

CHU CHIN CHOW
BY
OSCAR ASCHE (WORDS)
AND
FREDERIC NORTON (MUSIC)

1916

Edited by David Trutt

CHU CHIN CHOW
A MUSICAL TALE OF THE EAST
TOLD BY
OSCAR ASCHE
SET TO MUSIC BY
FREDERIC NORTON

First produced at His Majesty's Theatre, London
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Chu Chin Chow is a musical comedy written, produced and directed by Oscar Asche, with music by Frederic Norton, based, with embellishments, on the story of *Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves*. The piece premiered at His Majesty's Theatre in London on August 31, 1916 and ran for five years and a total of 2,238 performances (more than twice as many as any previous musical), a record that stood for nearly forty years.

The editor believes that the play will be more easily followed if the detailed story of the original *The Forty Thieves* is first presented. *The Forty Thieves* differs in a number of aspects from the tale as told in *Chu Chin Chow* but the basic stories are similar.

The Forty Thieves

The story takes place in Bagdad. Ali Baba and his elder brother Kasim Baba were the sons of a wealthy merchant. After the death of their father, the greedy Kasim cast Ali Baba out from their father's inheritance and business.

Ali Baba works collecting and cutting firewood in the forest, and one day he happens to overhear a group of forty thieves visiting their treasure store in the forest. The treasure is in a cave, the mouth of which is sealed by magic. It opens on the words "Open Sesame," and seals itself on the words "Close Sesame." When the thieves are gone, Ali Baba enters the cave himself, and takes some of the treasure home.

Ali Baba borrows his sister-in-law's scales to weigh this new wealth of gold coins. Unbeknownst to Ali, his brother's wife has put a blob of wax in the scales to find out what Ali is using them for, as it is known that Ali was too impoverished to need a scale for use. To her shock, she finds a gold coin sticking to the scales and tells her husband, Ali Baba's rich and greedy brother, Kasim. Ali Baba tells Kasim about the cave. Kasim goes to the cave to take more of the treasure, but in his greed and excitement over the treasures forgets the magic words to get back out of the cave. The thieves find him there, and kill him. When his brother does not come back, Ali Baba goes to the cave to look for him, and finds the body, quartered and with each piece displayed just inside the entrance of the cave to discourage any similar attempts in the future.

Ali Baba brings the body home, where he entrusts Marjanah, a clever slave-girl in Kasim's household, with the task of making others believe that Kasim had died a natural death. First, Marjanah purchases medicines from an apothecary, telling him that Kasim is gravely ill. Then, she finds an old cobbler known as Baba Mustafa whom she pays, blindfolds, and leads to Kasim's house. There, overnight, the cobbler stitches the pieces of Kasim's body back together, so that no one will be suspicious. Ali and his family are able to give Kasim a proper burial without anyone asking awkward questions.

The thieves, finding the body gone, realize that yet another person must know their secret, and set out to track him down. One of the thieves goes down to the town and comes across Baba Mustafa, who mentions that he had sewn a dead man's body back together. Realizing that the dead man must have been the thieves' victim, the thief asks Baba Mustafa to lead the way to the house where the deed was performed. The cobbler is blindfolded again, and in this state he is able to retrace his steps and find the house. The thief marks the door with a symbol. The plan is for the other thieves to come back that night and kill everyone in the house. However, the thief has been seen by Marjanah and she, loyal to her master, foils his plan by marking all the houses in the neighborhood with a similar marking. When the forty thieves return that night, they cannot identify the correct house and the head thief kills the lesser thief. The next day, another thief revisits Baba Mustafa and tries again, only this time, a chunk is chipped out of the stone step at Ali Baba's front door. Again Marjanah foils the plan by making similar chips in all the other doorsteps. The second thief is killed for his stupidity as well. At last, the head thief goes and looks for himself. This time, he memorizes every detail he can of the exterior of Ali Baba's house.

The chief of the thieves pretends to be an oil merchant in need of Ali Baba's hospitality, bringing with him mules loaded with thirty-eight oil jars, one filled with oil, the other thirty-seven hiding the other remaining thieves. Once Ali Baba is asleep, the thieves plan to kill him. Again, Marjanah discovers and foils the plan, killing the thirty-seven thieves in their oil jars by pouring boiling oil on them. When their leader comes to rouse his men, he discovers that they are dead, and escapes.

To exact revenge, after some time the thief establishes himself as a merchant, befriends Ali Baba's son who is now in charge of the late Kasim's business, and is invited to dinner at Ali Baba's house. The thief is recognized by Marjanah, who performs a dance with a dagger for the diners and plunges it into the heart of the thief when he is off his guard. Ali Baba is at first angry with Marjanah, but when he finds out the thief tried to kill him, he gives Marjanah her freedom and marries her to his son. Ali Baba is then left as the only one knowing the secret of the treasure in the cave and how to access it. Thus, the story ends happily for everyone except the forty thieves and Kasim.

Introduction by Oscar Asche

For the story of this entertainment I have gone to *The Arabian Nights*, and have taken as my subject *The Forty Thieves*, the best beloved, I imagine, of all the tales with which Shahrazad soothed her lord. Providing as it does such opportunities for musical illustration, for decorative dances, for pictorial artistry, for the making of atmosphere—the theme is irresistible!

Mainly I have used [Richard Francis] Burton's intimate translation, carefully collating the several variants of the story to be found in other literatures. I would point out that *The Forty Thieves*, as it is commonly known here, has acquired strange and uncongenial characters and incidents. These I have removed; while the exigencies of a play so spacious as to fill a stage so large as His Majesty's Theatre in London have needed the introduction of other scenes and personalities.

Indeed, I have used the license of the dramatist, with a carefully maintained consciousness of the spirit of *The Arabian Nights*. And I hope these magic doors may open on a lifelike and stimulating vision of the romance, the splendour, the inscrutable mystery of the East.

Synopsis of *Chu Chin Chow*

The wealthy merchant Kasim Baba, brother of Ali Baba, is preparing to give a lavish banquet prior to staging an auction of his most beautiful female slaves. The Robber Chieftain, Abu Hasan, wishes to add to his riches the gold and property of Kasim. Abu Hasan forces his captive, the beautiful Zahrat al-Kulub, to spy for him in Kasim's house by threatening her with torture. Zahrat sends a message to Abu Hasan, letting him know about the banquet. Hasan arrives at Kasim's palace in disguise as Chu Chin Chow, a wealthy Chinese merchant. He tries to glean information that will enable him to rob his host during the auction.

Meanwhile, Ali Baba happens upon Hasan's secret cave and hears him use the password "Open O Sesame." Ali Baba helps himself to some of the thieves' treasure. Kasim persuades his brother to tell him where his sudden wealth came from and slips out to see what he can find at Hasan's cave. Kasim finds the treasure but is captured by Abu Hasan and put to death. Finally, on the eve of an attack on Ali Baba's family planned by Abu Hasan, Zahrat gets her revenge by disposing of the forty thieves using boiling oil and stabbing Abu Hasan, and generally saving the day. The lovers are united, and all ends happily.

Editor's Comments

In the original production baritone Oscar Asche played Abu Hasan; his wife, Lily Brayton played Zahrat al-Kulub. Courtice Pounds, D'Oyly Carte tenor, played Ali Baba. William Davidson, also previously of D'Oyly Carte, played Mukbil the slave auctioneer. Thus there is a link between Gilbert & Sullivan and this later musical.

In this edition, the songs have been taken from the Vocal Score or Libretto; they differ in a number of places and the more appropriate wording has been chosen. No words, however, have been updated or revised.

The Dialogue has been treated differently. It appears that in order to preserve the mysteries of the East, Oscar Asche has used olde English language and grammar. The editor was drawn between producing a 'reading copy' and an historical record. The decision was to produce a reasonable compromise. Olde English language such as *thee*, *thou*, *hath* has been judged inappropriate to an Eastern milieu, and has been updated. Asche's odd grammatical sentence structure is used to represent how foreign languages may be transliterated into English, and has been retained.

Note that Asche's spelling of 'Bagdad' instead of 'Baghdad' for the Persian city has been retained.

There were adjustments made to the Vocal Score and Libretto within the months after the opening in 1916. By 1918, a 'final' version was prepared: The number of acts was changed from three to two, songs were deleted and new ones added, the Libretto was modified to accommodate these perceived improvements. It is this 1918 version which is presented herein. The AFTERWORD starting on page 64 contains the *Chu Chin Chow* songs which did not become part of this version.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ABU HASAN	The Sheik of the Robbers, pretending to be Chu Chin Chow.
ZAHRAT AL-KULUB	She is Abu Hasan's spy in Kasim Baba's house.
KASIM BABA	Wealthy merchant wishing to do business with Chu Chin Chow.
ALCOLOM	Kasim Baba's chief wife, young and beautiful.
MARJANAH	Young slave girl of Kasim Baba, in love with Nur al-Huda.
ABDULLAH	Kasim Baba's steward.
ALI BABA	Kasim Baba's poor brother, in love with Alcolom.
MAHBUBAH	Ali Baba's wife, now older and unattractive.
BOSTAN	She is Mahbubah's servant.
NUR AL-HUDA	Ali Baba's son, in love with Marjanah.
OTBAH	A stall keeper.
BABA MUSTAFA	A cobbler.
MUKBILL	A slave auctioneer.
ZANIM	A slave dealer.
MUSAB	Member of Abu Hasan's band.
KHUZAYMAH	Member of Abu Hasan's band.
Robbers, Dancers, Servants, Slaves.	

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I		ACT II	
Scene 1-p 8	Kasim Baba's Palace	Scene 1-p36	Kasim Baba's Palace
Scene 2-p18	Marjanah's Window	Scene 2-p41	In the Starlight
Scene 3-p20	The Cactus Grove	Scene 3-p42	The Cave
Scene 4-p25	The Silk Stall	Scene 4-p45	Alcolom's Room
Scene 5-p29	Kasim Baba's Palace	Scene 5-p47	The Bazaar
		Scene 6-p58	Alcolom's Room
		Scene 7-p61	Kasim Baba's Palace

Enter two ATTENDANTS; they stand in front of the two centre pillars, and cross their arms on their breasts. Enter ABDULLAH [Kasim Baba's steward], followed by four ATTENDANTS, carrying each a dish of fruit, meat or fish upon his head. Four other ATTENDANTS enter carrying similar dishes upon their heads. These ten coloured attendants are slaves of Kasim Baba. ABDULLAH carries two large staves, five feet long, one in each hand. He brings the staves on the ground in front of him each time he puts his right foot on the ground.

ABDULLAH. Here be oysters stewed in honey
And conger eels cooled in snow,
Here be shell-fish stuffed with spices
And fricasseed sturgeon-roe.

CHORUS. All for our rich lord Kasim
Whom Allah speed below!

ABDULLAH. Sh!
Here be lambs' tails baked in butter
And plovers' eggs from afar,
Here be humming-birds in jelly,
And lizards from Zanzibar.

CHORUS. All for our rich lord Kasim,
O curse Kasim Baba!

ABDULLAH. Shhhh!

The ATTENDANTS lay their dishes on the hotplate. Those with fruit place their dishes on the adjacent table. Enter ZAHRAT AL-KULUB [Abu Hasan's spy in Kasim Baba's house].

ZAHRAT. How now, what guest are you preparing for to-night, Abdullah?

ABDULLAH. Don't you know, O Zahrat al-Kulub, that our master entertains this night Chu Chin Chow, a rich merchant from China?

ZAHRAT. Whereby the rich merchant will wax the richer and our master Kasim, the poorer.

ABDULLAH. What do you mean, O serious and mysterious one?

ZAHRAT. After every such feast of honour to these traveling strangers or rich merchants from afar, bad fortune has knocked at the house of Kasim Baba.

ABDULLAH. In sooth you are right.

ZAHRAT. Was there not Sharrkan, the Wizar of Sharazynar?

ABDULLAH. Whose bilious skin Kasim sought to render yet more bilious with a feast of fat, rich food.

ZAHRAT. But Kasim will never part with thee, O daughter of longing desire.

MARJANAH. Therefore, I pray to Allah that Kasim may lose every dinar of his hoarded ill-gotten wealth.

ALCOLOM. Allah hear her prayer.

ZAHRAT. There may be one coming to the feast to-night who has power to grant her prayer. One mighty even as Allah.

ALCOLOM (*lightly*). So so! Comes then Satan to the feast?

ZAHRAT. Nay, but the son of Satan comes in very sooth, the great Chu Chin Chow of China!

ALCOLOM. What be your riddle?

ZAHRAT. Will you both give the bond of Allah never to unfold what I shall tell?

ALCOLOM *and* MARJANAH. We swear by the Koran.

ZAHRAT. Know then that I am above all the very slave of this Chu Chin Chow. Even as I was the slave of the Wazir of Sharazynar, and of the Hebrew Damascene, and of the Royal Grecian Prince, for all four be but one and the same.

ALCOLOM (*frightened*). Are you then the slave of some spirit, of some ifrit [*demon*]?

ZAHRAT. Yea, of the spirit of all evil, of the ifrit of ifrits. I am the slave of Abu Hasan of Khorasan.

ALCOLOM *and* MARJANAH (*a frightened shriek*). The robber sheik!

ZAHRAT. Yea, of him whom all men fear, the robber of mankind.

MARJANAH. You!

ALCOLOM (*frightened*). You, his slave!

