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DOMES ANIMATION: ARABIAN NIGHTS

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short film treatment by
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Version 3.6

Original tale for Bollywood Parks Dubai
based on the beloved characters and stories
of the classic folklore of The Arabian Nights

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SCHEHERAZADE'S TALE

INTRODUCTIONS

Once the audience is assembled a silhouette of a magic lamp is seen on the screens, sending up tendrils of smoke. Arabic music accompanies. Onto the ringlets of smoke, a vine rises up to create a beautiful stylized Arabic window. Our male narrator begins, briefly recounting the beloved folklore of the Arabian Nights told by the greatest storyteller that ever lived.

- As he speaks, an iconic silhouette of the clever and beautiful storyteller, Scheherazade appears.
- As the narrator tells how she won the Sultan's heart with her 1001 stories, the Sultan appears in silhouette. The narrator goes on to say that he ruled their kingdom well.
- But one day, their young son grew gravely ill and fell into a deep slumber from which no one thought he would awaken. A silhouette of the sleeping prince is added to finish the picture window.

At this, Scheherazade's silhouette moves and she steps out of the frame, becoming fully alive in a flowing Arabic garment [*live actor or animation*]. Although a mother now, she is still young and beautiful, and clever as ever. She tells the audience that she will stay by her son's side and tell him a story so adventurous, so dramatic, so daring, that the little boy will surely awaken and be well. She rubs her ornate brass lantern and it issues forth smoke that spreads across the dome's screens. "But I shall need a little help."

Next, she calls to the heroes of her Arabian Nights. As she calls them by name they appear around the dome in the magical smoke. "Sinbad! Aladdin! Ali Baba! Morgana!" They bow, asking how they might be of service. "Our son is gravely ill," she says. "And I am in need of a grand, new story, full of adventure and courage! Will you accept my quest?"

THE QUEST

The heroes cheer and Scheherazade rubs her lamp. The smoke dissipates, leaving the four heroes in the middle of a beautiful Arabian city. [*setting 1, ancient Arabian city*]

Scheherazade calls first to Sinbad to see if his ship is ready. “Why yes, fair Queen!” Sinbad replies. She goes on to ask if he remembers the way to the Island of the Diamonds? He beats a well-worn marine chart across his bared chest and shouts, “Indeed!” Then Scheherazade calls to Ali Baba, asking if he has brought his bow. Brandishing it over his head, with a quiver of arrows beside, he cries, “But of course!” Then she says to Ali Baba’s servant girl, “And you Morgana? Have you the crystal vial?” Morgana holds it sparkling in the air. “I have!” Then Finally, Scheherazade asks Aladdin if he has his lamp and can call forth the Genie. “Once, tonight, between the full moons,” he says and bows, lamp outstretched.

“You shall need all of this, my friends...and more!” Scheherazade says. She explains that she will tell a new story to her son, about his heroes Ali Baba, Morgana, Aladdin and Sinbad. About how they join forces and board Sinbad’s ship to sail to the Island of the Diamonds where the Gilded Flower grows. “Then I will tell the Prince how you bring him the nectar of the Gilded Flower that has the power to heal all,” Scheherazade finishes. “And now, Salaam my friends, together we shall make a tale so rich in adventure that it will awaken my fevered son.” With that, Scheherazade bows back into the silhouette and kneels at her son’s bedside.

With a rallying cry, Ali Baba leaps on his horse with Morgana, while Sinbad and Aladdin jump onto Aladdin’s magic carpet, and they all speed off through the city. [*Scheherazade’s voice narrates their quest as though she is telling the story to her son*] Their Quest begins aboard Sinbad’s famous ship [*setting 2, ship on water*]. “Ahoy! Raise the sails mates! We must make the Island by moonlight – when the Gilded Flower blooms!”

However, just as the sun sets over the water, a huge Sea Monster appears. “Swing Aft!” they shout and Sinbad deftly maneuvers the ship away from its spiny tail. Aladdin flies on his carpet to distract the creature, “Let’s see you catch me, you little beast!” While Ali Baba shoots fiery arrows wherever he can. “Just try to best my arrows, monster!” Ali Baba cries.

But alas, the sea serpent raises its mighty tail and slams it across the vessel.

With the ship badly listing and sinking, Sinbad continues to fight the Sea Monster. “Ha! I’m no stranger to the sea...or you!” He grabs a loose rigging rope and swings out across the water. As the creature surfaces, Sinbad leaps onto the monster and thrusts his cutlass into the sea serpent’s back. It wails loudly, twisting and diving, trying to shake off the heroic Sinbad. Aladdin raises his lantern, “Genie! Come forth!” At Aladdin’s command, the great apparition rises out of the lamp. “Save us!” Instantly the Genie becomes a huge Enchanted Horse with enormous wings that can fly and carry them all. The flying horse banks and swings around; Ali Baba and Morgana leap onto it’s back just as the ship disappears beneath the waves.

