Sahara Nights

by Wade Bradford

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Everything in the kingdom is good—the economy, foreign diplomatic relations, even the new hanging gardens look lovely. Naturally, the Sultan is bored out of his skull now, so he decides to hold auditions for a Royal Entertainer. The good news is the winner will have more riches than could be imagined. The bad news is those who audition but don't amuse him will rot in the royal dungeon. Unfortunately, young Aladdin fails to return all his library books so Miss Curdle, the librarian, gets him thrown into the dungeon just as the competition starts. So, when Aladdin's friend Sahara Scheherazade, who just happens to have the missing books, tries to speak to the Sultan about freeing Aladdin, the bored ruler thinks she auditioning. After such "entertainers" as mimes, puppeteers and a Tom Jones-style lounge singer, Sahara is quickly selected as the Sultan's Royal Entertainer. To save herself and her friends she must tell captivating stories to the bratty and brutish Sultan.

Unfortunately, Sahara isn't the most accurate storyteller, so the stories that come to life on stage are quite imaginative. "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" becomes "Ali Baba and the Forty-Niners," with a disgruntle football team as some of the characters. "The Adventures of Sinbad" becomes a Star Trek-inspired spoof with Captain Kork and Mr. Spork. Lastly, the "Emperor's New Clothes" deals with the "King" himself, Elvis, and his advisors, The Beatles.

Soon, everyone in the kingdom is enthralled with her tales, and eventually the stories show the Sultan and the mean Miss Curdle the error of their ways to make way for a happy ending.

The loads of pop culture and lighthearted comedy ensure that in "Sahara Nights" the cast will have almost as much fun as the audience.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
27 characters plus extras, much doubling possible

ADVISOR: Advisor to the Sultan.
SULTAN: Arrogant ruler looking for entertainment.
SAHARA: Close friend of Aladdin, tells beautiful stories.
ALADDIN: Book-loving boy.
MRS. CURDLE: Strict librarian.
PUPPETEER: A hopeful auditioner with a sock puppet.
MIMES: Two hopeful auditioners.
TOM JONES: Vegas star, also a hopeful auditioner.
ALI BABA: A young wood-gatherer who wants to get a degree in advanced calculus.
MORGIANA: Beautiful and betrothed to Ali.
COACH: Coach of the 49ers.
FRANK: A prison guard.
CAPTAIN KORK: Brave adventurer of the *Seaship Enterprise*.
BONES: The ship's doctor.
SULU: The ship's navigator.
UHURA: Another crew member.
SPORK: Very logical long-eared fellow.
GENIE: Magical being that grants three wishes.
DIEDRE: Head of the natives.
JOHN: One of the Beatles, royal servant to Elvis.
PAUL: Another one of the Beatles, royal servant to Elvis.
GEORGE: Another one of the Beatles, royal servant to Elvis.
RINGO: Another one of the Beatles, royal servant to Elvis.
ELVIS: The King.
MISS BEE: Con artist.
MISS GEE: Con artist.
KID: Observant youth.
OTHER CHARACTERS INCLUDE:

GUARDS	BANDITS
FOOTBALL PLAYERS	CHEERLEADERS
NATIVES	TAILORS
SUCKERS	CITIZENS
GIRLS	HOPEFULS

THE SET

The play's setting is the Sultan's royal palace. As fancy as this may sound, the set doesn't need to be elaborate. USL is a large platform adorned with pillows and fabrics, and perhaps a small table with fruits, basically a luxurious little spot for the Sultan to lie about while he is being entertained. The rest of the stage can be sparsely decorated with an Arabian flair. There is an entrance to the prison chambers USC, which can be established by curtains or a simple archway. One of the reasons for the sparse stage is that much of the stories told within the play are acted out center stage. With each mini-story told by Sahara Scheherazade, actors will either pantomime or use very simple props and set pieces.

PROPS

Act I

Sc. 1: Letter; Twister game; heavy backpack filled with books for Aladdin and smaller bag for Sahara; wristwatch for Aladdin; makeshift library table with books and rubber stamp.