ZAHRAT. Five years ago he raided the desert of A'mara, and dragged me from my desert home and my desert lover. Then, tiring of me, sold me by subtle means and cunning as slave to Kasim Baba.

ALCOLOM. You are his spy!

ZAHRAT. In every household of the rich, he keeps a slave to spy for him on pain of torture.

ALCOLOM. And you send him word and warning when there is aught to rob?

ZAHRAT. Even so. Then he comes in strange disguise to gather up by wit and guile what threads be lacking.

ALCOLOM. What threads does he come to gather up to-night?

ZAHRAT. Your lord tomorrow holds him a sale of some score or so of precious slaves, the pickings and barterings of many moons and climes. Marjanah and I are amongst them.

MARJANAH (*sadly*). Awah [*alas*], Awah!

ALCOLOM. Well, say on!

ZAHRAT. Only the wealthiest are bidden to this sale.

ALCOLOM. Yea, so. But how can Abu Hasan help us to our desires?

ZAHRAT. Let Marjanah here before the feast gain speech with him and fain to pierce through his disguise.

ALCOLOM. And threaten to expose him?

MARJANAH. Yea! I will say that you have unwrapped his secret!

ZAHRAT. Awah, that would mean death to him I love and worse than death to me.

ALCOLOM. Then how?

ZAHRAT. Upon his thumb he ever wears a ring—an emerald carved like an eagle's claw. Let your wits, Marjanah, devise the rest. Yet must he not suspect you know he is Abu Hasan, that would mean death for all.

ALCOLOM. But you, O Zahrat?

ZAHRAT. I do but wait till Allah shall unfold to me the path to freedom and revenge. My time will come. 'Tis written in the sand, his fate and mine. (*Exit ZAHRAT.*)

ALCOLOM. Will you, Marjanah, speak with this honoured guest and plead my cause?

MARJANAH. Yea, and mine. (*Exit ALCOLOM and MARJANAH.*)

(*Enter ABDULLAH, followed by two ATTENDANTS, then two sets of four ATTENDANTS carrying jars of wine upon their heads.*)

ABDULLAH. Here be bitter juice of orange
And juniper to entice,
Here be peppermint and wormwood
And shimmering Arctic ice.

CHORUS. All for our rich lord Kasim,
May he gain Paradise!

ABDULLAH. Shhhh!

(*Gong sounds. Enter ABU HASAN followed by six CHINESE ATTENDANTS. ABDULLAH bows his head.*)

HASAN. I am Chu Chin Chow of China.

CHINESE. Of Shanghai, China.

HASAN. No blood finer as mine in China.

CHINESE. In Shanghai, China.

HASAN. I am a Merchant Mandarin,
I have a purple palanquin [*enclosed litter to carry him*],
And a record strangely clean—

CHINESE. In Shanghai, China.

ABDULLAH. We are the dust beneath your feet, O Chu Chin Chow, and I will acquaint my lord of your arrival. *(Exit ABDULLAH and his ATTENDANTS.)*

HASAN. I am Chu Chin Chow of China.
Of Shanghai, China.
No blood finer as mine in China.
In Shanghai, China.
I am no Merchant Mandarin,
I have no purple palanquin,
And the land I ne'er have seen
Is Shanghai, China.

HASAN *(laughs)*. So my old friend, Kasim Baba, has prepared another sumptuous feast in my honour—the honour of Abu Hasan of Khorasan, or rather in honour of Chu Chin Chow of China. Even as he prepared for the Wazir of Sharazynar, and for the Hebrew Damascene and for the royal Grecian Prince. May Allah bless this feast as he blessed the others, that I may worm out of Kasim the secret of this slave-selling that we may plunder him yet again.

CHINESE. Glory be to Allah! May it be so!

(Unknown to HASAN, ZAH RAT has entered and hides behind a pillar.)

(Enter MARJANAH.)

MARJANAH. Are you our master's honoured guest, the great Chu Chin Chow of China?

HASAN. Yea, little daughter of inquisitive questioning.

MARJANAH. Nay, you may deceive others, O Chu Chin Chow, but never Marjanah.

HASAN. What do you mean, O daughter of ignorance?

MARJANAH. This is the fourth time you have honoured Kasim Baba's palace and ever in different garb, but ever wearing that same ring. You have come to work evil against my master, O Chu Chin Chow. *(HASAN and CHINESE draw their daggers.)* Nay, fear not that I will betray you. If I swear to keep your secret, will you swear to aid me?

HASAN. I swear it by the Koran. What would you ask, little jasmine bud?

MARJANAH. Will you this night bargain for me with Kasim Baba and, having bought me, give me my freedom that I may enter the harem of my soul's delight?

HASAN. I swear it by the Koran!

MARJANAH. Yea! and yet another boon?

HASAN. Say on!

MARJANAH. My mistress Alcolom hates and is hated by her lord Kasim, yet will not Allah hearken to her prayer. Can you not aid her to her desires, O Chu Chin Chow?

HASAN (*motion of cutting throat with fan*). By the removing of her lord to Paradise?

MARJANAH (*both hands pointing down*). Nay, to your father's kingdom [*Hades*].

HASAN (*seeing that she knows he is ABU HASAN in disguise*). Whence this knowledge of my pedigree, Marjanah? And do you think I will crush the bee that makes me honey? Yet if your mistress will but aid me to rob the comb, she shall remain queen bee.

MARJANAH. How, O son of Satan?

HASAN. That shall she know hereafter. Go!

MARJANAH. That will I. And Allah send you days of light and delight, O lord of the rising sun. (*Exit MARJANAH.*)

HASAN (*to CHINESE*). I am betrayed.

CHINESE. Yea, O master.

HASAN. And the reward?

CHINESE. Death, O master.

(*ZAHRAT moves away from behind the column as though to run off. HASAN seeing her, calls to stop her. She stops but does not look at him.*)

HASAN. Zahrat al-Kulub. Nay, hide not, you bashful flower. Draw near, you bloom of the desert. Do you hear?

ZAHRAT. My lord and master.

HASAN. Why do you lurk in the shadow, Zahrat al-Kulub?

ZAHRAT. Awaiting opportunity of speech with you, alone and unobserved.

HASAN. O faithful flower, your news is true?

ZAHRAT. Yea, O master.

HASAN. These slaves of Kasim's so highly prized are sold at sunrise?

ZAHRAT. Yea.

HASAN. Where be the sale?

ZAHRAT. That is for you to learn, O master.

HASAN. You have ever served me faithfully?

ZAHRAT. Has not my master proof?

HASAN. And you bear no malice for the years now past, no desire for vengeance?

ZAHRAT. How could so poor a creature have vengeance upon Abu Hasan of Khorasan?

HASAN. Thy fellow-slave Marjanah does suspect me and has named her price of silence. Why does she suspect?

ZAHRAT. Marjanah's eyes are ever keen.

HASAN. Your mistress Alcolom has likewise named her price. The ridding of her lord Kasim.

ZAHRAT. A jackal by whose death the world would gain.

HASAN. Yea, but why does Alcolom suspect?

ZAHRAT. Marjanah is never secret.

HASAN (*gives sharp look at ZAHRAT*). Your tongue has never loosely wagged?

ZAHRAT. Never, O master.

HASAN. And your reward, O Zahrat?

ZAHRAT. O master, I likewise am for sale. Buy me and set me free, that I may return to my desert home and my desert lover.

HASAN. No desire for riches?

ZAHRAT. None, O master.

HASAN. Yet for your service I shall reward as befits you. Until the end of life, which Allah grant not be for many years, I swear by the Koran you and your lover shall live midst wealth uncountable.

ZAHRAT. You swear?

HASAN. By the Koran.

ZAHRAT. Amen.

CHINESE. Amen.

HASAN. Zahrat, take this phial and drug your master's cup at the feasting so that he may be absent from the sale to-morrow, and bid your mistress Alcolom take his place. Go!

ZAHRAT (*takes the phial*). Hearing is obeying. (*She moves away and drugs the cup.*)

HASAN (*to CHINESE*). By wealth uncountable until they die. Be that not just?

CHINESE. Yea, my lord.

(The feast and entertainment begin. Enter KASIM BABA and ALCOLOM. Enter ALI BABA, his wife MAHBUBAH and son NUR AL-HUDA. Enter ABDULLAH, followed by two ATTENDANTS, then two sets of four ATTENDANTS. Enter six JAVANESE DANCERS.)

(ZAHRAT brings the drugged cup of wine to KASIM who drinks of it. Exit ZAHRAT.)

ALI (*plops down on the cushion next to Alcolom*). O Alcolom, you ravisher of hearts, you are myrtle, you are sweet basil, you are white jasmine.

HASAN. Who is this father of mirth and girth, O host of hosts?

KASIM. A poor half-witted brother of mine, the babbler of Bagdad, O guest of guests.

ALI. And who is this father of air and hair, O brother of brothers?

KASIM. The rich merchant, the great Ch-ch-ch—

HASAN. Chu Chin Chow of China.

ALI. Yea. And have you journeyed all those many miles from China, O Chu Chin Chow, to walk at last into the web of the ancient spider Kasim. He will suck you dry even as I suck the blood-orange of the Khulanjan.

ABDULLAH (*sounds gong*). The dancers from the Nile.

(Enter six EGYPTIAN DANCERS. Enter MARJANAH who begins to sing.)

MARJANAH. When the blood red sun is gliding o'er the Nile,
 CHORUS. Cleopatra's Nile.
 MARJANAH. There come marching ghostly legions mile on mile.
 CHORUS. Cleopatra's Nile.
 MARJANAH. Whom great Antony in vain
 Led to death on Egypt's plain
 Those legions sold by her guile.
 CHORUS. Ah! Ah!
 MARJANAH. When the blue moonlight is silvering o'er the Nile,
 CHORUS. Cleopatra's Nile.
 MARJANAH. Then the ghosts of those she pleased for a while,
 CHORUS. Cleopatra's Nile.
 MARJANAH. Come floating down the mist
 To keep their midnight tryst,
 Ghosts of Passion's Pilgrims of the Nile.
 CHORUS. Ah! Ah!

HASAN. By Buddha's tomb, this slave of yours, Marjanah, delights my celestial eye.
 What sum, O Kasim, will tempt you to part with such a gem?

NUR (*coming forward*). She is not for sale, O stranger from Shanghai. She is my
 beloved. Is it not so, O love of loves?

MARJANAH. You are the heart of my life, O Nur al-Huda. Yet am I but a chattel of
 my lord Kasim.

KASIM. By Allah, who are you to bandy words?

NUR. Your brother's son. And we have come hither to bargain with you for her
 freedom.

ALI. Yea! What is the price you ask, O my brother?

MAHBUBAH. Why do you talk of price, you drunken fool? You do not own the price
 of a pair of worn-out slippers.

HASAN. Are you willing to change your master, O daughter of song?

MARJANAH. As Allah wills.

NUR. Nay, Marjanah, never to him.

MARJANAH. Allah's ways are strange, O Nur al-Huda.

KASIM. What do you offer, O noble one?

HASAN. A thousand pieces of Chinese gold.

ALI. And I, two thousand Persian pieces.

KASIM. Pieces. What pieces, fool?

MAHBUBAH. Pieces of Persian firewood are all that he can offer. He cannot bid
 against this stranger for the slut.

ALI (*rising in tipsy exaltation*). Now by Allah. You do not know all the secret sources of my unknown wealth, you crinkled crow Mahbubah—nor you, you shrunken spider Kasim. Whatever Chu Chin Chow offers, I will double.

KASIM. But when will you offer the colour of your gold, you babbler of Bagdad?

HASAN. I offer twenty thousand Chinese pieces.

ALI. I offer forty thousand golden pieces of Turkey, Persia, Egypt, Greece, or any land that pleases you.

KASIM. Offer! Offer! When will you pay?

ALI. According to our Persian law, I claim a full day's time.

KASIM. Then if you fail to pay the forty thousand before next midnight, I'll take your offer O noble Hasan.

HASAN. Nay, I'll bid again. The slave may go for less.

ALI (*crossing to his son NUR*). The slave is yours, O son of my heart.

KASIM. When you have paid.

MAHBUBAH. Paid! He'll never pay, O Kasim. You will sing for the forty thousand pieces.

ALI. Sing for them! Yea! Glory be to Allah for the thought. I'll sing for them, hour upon hour round Bagdad will I sing.

KASIM. And dance for them also, O brother of drunkenness.

ALI. Yea, by Allah! Sing and dance.

ALI. I'll sing and dance.
 I'll dance and sing,
 Do anything,
 Do anything
 To bring the ring [*sound*]
 Of forty thousand pieces on the ground.
 Silver pieces, golden pieces,
 Ringing out their sound,
 Pieces winking, blinking, chinking, clinking
 On the ground.

HASAN. He cannot dance,
 He cannot sing.

NUR *and* MARJ. And yet he'll bring the glorious ring
 Of forty thousand pieces on the ground.

ALI. Pieces winking, blinking, chinking, clinking
 On the ground.

ALL. Ha ha! Ha ha! Ha ha! Ha ha! Ha ha! Ha ha!

ALI. Forty thousand pieces.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

ALI. Silver pieces, golden pieces, clinking out their sound.
I'll dance and sing,
Do anything
To hear them ring upon the ground.

HASAN *and* KASIM. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

ALCOLOM *and* ABDULLAH. Alas! I fear
He'll never hear
The pieces clinking out their sound.