The Sea Monster arches wildly and Sinbad is thrown into the roiling sea. The great sea serpent spins and charges Sinbad; it’s gapping mouth open to swallow him whole. The flying horse is too far away to rescue Sinbad. The creature closes in; Sinbad grasps onto a drifting piece of flotsam from his ship while holding his sword and bracing for the attack. “Look here you vile creature!” Morgana raises her dagger and slashes a bag of gold, dumping it into the sea. The covetous Sea Monster turns away from Sinbad at the last moment and dives for the gold, disappearing into the depths of the darkened blue. Sinbad is plucked from the water and the heroes make for the island. “Huzzah!” they cheer.

The Enchanted Horse flies higher, over the clouds, carrying them in near darkness. Sinbad shouts over the wind, “There! The Island of the Diamonds!” Aladdin chimes in, “Where the Gilded Flower grows!” [*setting 3, sky flight*]. Just as they come near the island, a great bird, bearing huge talons and a Giant Snake in its beak, threatens them. “The Roc!” Ali Baba shouts and takes up his bow, looking for his chance. The Roc makes a fighting pass or two at the Enchanted Horse in mid-air—talons, hooves, wings clashing...the heroes holding on and shouting their assistance to the Enchanted Horse. “Look there!” and “Up above!” and “Bank to the right!” Finally, in a beautiful maneuver, the Enchanted Horse swoops below the eagle-like creature in a dive for the valley below, Ali baba sends up an arrow screaming past the Roc’s breast, and the Roc pulls up, shrieks and flies off to feast on its prey.

Narrowly escaping the Roc, the heroes find themselves landing in a darkened place but for the sparkling ground. “The Valley of the Diamonds,” Sinbad says. “I know it well, beware the Giant Snakes.” [*setting 4, narrow island valley*] The Enchanted Horse picks its way through the narrow valley of shimmering diamonds until Aladdin spies the Gilded Flower up above. “There on that rocky ledge!” The moon is rising and the flower appears about to bloom, but suddenly, the Giant Snakes Sinbad warned them about, come slithering out to protect their gems. The Enchanted Horse takes flight once again, skimming over the tops of their horrid heads.

As they get closer, Ali Baba calls, “Morgana, only a woman’s hand can harvest the nectar – take your vial and go!” Morgana nimbly drops from the horse onto the small, rocky ledge that holds the Gilded Flower. The others hover nearby on the wings of the Enchanted Horse. Just as the precious Gilded Flower opens in the moonlight, Morgana tips it up gently, capturing its nectar in her crystal vial. But just as she reaches to climb back onto the Enchanted Horse, a Giant Snake wraps the curly end of its tail around her ankle and nearly pulls her down. Aladdin and Ali Baba grab her hands and pull in a macabre tug of war. Sinbad draws his sword, while leaping to engage the hideous reptile; he slashes at the enormous snake and dodges its massive jaws as it attacks. Finally he severs the tail that holds Morgana’s foot, releasing her. Aladdin and Ali Baba pull her onto the horse as the wounded snake retreats to nurse its tail. Once the heroes are safely aboard, the Enchanted Horse takes off, flying through the starry night to bring the Sultan’s son his medicine. [*setting 3, sky flight*]

CLOSING

As the heroes fly into the starry night sky, they circle the dome and come through a bank of clouds, arriving above Scheherazade [*live or animated*] waiting beside her silhouetted window. The Enchanted Horse pulls up, hovering on his huge wings. Morgana holds up the vial in victory. Sinbad shouts, “As you wish, fair Scheherazade!” Scheherazade holds out her hands and calls, “Quickly!” Morgana leans over the horse and gently tosses the vial to Scheherazade; she catches it easily. “Thank you! I must go now!” Scheherazade steps

toward the window silhouette. “As do we fair Queen!” Sinbad calls. The heroes bow and wave and shout their goodbyes as the Enchanted Horse flies off into the clouds.

Scheherazade steps into the window, becoming a silhouette once more. She joins the Sultan standing over the bed of their young prince. “And then!” She drops to her knees and tells the sleeping boy the end of her story with great animation, “Once the heroes captured the Gilded Flower, they flew home through the starry night to heal the Prince.” She puts the crystal vial to the boy’s lips. A magical, sparkling flutter begins at the crystal vial and whimsically weaves its way around the boy, then it winds itself around the dome; a mystical strand of music accompanies. The Prince sits up suddenly in the silhouette, fully awake, and Scheherazade finishes the story. “And there was great rejoicing!” The family embraces.

This striking silhouette of the Sultan, Scheherazade and their healed son in a family embrace, freezes; it remains clear and pure, a focal point on the dome, as the rest of the screen rises into a colorful Arabic pattern, like the backdrop of the ending scene. Finally, Scheherazade’s parting words are heard over the soft music that signals the end of the show. “And all was right with the world.”