Not even for a considerable sum of money?

GOBBY: How considerable?

(Omar whispers to him.)

I'll consider that. That's a lot of piasters. Where you gonna come up with that kind of money?

OMAR: I have several investors who want to make the Casbah successful right away and they are willing to pay. You only have to work late-night after you finish your show here.

GOBBY: Omar, you got a deal.

OMAR: Can you start tomorrow night?

GOBBY: I'll be there with bells on.

OMAR: Bells?

GOBBY: I've got this new whole routine with bells, it's hilarious. Just remember, no one can find out I'm playing another club. The Sharif wouldn't like it.

(The Set shifts to the Casbah.)

CHORUS 3: Omar gave Gobby directions to the club and the next night after his show at the Pyramid he quickly made his way over to the Casbah, where Omar was meeting with his investors.

(Omar enters with three investors.)

INVESTOR 1: So the comedian has taken our offer?

OMAR: Gobby agreed to the sum of money we talked about.

INVESTOR 2: I think it is a wise investment.

INVESTOR 3: I saw his show last week. If he plays here every night, in six months we'll all be rich.

OMAR: He should be here any minute. You can meet him and then we'll open for the evening.

(Investors exit as a waiter enters carrying a bucket and sets it on the table.)

What is that smell?

WAITER: Tonight's fish special has gone bad.

OMAR: Well throw it away.

WAITER: That's what I'm doing. There's a whole bunch in the kitchen.

OMAR: Here, I'll help you.

(Omar and Waiter exit. Gobby enters with Bells on.)

GOBBY: Hey, the funny man is here? Tough crowd. Hello!

(He notices the fish on the table.)

What's this?

(He sniffs.)

Oh, fish. Don't mind if I do.

(He eats a piece of fish.)

That didn't taste right.

OMAR: *(Entering.)* Ah, Gobby, you're here. I'd like you to meet someone.

(Calls offstage and Gobby starts to cough.)

Gentlemen, he's here.

(Gobby points to his throat.)

Oh, you've got your bells on.

(Investors enter.)

He's doing his famous bell routine. I've heard it's hilarious.

(Gobby goes through a series of gagging fits and bizarre convulsions and finally falls on the floor. The whole time the men are pointing and laughing and at the end they applaud.)

I told you. Isn't he funny? He's just so...

(Looks closer at Gobby.)

Dead!

(Omar looks at the bucket of bad fish.)

Oh, my word he must have eaten the spoiled fish. What should we do? If the Sharif finds out...

INVESTOR 1: Get rid of him!

INVESTOR 2: No one can know we were responsible!

OMAR: Maybe if we get him to a doctor quickly, he can be saved.

INVESTOR 3: Take him to a doctor and leave him there. And try not to be seen. If word of this gets back to the Sharif, he won't like it.

CHORUS 1: Omar dragged Gobby out of the Casbah and walked him down the street to the nearest doctor's office, where he met a nurse outside.

OMAR: Excuse me, are you a nurse? My friend is very sick.

NURSE: Oh, my! Come this way. The doctor's office is up these steps.

(To Gobby.)

Can you walk, sir?

(Omar nods Gobby's head for him.)

Okay, follow me.

CHORUS 2: Omar dragged Gobby up the stairs and when the nurse went inside to fetch the doctor, Omar propped the jester against the door...

(Omar exits with Gobby, then re-enters, runs off opposite stage)

CHORUS 3: And ran back to the Casbah.

CHORUS 1: The doctor hurried out to attend to the patient and knocked Gobby back down the stairs.

(There are loud tumbling noises offstage and Gobby's legs flop on stage. The nurse and doctor enter, looking down at the prone figure of Gobby)

NURSE: Oh my goodness! Oh my goodness! Doctor, how is he?

DOCTOR: He's dead. The fall down the stairs must have finished him off. Where is the man who left him here?

NURSE: I don't know...

(Looking closer at Gobby, she gasps)

Do you know who that is?

DOCTOR: No.

NURSE: It's Gobby, the Sharif's personal jester.

