



In Tales of the Arabian Nights, you are the hero or heroine in a story of adventure and wonder just like those told by Scheherazade to her spellbound sultan! You will travel the land seeking your own destiny and fortune. You will learn stories and gain wisdom to share with others. Will you be the first to fulfill your destiny? The next tale is yours to tell!

There is, of course, a winner in Tales of the Arabian Nights, but the true joy of the game is enjoying the unfolding and telling of a great story!

The **Book of Tales** is the heart of
Tales of the Arabian Nights.

WE RECOMMEND YOU NOT READ THROUGH IT!

If you do, you may reduce your opportunities for surprise and delight.

Rules of Play



Play Overview

Tales of the Arabian Nights is both a storytelling game and all the narrative components you'll need to set up stories worthy of Scheherazade to tell or role-play. During the game, you and the other players encounter a diversity of interesting people, exotic creatures, and strange events. Each encounter is set up for you by referring to a Reaction Matrix, which offers you several choices of how to respond to that encounter. Your choice will guide you to a set of story paragraphs in the *Book of Tales*, which reveal the outcomes of your encounter. You can wield the skills and statuses of your character to affect your results, or the story may key off those skills and statuses to take your Arabian Nights adventure in unexpected directions, for good or ill!

Winning the Game

If you're the first player to garner your chosen goal of Destiny and Story Points and return safely to Baghdad, you win the game!

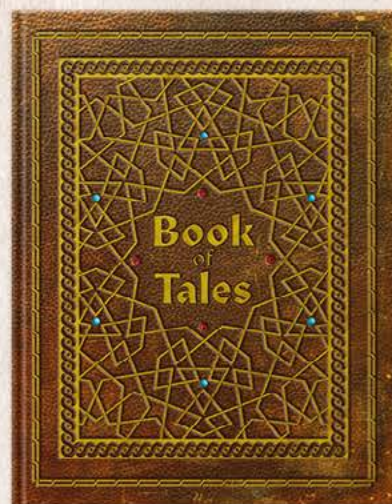
In general, everybody wins when playing by the Golden Rule: "Whatever makes for the best story, makes for the best game." Whenever you may be unsure about how to continue, you should go with the option that leads to the most entertaining story.

Components

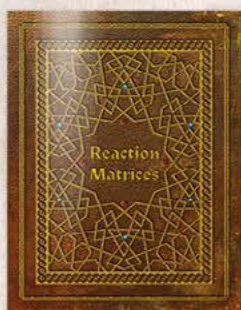
In addition to this Rulebook, each copy of *Tales of the Arabian Nights* includes:



1 x Map



1 x Book of Tales



1 x Reaction Matrices booklet



1 x Secret goal pad



2 x Standard 6-sided dice
1 x Destiny Die
(with +, -, and blank faces)



23 x City cards



19 x Quest cards



81 x Status cards (3 each of 27 card types)



44 x Encounter cards (16 x Character, 18 x Terrain, 10 x Places of Power)



30 x Treasure cards



6 x Player mats



6 x Origin markers



6 x Destination markers



6 x Outlaw markers



18 x Quest markers



6 x Player character standees
6 x Plastic stands



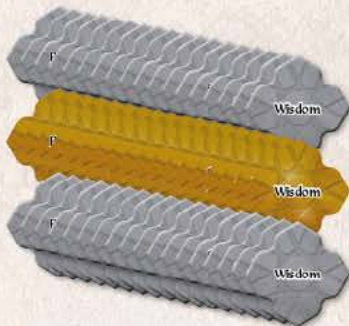
6 x Story markers



6 x Destiny markers



6 x Wealth markers



54 x Skill markers

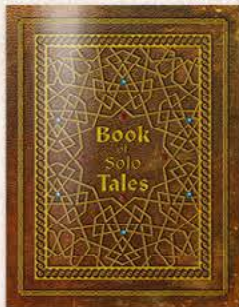


24 x Status markers



3 x Time of Day markers

Solo Components



1 x Book of Solo Tales



7 x Solo Milestone markers



1 x Solo Quest point tracker



90 x Solo cards:

- 28 x Solo Treasure
- 47 x Solo Status
- 15 x Solo Quest



Setup

- 1 Place the map where all players can reach it.
- 2 Each player chooses a Character and takes the matching Player board, Character standee, Destiny Point, Story Point, Wealth Level, Origin, Destination, Quest, and Outlaw markers.
- a Place your Character on the board in the Baghdad space.
- b Place your Destiny and Story Points markers at the start of their respective tracks.
- c Place your Wealth Level marker on the "Poor" space of your personal Wealth Track.
- 3 Shuffle the Treasure cards and place them facedown near the board.
- 4 Shuffle the Quest cards into a deck and deal two Quests faceup to each player. Each player will choose one Quest to keep and discard the other to a discard pile. Place the rest of the Quest deck facedown near the board.

Example: Setup of 3 players, Zumurrud, Aladdin, and Ali Baba, in Baghdad ready to start their storied adventure.

Quest Cards

The Quest cards give you additional reasons to travel the world. Some quests require you to visit multiple locations, which you mark with your Character's Quest markers. To claim a marker requires remaining in the space after you have an encounter there (unless otherwise indicated).

Note that these quests do not have to be fulfilled linearly, nor even fulfilled at all. Once a quest is completed, **remove it from the game**, and draw 2 new Quest cards. Choose one to keep and discard the other card. Remove any previous Quest markers still on the board and place new Quest markers as indicated on the new Quest card. If the Quest deck is ever empty, shuffle the discard pile and form a new deck.

The Story of Stories

Truly there is no story greater than that of the boy and the dinn in the lamp—or of the Sultan who became a more urban-maker and then again a Sultan. You know that the entire world loves a good story and you know that with practice and experience you can shape the story that binds together and surpasses them all.

