

**THE  
ROSE OF PERSIA;**

**or, the Story-Teller and the Slave**

**A Comic Opera in Two Acts**

**Written by Basil Hood**

**Composed by Arthur Sullivan**

*First produced at the Savoy Theatre, London on Saturday 29th November 1899  
under the management of Mr. Richard D'Oyly Carte*

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## THE ROSE OF PERSIA

Sir Alexander MacKenzie, speaking after Sir Arthur Sullivan's death in November 1900, dubbed this work "Sullivan's masterpiece of Comic Opera." What the composer would have thought of this it is hard to imagine. Sullivan would probably have preferred to be remembered for IVANHOE, THE MARTYR OF ANTIOCH or THE GOLDEN LEGEND.

However, fate and posterity decreed otherwise, and whatever Sir Alexander MacKenzie may have thought, it is for his works with W.S. Gilbert, and particularly H.M.S. PINAFORE, THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE and THE MIKADO, that Sullivan is remembered today.

By the time of the premiere of THE ROSE OF PERSIA, Sullivan might have been forgiven for thinking that the good fortune that he had always enjoyed at The Savoy had deserted him forever. Since THE GONDOLIERS in 1889, Sullivan had achieved no lasting success at the theatre which had become synonymous with the triumphs of the eighties.

Neither of his final operas with Gilbert (UTOPIA (LIMITED) and THE GRAND DUKE) were to achieve lasting success in his lifetime, and his work with other librettists was to receive a lukewarm reception.

It must have been with surprise and delight that the composer was able to record in his diary for Wednesday 29th November 1899, "First performance of ROSE OF PERSIA at Savoy Theatre. I conducted as usual. Hideously nervous as usual - great reception as usual - excellent performance as usual - everything as usual - except the piece is really a great success I think, which is unusual lately."

The cast of the first performance was as follows:-

The Sultan	-	Henry Lytton
Hassan	-	Walter Passmore
Yussuf	-	Robert Evett
Abdallah	-	George Ridgwell
The Grand Vizier	-	W. H. Leon
The Physician-in-Chief	-	C. Childerstone
The Royal Executioner	-	Reginald Crompton
Soldier of the Guard	-	Powis Pinder
Rose-in-Bloom	-	Ellen Beach Yaw
Scent-of-Lillies	-	Jessie Rose
Heart's-Desire	-	Louie Pounds
Honey-of-Life	-	Emmie Owen
Dancing Sunbeam	-	Rosina Brandram
Blush-of-Morning	-	Agnes Fraser
Oasis-in-the-Desert	-	Madge Moyse
Moon-upon-the-Waters	-	Jessie Pounds
Song-of-Nightingales	-	Rose Rosslyn
Whisper-of-the-West-Wind	-	Gertrude Jerrard

**Dramatis Personae**

**The Sultan Mahmoud of Persia**

**Hassan (a philanthropist)**

**Yussuf (a professional story-teller)**

**Abdallah (a priest)**

**The Grand Vizier**

**The Physician-in-Chief**

**The Royal Executioner**

**Soldier of the Guard**

**The Sultana Zubeydeh (named “Rose-in-Bloom”)**

**The Sultana's favourite slaves:**

**“Scent-of-Lilies”**

**“Heart's Desire”**

**“Honey-of-Life”**

**“Dancing Sunbeam” (Hassan's first wife)**

**“Blush-of-Morning” (his twenty-fifth wife)**

**Wives of Hassan:**

**“Oasis-in-the-Desert”**

**“Moon-Upon-the-Waters”**

**“Song-of-Nightingales”**

**“Whisper-of-the-West-Wind”**

**Chorus (Act I). - Hassan's Wives, Mendicants, and Sultan's Guards.**

**(Act II.) - Royal Slave Girls, Palace Officials, and Guards.**

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**ACT I. - Court of Hassan's House.**

**ACT II. - Audience Hall of the Sultan's Palace.**

## ACT I.

*SCENE. - Court of HASSAN's house. Entrance to house on Left. At back and on Right view of streets.*

*HASSAN is seated contemplating the view over the city. He is surrounded by his wives, who are lying on divans. It is a beautiful moonlit night.*

### No.1. - CHORUS - Wives.

As we lie in languor lazy,  
Lounging on a low divan,  
Flood of interesting chatter  
Flows behind each dainty fan:  
"Is our husband going crazy?  
Neighbours call him Mad Hassan!"  
Not an unimportant matter  
For the wives of any man!