ALI. I'll sing and dance.
I'll dance and sing,
Do anything,
Do anything
To bring the ring
Of forty thousand pieces on the ground.
Silver pieces, golden pieces,
Ringing out their sound,
Pieces winking, blinking, chinking, clinking
On the ground!

ALL. Ha ha! Ha ha! Ha ha! Ha ha! Ha ha! Ha ha! Ha ha!

ALI. Forty thousand pieces.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

ALI. Pieces winking, blinking, chinking, clinking on the ground.

CHORUS. He'll dance and sing,
Do anything
To hear them ring upon the ground.

ALI. Forty thousand pieces
Ringing out their sound!

ALL. Ah! Ah! Ah!

ALI. Winking, blinking, chinking, clinking all the ground.

ALL. Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha—
Ah! Ah!

CURTAIN.

(NUR AL-HUDA *is singing a serenade opposite MARJANAH'S window.*)

NUR. Marjanah, O list to my sighs,
 Seething and breathing with fire.
 Thy lover Nur al-Huda cries,
 Prays that thou quench his desire
 With love that will ne'er tire.
 Come, Marjanah, come awhile,
 Wait not till the sun doth smile,
 Come, thou dancer from the Nile,
 Marjanah, Marjanah, my love, my love!
 O Spirit of languorous night,
 Hasten each laggardly hour:
 No joy can I know till the light
 Open the eyes of my flower!
 Oh watch with me by Love's enchanted bower.
 Heart on lips I cry for her
 Every breath a sigh for her.
 Death were sweet to die for her,
 Marjanah, Marjanah, my love, my love!

(MARJANAH *appears at window.*)

MARJANAH. Nur al-Huda! Nur al-Huda!
 Love, I fly on wings of love to thee.
 Ere thy song had reached the skies
 Dreamed I one had kissed mine eyes,
 Who had brought such sweet surprise,
 Who but thee, eyes of me.
 My love! My love!

MARJANAH. O Nur al-Huda, light of my soul, your father Ali has brought dire calamity upon us by his meddling. I had made a bargain with that stranger from Shanghai that he should buy me from Kasim Baba and give me my freedom, that I might become your wife. And now, owing to your father's drunken boastings, am I still in bondage.

NUR. But did not the stranger say that he would bid for you again?

MARJANAH. Awah, he has departed from Bagdad, and we are never like to set eyes on him again.

NUR. Hope is the last thing that forsakes lovers. We must steal what we cannot buy, my heart's desire. At sunrise I go with my father to the woods outside the city to gather fuel. Meet us there and we will haste with all speed from Bagdad.

MARJANAH. In what part of the woods shall I await you, O Nur al-Huda?

NUR. Near the Turquoise god in the Cactus Grove. Sing that song of the market slave. I shall hear your voice trembling through the trees and answer it and find you.

MARJANAH. Sh! Now I must go, my beloved, for I hear Abdullah going his rounds to see that all is safe. Allah's peace on you, O my love.

NUR. And on you, O love of loves.

(NUR kisses her hand. MARJANAH disappears from window.)

NUR. Sleep, Marjanah. sleep awhile,
Meet me when the sun doth smile,
Fly from bondage, fly from guile,
Marjanah, Marjanah, my love, my love.

CURTAIN.

(ALI is asleep in front of the Turquoise god. He awakens, sits up and holds his head.)

ALI. My head, my head,
It weighs like lead,
I'm feeling dead.
My head—
Should be in bed.
I'll drink instead.
I'll drink. I'll drink instead.

(ALI drinks from bottle. Enter NUR AL-HUDA.)

NUR. Drinking yet again, O my father?

ALI. Again! It's the first I've had this day.

NUR. Yea! But yesternight at Kasim's feast did you not drink sufficient to last you even for a journey to Mesopotamia?

ALI. Is it not written "the past is past?" I remember naught but the present.

NUR. Do you not remember your bid of forty thousand pieces at the feast?

ALI. No.

NUR. And how you did swear to Allah to sing through Bagdad hour on hour to make good your bid?

ALI. No.

NUR. And here are you still lying where I left you at sunrise after your wife had turned you out to seek for firewood. Had you not meddled and muddled at Kasim's feast, Marjanah would now be mine.

ALI. There are many women in the world, O my son.

NUR. None like Marjanah, whose figure is like a willow branch. My soul almost quits me at the sight of her movements.

ALI. Only two kinds of women, O my son, even as the cattle in Pharaoh's dream—fat and lean. Consider your poor father's lot. When I married Mahbubah, she was as beautiful as a wild gazelle. Even as Marjanah. Consider her now. Now the passing years have leaned and angled her. When I embrace her I embrace a thistle. If only Alcolom were here in her place. A soft pillow to rest on after the day's work is done. Choose a fat wife, O son of my heart, not such a one as Marjanah. A fat wife considers her husband's comfort, a thin wife her own. Look at what Alcolom slipped under my robe last night—this flask of Grecian wine and this plump basted pullet, stuffed with cloves and almond patties—plump and juicy even as Alcolom herself—the ravisher of hearts.

(MARJANAH steals onto the stage. NUR sees her, joins her and they steal off.)

ALI. When a pullet is plump she's tender,
 When she's scraggy, no teeth can rend her.
 'Tis so even with a wife,
 If she's fat one blesses life,
 But when she's skin and bone
 She'll ever nag and moan.
 'Tis then the prayer to Allah rises—
 O to live alone.

 If with years a wife grows rounder
 You will ever be glad you found her.
 If the husband goes astray
 She'll look the other way.
 But if she's thin she'll rave
 And make a man behave.
 'Tis then the prayer to Allah rises—
 Dig deep my grave.

 When a pullet is plump she's tender. *(Exit ALI BABA.)*

NUR *(re-enters with MARJANAH)*. Oh, my sweet myrtle bud, now must we haste us
 and speed from Bagdad ere your master Kasim suspects your absence. We will beg our
 way as wandering minstrels and put trust in Allah.

(MUEZZIN [a Muslim crier] calling the hour of daily prayers is heard offstage.)

MUEZZIN. Allah is almighty,
 There is no god but Allah.
 There is no god but Allah.

MARJANAH. 'Tis the hour of noon-day prayer. *(MARJANAH and NUR kneel in prayer.)*
 HASAN *(offstage)*. Open O Sesame!

(MARJANAH and NUR rise and run off the stage upon hearing HASAN'S voice. They do not see the Cave opening. From the Cave, enter six CHINESE ATTENDANTS and eighteen ROBBERS, followed by HASAN. As they move onto the stage they sing.)

ROBBERS. We are the robbers of the woods,
 And we rob everyone we can;
 We steal the wealthy merchant's goods
 And sack each caravan.

And we count forty thieves all told.
 Our chief, the great Abu Hasan,
 Is clever, crafty, cool and bold,
 And we can always trust his plan.

We hide all spoils we chance to gain,
 Of precious jewels, silk and gold,
 Of spices, perfumes, wines and grain,
 In caverns grim and cold.

We are the robbers of the woods,
 And we rob everyone we can;
 We steal the wealthy merchant's goods
 And pillage every caravan.

HASAN. Shut O Sesame! (*Cave shuts.*) Now must we to the palace of Kasim Baba. Khuzaymah, go forth into the desert, seek out tidings of Zahrat al-Kulub's lover, the number of his tribe and where his tents are pitched. Ere set of sun your task be done. Musab, collect our band and gather outside the palace gates to enter at my call, that we may plunder Kasim Baba again. Come!

(*Exit HASAN and ROBBERS. As they move offstage they sing.*)

ROBBERS. We are the robbers of the woods,
 And we rob everyone we can;
 We steal the wealthy merchant's goods
 And seek every caravan.

And we count forty thieves all told.
 Our chief, the great Abu Hasan,
 Is clever, crafty, cool and bold,
 And we can always trust his plan.

(*Enter NUR and MARJANAH.*)

NUR. By Allah! What wonder of wonders is this? It is the Chinese merchant, Chu Chin Chow.

MARJANAH. It is Abu Hasan of Khorasan.

NUR. The robber sheik.

MARJANAH. Yea!

ROBBERS (*singing offstage*). Gold and jewels and silks
All hidden in this cavern
Grim and cold.

NUR. What were the words they spoke to close the rock?

MARJANAH. Yea, and the words to open it.

NUR. What were they?

MARJANAH. Open O—

ALI (*enters*). Ho, Nur al-Huda.

MARJANAH. Your father.

NUR (*excitedly going towards him*). O my father.

MARJANAH. O father of fathers.

NUR *and* MARJANAH. We have seen strange sights.

ALI. Yea, even as I see a strange sight now, you my son, loitering and lazing away your hours with this chattering magpie, while your poor hard-working father toils and broils in the noon-day heat, with never a drop of wine or water to cool him.

MARJANAH. Nay, listen, O father of cryings and lyings. Even as your son and I were prostrating ourselves to Allah at the call of noon-day prayer—the earth opened before us.

NUR. And a troupe of strange men came out of the bowels of the earth, singing as they came.

ALI. What have you done with my bottle of wine, O my son?

NUR. Nay, you did drink it all at the noon-day meal.

ALI. Then where have you two procured the inspiration for your imaginings?

MARJANAH. Nay, 'tis true, O father of misbelieving. Here knelt we—here—when we heard a strange singing beneath our feet.

NUR. A singing of many voices.

ALI. Have you left any wine for your father, O my son?

MARJANAH. Then certain words were spoken, and this rock raised up its head, and a band of robbers poured out.

ALI. Poured out? Where's the wine, my son? Poured out?

NUR. And then they spoke the words again and the rock closed down and they trooped off through the trees.

ALI. That rock rose up its head and then shut down, and then they all trooped off singing?

NUR *and* MARJANAH. Yea!

ALI. O my head, my head.

NUR. Opened and shut.

ALI. Even as my head opens and shuts, opens and shuts.

MARJANAH. All at their spoken word.

NUR. Yea!

ALI. Come, we'll all go home.

NUR. Nay, father, do you not believe?

ALI. Everything I see, my son.

NUR. And do you think we speak not the truth, when we tell you we heard this singing?

MARJANAH. And heard their voices call out "Open O Sesame!" and saw the rock rise up! (*As she says "Open O Sesame" ALI is amazed and frightened to see the rock open.*)

ALI (*dropping onto his knees*). O Allah!

NUR *and* MARJANAH. What has befallen you?

ALI (*pointing to rock which has opened*). O Allah! Tell me, my son, do I see truly?

NUR *and* MARJANAH (*seeing open cave for the first time*). O Allah!

ALI. Let's all go home to bed.

NUR. Nay, we will all go down there into the cave.

ALI. By Allah, I'll go home.

MARJANAH. They sang of precious stones and gold all hidden in this cave.

ALI (*stops and turns*). Stones and gold?

NUR. Come, my father. Come, Marjanah, let us go into the cave.

ALI. Yea, home to bed.

NUR *and* MARJANAH (*pointing into the cave*). Nay, to the cave.

ALI. Oh!

(NUR AL-HUDA *and* MARJANAH, *followed by* ALI BABA, *enter the ROBBERS' Cave.*)

CURTAIN.

(NUR AL-HUDA, MARJANAH and ALI BABA are onstage as the curtains open.)

ALI. Awah! Temperamental am I,
 And so, I go
 My own way—a lone way,
 With smiles but often a sigh.
Awah! Child of nature am I,
 A child of mood—misunderstood.
 But why should I repine
 When here is raiment fine?
 The rarest in the Orient,
 To suit the thin or corpulent;
 There's gold enough to buy,
 Whate'er may please the eye,
 A thousand hues to match the bloom of peerless Alcolom.
 So why should I repine
 When here is raiment fine?
 The rarest in the Orient,
 To suit the thin or corpulent;
 There's gold enough to buy,
 Whate'er may please the eye,
 A thousand hues to match the bloom of peerless Alcolom.
 My Alcolom,
 My Persian plum.

NUR. Yea, now you are rich, O my father, you will be having your harem.

ALI. Yea! And palaces of ivory and ebony, hammams [bathhouses] of flawless marble,
and feasts such as Kasim's feasts night upon night, and I shall be a Wazir of Wazirs.

MARJANAH (*laughs*). Or Chu Chin Chow of China.

ALI. I'll be Chu Chin Chow of China.

NUR and MARJ. Of Shanghai, China.

ALI. And no harem will be finer

NUR and MARJ. In Shanghai, China.

ALI. I'll have a palace made of gold
 And concubines, all young, none old,
 With a manner strangely bold,

NUR and MARJ. For Shanghai, China!

NUR. Come, O my father, cease your singing and your buying. 'Tis close upon the hour of sunset prayer and we must to Kasim's house.

ALI. Wherefore, O son of haste?

NUR. To pay him your forty thousand pieces which you bid last night for my Marjanah.

ALI. First would I purchase me yet more brave apparel that I may fill the eye of Alcolom.

MARJANAH. Nay, 'tis not what she sees upon you but what she knows within you, O Ali, which touches the heart of Alcolom. There lies the difference as the poet has said. Man loves the woman, but the love of the woman is for the love of the man. O Nur al-Huda, tell me yet again that you will ever love your Marjanah.

ALI. Oh! . . .

NUR. How many thousand times have you heard my answer?

MARJANAH. Yea, but does a woman ever tire of hearing what she fears to be true?