Pile your three Quest markers on the Story Point track. Whenever you receive at least 2 as a reward in a single encounter, remove one Quest marker. When you have removed all three Quest markers, you have the material for the Story of Stories! (at Master level or above)

6

5

4

3

2b

2



Game Sequence Overview

Tales of the Arabian Nights is played in turns. When all players have taken a turn, a round is completed (only important for step 7 below). On your turn, you will complete the following phases in this order:

1) Pass the Book of Tales

Pass the Book of Tales to the player on your left, who will be the Reader for your turn. The Reaction Matrices booklet is given to the player on your right, who will be your Matrix Reader for your turn. In a two-player game, the same player reads both the Book of Tales and the Reaction Matrices.

2) Check Treasures and Statuses

If you have any treasures or statuses that will affect your turn, announce them now. Add or remove any Status markers as indicated on the card.

3) Move Your Character

You may move your Character up to the number of spaces that your Wealth Level allows. You can also remain in place.

4) Resolve Your Encounter

Unless otherwise instructed, draw the top card from the Encounter deck and resolve the encounter indicated on the card. If you arrive in a city for which you have a matching City card, you may encounter that instead of drawing from the Encounter Deck.

5) Resolve Quests

If you have completed the requirements for your Quest, take the award listed on the Quest card, remove it from the game, then draw 2 new Quest cards and keep 1, discarding the other.

6) Check for Victory

If you are in Baghdad and have met (or exceeded) the conditions of your Secret Goal, then declare that you can win. All the other players will have one more turn.

7) Change Time marker *(End of round only)*

After everyone has taken a turn, change the Time marker to the next time of day: morning to noon, noon to night, night to morning, and so on.

The Movement Phase

Your movement rate is determined by the box your Wealth Level marker occupies on your Player board. Below each box are both land movement and sea movement rates.

Your Character may move as many spaces on the map as your movement rate, or less, or even not at all. A move is a land move if it is between two spaces which are connected by a land route (represented by a red dashed line), and a sea move if the spaces are connected by a sea route (represented by a solid blue line).

You may combine movement (that is, move by land and sea in the same turn). The total distance you move cannot exceed the faster of your two movement rates. But you also cannot move more spaces along slower routes than your slower movement limit.



Example: Sindbad currently has Princely wealth, so he has a sea movement rate of 5 and a land movement rate of 3. He may move a maximum of 5 spaces (the faster rate), no more than 3 of which may be by land (the slower rate). Similarly, Zumurrud is a Beggar, so she has a land movement rate of 3 and a sea movement of 2; she can move a maximum of 3 spaces, no more than 2 of which can be by sea.

Seamanship

If you have the **SEAMANSHIP** skill, you may always move at least 4 by water regardless of Wealth level.





Places of Power

The map shows ten Places of Power. Each Place of Power has a one-way arrow leading away from it. Because these wondrous locations are hidden, you may not enter a Place of Power simply by moving your Character there with normal movement! During the course of your adventures, you may have an encounter that will reveal one of these mysterious places. Some encounters in the Book of Tales will award you with an “opportunity to enter” a particular Place of Power. If you earn one of these opportunities, place your Destination marker on the Place of Power mentioned in the Book of Tales. While your Destination marker is on a Place of Power, you may move there with normal movement (or movement effect) just like a normal space (following the arrow backwards). If you use this opportunity to enter a Place of Power, your movement for the turn ends immediately, and the Destination marker is removed from the board. Do not draw an Encounter card; instead, go to the paragraph number indicated on the Place of Power.

If your Destination marker is on a Place of Power and you are told to move this Destination marker anywhere else, including another “opportunity to enter” a different Place of Power, you lose the opportunity to visit the previous Place of Power.

Some encounters will tell you that you must move directly to a Place of Power. Move your Character to that Place of Power (regardless of the distance) and have an encounter there immediately.

As soon as you complete your encounter in a Place of Power, move your Character to the space indicated by the arrow (unless the encounter indicates that you should move somewhere else). You cannot end your turn on a Place of Power.

The Map

The known world of Tales of the Arabian Nights is found within 5 continents, each enclosed in a wispy white border. The continents are: Arabia, Europa, Africa, India, and Asia.

Within each continent are six different terrain types, spaces that represent cities, forests, mountains, deserts, islands, and seas. (Coastal spaces are not separate terrain but any space which has both land and sea routes leading to them.)

Also found in these continents are magical and mystical spaces called Places of Power. These, too, are not terrain spaces, but hard to reach places that offer wealth, wonder, and woe.

Map Scale: Due to the very large scale of the map (and the lack of accurate map-making in the days of the Arabian Nights), you may occasionally encounter sand dunes in a city or trees at sea. This is intentional. The map spaces represent very large areas; cities are often surrounded by sand dunes, and uncharted islands are scattered across the sea.

The Encounter Phase

At the end of your movement, you must check to see what your encounter will be (even if you did not actually move your character anywhere). Unless otherwise instructed, draw the top card from the Encounter deck.

◇ **Important:** *If you end on a space in a city for which you have the matching City card, you may instead choose to play the City card instead of having a normal encounter. (See City Cards below.)* ◇

An encounter may give you a free move (example: “move to any coastal space”) or “magically transport” you to another space; in this case, you do not check for a second encounter unless the new space is a Place of Power. If you move to a Place of Power, then the Reader continues with the paragraph for that Place of Power.

When you have an encounter, you will face some challenge or opportunity and decide how to react. Your choice, along with your skills and statuses, will determine how you are affected by the encounter.

◇ **Note:** *You are considered to have a successful encounter if you finish your turn in the same space as the encounter, unless you end up **Lost**, **Imprisoned**, or **Dead**.* ◇

Encounter Cards

There are three kinds of cards in the Encounter deck: Places of Power, Terrain, and Characters. The card you draw will determine who or what you encounter.

Place of Power Encounter Cards

If you draw a Place of Power Encounter card, you are taken directly to a paragraph number. After your encounter is completely resolved, remove the card from the game.



Example: Scheherazade draws the *Cave of Wonders* and her Reader reads paragraph 2709. After the paragraph is resolved, no matter the result, this card is removed from the game.



Terrain Encounter Cards

If you draw a Terrain Encounter card, you must determine what kind of terrain your character is in (refer to the Terrain Key on the map). At the bottom of the card, you will find a paragraph number for each type of terrain. The Reader finds the paragraph number shown in the Book of Tales.