Sc. 2: Sock puppet; cup of water; pack for Ali containing wood and sandwich; bag of gold trophies; shawl for Morgi.

Sc. 3: Kork's small notebook; treasure chest, magical lamp, and brochures; carpet on rollers; grapes in a bowl; sunglasses on a pillow; hand mirror; playing cards; money; bag of gold.

Act II

Sc. 1: Chains for prisoners.

Sc. 2: Key on necklace; book, shawl, blond wig and beard; coffee pot and cup; whistle; large boxes; Gatorade and cups; contract and pen; shears; lamp; carpets; clouds and other items to "fly" by; bald cap and wig; robe; hanger; colorful boxer shorts; checkbook and pen.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: The curtain opens with an exotic, triumphant MUSICAL fanfare. CITIZENS of the palace are waiting patiently as the King's ROYAL ADVISOR prepares to speak to them.)

ADVISOR: Citizens of the kingdom. Here, in my very hands is a message from his majesty. It is to be read to you by me, Royal Advisor Mary-Samantha Agogabooga of Icanstanstinople. But most of you know me as Fluffy. The message reads as follows ... and I hope you are paying close attention.
CITIZEN #1: Get on with it, Fluffy.
ADVISOR: All right, all right. Ahem. *(Adjusts letter.)* Anyone have a glass of water handy?

(The SULTAN storms onto the stage. He is a short, stocky, arrogant young man.)

SULTAN: Enough already! Gimme that! *(Takes the message. EVERYONE bows before him in awe.)*
ADVISOR: Your Highness!
SULTAN: I just wanted to give you lovely people of my kingdom the royal progress report to tell you how things are going. First of all, the economy is good.
EVERYONE: *(Clapping.)* Good. Good. Fine. (*Etc.)*
SULTAN: Diplomatic relations are good.
EVERYONE: *(Clapping.)* Good! Great! Wonderful! *(Etc.)*
SULTAN: And the new hanging garden landscape has turned out fine.
EVERYONE: Good! Yahoo! Fabulous!
SULTAN: Silence. It's not fabulous. It's horrible. Everything is so nice and peaceful I'm bored out of my skull. There's never anything to do around here. Nothing to see. Everything in my kingdom is so drab, so dull. I do nothing all day but sit around and sigh. And it's driving me crazy!

ADVISOR: What can we do to ease your royal pain?
SULTAN: I need ... I need some form of entertainment.
ADVISOR: Entertainment? Excellent idea! *(Claps twice.)* Bring forth the royal game of Twister.

(THEY quickly bring out the game.)

SULTAN: No, no, enough of petty games. I want real live entertainment. Something I can just sit back on my throne and watch and enjoy. Citizens, let it be known that throughout the palace and all the land, I will be having auditions for a Royal Entertainer. If you can end my boredom you will have more riches than you have ever imagined. *(EVERYONE reacts: Ooo!)* If you fail to amuse me, you'll be sent to the dungeon to rot. *(EVERYONE reacts: Uhhhgh.)*
ADVISOR: You heard His Majesty. Auditions begin this evening.

(PEOPLE begin to scatter, excited about the auditions.)

SULTAN: Ah, Miss Agogabooga of Icanstanstinople.
ADVISOR: Please sir, call me Fluffy.
SULTAN: It's too hard to pronounce. Now, about this entertainer business ... I want to find him or her right away. I'm so incredibly bored.
ADVISOR: Sir, I could be your Royal Entertainer ... *(SHE starts to sing. It sounds horrible.)*
SULTAN: Enough of this silliness, Agogabooga. I'll be in my chambers. Inform me before the auditions are ready to begin.
ADVISOR: Yes, oh Flamboyantly Noble One.

(The SULTAN EXITS SL. FLUFFY EXITS SR, passing by several Townspeople. PEOPLE begin wandering back and forth across the stage.)

GIRL #1: *(To 3 OTHERS.)* Did you hear about the Sultan? He's looking for an entertainer!

End of Freeview

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