MARJANAH. Although I've often asked before,
 And thou hast answered yea,
 I ask the question yet once more,
 Oh, do not say me nay.
 Wilt thou devote thy life to me,
 And always for me care?
 And take no other wife to thee—
 Oh, let me hear thee swear.
 I love thee so.
 I love thee so.
 Art sure thou wilt not forsake me soon,
 Will a vow to me now be too great a boon,
 That love will not die,
 O swear though a lie.
 O swear my love,
 Be ever true.
 I love thee so.

MARJANAH. Although thou hast soothed my mind to sleep,
 And lulled my heart to rest;
 Yet promise all your vows to keep,
 O grant me this request.
 Wilt thou ne'er seek a fairer bliss
 Than in these arms to live.
 Nor long for yet some rarer kiss
 Than my poor lips can give.
 I love thee so.
 I love thee so.
 Art sure my smile thou'lt not turn to tears.
 Nor beguile me by wile in the coming years.
 O let not love die
 And tenderness fly,
 Be ever true.
 I love thee so.
 I love thee so.
 I love thee, love thee so.

MARJANAH (*lovingly*). Oh! Nur al-Huda!

ALI (*mockingly*). Nu-ral Hu-da! Awah, awah! The ways of a woman are beyond the wit of man to understand. Here are you before marriage, sweet as the sugar-cane, pliable as the willow-twig, yet when you have attained your desires, your sugar sweetness will turn to vinegar, your yielding and bending to carking [*fretting*] and barking.

MARJANAH. Nay, not so with me, for I shall never change.

NUR. For we are young, and love is ever young.

MARJANAH. And you are old.

ALI. Nay, middle-aged, but middle-aged.

NUR. It is only youth that knows of love, is it not so, Marjanah?

MARJANAH. Yea, yea, my love.

MARJANAH. All my days till end of life,
I will be his soothing wife:
Never doleful, ever gay,
Chasing worries from his way,
Still and silent and at ease,
Chattering, laughing, if he please.

ALI. That same tale was told to me,
By Mahbubah, so said she:
Soothing, silent, happy home,
Never would I wish to roam.

MARJANAH. So I Nur al-Huda tell.
ALI. Now I ever live in—
MARJANAH. Well?
ALI. Happiness at home!

MARJANAH. And at night when he would rest
I will sing what he loves best,
Smooth his pillow, fan his face,
Kiss him one good-night embrace.
In the morning when he wakes
Sherbet I will bring and cakes.

ALI. That same tale was told to me,
By Mahbubah, so said she:
Peaceful slumber, sweet and mild,
Never would my nights be wild.

MARJANAH. So unto my love I vow.
ALI. Sleeps Mahbubah like a—
MARJANAH. How?
ALI. Softly breathing child!

MARJANAH. How I love my Nur al-Huda.
ALI. How I loathe my Mahbubah.
MARJANAH. Love my Nur al-Huda! (*sung together*)
ALI. Loathe my Mahbubah! (*sung together*)

CURTAIN.

(The Slave Auction at KASIM BABA'S Palace. MUKBILL the Auctioneer, ABDULLAH the Steward, thirteen female SLAVES, four COLOURED ATTENDANTS with spears are onstage as the curtains open.)

MUKBILL. Are your master's slaves ready for the sale?

ABDULLAH. Yea, they be all bedecked and bejewelled and arrayed in their finest, even as they shall walk for sale.

MUKBILL. Then we but await the coming of your master Kasim Baba for the opening of the sale.

ABDULLAH. Yea, none shall enter to the selling save at his bidding.

ALCOLOM *(enters onstage followed by two ATTENDANTS)*. O Abdullah, your master is grievous sick, inflicted with pains internal and infernal.

ABDULLAH. The fruits of last night's feasting.

ALCOLOM. Therefore come I in his stead to see the carrying out of his commands and demands.

ABDULLAH. Hearing is obeying.

MUKBILL. Have you, O gracious Alcolom, the names of those invited to the sale that they may enter and the sale begin?

ALCOLOM. Yea, here be the list. *(Gives list to ABDULLAH.)*

MUKBILL. Call out the names. See that none else enter.

ABDULLAH. Kamar al-Zaman! Shams al-Din, slave dealer of Bassorah! The Sheik Omar Binal-Khattab! Sitt al-Hasan! Natal Damaki of Al Yaman! The slave dealer Zanim!

(Enter the six buyers, four men and two women, NATAL DAMAKI and ZANIM. Each is followed by an ATTENDANT with a sack of money.)

NATAL DAMAKI *(to MUKBILL)*. Allah give you good sweating.

MUKBILL. And to you, O lady. *(To ABDULLAH)* Be these all that are bidden?

ABDULLAH. All that be on the list. *(To ALCOLOM)* Yet, O gracious lady, your lord's guest of yesternight, the Chinese merchant, is without and prays for admittance.

ALCOLOM. Yea, my lord did bid him to the selling. Let him enter.

ABDULLAH. The merchant Chu Chin Chow of Shanghai, China is bidden to the sale.

HASAN *(enters onstage and goes to ALCOLOM)*. May I have speech with you, O head wife of my honourable and honoured host?

ALCOLOM *(to her ATTENDANTS)*. Withdraw.

HASAN. Are you willing to aid me in this robbing of your lord?

ALCOLOM. Yea, verily, if you will swear by Allah to rob me after.

HASAN. Rob you, O lady?

ALCOLOM *(fiercely)*. Yea, of my Lord.

HASAN. I swear by the Koran to rob you in the end.

ALCOLOM. When will be the end?

HASAN. When your lord has naught for me to rob save life.

ALCOLOM. Then by the Bestower of life and love will I quicken the end by feeding your ears with my knowledge of his buyings and sellings.

HASAN. Then hearken! You must consent to all I ask and when this market is at an end the rest will be my care and caring. Bid the sale begin.

ALCOLOM (*strikes gong*). Ho, Abdullah! Bring forth the slaves. Display their points unto the buyers and let the sale begin.

ABDULLAH. Hearing and obeying.

MUKBILL (*beats tom-tom for silence*). Praise be to Allah who has sent us His prophet and cursed be Satan the stoned, the deceiver of mankind. May the patron saint and the friend of buyers and sellers bless this market and all who buy and sell therein and grant them prosperity and length of days.

ALL. Amen!

(*Four SLAVES are brought forward: two white, one coloured and one Japanese.*)

ABDULLAH. Behold. Behold.
Spare not your gold.
But be ye bold,
Both young and old.
Behold!
Maids to grace a King's Harem,
Bodies black, brown, white and cream,
Lips that melt and eyes that gleam.
Behold!

(*The Four SLAVES are brought to the back. Three DANCING SLAVES are brought forward, followed by Four COLOURED SLAVES of rather large proportions.*)

ABDULLAH. Behold. Behold.
Dancers ripened by the sun,
Slender virgins every one.
Others weighing half a ton.
Behold! Behold!

(*The Three DANCING SLAVES and Four COLOURED SLAVES are brought to the back.*)

MUKBILL. The first lot!

(Zahrat al-Kulub and eight DESERT DANCERS are brought forward.)

ABDULLAH. Zahrat al-Kulub and the desert dancers, come into the ring.

MUKBILL. For Zahrat al-Kulub and the desert women, what is bid?

ZANIM. Before we bid, O Mukbill, let them display their gifts.

BUYERS. Yea, display their gifts.

ABDULLAH. O Zahrat al-Kulub and you desert women, display your gifts.

ZAHRAT. O ye, who in walled cities dwell,
What do ye know of life?

GIRLS. He! He! Of life.

ZAHRAT. O ye, who strive to buy and sell,
What taste have ye of strife?

GIRLS. He! He! Of strife.

ZAHRAT. O ye, who breathe but reek and dust,
Who hoard your wealth for moth and rust,
Whose veins are clogged by lazy lust,
What can ye feel of passion's gust?

GIRLS. Yaha! Yaha! But we, but we.

ZAHRAT. Yea, we who in the desert live.

GIRLS. Yea, live and live.

ZAHRAT. Yea, we who sell not love but give.

GIRLS. Yea, give and give.

ZAHRAT. Yea, we whose blood is hot and red,
By desert sire and mother bred,
Whose love is not by riches fed,
With lips and teeth we kisses shed.

GIRLS. We live! We live! *(Break into wild dance.)*

ZAHRAT. See their bodies whirling, throbbing.

GIRLS. Throbbing! Throbbing!

ZAHRAT. See their bosoms, heaving, sobbing.

GIRLS. Sobbing! Sobbing!

ZAHRAT. See their mad eyes gleaming,
See their love blood streaming.

Hear their screaming.

GIRLS. Screaming! Screaming! *(Dance and song ends.)*

ZANIM. Five thousand dinar.

SECOND BUYER. One thousand more.

THIRD BUYER. I bid another.

ZANIM. And five hundred more.

SECOND BUYER. Two hundred more than Zanim.

HASAN. Nay, hold! Put all the lots together and I will bid against them all. What say you, O Mukbill?

ZANIM. Nay, it is against all law and custom to alter the proceedings of the sale as set down by him who sells.

BUYERS. Yea, yea, against all law.

MUKBILL. Yea, it is against all law. Were Kasim Baba here—

ALCOLOM (*strikes gong for silence*). I speak for Kasim Baba. Do as Chu Chin Chow asks.

BUYERS. It is against all law.

MUKBILL. So be it. For all the lots together what is bid?

ZANIM (*addressing other BUYERS.*) We join together and bid against this stranger from Shanghai?

BUYERS. Yea, we join, we join.

ZANIM. And leave the bids to me?

BUYERS. Yea, yea, so be it.

ABDULLAH. Behold. Behold.
Spare not your gold.
But be ye bold,
Both young and old.
Behold!

ZANIM. Then for the lot what say you to thirty thousand dinar?

MUKBILL. Ha! ha! Thirty thousand.

BUYERS. Yea!

MUKBILL. A mere miserable thirty thousand for such slaves as never seen before.

ZANIM. Yea, here in good Persian gold.

BUYERS. Here in good Persian gold.

MUKBILL. What more is bid?

HASAN. I bid two score thousand dinar.

MUKBILL. Forty thousand bid. Throw your money down.

HASAN. Nay, I give my bond.

MUKBILL. Your bond!

ZANIM. No bonds are taken here.

BUYERS. Nay, no bonds, no bonds. Naught but good Persian gold.

ALCOLOM (*strikes gong for silence*). I speak for Kasim Baba. I take this merchant's bond.

ZANIM. O gracious one, will you take ours also?

ALCOLOM. Nay, naught but gold from you.

HASAN. Naught but good Persian gold.

ALCOLOM. I know Chu Chin Chow's worth, but Zanim's I know not.

MUKBILL. Forty thousand bid.

ZANIM. Another ten.

MUKBILL. Fifty thousand.

HASAN. Hold! How many thousand dinar have these buyers in good Persian gold?

ZANIM (*after conferring with other BUYERS*). Two hundred and ninety thousand and some two hundred odd.

HASAN. And will you bid the lot?

ZANIM. Yea, yea, if need be.

HASAN. I bid then, two hundred and ninety thousand.

ZANIM. And two hundred more.

HASAN. Throw your money down!

BUYERS (*throwing bags of gold on the mat*). Here on the mat. All good Persian gold.

HASAN. And one dinar more.

ZANIM. Now Satan curse you!

MUKBILL. Two hundred and ninety thousand two hundred and one dinar bid.

HASAN. Have you nothing left?

ZANIM (*turning to ALCOLOM*). Will you not, O gracious lady, take our bond?

ALCOLOM. Naught but gold from you.

ZANIM (*removes her bracelets and throws them onto mat*). These jewels then I add.

MUKBILL. What be their worth?

ZANIM. Bought from Kasim Baba not two months since for twenty thousand dinar.

ALCOLOM. Ha! From Kasim Baba say you?

ZANIM (*showing receipt*). Yea, here be his hand acknowledging the sum.

ALCOLOM. Worth then a third. I will reckon seven thousand.

MUKBILL. Two hundred and ninety-seven thousand two hundred and one dinar bid.

HASAN. And one dinar more.

BUYERS. Awah, awah!

MUKBILL. And one dinar more.

ZANIM. By Allah, we are finished, awah, awah!

MUKBILL. Then the slaves are yours, O Chu Chin Chow, for two hundred and ninety-seven thousand two hundred and one dinar more. Where be your bond?

HASAN. My spoken word!

ALL (*laughing*). Yep!

MUKBILL. Nay—Nay—

ALCOLOM (*strikes gong for silence*). I speak for Kasim Baba. His spoken word I do accept.

ALL. Yep! Now Allah save your lord!

(BUYERS *retrieve bags of gold from the mat, but do not leave the room.*)

ALCOLOM. Allah's blessing on you, Abu Hasan of Khorasan.

HASAN. Zahrat al-Kulub! Now I have bought you and you are mine again.

ZAHRAT. And will you keep your oath and set me free?

HASAN. Was that my oath?

ZAHRAT. Yea!

HASAN. Nay, I swore to reward you befitting the service you have rendered.

ZAHRAT. Yea, that till my death we should live surrounded by wealth uncountable.

But wealth I crave not, only freedom and the desert and my love.

HASAN. Too great a reward for a loose, babbling tongue. You did betray me yesterday night to Alcolom and your fellow-slave Marjanah. For service such as that the reward is death.

ZAHRAT. Death!