Read the paragraph indicated by the terrain. If it is an "N", you have encountered what is illustrated on the card and will be directed to Reaction Matrix N to choose a reaction.

If you are not in a terrain space marked with an "N", you have a normal encounter as directed by the paragraph number given for the terrain space you are on. After you resolve this encounter, you may discard this card into the Encounter card discard pile OR keep it. If you keep it, on any subsequent turn you stop on a terrain space that matches its terrain with an "N" during the Movement phase, instead of drawing an Encounter card, you may discard this card into the Encounter card discard pile to encounter the card using Reaction Matrix N.

Note: On the rare occasion you are moved into a matching terrain space by some means and you are allowed to draw another Encounter card, you may instead use a Terrain card.



Example: Sindbad moves to a sea space and draws the *Magnetic Mountain* Encounter card. The Reader would turn to paragraph 2. After resolving this paragraph, Sindbad can keep this card or discard it. If he were to keep it, then on any subsequent turn, if he ends his movement on a Mountain space he can choose to discard this card to the Encounter card discard pile to encounter the *Magnetic Mountain* on Reaction Matrix N rather than draw an Encounter card.

Character Encounter Cards

If you draw a Character Encounter card, refer to the Time marker (morning, noon, or night). The Encounter card will direct the Reader to various paragraphs in the Book of Tales based on the matching Time icon showing on the card.

After the encounter, discard this card into the Encounter card discard pile.



Example: After Zumurrud finishes her movement, she draws an Encounter card and it is the 'Efreet! Since the time of day is Night, she will be taken to paragraph 119.



City Cards

City cards give you an opportunity to earn special awards if you can reach a specific city during your travels.

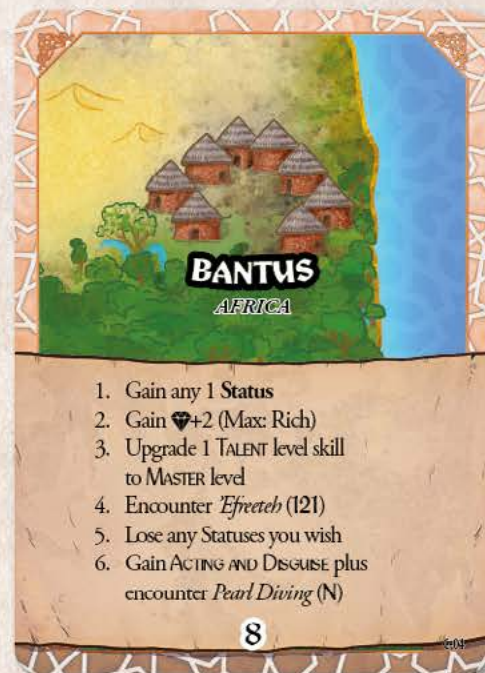
During your Movement phase, if you end your movement in a City space that matches a City card you have, *instead of drawing an Encounter card*, you may play the matching City card.

Immediately roll a single die. Then receive the indicated award.

Sometimes, the award of a City card will name an encounter. These special encounters either list a paragraph number from the Book of Tales, or a letter matching a table in the Reaction Matrices. If you get one of these results, refer to the Book of Tales or the Reaction Matrices as indicated. You must resolve this special city encounter even if you already had a normal encounter in the same turn.

If you did not have an encounter due to the die roll, then after receiving your award, encounter the paragraph number printed on the bottom of the card.

Once any encounter from the City card is resolved, discard the City card into the City card discard pile and draw another City card. If the City deck is empty, shuffle the discards to form a new City deck.



Example: Aladdin stops in Bantus. He plays the Bantus City card and rolls a die. He rolls a "2" and gains 2 Wealth Levels. Afterwards, he encounters paragraph 8. When that is resolved, he will discard Bantus and draw a new City card. If Aladdin had rolled a "4", he would encounter an 'Efreeteh. After resolving that encounter, he would discard Bantus, then draw a new City card.

Resolving Encounters

There are four steps to each normal encounter:

- 1) Discover Your Encounter
- 2) Choose Your Reaction
- 3) Determine Your Destiny
- 4) Resolve Your Encounter

1. Discover Your Encounter

The first paragraph the Reader turns to will usually be an Encounter Chart. Each Encounter Chart shows twelve numbered entries. You now roll one die and add:

- The value of your die roll;
- The number printed under the terrain space your Character is on, if any;
- +1 to the roll if you have 3 or 4 Destiny Points, or +2 if you have 5 or more. (These additions are printed on the Destiny Track on the board as a reminder.)

Any total above 12 is resolved as a 12.

The Reader finds the result of your modified roll on the Encounter Chart and reads the description next to that number.

A typical encounter chart

4

- 1 Lost Merchant (L)
- 2 Wicked Hag (C)
- 3 Mad Slave (D)
- 4 Friendly Merman (I)
- 5 Mild Storm (F)
- 6 Malicious Merman (I)
- 7 Malicious Merman (I)
- 8 Fearful Captain (I)
- 9 Beautiful Shoals (F)
- 10 Treacherous Shoals (F)
- 11 Mad Captain (I)
- 12 Terrible Storm (F)

Example: Ali Baba has 9 Destiny Points. The encounter occurs in a particularly dangerous space which has a “4” printed under the Terrain space. If he rolled a 6, the result would be a 12 (6 +4 for the Terrain number, +2 for his Destiny point total). The Reader, looking at paragraph 4, would tell him that a 12 means he has encountered a *Terrible Storm*. The Reader further notes that the Reaction Matrix will be letter “F.”

2. Choose Your Reaction

The Encounter Chart will direct the Matrix Reader to a Reaction Matrix. There are 17 matrices, each labeled with a letter from **A** to **Q**. Some Encounter Charts will use a single matrix for the entire chart, in which case the matrix letter is listed by the paragraph number. Other charts will direct you to a different matrix depending on the roll, and the matrix letter will be listed next to each result on the chart (see left column).