*(addressing HASSAN.)* Hassan! Hassan! Hassan!  
Inform us if you can!  
Irresponsible and hazy,  
Unconventional and mazy  
Seem your actions - are you crazy?  
Are you crazy, O Hassan?

*HASSAN turns round on his seat, and faces the audience.*

### SONG - Hassan.

I'm Abu-el-Hassan<sup>1</sup>;  
I'm neither sick nor sad:  
A most contented man,  
Though foolish persons think me mad!  
The laziest of lives  
I live in peace and plenty,  
Surrounded by my wives  
Who number only five-and-twenty!

Wives.<sup>2</sup> Surrounded by his wives  
Who number only five-and-twenty!

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<sup>1</sup> The Vocal Score has 'I'm Abu'l Hassan' at this point

<sup>2</sup> This repeat, although not indicated in either the published Vocal Score or in the Band Parts, is performed on the St. Alban's recording (Rare Recorded Editions - c1970 (original recording 1963)), and was performed by St. David's Players, Exeter in 1990, but is not included on the Prince Consort recording (Pearl Records - 1986). The cued conductors score indicates a repeat for orchestra only at this point.

Hassan. You'll find that five-and-twenty  
Are practically plenty,  
If you've a craze  
To make your days  
A dolce far niente!  
Another wife  
Might spoil my life,  
Because you see  
(Twixt you and me),  
She might have tricks  
That would not mix  
With dolce far niente!

Wives. *(to one another)*. Another wife  
Might spoil his life,  
Because you see  
(Twixt you and me),  
She might have tricks  
That would not mix  
With dolce far niente!

Hassan. It may occur to you  
That only twenty-five  
Are singularly few -  
To that, of course, I'm quite alive!  
My wealth is so immense  
Their number I could double;  
I do not fear expense  
So much, you see, as extra trouble!

Wives. *He does not fear expense  
As much, you see, as extra trouble!*

Hassan. I smoke my hubble-bubble,  
And calculate the trouble;  
The trouble I've  
With twenty-five  
Twice twenty-five would double!  
A simple thumb  
And finger sum -  
It's rule of three  
It seems to me;  
Our Arabic  
Arithmetic  
Would prove the trouble double!

Wives. *(to one another)*. A simple thumb  
And finger sum -  
It's rule of three  
It seems to me;

Our Arabic  
Arithmetic  
Would prove the trouble double!

Hassan. O Moon-upon-the-Waters!

Moon. I am here, O husband! (*Advances to him.*)

Hassan. O Song-of-Nightingales!

Song. I am here, O husband! (*Advances to him.*)

Hassan. O Whisper-of-the-West-Wind!

Whisper. I am here, O husband! (*Advances to him.*)

Hassan. O Blush-of-Morning!

***BLUSH-OF-MORNING enters from house.***

Blush. I am here, O husband! (*Advances to him.*)

Hassan. (*counting girls*). Twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five, O Dancing Sunbeam!

Blush. She is not here, O husband!

Hassan. Not here? Twenty-four, twenty-five - do you mean to say that Dancing Sunbeam is twenty-six?

Blush. She says so, O husband. I say she is forty, if she is an hour.

Hassan. Twenty-six! Dear me! Who was the last lady I married?

Oasis. I was the last, Oasis-in-the-Desert.

Hassan. I fear you will have to be divorced, Oasis. I had no idea you made twenty-six. It was careless of me to have married you; but there it is. (*Kindly.*) You can have a month's notice<sup>3</sup>.

Oasis. I hear you and obey.

Hassan. Nice girl. Where is Dancing Sunbeam?

***Enter DANCING SUNBEAM.***

Sunbeam. I am here, O husband.

Hassan. Ah! Is it you, O Dancing Sunbeam, who have told these girls that I am crazy?

Sunbeam. Even so.

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<sup>3</sup> In some recent productions this line has been changed to read "You can have a month's pay in lieu of notice."

Hassan. The odds were even so<sup>4</sup>. (*To DANCING SUNBEAM.*) Will you tell me what reason you have found for thinking that I have lost mine?

Sunbeam O husband, you are indifferent to other people. For when I nag at you by the hour - and I can nag - you take no notice; but sit and smile and babble to yourself that you hear soft music in the air -

Blush. How do you manage that if you are not mad?