DOCTOR: Oh, he's funny...

(Looks at Gobby.)

Well, not now.

NURSE: We're going to get blamed for this.

DOCTOR: But it was an accident.

NURSE: Accident or not, when the Sharif finds out he won't like it and someone is going to get punished.

DOCTOR: You're right. We should get rid of the body and pretend we never saw it. Come on we'll take it to the alley.

(The nurse and doctor pick Gobby up and walk him across stage.)

CHORUS 2: The doctor and the nurse pulled Gobby up on his feet and walked him across the street to the alley where they propped him against a wall.

CHORUS 3: Then they ran back to their office and continued their business like nothing ever happened.

CHORUS 1: Meanwhile two merchants pushing a large wagon full of fish entered the alley.

CHORUS 2: They were going about their deliveries and didn't notice that a person was standing in their way.

MERCHANT 1: *(Enters)* Keep pushing. Our first delivery is right up this way.

MERCHANT 2: *(Offstage)* Well, aren't you going to help me?

MERCHANT 1: I am helping. I'm guiding. I guide, you push.

MERCHANT 2: *(Offstage)* That doesn't seem fair.

MERCHANT 1: *(Notices Gobby)* Hey, look out!

(The front of the wagon bumps into Gobby and knocks him over and several fish spill onto him.)

MERCHANT 2: *(Enters)* What did I hit?

MERCHANT 1: It's a guy. I didn't even see him standing there.

MERCHANT 2: Is he hurt?

MERCHANT 1: He's not moving. Hey, mister. Oh wow, he's dead.

MERCHANT 2: No way, I barely hit him.

MERCHANT 1: He must have been sick. Hey, I know this guy. He's the Sharif's clown.

MERCHANT 2: Gobby! Oh wow, he kills me. And now I've killed him. That's ironic.

MERCHANT 1: We're in trouble.

MERCHANT 2: I didn't mean to.

MERCHANT 1: Tell that to the Sharif. When he hears about this...

MERCHANT 2: He won't like it.

MERCHANT 1: Come on, help me.

ARABIAN NIGHTS by E. Gray Simons III

CHORUS 1: The two merchants cleared away their fish and took Gobby around the corner to a café where they seated him at a table and ordered him a drink.

CHORUS 2: Then they quickly returned back to their wagon and went on delivering fish.

CHORUS 3: Just as the waiter had served Gobby his cocktail, a musician and his pet monkey walked by.

(Salim and his pet monkey, Mustafa enter. Salim notices Gobby.)

SALIM: Well, well, well. Look who we have here. If it isn't the star of the Pyramid Café. I've been dying to run into you. You probably don't even realize or care that you ruined my career. That's right, I was the most talented organ grinder this side of the Nile. "Salim the Sublime". Don't tell me you don't remember. I had my weekly spot at the Pyramid. I was on the ladder to greatness and then good ole' Gobby shows up on the ladder, out of nowhere, and steps on my face as he climbs past me. You got fame and I'm the fry cook at the Falafel Hut. Can you believe this guy? He doesn't even have the decency to turn around and look me in the eye. You make me sick!

(To Mustafa.)

Get him, Mustafa!

(Mustafa shrieks and jumps on Gobby's chair and starts shaking him. Gobby falls out of his chair. Mustafa retreats back to Salim as two policemen enter)

POLICEMAN 1: Police! Hold it right there.

POLICEMAN 2: What's going on here?

SALIM: *(Points to Gobby)* He fell out of his chair.

(Mustafa agrees)

POLICEMAN 1: *(Examining Gobby)* This guy is dead. And he smells like fish.

SALIM: I didn't do it.

(Mustafa shakes head)

POLICEMAN 2: I saw the monkey attacking him.

SALIM: All Mustafa did was shake his chair and he fell.

POLICEMAN 1: Hey, not only is this guy dead, but he's also the most famous comedian in Giza.

POLICEMAN 2: We're taking you two downtown. The Sharif will have to know about this...