You may also be directed to a Reaction Matrix directly by an Encounter card.

Once you locate the correct Reaction Matrix, find the adjective shown on the Encounter Chart in the left-hand column. (In the example on the left, the Matrix Reader would find the word *Terrible* for the *Terrible Storm*.)

A number of reactions are listed at the top of the matrix. You must choose one of these options as your reaction to the encounter. The Matrix Reader will read all the options aloud, and you must choose how you will react to the person, event, or creature you have encountered. (Your Player board also details the possible reactions for each matrix.) Each option has a paragraph number for each line of the matrix. This paragraph number matches one of the paragraphs in the Book of Tales.

3. Determine Your Destiny

Each reaction option on the Reaction Matrix has three possible Result Paragraphs. Once you have chosen your reaction, the Matrix Reader notes the number and you roll the Destiny Die. If you roll:

- Minus (–): subtract one from the paragraph number
- Blank: use the paragraph number printed in the Matrix
- Plus (+): add one to the paragraph number

The Matrix Reader will tell the Reader what paragraph to turn to in the Book of Tales.

	F	Pray	Avoid	Wait	Cry Out	Drink	Examine	Travel	Hide
Sand	755	2171	758	756	2186	2177	760	759	
Terrible	703	2171	701	2174	2183	713	2189	699	
Treacherous	671	677	666	659	2180	667	669	2162	

Example: Since a *Terrible Storm* (F) was rolled, Ali Baba looks at his Player board to see his reaction options (or Aladdin, his Matrix Reader, can tell him what the reaction options are). Since Ali Baba has the *PIETY* skill, he decides to choose *Pray*, hoping his *PIETY* skill can help him against the storm. Aladdin asks him to roll the Destiny Die and afterwards, will give the final result to Zumurrud, the Reader. Aladdin asks Ali Baba to roll the Destiny Die. It is a “+” so Aladdin tells Zumurrud to read paragraph **704**.



4. Read the Result Paragraph

This is your opportunity to read dramatically, do voices, and otherwise be theatrical in storytelling — or, after the results are known, to engage in role-playing the story or improv. Have fun with the reading, the delivery, and the dramatic re-enactment!

Some Result Paragraphs will have lists of skills after them. We'll explain that a little later on. For now, look at the end of the paragraph. A cryptic code will appear in brackets. It will look something like this:

[♦2/♠1/♥+1 (Max: Poor)/STORYTELLING/**Respected**/*TREASURE*]

This lists the award(s) received for the encounter. They are to be resolved left to right and the slashes indicate a separation of information, not a choice.

The number printed next to the ♦ is the number of Destiny Points gained (or lost, if it is a negative number, but never to below zero). In the example above, the Character gains two Destiny Points.

The number printed next to the ♠ is the number of Story Points gained (or lost, if it is a negative number, but never to below zero). In this example, the Character gains one Story Point.

The number printed next to the ♥ refers to the number of Wealth Levels gained or lost (+ or -), and the maximum or minimum level this award can give. In the example, the Character gains one Wealth Level, but their wealth could not be increased above Poor by the award.

SKILLS are written in all caps. In this example, the Character gains the Storytelling skill. (See Skills on page 12.)

Statuses are written in bold. In this example, the Character gains the Respected status. (See Statuses on page 13.)

TREASURES are written in all caps and italicized. In this example, the Character draws a random Treasure card. (See Treasures on page 14.)

Sometimes the Result Paragraph will list additional awards. Simply do what the award tells you to do. For instance, an award might read:

[♦2/♠1/Have another player place you within four spaces of the *Jeweled Fortress*]

In this case, you gain 2 Destiny Points and 1 Story Point; in addition, you choose another player to place your Character anywhere on the map within 4 spaces of the Jeweled Fortress.

Another example of an award:

[WEAPON USE (1 use)/**Diseased** (1 turn)]

1 Use: Skills gained in an award with the “1 use” restriction are returned to the Skill Bank when they are used once. If you already had the skill, it will be at Master level for one use, then flipped back to its Talent side.

1 Turn: Statuses gained in an award with the “1 turn” restriction are returned at the end of your next turn, no matter what other “to lose” requirement the Status has. Use a Status marker or some other marker as a reminder.



The “Other”

A note on the word “other” in the Book of Tales: Since many paragraphs are used for encounters with multiple people or creatures, the specific person or creature is often not mentioned. The word “other” is used instead.

Suppose you were directed to a Result Paragraph while encountering an 'efreet. It reads:
On your words, the other says, “If you would truly honor me, you would grant me your aid.”

Since you are encountering an 'efreet, you would read it as:
On your words, the 'efreet says, “If you would truly honor me, you would grant me your aid.”

Skills

At the beginning of the game, all of your skills are at the Talent level, so place the markers on the table with the Talent side (silver) face up. During the game, your skills can increase to the Master level; if they do, flip the marker over to the Master side (gold).



When a new skill is gained in an award, take that skill marker from the Skill Bank and place it in front of you, at Talent level.

If you already have the skill, flip your skill marker to its Master level side.

Skill markers are not limited: if you gain a skill and all those markers are with other players, keep note that you have that skill.

Most Result Paragraphs are divided into several skill sections. One of them is labeled **NO SKILL**, and the others are labeled with a skill (and sometimes a status or treasure). When you are the Reader, you begin by reading only the first part of the paragraph (before the list of skills, etc.). Then, you read off the list of skills, etc. but don't read the text after the skills yet! The other player must choose which skills (if any) they are going to use before they know what the results of their choice will be!

If you don't have any of the skills, (or statuses, treasures, etc.) listed: you must choose the **NO SKILL** section. The Reader reads that section aloud, and you gain the awards or penalties listed there. (Also, the Reader will read this section if you do not want to use any of your skills.)

If you have one or more of the listed skills (etc.): You may choose to use any **ONE** of them, or choose to use no skill at all. The Reader reads the appropriate section and the awards or penalties it gives.

Note: Using the skills, statuses, etc. asked for does NOT always yield a positive result. Consider what you are doing to whom or what and realize that your skill or status just may not be as useful as you think.