HASAN. But I will show you mercy and keep my oath. Until the end of life, which Allah grant you not for many years, I swear by the Koran you and your lover shall live chained in my cave midst wealth uncountable.

ZAHRAT. Nay, then, son of Satan, I will betray you in very deed here at this sale. (*Turns to BUYERS.*) Hear you all! This is no Chinese merchant you have been bartering with.

(HASAN *turns and takes a fan from one of the ATTENDANTS.*)

ALL. What do you say? No Chinese merchant?

ZAHRAT. It is Abu Hasan of Khorasan!

(ALL *rise and kneel with heads on floor full of fear.*)

ALL. The robber sheik!

ZAHRAT. Yea, he, the robber of mankind.

ALL. Allah protect us!

HASAN. Ha, ha! Do you believe her?

ZAHRAT. By Allah, it is true! I was his spy in Kasim Baba's house for many years.

ALL (*excited*). Allah! Allah!

HASAN. Do you believe her?

ZANIM (*frightened*). Nay, she is mad!

SECOND BUYER (*nervous laugh*). He, Abu Hasan?

THIRD BUYER. He, the robber sheik? The desert woman's mad—mad—mad!

ALL (*laugh*). Yea! Mad—mad—mad!

HASAN (*rising*). Nay, it is you who are mad. I am Abu Hasan of Khorasan.

ALL (*groveling on ground*). Allah protect us. Allah have mercy on us. Awah, awah!

ZAHRAT. Why cry to Allah? Why not protect yourselves? Here stands the wolf alone, that has robbed you all for years. Here, in your power. You are many, stand up and seize him. He is but one!

HASAN (*sounds signal and robbers enter*). And forty more! Did you forget? Now do you believe her?

ZANIM. O Allah!

HASAN. Place all your bags of gold—of good Persian gold—here on this mat. (ALL *do so*.)

ZAHRAT (*to ALL*). Now Allah's curses on your Bagdad. You have no men, no blood in Bagdad. You writhe and grovel in the dust before this robber sheik, but I, the desert woman, will avenge your wrongs and mine. Abu Hasan, I am your death!

(ZAHRAT *rushes at HASAN with a dagger. He lifts his fan and deflects her charge. ZAHRAT falls on her knees and drops the dagger.*)

HASAN. Your stroke has failed, my desert flower.

ZAHRAT. Yea, this time, Abu Hasan. Yet fate, which never lies, has written in the sand that I shall be your death. 'Tis written in the sand, Abu Hasan, Abu Hasan, my fate and your fate.

HASAN. Khuzaymah guard well the slaves, and bring Zahrat al-Kulub to the cave. The peace upon you all.

CURTAIN—END OF ACT I.

(KASIM BABA'S *Palace that evening after the theft of gold and slaves by ABU HASAN. KASIM BABA, ABDULLAH the Steward, and eight JAVANESE singers for the CHORUS are onstage as the curtains open.*)

KASIM (to ABDULLAH). Call forth my wife of wives and bid her sing and let my dancers dance. (Exit ABDULLAH. Enter eleven DANCERS, followed by ALCOLOM.) Alcolom, come sing to me. A song of love!

ALCOLOM. How can I sing from a heart that's cold,
From a heart that's bought by a bidder's gold,
A song of passion—of love—of life,
With a will at war and a soul in strife.
What gain or pleasure for thee to hear
A song of love from a soul in fear,
Hear thou the song of my life's desire
From a heart in pain, from a soul in mire.

CHORUS. I long for the sun and for freedom's breath,
To escape from this grave—from this living death,
From the stifling heat of thy cold harem.

ALCOLOM. To awake as one wakes from a torturing dream,
To awake as one wakes from a torturing dream.
I long for the sound of the boundless sea,
To be free, free, free from my chains,
To be free, free, free.

CHORUS (*reprise*). I long for the sun and for freedom's breath,
To escape from this grave—from this living death,
From the stifling heat of thy cold harem.

ALCOLOM. To awake as one wakes from a torturing dream,
To awake as one wakes from a torturing dream.
I long for the sound of the boundless sea,
To be free, free, free from my chains,
To be free, free, free.

(Exit eleven DANCERS. Enter ABDULLAH, MARJANAH, NUR AL-HUDA and ALI BABA accompanied by COLOURED BOY ATTENDANT carrying bag of money. KASIM BABA, ALCOLOM and eight JAVANESE singers remain onstage.)

ALI. Where be this poverty-stricken stuttering brother of mine, the lord of this shambling palace?

KASIM. Why have you come, O brother of rags and filth? Have I not misfortune enough crowding on my heart this night but you must needs come with your babblings?

ALI. I deign to set my lordly foot within your lowly hovel to bring you the sum of my bidding.

KASIM. Where did you get this gold?

ALI. What's that to you?

KASIM. What house in Bagdad has hoarded your unknown wealth?

ALI. A house whose door opens without a key.

KASIM. Opening doors without a key is the knavish trick of a petty thief, and that's you.

ALI. A thief, O brother?

KASIM. Now you shall forfeit all your wealth and be disgraced and thrown out unless you tell me the truth.

ALI. Nay, nay. Give me your ear in secret and I will unfold strange sights and stranger.

ALI. Hail the Grand Wazir to be,

KASIM. Who is he?

ALI. Ali Baba the First,

ALCOLOM. Ali Mine how wondrous fine,

KASIM. He's in wine,

ALI. I've unquenchable thirst.

KASIM. Why hast thou cast off thy rags,

Whence this rich array?

ALI. For thy answer see the bags

Let them say my say.

KASIM&ALCOLOM. By Allah what contain the bags then pray.

ALI. Pieces of gold for Ali, for Ali, for Ali.

Ali is richer far than brother Kasim Baba,

So make a Salaam to Ali,

I promise goodly cheer,

A daily dinner for saint and sinner

When I am Grand Wazir.

KASIM. Where hast thou got all this wealth,
Stole by stealth?

ALI. Brother Baba will burst,

KASIM. Now unless thou tell me true,
Thou shalt rue.

ALI. Splutter stutter thy worst.
Here do I make good my bid
Forty thousand and, So;

KASIM. Tell me where thy fortune's hid
Or to justice go.

KASIM&ALCOLOM. Awah! The Wazir of police will know.

ALI. Naught is amiss with Ali, with Ali, with Ali.
Ali is purer far than driven snow in Persia,
So step thou aside with Ali,
I'll whisper in thine ear,
A tale of wonder, of goodly plunder
Salaam the Grand Wazir.

CHORUS (*reprise*). Naught is amiss with Ali, with Ali, with Ali.
Ali is purer far than driven snow in Persia,
So step thee aside with Ali,
He'll whisper in thine ear,
A tale of wonder, of goodly plunder
Salaam the Grand Wazir.

KASIM. Come, O brother of wonders.

ALI. I follow, O brother of plunder. *(Both exit behind pillar.)*

ALCOLOM. Is it true that there be this secret well of wealth into which your father has dipped?

NUR. Yea, a well of wells indeed. But now will your lord Kasim learn the secret and his bucket will drain it to the last drop.

MARJANAH. That must our wits prevent. Come, Nur al-Huda, the tale hereafter.

ALCOLOM. Yea, any tale that would foil and despoil my lord Kasim and yield Ali the wherewithal to purchase me into his harem.

NUR. Yea, verily! But what will Mahbubah say?

MARJANAH. She will say her say
All night and day.

NUR. All night and day.

ALCOLOM. And indeed she may.
For I am gay,
Not lean nor grey.

ALL. And so we all to Allah pray.
That Mahbubah, Mahbubah, Mahbubah bubah bubah.

ALCOLOM. That grim and slim Mahbubah bubah,

MARJANAH. Flat old cat, Mahbubah bubah,

NUR. Bone and groan, Mahbubah bubah,
Bubah's had her day.

ALL (*reprise*). And so we all to Allah pray.
That Mahbubah, Mahbubah, Mahbubah bubah bubah.

ALCOLOM. That grim and slim Mahbubah bubah,

MARJANAH. Flat old cat, Mahbubah bubah,

NUR. Bone and groan, Mahbubah bubah,
Bubah's had her day.

(*Exit MARJANAH and NUR AL-HUDA. Enter KASIM and ALI.*)

ALI. Yea, we now will dine
On love and wine.

ALCOLOM. On love and wine,

KASIM. O brother mine.

This house is thine
Whilst I recline.

ALL. Such kindness you cannot decline.

O old Baba, old Baba,

ALCOLOM. Old Kasim, curse him, Baba.

ALI. O mean and lean old Kasim Baba.

ALCOLOM. Stutt'ring, splutt'ring Kasim Baba.

KASIM. Plumpy, stumpy, Ali Baba,

What is mine is thine.

ALCOLOM (*to ALI*). What is thine is mine.

ALL (*reprise*). Such kindness you cannot decline.
O old Baba, old Baba.

ALCOLOM. Old Kasim, curse him, Baba.

ALI. O mean and lean old Kasim Baba.

ALCOLOM. Stutt'ring, splutt'ring Kasim Baba.

KASIM. Plumpy, stumpy, Ali Baba,
What is mine is thine.

ALCOLOM (*to ALI*). What is thine is mine.

(*Exit ALI BABA and ALCOLOM and eight JAVANESE singers. KASIM BABA alone remains onstage.*)

KASIM. Now will I this night
Ere it be light
Ere it be light,
Prove wrong or right
This fable trite
Of treasure bright.
So may thy plans be withered o'er with blight.
O, O Ali. O Ali.
O babbling brother Ali.
O needy greedy, brother Ali.
Doting gloating, brother Ali.
Muddled fuddled, brother Ali
Satan thee requite.

(*Exit KASIM BABA. Enter ALI BABA and ALCOLOM and eight JAVANESE singers.*)

ALI & ALCOLOM. O Ali. O Ali.
O Alcolom. O Ali.
Beguiling, smiling Ali Baba.
Laughing, quaffing Ali Baba.
Sinful, skinful [*corpulent*] Ali Baba.
Allah bless thy night.

CHORUS (*reprise*). O Ali. O Ali.
O Alcolom. O Ali.
Beguiling, smiling Ali Baba.
Laughing, quaffing Ali Baba.
Sinful, skinful Ali Baba.
Allah bless thy night.

CURTAIN.

(Enter NUR AL-HUDA and MARJANAH.)

NUR. This is our last night of freedom, O my Marjanah. Ever after this night we shall be bound together with chains of love.

MARJANAH. Nay, O silly one, this is our last night of bondage. Ever after this night we shall be rid of the chains of custom and restraint and be free to live and love.

NUR. By Allah, you are as wise as you are beautiful.

MARJANAH. Yea, you think so now, O my beloved? What will you think when I am arrayed even as a queen, bejewelled and perfumed with rare intoxicating scents?

NUR. Never can you be more beautiful than when I saw you first in your slave girl's dress.

MARJANAH. Tell me yet again, O Nur al-Huda, will you ever love your Marjanah?

NUR. How many thousand times have you heard my answer?

MARJANAH. Yea, but does a woman ever tire of hearing what she fears to be untrue?

MARJANAH. I built a fairy palace in the sky,
 All women do.
 A palace built of dreams where love and I
 ('Twas built for two.)
 Will wander year by year
 Unhaunted by the fear
 That love within my palace e'er should die
 Can dreams come true?

 You built no fairy palace in the sky,
 Men never do.
 And yet you built a palace just as high,
 You know it's true.
 You built it in my heart,
 Oh, vow you'll ne'er depart,
 And cause within your palace e'er to die
 My love for you.
 I built a fairy palace in the sky.

CURTAIN.

(NUR AL-HUDA and MARJANAH are found inside the ROBBERS' CAVE. Hidden in its dark shadows is ZHRAT, who is chained to a post, gagged and covered in a black veil. Also present, perfectly still and unseen by NUR and MARJANAH are nine SPIRITS of the Cave.)

NUR. Shut O Sesame! Now we are here, O beloved daughter of cleverness, unfold your plan.

MARJANAH. Here wait we until your Uncle Kasim approaches the mouth of the cave. And afterwards then shall I whisper "Open O Sesame!"

NUR. And leave him locked below.

MARJANAH. Yea! Yea! (*Hearing a moan made by ZHRAT.*) Do you not hear a sound, a moving?

NUR. Where?

MARJANAH. There in the corner by those heaps of gems.

NUR (*goes to the corner*). 'Tis a woman chained amidst these glittering gems.

MARJANAH (*goes to the corner*). 'Tis Zahrat, my fellow slave.

NUR. Chained and gagged. (*They unbind and ungag her.*)

MARJANAH. Zahrat al-Kulub. Zahrat, how do you come to be here?

ZHRAT. The work of Abu Hasan. He chained me here to live midst countless wealth until I die, and beneath my feet in a yet deeper cavern, my loved one is imprisoned.

MARJANAH. But we will free you, O Zahrat.

ZHRAT. Awah, these chains are thick, you have no file, no tool to force them, and the secret opening of the lower cave I know not.

MARJANAH. Let us with speed to Bagdad then for help.

NUR. Ssh! the trampling of Kasim's mules above.

ZHRAT. Replace the gag and leave me, and do even as you have planned.

NUR (*replaces gag*). One of these mules will bear me to the city and back again.

MARJANAH. Yea! And hide the rest within the grove.

KASIM (*offstage*). Open O S-s-s-s—

MARJANAH. Did I not tell you? Harken to his hissing!