POLICEMAN 1 AND 2: And he's not going to like it.

CHORUS 1: So Salim and Mustafa were immediately taken before the Sharif.

CHORUS 2: In the short time before their trial, wild rumors circulated around the town.

CHORUS 3: “The jokes of our beloved fool have been silenced forever by a vicious trained assassin monkey” was but one sampling of the gossip.

CHORUS 1: People quickly amassed outside the courtroom to catch glimpse of the offenders and witness the outcome of the proceedings.

CHORUS 2: Even the Kazi, the Sharif’s wisest legal advisor, was there for the unusual event.

SHARIF: Organ grinder, you are charged with the wrongful death of my fool. What do you have to say?

SALIM: I’m innocent and so is Mustafa.

CHORUS 1: Much to the amazement of everyone there, the two merchants stepped forward.

MERCHANT 1: It’s true, your Excellency. They are innocent. We killed him with our fish wagon.

MERCHANT 2: It was an accident. He was standing in the alley and we didn’t see him.

CHORUS 2: Before the Sharif could respond to this new development, the Doctor and the Nurse stepped forward.

DOCTOR: No we killed him and put him in the alley.

NURSE: We accidentally knocked him down a long flight of stairs.

CHORUS 3: The Sharif was beyond speech.

OMAR: No, they are all innocent. I hired Gobby to do his stand up routine at my club and when he got there he ate some spoiled fish and choked to death. I’m sorry.

CHORUS 1: The Sharif Had a moment of utter perplexity and then...

(Sharif laughs really hard)

SHARIF: My fool is dead and he still makes me laugh. And I still have all of you fools around to keep me entertained.

(They all laugh nervously)

What do you think, Kazi?

KAZI: I think I would like to examine your clown. Where is he?

SHARIF: *(Points)* He lies there.

(The Kazi goes to examine Gobby)

Is all this you have said absolutely true?

(All nod in affirmation)

Then I will put you all in prison.

(All plead, beg, object, etc...Sharif holds up a hand to silence them.)

KAZI: Did any of you attempt to revive this man?

EVERYONE: No.

(The Kazi whacks Gobby on the back. He coughs for a moment then looks around)

GOBBY: Hey, Sharif, if you go to the Casbah, don't order the fish. You won't like it.

(Sharif laughs and everyone talks excitedly and exits. King Shahryar is left on stage and he sits)

SCHEHERAZADE: And that your highness is the "Tale of the Fool"

SHAHRYAR: Extraordinary.

SCHEHERAZADE: It is extraordinary, but no more so than the other stories I could tell.

SHAHRYAR: Would you tell me another?

SCHEHERAZADE: If you insist.

8 more pages to ***THE END***

TALES FROM THE FRACTURED SIDE

Plays and a musical or two, written by **E. Gray Simons III**, that tell these familiar tales in a slightly off-center way.

Alice In Wonderland (adapted from the Lewis Carroll classic) ORDER #3183

Arabian Nights (three interwoven stories from the Book of One Thousand and One Nights) ORDER #3178

Cinderella (adapted from the Charles Perrault fairy tale) ORDER #3184

The Emperor's New Clothes (adapted from Hans Christian Andersen) ORDER #3209

Hansel & Gretel's Grimm Tale (Grimm turned around) (written with **Tara Franklin**) ORDER #3179

Just So Stories (adapted from Rudyard Kipling) ORDER #3180

The Magic Flute (story adapted from Emanuel Schikaneder's libretto from the Mozart Opera) ORDER #3185

Monkey (based on the Chinese Folktale "Journey to the West")(written in collaboration with Blue Hill Performance Ensemble) ORDER #3186

Nursery Rhyme Cafe (Musical) (the folks in the Mother Goose Village are having more problems than usual) ORDER #3181

Pinocchio (loosely based on the Collodi classic) ORDER #3182

Robin Hood (suggested by the ballads and legends)(written with **Foster Durgin**) ORDER #3191

The Wind In The Willows (adapted from the Kenneth Grahame classic) ORDER #3187