Mandatory: Sometimes a heading will be noted as “(mandatory)”. In that case, you must use that section if you have that mandatory skill, treasure, or status, etc. listed for that section, even if other choices are available.

All mandatory: Sometimes a heading will be noted as “(All mandatory)”. In that case, you must use that section if you have **any** of the skills, treasures, or statuses, etc. listed for that section, even if other choices are available.

How to Resolve an Encounter

Going back to the previous encounter with the 'efreet:

On your words, the 'efreet says, “If you would truly honor me, you would grant me your aid.”

NO SKILL: The task the other asks of you is beyond your abilities; you cannot help, but the story of their doomed courtship is a powerful and memorable lesson. [1]

COURTLY GRACES: The other is soon to be married to one of high station, but is lacking in knowledge of protocol. Your courtly skills help the other. In gratitude, the married couple bestows a wondrous gift upon you.

[1/1/TREASURE]

QUICK THINKING: With great cleverness, you weave a complex ruse to gain the other the thing they need. Impressed and grateful, the other shares with you an arcane secret they learned many years ago.

[1/1/You may lose one status of your choice]

The Reader starts by reading the text before **NO SKILL**, then asks if you have **COURTLY GRACES** or **QUICK THINKING**.

If you have neither **COURTLY GRACES** nor **QUICK THINKING**, they read the **NO SKILL** section, and you gain 1 Story Point.

If you have and choose to use **COURTLY GRACES**, the Reader reads the middle section and you gain 1 Destiny Point, 1 Story Point, and a random treasure.

If you have and choose to use **QUICK THINKING**, the Reader reads the bottom section and you gain 1 Destiny Point, 1 Story Point, and you can lose one status of your choice.

If you have both skills, you may choose which of the two skills you wish to use.

You can also choose not to use any skill you might have and take the **NO SKILL** result instead.

Note: Don't forget to replace “other” with “efreet” in any of the paragraphs above being read.

Master Skills

If you have skills at the Master level, you can control your own fate to a greater degree. Do not immediately roll the Destiny Die to determine your Result Paragraph.



Instead, the Matrix Reader informs the Reader of the paragraph number found in the matrix and the Reader then checks all three possible paragraphs first, to see whether one or more of your Master skills are listed.

If they are not listed, resolve the encounter in the normal way. (Roll the Destiny Die, check for appropriate skills, etc.)

If one of your Master skills is listed in any of the three possible paragraphs, you may choose to go directly to that paragraph (starting with the first part, then reading the section for the Master skill) without rolling the Destiny Die. (You may still roll instead, if you prefer.)

Note: The Reader does not inform you if one of those skills is mandatory! Since most mandatory paragraphs are harmful to you, knowing if a selection is mandatory would encourage you to avoid it.

Example: Ali Baba has encountered a *Mystic Fire*, so the Reader has turned to paragraph number **728**. Ali Baba has the **MAGIC** skill at the Master level.

The Reader looks over paragraphs **727**, **728**, and **729**, and notices that paragraph **728** lists **MAGIC** as a skill. They ask Ali Baba if he would like to use his **MAGIC** skill, or if he would prefer to roll the Destiny Die. The Reader does not tell a player what the paragraph numbers are unless there is more than one option for the player to choose.

Losing Skills

Certain paragraphs will instruct you to lose a particular skill. If you have that skill at the Talent level, put it back in the Skill Bank. If you have the skill at Master level, turn it back to its Talent side.

Skills may also be lost due to the effects of a status. Such losses are temporary. Place all affected Skill markers underneath the appropriate status card. When you lose the status, you regain the skills.

Example: Ma'aruf has been **Grief-Stricken** for a turn. On his current turn, after resolving an encounter, he receives **3**2. This allows him to place a Status marker on **Grief-Stricken** and since there are now 2 Status markers on the card, he loses **Grief-Stricken**.

Statuses

When something out of the ordinary happens to your character (such as being turned into an ape or becoming the object of someone's affection), you receive a status. However, you cannot receive the same status you currently have: ignore that result/effect and do not reset any Status markers on the card.

Status cards are not limited. If you gain a Status and no card is available, just keep track of its effect by using another player's card for information.

Effects of Statuses

When a Status is acquired, read it out loud. Immediately resolve any effects listed on the card.

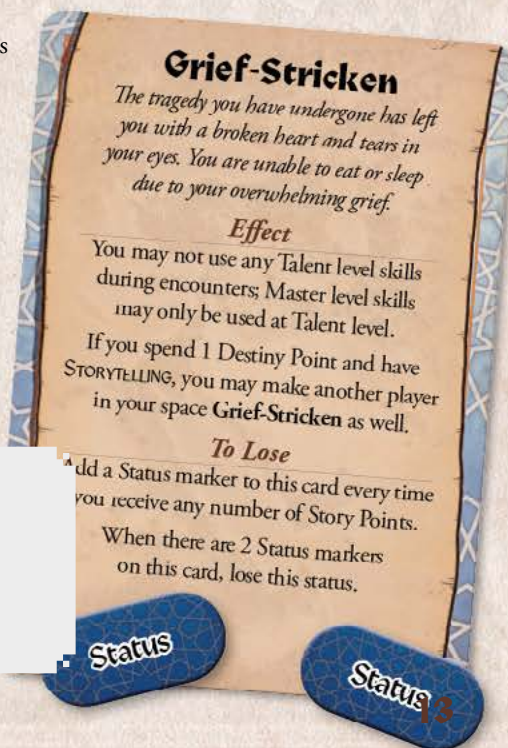
Example: You received the **Robe of Honor**. The Status card states that you immediately gain **1**, the **Respected** status, and the **WISDOM** skill.

You need to keep an eye on the other players, and remind the Reader if there are any statuses in effect. If a player takes an action that ignores the effects of a status, and no one catches the error before the end of their turn, then it is too late to change and the action stands.

Statuses can be lost in several ways, including as part of an Award. Most times, the status itself will indicate on the card what is required to lose it.