KASIM (*offstage*). Open O S-s-s-s—

MARJANAH (*in a whisper*). Open O Sesame!

(KASIM enters the Cave. MARJANAH and NUR creep across and exit the Cave.)

KASIM. What ifrit hath laid these treasures here?
 Jewels rich and rare beyond compare:
 Opals with rainbow tint,
 Diamonds with white-fire glint,
 Emeralds of deepest green,
 Pearls lustrous and clean,
 Topaz that flame and flare,
 Amethysts purple glare,
 Gold coins in thousand lie.
 S-s-s-s— (*hiss of exultation at his discovery*).

SPIRITS. S-s-s-s—

MARJANAH (*outside Cave, in a whisper*). Shut O Sesame!

KASIM. Echoes all around me cry.
 (*drags two sacks*) All these I'll drag above,
 These jewels and gold I love;
 All these are mine I trow,
 What's that I heard but now?

ROBBERS (*offstage*). We are the robbers of the woods,
 And we rob everyone we can;
 We steal the wealthy merchant's goods
 And sack each caravan.

KASIM. Allah! Awah! Alack!
 The robbers are coming back.
 Open O S-s-s-s—

SPIRITS. S-s-s-s—

KASIM. What are those cries around
 Coming from 'neath the ground?
 (*SPIRITS rise and dance around KASIM. He screams when he sees them.*)

KASIM. Open O S-s-s-s—

SPIRITS. S-s-s-s—

HASAN (*offstage*). Open O Sesame! (*SPIRITS go to shadows. ROBBERS enter Cave.*)

ROBBERS. And we count forty thieves all told.
 Our chief, the great Abu Hasan,
 Is clever, crafty, cool and bold,
 And we can always trust his plan.

HASAN. Khuzaymah, unbind Zahrat's eyes that she may gaze upon her lover. Unbind her lips that she may give him greeting. Now, O desert flower, now will I open your lover's prison door, and you shall see him and have speech with him. (*Sees sacks taken by Kasim.*) Now by Satan! How came these sacks of gold and jewels here?

ZAHRAT. By him who has your secret.

HASAN. What say'st?

ZAHRAT. By him who came to rob you, Abu Hasan. By him to whom the spirits danced and sang, a jackal that still lurks in the shadows of your cave, O wolf of wolves.

HASAN. A jackal, say you. The wolves will smell him out.

KASIM (*runs forward and throws himself at HASAN'S feet*). Mercy! I mercy crave!

HASAN. Seek it within your grave. You are trapped, O Kasim Baba, and must die.

KASIM. I know you not. Who are you?

HASAN. From Shanghai.

KASIM. Allah protect me! What will you do?

HASAN. I draw my short sharp scimitar.

ROBBERS. His scimitar.

HASAN. My scimitar.

To end thy maudlin mutterings,
And close thy senile stutterings,
Carve thee up, carve thee down.
Slice thee through from heel to crown.
Carve thee in, carve thee out,
Whilst with pride my robbers shout.
See his scimitar.
See his scimitar.
Ha! Ha! Ha!

ROBBERS. Carve him up, carve him down.
Slice him through from heel to crown.
Carve him in, carve him out,
Whilst with pride we robbers shout.
See our scimitars.
See our scimitars.
Ha! Ha! Ha!

CURTAIN.

(ALI BABA and ALCOLOM are sitting at a table in ALCOLOM'S room in KASIM'S Palace. The table is decorated with wines, fruit and flowers.)

ALI. O Alcolom!

ALCOLOM. O Ali! What would Mahbubah say could she see us feasting thus?

ALI. The old cat fish is counting the golden pieces.

ALCOLOM. Those golden pieces with which you shall purchase me into your harem.

ALI. You timid giraffe, you who sways with an elephant roll.

ALCOLOM. Your breath breathes ambergris and perfumery.

ALI. Your lips are sugar to taste and cornelian [*deep red*] to see.

ALCOLOM. Your face shames the noon-day radiancy.

ALI. My Alcolom. I am drunk with the excess of your beauty.

ALCOLOM. O Ali. Your breath is musk and your cheek a rose.

ALI. Your teeth are pearls and your lips drop wine.

ALCOLOM. Your form a brand and you hips a hill.

ALI. Your hair is night and your face moonshine.

ALCOLOM. Yea, never have I known a night more blessed than this night.

ALI. Meet not your lover save by night for fear of slander.

ALCOLOM. The sun's a tittle-tattle.

ALI. The moon's a pander [*go-between in love intrigues*].

ALCOLOM. People have slandered our love serene,
 Laughed at your penchant for me,
 Said you were too old to love—a mean
 Libel on thy belle and thee.

 What matter they,

 You are my gay

 Characteristic Ali.

Youth is the time for loving,
So poets always say,
The contrary we're proving,
Look at us two to-day.
Love has no charm, no meaning,
Till man has reached his prime.

 Surely 'tis so,

 You ought to know.

 Any time's kissing time.

ALCOLOM.

Timid as any gazelle am I,
Here would I be yet afar,
Now there is only the moon to spy,
No one can guess where we are.

You are my deep
Little black sheep.
Ali, my Ali Baba.

Youth is the time for loving,
So poets always say,
The contrary we're proving,
Look at us two to-day.
Love has no charm, no meaning,
Till man has reached his prime.

Surely 'tis so,
You ought to know.
Any time's kissing time.

CURTAIN.

(MUSTAFA, *the cobbler, is seated outside his shop cobbling and singing. Visible are a Silk Stall, an Onion Stall and a Wine Stall with their STALL KEEPERS. Also on stage are various MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN, ENTERTAINERS and PEDLARS walking about the Bazaar. Also present are three ROBBERS, disguised in cloaks.*)

MUSTAFA. I sit and cobble at slippers and shoon [*shoes*]
 From the rise of sun to the set of moon.
 Cobble and cobble as best I may,
 Cobble all night and cobble all day;
 And I sing as I cobble this doleful lay—
 The stouter I cobble, the less I earn,
 For the soles ne'er crack, nor the uppers turn,
 The better my work, the less my pay,
 But work can only be done one way.
 And as I cobble with needle and thread,
 I judge the world by the way they tread:
 Heels worn thick and soles worn thin,
 Toes turned out and toes turned in,
 There's food for thought in a sandal skin.
 For prince and commoner, poor and rich,
 Stand in need of the cobbler's stitch.
 Why then worry what lies before?
 Hangs this life by a thread—no more.
 I sit and cobble at slippers and shoon
 From the rise of sun to the set of moon.
 Cobble and cobble as best I may,
 Cobble all night and cobble all day;
 And I sing as I cobble this doleful lay.

ZAHRAT (*who has been freed from the Cave, enters*). Allah's greeting to thee.

MUSTAFA. Greeting in the name of Allah.

ZAHRAT. Allah's blessing on thee, O father of stitches.

MUSTAFA. And on thee, O daughter of light and delight. But why do you seek the cobbler's stall? If you would have stitched up a love-pierced heart, you must wend your way elsewhere.

ZAHRAT. Yea, my heart has been pierced in very sooth, but the mending of it is in other hands. But stitch you naught but sandals and slippers?

MUSTAFA. Nay, I stitch shrouds for burial when Allah wills.

ZAHRAT. That is the why and the wherefore of my coming. Can you likewise stitch up your tongue in silence?

MUSTAFA. Yea, with stitches of gold, O daughter of inquisitive questioning.

ZAHRAT. Then may we arrive at a bargaining. Do you see this gold?

MUSTAFA. Allah! such a piece surpasses my earnings for many moons and more.

ZAHRAT. Yet shall it be yours and yet one more when you have ended the work I have to offer you.

MUSTAFA. Say your say.

ZAHRAT. A certain merchant of this city has met with a grievous stroke of fate, yea, of several strokes, for his body has been stricken and smitten into four quarters and lies at his abode awaiting burial.

MUSTAFA. Awah!

ZAHRAT. Yet for reasons which concern you not, must his quartering be kept secret and he must be buried as one who has died a death of nature.

MUSTAFA. And you would have me cobble these quarters into one even as I cobble these several pieces of leather into one sandal?

ZAHRAT. May it be done?

MUSTAFA. Hm! What is the name of this severed merchant and the street and house in which he lies?

ZAHRAT. That must remain unbeknown to you.

MUSTAFA (*laughs*). Nay, I am no ifrit to smell my way to the abode of death.

ZAHRAT. Yet I can lead you thither. Here is yet another piece of gold. I will bind your eyes and lead you by the hand and back again when you have ended your cobbling and stitched the shroud. And yet another piece will be yours when you are once more stitching in your stall.

MUSTAFA. Three pieces! Nay, I must have four in all, one piece for each quarter.

ZAHRAT. That do I promise you, O father of the bargaining. Therefore take your needles and thread and wax (*he takes them*), and let me bind your eyes. (*She binds his eyes.*) And now your hand. And as we go wail you the blind beggar's chant that the passer-by may think you so afflicted and no question or curiosity awakened.

MUSTAFA. And may we gather alms as we go?

ZAHRAT. Yea! Sing your song. Come. (*Takes him by the hand and leads him.*)

MUSTAFA. Blind, blind, have pity on the blind.

I smell the sun and feel the wind,

But cannot see if night or day

As I grope blindly on my way.

(*Exit ZAHRAT and MUSTAFA.*)

(Enter fourteen FRUIT GIRLS, each carrying a basket of fruit on her head. They mingle with the people on stage, offering their fruits for sale.)

GIRLS. We bring ye fruits of every clime,
Sultani, peach, sweet-scented lime,
Aleppo pear and jujube plum,
From gardens east and west they come.

Buy, O buy.

Grapes with a luscious bloom
Like blackest raven plume;
In leafy bed they shine
Like fingers henna'd fine.

Buy, O buy.

Red oranges that glow with life
Like youth's passions, storm and strife,
Sweet-flavoured figs of shapely mien,
Silken balls of sendal green.

Buy, O buy.

Here are almonds passing sweet
Pomegranates with scarlet sleet.
Mangoes green like Chinese jade,
Tangerines like gold brocade.

Buy, O buy.

(Exit all but the STALL KEEPERS, and the three ROBBERS who are at a table playing draughts [checkers]. Enter HASAN disguised as a water-carrier.)

HASAN. Water, water, cool and clear,
Sweetest Simsim, bright and clear.

(The three ROBBERS, including KHUZAYMAH and MUSAB, get up and approach HASAN.)

KHUZAYMAH. Greeting, O Chief, and Allah's blessing on you.

HASAN. And on you, and Allah's protection, for danger is abroad.

ROBBERS. Danger?

HASAN. Our safety is at stake. Zahrat al-Kulub has been freed. The body of Kasim Baba which we left quartered in the cave has been removed.

ROBBERS. Awah! Awah!

HASAN. Yea, and many sacks of gold and gems have gone.

ROBBERS. Who has our secret?

HASAN. There lies the mystery. When I returned at dawn to draw the gold to pay our weekly share, I found the body and Zahrat al-Kulub gone.

KHUZAYMAH. And her desert lover?

HASAN. Nay, he is safe. Naught but this amulet can set him free.

MUSAB. Where be the body?

HASAN. I sped to Kasim's house and made inquiries. Naught had been heard or seen of him since he fared forth yesternight with half a score of mules. His head wife Alcolom still feasted with her husband's brother Ali. I watched but even till now none save the girl Marjanah entered or left the house.

KHUZAYMAH. Has naught been seen of Zahrat?

HASAN. I posted members of our band about Bagdad to search for her and smell for clues. I go to find the rest to meet at sunset here to make our plans. Take up your game again and watch.

(Enter ZAH RAT and MUSTAFA. ZAH RAT, seeing HASAN, quickly exits.)

HASAN. Water, water, cool and clear,
 Sweetest Simsim, bright and clear.

MUSTAFA *(standing outside his shop)*. Water forsooth, when here's wine to drink. A flask of Alexandrian wine for the stricken blind. How now, you ugly-faced baboon, will you drink wine with a cobbler? *(Both sit.)* Ho! *(Enter COLOURED SERVANT from Cobbler's Shop.)* A flask of wine for me and yet another for this crier of water.

HASAN. Is cobbling so much in demand these days that you can pour gold down the throat of a stranger?

MUSTAFA. Nay, but to-day
 Have I earned good pay,
 In another way,
 And so I say—
 Drink wine,
 Juice of vine,
 Rare and fine.

HASAN. And have you cobbled much today, O father of generosity?

MUSTAFA. More have I earned by noon
 And not by cobbling shoon,
 Than I've earned since last new moon.
 Drink wine,
 Juice of vine,
 Rare and fine.

HASAN. What have you cobbled but shoon, O father of time and rhyme?

MUSTAFA. A body!

HASAN. A body? (*The three ROBBERS start and listen.*)

MUSTAFA. Yea, a male body sliced neatly in four pieces which I have again cobbled as neatly into one.

HASAN. Yea, and wherefore?

MUSTAFA. That it might be buried with respect and none suspect.

HASAN. A body, say you, of a man?

MUSTAFA. He was a man.

HASAN. And the house where you did cobble. Where lies it?

MUSTAFA. I was given gold with which to cobble up my tongue.

HASAN (*giving him coins*). Here be gold to take out the stitches. Where be this house?

MUSTAFA. I cannot say. I was led there by the hand, with my eyes bound up in a veil. Yet methinks I could find it again (*holding hand out*).

HASAN. How? Give me your direction and yet more gold.