Status Markers

Some statuses (mostly negative ones) gain Status markers on them when certain triggers happen. The Status card will indicate a number of Status markers needed to make you lose that status. Some Status cards will use Status markers to keep track of various things.



Wealth

Your  Wealth Level represents how rich you are.

Your wealth may never exceed Fabulous. If you have Princely wealth and own any treasure, then the next time you gain a Wealth Level, regardless of the stated maximum gain, you become Fabulously wealthy.

If you have Fabulous wealth (and therefore at least one treasure) and you lose your last treasure, your Wealth Level drops to Princely immediately.

Your Wealth Level may never fall below Beggar. If you are a Beggar, any instruction to lose a Wealth Level is ignored. Of course, you may not choose to voluntarily spend a Wealth Level if you are a Beggar.



Treasures

When you are awarded a non-specific treasure, draw a random Treasure card from the top of the Treasure deck and place it faceup in front of you.

As long as you own the treasure, you receive the benefit described on the card.

If you are awarded a specific treasure (such as *IONIAN GEMS*), look through the Treasure deck and its discard pile to find the appropriate treasure and place it faceup in front of you. If someone else already has that treasure, take it from them—they are out of luck! If you took it from the Treasure deck, shuffle the deck.

Some Treasures indicate they must be discarded to be activated. Place these cards in a discard pile. Should the Treasure deck ever run out, shuffle the discard pile to form a new Treasure deck.

Treasures can be sold whenever you end your turn in a city, after your encounters (if any) or resolving a City card (if any). If you sell a treasure, discard it to gain an amount of Wealth Levels printed in the gold coin on top of the card, noting the maximum Wealth Level you can gain printed on the bottom of the card.



Example: The *CELESTIAL PLANISPHERE* can be sold to gain 1 Wealth Level to a maximum level of Rich.

Negative Points

If you are given a choice that would require you to lose more  Destiny or  Story Points than you currently possess, you may not do so. You can only act on the choice if you have the required number of points to lose.



Death

There are times in the game that your character can die—that's just the way of things in the world of Arabian Nights. Fear not, however, as your character's brother or sister will take over your quests for you.

If your character dies, move back to Baghdad. You must also remove your Origin, Quest, and Destination markers from the board, reduce your Wealth Level to Poor, and lose all statuses and treasures. You do get to keep your skills, Story Points, and Destiny Points.

Note: If you have obtained your secret goal condition, you may announce that you are going to win (see Game End).

Game End

If you have collected enough Destiny and Story Points to meet your Secret Goal (chosen at the beginning of the game), you must return to Baghdad in order to win.

Once you reach Baghdad (and remain there after surviving an encounter), you announce that you are going to win.

All of the other players each have one last turn to try to complete their goals and reach Baghdad. At the end of this “last turn” any player in Baghdad who has met their Secret Goal can win the game.

At the end of the “last turn,” it is possible for one, several, or all players of the game to be in the running to win the game. If you are still the only eligible player at the end of that last turn, then you are victorious and all will sing your praises!

If more than one player with enough Destiny and Story Points to win ends their turn in Baghdad during that “last turn,” the tied player with the most statuses wins.

If there is still a tie, the tied player with the most skills wins.

If there is still a tie, then the story is even greater as the win is shared.

Variants

Longer (Classic) Game

You can play the original way where your Secret Goal must add up to 20 no matter the player count.

Timed Game

Choose how long to play and when time is up, the winner is the one closest to their Secret Goal. Ties go to the player with most statuses, then most skills. If still a tie, victory is shared and your stories will live on for future generations to recite.

There are more ways to play!

Visit www.playtozgames.com for more information.

Solo Game

A solo game of *Tales of the Arabian Nights* is available. Please use the Book of Solo Tales for rules and Quests.



Imprisoned

If you are **Imprisoned** in a city, you cannot sell a *TREASURE* or play a City card. Also, if you are **Imprisoned** in any location, encounters in that location are not ‘successful’ unless you are no longer **Imprisoned** after the encounter.

The Map

Baghdad, the City of Peace, is a city for all game purposes. *City of Brass* is not; it is a Place of Power.

Seamanship and Crippled/Diseased

Having the **SEAMANSHIP** skill automatically increases your normal sea movement rate to 4. Any status or other effect that reduces your movement rate (for instance, the **Diseased** and **Crippled** statuses) still reduces it.

Example: You have a wealth of Poor, the **SEAMANSHIP** skill, and the **Crippled** status. The base movement for Poor is 3 by land, 2 by sea. **SEAMANSHIP** would change that to 3 land/4 sea. **Crippled** then reduces your total movement to 2 land/3 sea. Thus, you would be able to move across 3 spaces, no more than 2 of which are land spaces.

Quests

When does a Quest begin? A Quest begins at the start of the next turn after you receive your Quest card, either at the beginning of the game or when you have completed an earlier Quest. A couple of Quests move you to another space when they begin; you should do this at the start of your next turn (or at the start of your first turn if it is your first Quest).

Gaining Rewards from Story Points

Hitting certain levels of Story Points brings additional rewards—for instance, an additional Wealth Level if you reach 3 Story Points. Even if you lose the Story Points in a later event, you keep this reward. However, you do not collect any such reward more than once — you can only receive a particular award once per game.

An Example Turn

Zumurrud, Ali Baba, and Aladdin are the players. It's Ali Baba's turn, so the Book of Tales is passed to Zumurrud on his left who has passed the Reaction Matrices to Aladdin on Ali's right.

★ **Destiny**

1 2 3 4 5 6

+1 Encounter
die roll

+2 Encounter
die roll

Dendan



1

Ali Baba has a wealth of Poor allowing 3 movement on land. This gets him from Bilma to Timbuktu. He then draws an Encounter card.

2

A Dendan... in Timbuktu? No, this is just the *rumor* of a Dendan. He gives Zumurrud the number next to the City icon (46).

STATUS TRACK

Beggar

Penniless

Poor

Respectable

Rich

Princely

Fabulous

Ali Baba

A		A	
Beautiful	236	Grovel	
Destitute	185	Aid	
Disgraced	2243	Rob	
Doomsyring	322	Avoid	
Enchanted	2258	Converse	
Fake	198		
Foolish	224		
Friendly	186		
Garrulous	209		
Handsome	236		
Healer	311		
Imprisoned			
Lonely			
Lost			
Lovesick			
Mad			
Power			
Weak			

3

Zumurrud looks up paragraph 46 (from the Dendan card) and asks Ali Baba to roll a die. He rolls a "3" and adds the number shown below Timbuktu (2) and his bonus (1) from the Destiny Points track. $3+2+1=6$, so he asks Zumurrud to read line 6 in the encounter chart.

5

Zumurrud opens the Book of Tales to paragraph 1000 and Ali's adventure continues...

4

Zumurrud tells Ali Baba that he has encountered a *Con Game* and to choose his reaction from Matrix I.

Referencing his Player board, Ali Baba tells Aladdin that he is going to **Avoid** the *Con Game*.

Aladdin finds the paragraph for *Avoid-Con* (999) and tells Ali to roll the Destiny Die. Ali rolls a (+) which means adding 1 to the printed paragraph number. Aladdin tells Zumurrud to read paragraph 1000.

	Honor	Attack	Avoid	Aid
Blind	986	2116	1008	988
Bloodthirsty	2059	969	971	2047
Con	1996	996	999	993
Fearful	2092	1062	2086	1055

Credits

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Eric Goldberg

40th Anniversary Edition

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Editor

Miguel Conceição

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Accessibility Feedback

Michael Heron; several BoardGameGeek & Reddit commenters
over the course of 15 years. We're most appreciative for this
constructive criticism toward making *Tales of the Arabian Nights* a
welcoming game for an even broader audience.

Deep thanks to Kevin J. Maroney who has been there and
done that many times over for this game. His help is very much
appreciated.

Dedication

To Victoria Goldberg, who started me on the
journey to a lifelong love of the great folk tales
when I was a very young lad. — EG

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Play to Z Games, Authorized User.

Third Edition

Published by Z-Man Games, 2009

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Reflections on a 40-year Design Journey

The journey of a thousand miles 1,001 stories began with a single step: a design goal to make the first truly replayable storytelling game.

The foundational dichotomy that had prevented such a game is that stories are traditionally linear and that, with a tip of the cap to *Highlander*, there can only be one storyline. Conversely, classic games deliver differing journeys through play, multiple choices, and variable outcomes resulting from those journeys and choices.

By the mid-1980s, two features now standard in the game design toolkit were incorporated into the conventional novel: first branching stories, with Edward Packard's "Choose Your Own Adventure" series (starting in 1979), and then simple role-playing game mechanics, with Steve Jackson's and Ian Livingstone's "Fighting Fantasy" series (from 1982).

Both series achieved great commercial success and broad appeal. Both were delivered in book format and allowed for only limited replayability, with each book's storylines soon exhausted. (To their credit, Livingstone and Jackson leveraged their game expertise to make "Fighting Fantasy" superior to its predecessor in this regard.) The solution to keeping customer interest, time-honored in book publishing, was to publish new books with frequency, with the "Choose Your Own Adventure" library eventually exceeding 300 books.

This decided me that a game format was the direct route to the 'true replayability' goal. The three core design ingredients in *Tales of the Arabian Nights* that made this possible were:

- The *reaction matrices*, with a diversity of encounters (primarily—but hardly limited to—characters), actions, and, to a lesser extent, outcomes.
- The *storylets*: The most time-consuming development task was fine-tuning the construction of the storylets and constituent paragraphs: the length (both for reading and for speaking), the interrelationships, and the interconnectivity of the narrative building blocks.
- An appropriate *thematic universe*: It had to be rich, with enough breadth and quality of story to allow for truly replayability; to deliver compelling stories at atomic levels (delivering story payloads for player delight in short bursts to suit gameplay); and, to encourage players to embrace a type of game no one had seen before, well-known and well-loved.

The finalists were the Arthurian legends and, of course, the 1001 Nights. At the time, Arthuriana, with many best-selling books and movie adaptations, had captured the popular imagination. Disney's *Aladdin*, which led to an explosion of interest in the greatest hits from the Arabian Nights, was still seven years in the future.

What decided this first game for the 1001 Nights was that the atomic quality of its stories were near-perfect for adaptation to the game system in development, and secondarily that these did not revolve around a central linear storyline as the Arthurian legend does. I describe the Tales as "the greatest collection of 'shaggy dog' stories the world has ever known"; the collective structure made these well-suited for gameplay, with several connected stories within stories and a broad selection of self-contained tales.

The game you now hold in your hands is replayable at least two dozen times—vetted across hundreds of thousands if not a million plays of the 3rd edition—before a player starts to see much story repetition. (With the content and gameplay enhancements to this new edition, that span should be even longer, including the addition-by-subtraction of 'getting out of jail free' rather than spending much of a game Imprisoned or Lost.) The great replayability also gives confidence that you won't get the same old story when you pick up the game again: that you'll get the delight of discovering something new, rather than knowing how the story is going to end. Or knowing the story encountered in subsequent play at all.

The game design and mechanics that deliver this true replayability combined to become a storytelling platform that in time may prove the chief reason the game endures. A number of third-party games have borrowed design elements from *Arabian Nights* in the intervening years; a first sequel "Tales" game was published in 2024, and at this writing, a third is in development.