MUSTAFA. As I was led into the street after my cobbling of the man was finished, I put my hand behind my back and drew a cross with blue chalk upon the door.

HASAN. And the street?

MUSTAFA. I turned to the left and I turned to the right, and yet to the right and once to the left, and the door is marked with a cross of blue.

HASAN. And the place from which you started in your blindness?

MUSTAFA. My shop at the end of this street where—

I sit and cobble at slippers and shoon

From the rise of sun to the set of moon.

Cobble and cobble as best I may,

Cobble all night and cobble all day;

And I sing as I cobble this doleful lay—

The stouter I cobble, the less I earn,

For the soles ne'er crack, nor the uppers turn,

The better my work, the less my pay,

Must Mustafa only cobble one way. (*Exit MUSTAFA into shop.*)

HASAN (*to KHUZAYMAH and MUSAB and the third ROBBER*). He turned to the left and then to the right, and yet to the right and once to the left, and the door is marked with a cross of blue. So get you in haste, Musab, and keep watch on the door till we come at sunset.

MUSAB. Hearing is obeying. (*Exit MUSAB.*)

HASAN. You two stay where you are and keep suspicious eyes. The rest with me till sunset.

Water, water, cool and clear,
Sweetest Simsim, bright and clear.

(*Exit HASAN. The two ROBBERS resume their game.*)

(*Enter MAHBUBAH with her servant, BOSTAN who is fanning her.*)

MAHBUBAH. Ho, Bostan, you daughter of a slug! Why are you ever loitering behind? Are you casting languorous glances on the stall keepers, you thing of naught?

BOSTAN. Nay ma, cho lay. [*Speaks a foreign language.*]

MAHBUBAH. Yea, I know you are fanning, but 'tis my face I would have you fan, not my spine bone.

BOSTAN. May it ko may iso.

MAHBUBAH. In sooth, is this the dress shop you told me of? Yea! 'Tis fair enough. (*To SHOP KEEPER.*) Ho, you!

OTBAH (*enters onstage from his shop*). Your slave, O lady of taste. What can I offer to your gracious gaze?

MAHBUBAH. What have you in the latest fashion of Bagdad? My purse is heavy and I would lighten it.

OTBAH. O lady of riches, I can show you wares such as none other in Bagdad can display. If the bringer of good fortune will deign to step within.

MAHBUBAH. Nay, I prefer to see your offerings in the light of day.

OTBAH. You say right, O lady of wisdom. (*Exits into shop.*)

BOSTAN. Bornni coy?

MAHBUBAH. You thing of evil mind. The man meant no ill in bidding me within.

(*MAHBUBAH moves over to the wine stall, followed by BOSTAN. She sits on a stool outside the stall, drinking a glass of wine. Enter ALI, who is seen by his wife. She gets down from her stool and goes over to him.*)

MAHBUBAH. Yea! Where have you been since yester eve?

ALI. My own affairs.

BOSTAN. E no mie. (*Goes to MAHBUBAH and speaks confidentially.*)

MAHBUBAH. She said truth. You have!

ALI. Have! Have! What have?

MAHBUBAH. Powder on your shoulder.

ALI (*brushes it off*). My own affair.

BOSTAN. (*Mumbles and giggles.*)

MAHBUBAH. Where?

BOSTAN. (*Mumbles and giggles.*)

MAHBUBAH. Yea! (*Pulls a hair from round his neck.*) Your eyes are keen.

ALI. What's that?

MAHBUBAH. A blue-black hair. My hair is grey, not dyed.

ALI. O Allah!

BOSTAN. (*Sniffs and mumbles.*)

MAHBUBAH (*smelling him*). Of musk and myrrh. You have been with Alcolom.

ALI. And a supper fit for a Kisra King.

MAHBUBAH. What have you to say?

ALI. Say! Say! You cat-fish. You shrunken camel-hump, You are no longer queen of my harem. Alcolom the ravisher of hearts reigns in your stead. (*ALI crosses to wine-stall.*) A flask of Grecian wine.

(*MAHBUBAH returns to OTBAH's shop. She is given a chair to sit outside and OTBAH parades twenty GIRLS before her, each "MANNEQUIN" wearing a different outfit. ALI is watching this fashion display.*)

OTBAH. From Cairo, Bagdad, Khorasan,
 From Kashmir, Labtayt, and Oman,
 From every land of the Koran,
 And city torched by Rhamazan,
 They come to tempt the eyes of man.

OTBAH. Which costume finds favour in your eyes, O lady?

BOSTAN. Iy em awe [*Buy them all*].

MAHBUBAH. Yea, you advise well. I buy them all.

ALI. O Mahbubah!

MAHBUBAH. What sum do you require?

OTBAH. From you but five thousand dinar.

ALI. Five thousand dinar!

MAHBUBAH (*gives OTBAH bag of money*). Count out the gold yourself.

ALI. O Allah, my gold.

OTBAH. And where do you live, O lady of great ordering?

MAHBUBAH. My lord will furnish you with directions. This very day we leave our present mansion for a somewhat larger, which he is seeking. Is it not so, O love of loves?

ALI. Allah alone knows, O dove of doves. Yea, I will give you directions where to send these goods.

MANNEQUINS. From Cairo, Bagdad, Khorasan,
 From Kashmir, Labtayt, and Oman,
 From every land of the Koran,
 And city torched by Rhamazan,
 We come to tempt the eyes of man. *(Exit MANNEQUINS.)*

MAHBUBAH. Come, Bostan. *(To ALI.)* I will await you at the sunset meal.

OTBAH *(to MAHBUBAH as she passes)*. Allah keep you in his eye. *(BOSTAN giggles.)*

MAHBUBAH *(to BOSTAN)*. Nay, his smile is innocent. *(Exit MAHBUBAH and BOSTAN.)*

(Enter MARJANAH and NUR AL-HUDA. They go over to ALI.)

MARJANAH. O Ali, we have sought for you all over Bagdad.

NUR. Where have you been, O my father?

ALI. I feasted with Alcolom till dawn, waiting for my brother Kasim, but as he came not I took my leave of Alcolom and am on my way to refresh me at the Hammam.

NUR. Know you not that Kasim stole forth ere midnight with a dozen mules to reach the cave before you, and leave us naught?

ALI. O Allah, I shall say my say on his return.

MARJANAH. He has returned.

NUR. Dead!

MARJANAH. Killed!

(ZHRAT comes onstage dressed as a FRUIT GIRL, and overhears the conversation.)

ALI. Glory be to Allah.

MARJANAH. Nay, listen, 'twixt middle night and dawn, we found your brother in the cave, slaughtered—quartered.

NUR. We took him to your house.

MARJANAH. Yea, with yet more sacks of gold.

NUR. And hid him in the cellar. Then when your wife fared forth upon her marketing, Zahrat did fetch a cobbler who stitched the body up, and so we buried it outside the city gates.

MARJANAH. And none save Zahrat and we know aught.

ZHRAT *(comes down to the group)*. Yea, we must use care and caution. The robbers have even now have smelt out our track. Even now I saw Abu Hasan dressed as a water-carrier lurking near Kasim's house.

ALI. Allah have mercy.

ZHRAT. Yea, and as I led the cobbler from your house I saw him chalk a cross of blue upon your door behind his back.

ALI. Allah! Allah!

ZAHRAT. Nay, do not fear. I did return and marked a like cross of blue on every door from end to end of street.

ALI. Allah prolong your days. Now will we to Alcolom and unfold the joyful news.

ZAHRAT. Give out that Kasim Baba last night set out for Egypt, then later, news must come of his disease in Cairo, when openly you can enjoy what Allah has sent.

ALI. There is no might nor majesty save in Allah, the one, the great.

ZAHRAT. I will move freely through the city and learn what is afoot, and warn you all if danger threatens. (*She goes into the COBBLER'S shop.*)

ALI. Allah prolong your days.

OTBAH (*enters, followed by three COLOURED BOYS who carry their parcels on their heads*). Your purchases are ready, O lord and master of toothsome loveliness, and await your instructions.

ALI. Yea, send them to Alcolom at Kasim Baba's mansion, near the Gates of Silence.

OTBAH Hearing is obeying. (*He instructs the BOYS and exits into his shop.*)

MARJANAH. Your purchase?

ALI. Yea, verily, Mahbubah's purchases, which now shall go to Alcolom. (*Exit MARJANAH, NUR AL-HUDA and ALI. Exit SHOPKEEPERS into shops.*)

(*Enter sixteen ROBBERS, who are joined by the two ROBBERS playing draughts. Enter HASAN carrying a small bag of sand.*)

HASAN. Now comrades, you have heard our secret is discovered, and with Allah's grace we must discover the discoverer. Is Musab here?

MUSAB. Yea, O Chief.

HASAN. Did the cobbler speak the truth?

MUSAB. I turned to the left and then to the right, and then to the right and then to the left.

HASAN. Did you find the house with the cross of blue?

MUSAB. Yea, verily, for every house on either side from end to end of street is marked with a cross of blue.

HASAN. Now by Satan the stoned, someone's wits are awake in Bagdad. Has no trace been found of Zahrat al-Kulub, the desert woman?

MUSAB. None, O master. Yet have we searched and watched.

ZAHRAT (*comes forth from MUSTAFA'S shop to engage the ROBBERS*). Wherefore do you seek for me, Abu Hasan?

HASAN. Zahrat al-Kulub. You! (*ROBBERS turn and face ZAHRAT.*)

ZAHRAT. Nay, I fear you not. 'Tis you who are feared of me. Yet will I bargain with you for my lover's freedom.

HASAN. What have you to offer?

ZAHRAT. Your safety.

HASAN. How?

ZAHRAT. I know what you do not. The holder of the secret of your cave.

HASAN. Well, your bargain?

ZAHRAT. If I reveal to you the name, you'll set my lover free?

HASAN. Yea!

ZAHRAT. The holder of your secret is Ali Baba, the brother of him you slew last night.

HASAN. Ali Baba! The wine-bibbing babbler of Bagdad.

ZAHRAT. If you believe it not, ask his wife Mahbubah the reason of her sudden wealth.

KHUZAYMAH. Yea, O Chief, she enters bazaar after bazaar, spending gold as water on gauds and trinkets.

HASAN. Go, search through the bazaar for this old woman, carry her with all speed and silence to our cave. (*Exit KHUZAYMAH with three ROBBERS.*) Do none other know?

ZAHRAT. Nay, that can I not answer for. He is a babbler as you say, and the secret may have spread. Yet have I a plan whereby to seal the mouths of all who have heard his babbling.

HASAN. Unfold.

ZAHRAT. To-morrow night they hold a wedding feast at Kasim Baba's house. Come at moonrise robed as an oil merchant from Jerusalem, with your thirty-nine followers each hidden within a jar.

HASAN. Good, good.

ZAHRAT. One or two jars of oil in sooth you'll take as caution against the curious. Obtain permission to store them at the palace till dawn. Then when all the guests are gathered for the dance, sing you the song of the scimitar. Then joining in the chorus, your followers cut their way out and slay. What say you?

HASAN. How do I know you will not play me false?

ROBBERS. Aye!

ZAHRAT. Hold you not still my lover hostage? When all is over and death has danced his dance, then only shall I claim from you, Abu Hasan, the amulet that sets him free. Do you agree?

HASAN. By the Koran!

ZAHRAT. Amen. (*Exit ZAHRAT.*)

ROBBERS. Amen! There is no might nor majesty save in Allah, the one, the great.

HASAN. Go! (*Exit ROBBERS. HASAN remains.*)

(The COBBLER MUSTAFA enters from his shop and sits outside on the stone seat.)

MUSTAFA. I sit and cobble at slippers and shoon
From the rise of sun to the set of moon.
Cobble and cobble as best I may,
Cobble all night and cobble all day;
And I sing as I cobble this doleful lay.

(While MUSTAFA is singing, HASAN opens the bag of sand, spreads sand on the ground, and makes signs in the sand with his finger as if reading his fortune. He starts slightly, puts his hand under his chin, and looks out as if he had read bad fortune there.)

CURTAIN.

(Enter ALCOLOM and ALI.)

ALCOLOM. How dear is our day
Now that Kasim's away.

ALI. Delicious, auspicious, our lot.

ALCOLOM. We'll bill and we'll coo
As a couple should do.

ALI. You pet you. Coquette you.

ALCOLOM. I'm not.

ALI. With nectar fill the goblet up.

ALCOLOM. Two loving hearts, one loving cup.

ALI. My feast of love, my turtle dove.

ALCOLOM. O Ali.

ALI. O Alcolom, my Persian plum.

ALCOLOM. My yum-yum-yum.

ALI. My teetotum.

ALCOLOM. O Ali. O Ali.

ALI. O Alcolom, with love I'm numb.

ALCOLOM. My sippity, nippity—

ALI. Tippity, lippity—

BOTH. Flippity, plippity plum.

ALI. No peach is, I vow
Quite as blooming as thou.

ALCOLOM. I'm dressed, dear, my best dear, for you,
I feel seventeen.

ALI. And you look it, my Queen.
You do, love.

ALCOLOM. Pooh, pooh, love.

ALI. It's true,
Thou art the rose that reigns apart.

ALCOLOM. And thou my Dandelion art,
My luscious fig.

ALI. My guinea-pig.