Over four decades, the storytelling platform has led to a voyage of discovery, as *Arabian Nights* has been embraced by successive audiences:

- 1) A *"girlfriend" game*: In 1985, the small American tabletop adventure game market catered to nerd-ish boys and their toys, with a consumer base estimated at 90% male. From the start, *Arabian Nights* appealed to both women and men; with today's gamer population cresting 30% female, I'm most pleased that *Arabian Nights* is now also a 'boyfriend' game and a 'significant other' game.
- 2) A *family game*: This emergent audience came as a surprise but probably shouldn't have; it taps into something powerful and lasting, as parents have told stories to children since time immemorial. *Arabian Nights* serves up a rich buffet of stories, and invests children in those stories by allowing them to participate and to direct the telling of the tales.
- 3) *Role-playing*: The "Fighting Fantasy" series adapted simple game mechanics from tabletop role-playing games to branching stories; *Arabian Nights* adapts role-playing tools to a storytelling game. One outgrowth is *D&D* players using *Tales* to introduce novices to the role-playing experience.
- 4) *Improv*: "You're a mad barber, she's a whirling dervish. You meet at a bazaar in the fabled city of Samarkand. Go!"
- 5) *Education*: In China, teachers are using the local edition to facilitate students who never or rarely speak in class to become accustomed to doing so. This started with an enterprising teacher; after the Chinese publisher took the game to an education conference, the practice spread to hundreds of classrooms.

The storytelling platform allows you to make *Tales of the Arabian Nights* your game. While in "Choose Your Own Adventure" and "Fighting Fantasy" books, you're the main character, in *Tales*, you—when you want—can be the game director, tailoring the game to your personal preferences. (As you can see at the estimable BoardGameGeek.com, thousands of players have!)

The lightning-rod issue social issue with my original conception of *Tales of the Arabian Nights* was that, in hewing closely to the mores of the 1001 Nights stories, the game did not properly respect the full spectrum of players' life and lifestyle choices. For making what should be a fun experience sometimes less comfortable and especially for offense that didn't need to be given, my deep apologies—not least because, in doing so, I was inconsistent with my original design intent. In the Note to the original 1985 edition¹, I wrote an apologia for why female characters had much greater agency in this *Tales of the Arabian Nights* re-telling than in, say, the Victorian-era re-tellings of the tales. At bottom, this edition is truer to that original intent: the stories remain faithful to the source material, with the color, the sense of wonder, the mores, and the general storylines; while the game is for the players, rewards their play regardless of who they may be in real life, and above all it promotes their enjoyment.

For those interested in thoughtful criticism of my design misstep in underserving the full player audience, Michael Heron's "Accessibility Teardown" post at the Meeple Like Us blog² provides a good summary of perceived issues (most of which I concur)—and several recommendations for remediation that have influenced this 40th anniversary edition.

Of the many people who've contributed starting in 1984 to making *Tales of the Arabian Nights* the game it is today, the four whose influence is greatest to the core game and experience have been Doug Kaufman, Ken Rolston, Kevin J. Maroney, and Zev Shlasinger. I'm deeply appreciative to Doug and Ken for their seminal development and storytelling work; and to Kevin and Zev for their many enhancements in taking *Arabian Nights* to a much larger audience.

In the course of a 40-year journey, *Tales of the Arabian Nights* became a family game in a personal way. A little over five years ago, my older daughter Tara became enamored of the game, since playing it 35–40 times. Accordingly, I frequently deferred to her on improvements to the text of and values for the cards, as she has greater recent experience with how these play. (With Kevin and Zev, as game professional and publisher, batting last.) So, in a sense, this edition of *Tales of the Arabian Nights* is from my family to yours.

Welcome to Schehenzade's, to our and now your stories. *Tales of the Arabian Nights* awaits for you to discover anew, enjoy, and experience stories that become yours in the telling.

Eric Goldberg
New York, July 2025

¹A Note to Western Readers (1985): reprinted on page 16 of <https://boardgamegeek.com/filepage/43583/english-rulebook-pdf-tales-of-the-arabian-nights>

²Accessibility Teardown (2009 edition): <https://www.meeplelikeus.co.uk/tales-of-the-arabian-nights-2009-accessibility-teardown/>

Quick Start Guide

Read this to play the game right away, using the rest of this rulebook as reference as needed.

Goal: Be in Baghdad while having achieved your combined Secret Goal of  Destiny and  Story Points.

Players	Points
2	20
3	18
4	15
5	13
6	11

Setup

See page 4 for full setup details.

- **Map:** Place the map where all players can reach it.
- **Characters:** Choose your Character and all matching components: Player mat, markers, and Standee. Place Standee in Baghdad. Place Destiny and Story markers on the track near the Start space. Place your Wealth marker on your Player board on the “Poor” space.
- **Cards:** Shuffle the Encounter, Quest, City, and Treasure decks separately. Place them facedown near the Map. Stack the Time markers next to the Encounter deck with Morning on top. Deal 2 City cards faceup to each player. Draw 2 Quest cards and keep 1, discarding the other. Place it faceup in front of you. Sort the Status cards by type and place them faceup near the map.
- Record your **Secret Goal**. (See chart above.)
- Choose **Starting Player** randomly.
- Make a **Skill Bank** near the Map. then in turn order take a Skill until everyone has 3 different skills on the Talent side. (See page 12.)



Talent level skill



Master level skill

On your turn

See pages 16–17 for an example turn.

- 1) **Pass the Book of Tales** to the player on your left. The Reaction Matrices booklet is given to the player on your right. (See page 6.)
- 2) **Check Treasures and Statuses:** If you have any treasures or statuses that will affect your turn, announce them now (see page 14). Add or remove any Status markers as indicated on the card. (See page 13.)
- 3) **Move Your Character:** You may move your Character up to the number of spaces that your Wealth Level allows. You may also choose to remain in place. (See page 6.)
- 4) **Resolve Your Encounter:** Draw the top card from the Encounter deck and resolve the encounter by the type of card it is. (Character, Terrain or Place of Power — see page 8.) If you arrive in a city for which you have a matching City card, you may play that card instead of drawing from the Encounter Deck. Discard the City card after resolving the roll and the encounter. Draw a new City card. (See page 9.)
- 5) **Resolve Quests:** If you have completed the requirements for your Quest, take the award listed on the Quest card, remove it from the game, then draw 2 new Quest cards, keeping one and discarding the other. (See page 4.)
- 6) **Check for Victory:** If you are in Baghdad and have met (or exceeded) the conditions of your Secret Goal, then declare that you can win. All the other players will have one more turn.
- 7) **Change Time marker (end of round only):** After everyone has taken a turn, change the Time marker to the next time of day: morning to noon, noon to night, night to morning, and so on.