ALCOLOM. O Ali.
 ALI. O Alcolom, my Persian plum.
 ALCOLOM. My yum-yum-yum.
 ALI. Fee-fi-fo-fum.
 ALCOLOM. O Ali. O Ali.
 ALI. O Alcolom, with love I'm numb.
 ALCOLOM. My sippity, nippity—
 ALI. Tippity, lippity—
 BOTH. Flippity, plippity plum!

ALI (*to ABDULLAH, who has just entered*). And has no news arrived of that lost, stolen or strayed article Mahbubah?

ALCOLOM. Your disappearing delicacy.

ALI. My wrinkled will o' the wisp, my crinkled carrier pigeon?

ABDULLAH. No news, O Lord, though many dinars have been expended in public criers, and rich rewards promised to any and all who bring welcome tidings of your lost lotus bud.

ALI. Be not extravagant with your enquiries, O Abdullah. And though I grudge not rich rewards to the bringers of good news, yet must I alone be the judge whether the tidings be good or bad.

ABDULLAH. And to-night's feast and entertainment for the wedding of your son still goes forward?

ALI. Yea!

ABDULLAH. Whether your orange blossom is found or not?

ALCOLOM. Found or lost, blooming or withered.

ALI. We must consider the happiness of others before our private griefs.

ALCOLOM. Grieve not, my lord. Allah is mighty.

ALI. Yea, my trust is in Allah. Though Mahbubah is one of the everlasting kind and will return. She is one of whom it may be truly said, "Give a man luck and throw him into the sea [*and he will come up with a fish in his mouth.*]"—

ABDULLAH. Allah will hear your prayer. There is a small matter which I hesitate to intrude upon you, overwhelmed as you are with your grieving.

ALI. Intrude any matter, Abdullah, that will distract my thoughts from Mahbubah.

ABDULLAH. An oil merchant from Jerusalem, one Kwajeh Hasan, has arrived at your portals with some twenty asses laden with jars of oil, and craves permission to store them at your palace till dawn.

ALI. Tell him he may store his oil without payment, moreover, invite the stranger to the wedding feast. The more the merrier in this time of lamenting.

ABDULLAH. Hearing is obeying.

ALI. What fresh dishes have you ordered for the feast, Abdullah?

ABDULLAH. There be lampreys caked with quails' eggs,

ALI. And succulent Chinese char.

ABDULLAH. There be frogs' legs fried in whale fat,

ALI. And Caviar from Tar Tar.

ALCOLOM. All for my new lord Ali,
Where is Kasim Baba?

ALI & ABDULLAH. Sh.....!

ABDULLAH. There be rose leaves sugar crystallized,

ALI. And hyacinths clogged with spice.

ABDULLAH. There be vermicelli saffroned,

ALI. And cinnamon flavoured ice.

ALCOLOM. All for my new lord Ali,
Kasim's in Paradise. (*She looks and points up.*)

ALI & ABDULLAH. Sh.....! (*ALI shakes his head and points down.*)

CURTAIN.

(Oil Jars stand on either side of the stage. Enter Zahrat.)

Zahrat. Ho, Abdullah! *(Enter Abdullah.)* Whence comes those jars?

Abdullah. An oil merchant from Jerusalem has your lord's consent to store them here till dawn.

Zahrat. What do you think these jars contain?

Abdullah. The finest olive oil from Palestine.

Zahrat. Nay, each jar contains a man.

Abdullah. Allah preserve your wits.

Zahrat. By Allah I speak true.

Abdullah. By Allah, you are mad. Even now a jar of that same oil is boiling in the kitchen. There stands the empty jar.

Zahrat. Then keep your tongue between your teeth, no crying out but listen. *(She goes up to a jar and raps on it.)*

VOICE *(inside jar)*. Is it time, O sheik?

Zahrat *(in gruff voice)*. Not yet! *(She crosses to the other side of the stage and raps on a different jar.)*

VOICE *(inside jar)*. Is it time, O sheik?

Zahrat *(in gruff voice)*. Not yet!

Abdullah *(falling on his knees in fright)*. Allah!

Zahrat. In every jar the same.

Abdullah. What does this mean?

Zahrat. The merchant from Jerusalem is Abu Hasan of Khorasan, who has come to kill your master and all that is your master's. Go, bring your men with pots filled with the boiling oil and pour some in each jar.

Abdullah. Yea! Allah alone is all-knowing.

Zahrat. And as you pour in the oil, sing all of you to drown their cries. Make haste! *(Exit Abdullah, followed by Zahrat.)*

(Enter Hasan. He goes over to a jar and raps on it.)

VOICE *(inside jar)*. Is it time, O sheik?

Hasan. Not yet. When all the guests are gathered for the feast and the gates are shut, I give the signal, the song of the scimitar. Then joining in the chorus cut your way out and slay. Do you understand?

VOICE *(inside jar)*. Yea, O sheik.

Hasan. Till then the peace upon you. *(Exit Hasan.)*

ZAHRAT (*enters*). And on thee and thine, the peace of death, Abu Hasan of Khorasan.
 (ABDULLAH *enters followed by ATTENDANTS, who are carrying pots of boiling olive oil and are singing. They go from jar to jar and pour in the boiling oil. ZAHRAT watches.*)

ABDULLAH. Sweet olive oil!

CHORUS. Olive oil!

ABDULLAH. Cool olive oil!

CHORUS. Olive oil!

ABDULLAH. Will cure, heal and soothe,
 And render rough, smooth.

CHORUS. Olive oil!
 Oil! Oil!

ABDULLAH. Sweet olive oil!

CHORUS. Olive oil!

ABDULLAH. Hot boiling oil!

CHORUS. Olive oil!

ABDULLAH. Will cook any dish
 Of fowl, flesh or fish.

CHORUS. Olive oil!
 Oil! Oil!

(*Exit ABDULLAH followed by ATTENDANTS. ZAHRAT is alone on stage.*)

ZAHRAT. Now only one remains! Abu Hasan of Khorasan.

(*Music for the wedding ceremony of MARJANAH and NUR AL-HUDA begins. Enter ABDULLAH followed by numerous ATTENDANTS and DANCERS. Enter then MARJANAH followed by ALCOLOM, and NUR AL-HUDA followed by ALI BABA. After all come in, enter HASAN disguised with a cloak.*)

HASAN. Before the ceremony starts I claim the privilege of a stranger guest to greet the bridegroom and the bride with song, the like of which none here has ever heard before, nor will ever hear again.

I draw my short sharp scimitar!

ZAHRAT (*comes over to HASAN*). Nay, I will sing a song to you, O stranger guest, the like of which you have heard before, but will never hear again.

Thou art Chu Chin Chow of China.

ALL. Of Shanghai, China.

ZAHRAT. No wits as fine as thine in China.

ALL. In Shanghai, China.

ZAHRAT. But Zahrat has wits as well,
 And the end of thy tale thou'lt tell
 To thy comrades down in hell
 Or Shanghai, China!

(ZAHRAT *stabs* HASAN *and he falls over*.)

ALL. Allah! What have you done?

ZAHRAT (*pulling off* HASAN'S *disguise*). I have slain the enemy of man, Abu Hasan of Khorasan.

ALL. The robber sheik.

ZAHRAT. Yea, he came here with his band who now lie dead within these jars, to slay you all.

ALL. Allah!

ZAHRAT. The tale hereafter.

ALI. Remove the stranger guest. (*ATTENDANTS remove the dead* HASAN.)

MAHBUBAH (*enters*). Allah has restored me to you, O my lord.

ALI. Did I not say, give a man luck and throw him into the sea.

ZAHRAT. On with the wedding!

ENSEMBLE. On with the wedding, let joy be complete,
 Happiness is coy, life is fleet.
 Here be true love none can buy nor sell,
 Praises to Allah, now all is well.
 Praise Allah! Praise Allah!
 Here be true love none can buy nor sell,
 So sing and dance. O dance and sing.
 Let joy bells ring. Let joy bells ring.
 Life and love and laughter,
 Call to youth and maid.
 Ah! ah! ah!
 What of sorrow after,
 Youth is unafraid.
 Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha
 Ah! ah! ah!

CURTAIN—END OF ACT II.

ALI BABA, MARJANAH and NUR AL-HUDA in the ROBBERS' CAVE

ALI.	I shiver and shake with fear, what's here?	
MARJANAH.	What's that in the corner?	NUR. Where?
ALI.	That shape over there.	
NUR.	'Tis nothing O father.	
MARJANAH.	How cold is the air.	
ALI.	I see snakes everywhere, Let us go.	
NUR&MAR.	No!	ALI. Oh!
ALI.	I tremble and twitter with fright, There's no light.	
MARJANAH.	Did'st thou hear a whisper?	NUR. When?
ALI.	As she asked thee just then.	
NUR.	'Tis nothing O father.	
MARJANAH.	What a grim gloomy den.	
ALI.	I'm as faint as a hen, Let us go.	
NUR&MAR.	No!	ALI. Oh!
NUR.	We've forgotten to close the rock.	ALI. The rock?
MARJANAH.	Where we entered	
NUR.	Overhead.	ALI. We're dead.
NUR.	Fear nothing O father.	
MARJANAH.	We'll say as they said.	
ALI.	I've got rats in my head.	MAR. Rats?
ALI.	I've got rats in my head.	NUR. Rats!
ALI.	Let us go.	
NUR&MAR.	No!	ALI. Oh!
MARJANAH.	Shut O Sesame! It's like a dream.	ALI. I'll scream.
NUR.	See the rock closing.	ALI. Where?
MARJANAH.	Over there.	
NUR.	It is nothing O father.	
ALI.	I've got ghosts in my hair. List, O list to a father's prayer. Let us go.	
NUR&MAR.	Down below.	ALI. Oh!

MAHBUBAH *pounding beans in a mortar before ALI BABA finds the gold*

MAHBUBAH. Beans, beans, beans.
 Never a dish
 Of pig or a fish.
 But beans, beans, beans.
 Beans, beans, beans.
 Day after day
 Cooked every way.
 Beans, beans, beans.
 Beans, beans, beans.
 Wormy and burst
 Crumbled and curst.
 Beans, beans, beans!

NUR AL-HUDA *and* MARJANAH *sing a love song*

NUR. If I liken thy shape to the bough when green,
 My likeness errs, I must confess:
 For the branch is fairest when clad the most,
 And thou art fairest when clad with less.

MARJANAH. Nay, when in Cashmere silk I'm clad,
 Perfumed with mush from Kanadad,
 Powdered and khold [*using black eye makeup*] with cheeks be-rosed.
 Bosom in sapphire clasps enclosed.
 Sandalled in Alexandrian shoon,
 Glinting with gems of sun and moon,
 Them wilt thou my love confess,
 Thou could'st not love me more in less.
 Come my love, confess, confess!

MARJANAH sings a love song with the same music as on pages 26-27 but with new words

MARJANAH. Although your love for me I know,
My foolish heart is fain,
To hear the words I cherish so,
Repeated once again.
One boon I crave, one little thing
Means all the world to me,
It is to hear you whispering
The Lover's Litany.

I love you so.

I love you so.

Though seas divide, I will fly to you,
As a bride by your side to be nigh to you.

Ah, hold me my own.

Enfold me alone.

In your dear eyes

Is Paradise.

I love you so.

Within a garden fair as this,
Another you may see,
To tempt you with a rarer kiss
Than mine can ever be.
Then swear by all the lamps that light
The changeless Heavens above,
To think of one who sings to-night
Her Litany of Love.

I love you so.

I love you so.

Though seas divide, I will fly to you,
As a bride by your side to be nigh to you.

Ah, hold me my own.

Enfold me alone.

In your dear eyes

Is Paradise.

I love you so.

I love you, love you so.

ZAHRAT AL-KULUB laments her separation from her desert lover

ZAHRAT. Dawn and a desolate haze
Overhead the cloudless blue.
Dreams of the passionate days,
Storied past when love's supremacy grew.
Oh, for an hour with thee,
Love and a golden hour.
My desert flower. My desert flower.

Eyes like a shimmering pool.
Mirror of the soul of heart's desire.
Lips so inviting and cool,
Sweet oasis in a desert of fire.
Oh, for an hour with thee,
Love and a golden hour.
My desert flower. My desert flower.

THE DESERT LOVER laments his separation from ZAH RAT AL-KULUB

LOVER. Here in Thy desert day after day I offer prayer.
 Here in Thy vastness year after year
 In dread despair, wait in trembling fear, and cruel pain.
 Thy answer to my prayer in vain, in vain.
 Yet once again I cry to Thee above:
 Cry from my heart and soul, from brain and blood,
 Cry through mists of tears that choke in flood,
 Give back O Allah, O give back my love.

Now as Thy sun sets wrathful 'neath the sand,
 So rise I angered and defiant stand.
 No longer will I kneel and supplicate
 Thee, O God of sorrows, God of Hate.
 Hear then my challenge O Thou God above:
 If Thou hast pity, care for flesh and blood,
 For agony of heart, for tears in flood,
 Show then Thy mercy, give back my love.

Now in Thy silence, beat after beat, my heart grows old,
 Now in Thy darkness, drop after drop, my blood turns cold.
 I lie and grovel in Thy sand and pray
 My prayer of yesteryear, of yesterday.
 Yea once again I cry to Thee above:
 Cry from my heart and soul, from brain and blood,
 Cry through mists of tears that choke in flood,
 Give back O Allah, give back my love, give back my love.

CHU CHIN CHOW — THE END.