Hassan. Hush! That is a secret! Go on.

Sunbeam. Secondly, O husband -

Hassan. Don't say "O husband" every time. I shan't forget that I am married.

Sunbeam Secondly, O foolish one, you are different from other people. For though you are naturally vulgar and unnaturally rich, you do not try to push your way into the best society.

Hassan. No. I prefer the worst. I am a rich man, and try to be charitable, but I prefer the society of beggars to the beggars of society.

Sunbeam. But when I married your money I meant to be in the best society, one day.

Hassan. We were in it one day. One day was enough for me.

Sunbeam. The ball was at our feet. I shall never forget that!

Hassan. The ball was at our house. I shall never forget that! Upper classes? I know 'em, however much they pretend not to know me. They took everything I gave them, and when there was nothing else for them to take, they took me for one of the waiters! No. The friendship of fashionable persons is the one thing you will have to do without - you can have everything else money can buy, except that. I have spoken.

*Exit HASSAN.*

Sunbeam. The day I married that man I married an idiot!

*Exit DANCING SUNBEAM.*

Blush. Yes, whatever he is now, on that day he cannot have been quite clear in his mind.

*Enter ABDALLAH.*

Abdallah. Peace be upon this house!

Girls. And on you Peace!

Abdallah. Where is your eccentric husband?

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<sup>4</sup> The entire libretto of THE ROSE OF PERSIA is littered with such puns as this. They seem to have been a hallmark of Basil Hood's work as is witnessed by the libretti of THE EMERALD ISLE, MERRIE ENGLAND and A PRINCESS OF KENSINGTON.

Blush. O Priest, he has just left us.

Abdallah. Has he gone out to the streets to gather his crowd of beggars - the tagrag and bobtail of the city - of whom he nightly makes his boon companions?

Blush. Not yet. He has but gone into the house to fetch his hat.

Abdallah. Go and send him to me.

Blush. To hear is to obey.

*Exit BLUSH-OF-MORNING.*

Abdallah. It is unseemly that he should consort each night with tagrag and bobtail - it is more unseemly that his women-folk should be unveiled - it is most unseemly that his contempt for my daily exhortations should be unveiled. He is a doubting follower of the Faith, but Islam hath power of chastisement over her children!

**No.2. - SONG - Abdallah with Chorus of Girls.**

When Islam first arose,  
A tower upon a rock,  
Beneath her haughty battlements  
Were ranged around the jealous tents  
Of swift-encircling foes!  
Then all her gates did Islam lock,  
As every Muslim knows;  
And through those gates of Right and Wrong  
No traitor comes or goes;  
No traitor comes or goes!  
For Islam's gates are strong against a friend or foe;  
Her gates of Right and Wrong none passeth to and fro;

For foes are they without and friends are they within;  
The postern-gate's the Gate of Doubt, that leads to the Camp of Sin;  
The Camp of Sin!

Whoever opens wide  
The postern-gate of Doubt,  
Doth prove to Islam's garrison  
That in their very midst is one  
Who loves the other side!  
His heart is with her foes without,  
And Islam, in her pride,  
Dost send him from her battlements,  
The road that traitors ride;  
The road that traitors ride!

For Islam's gates are strong against a friend or foe;  
Her gates of Right and Wrong none passeth to and fro;

Abdallah. For foes are they without  
And friends are they within;  
The postern-gate's  
The Gate of Doubt,  
That leads to the Camp of  
Sin!  
The Gate of Doubt,  
That leads to the Camp,  
The Camp of Sin!  
The Camp of Sin!

Girls. For Foes are they without,  
And Friends are they within;  
The postern-gate's  
The Gate of Doubt,  
That leads to the Camp of  
Sin!  
The Camp of Sin!  
Leads to the Camp of Sin!  
The Camp of Sin!  
The Camp of Sin!

***Exeunt CHORUS. Enter HASSAN.***

Hassan. Peace be on you!

Abdallah. And on you Peace! I am here to threaten you with chastisement.

Hassan. Won't you sit down? *(Going to exit.)*

Abdallah. You are going out? *(Detaining him.)*

Hassan. Yes. But you needn't.

***Enter DANCING SUNBEAM.***

Abdallah. You are going to collect beggars and cripples and worthless characters, and make night hideous with the riff-raff of the town. Therefore you are either mad or bad.

Sunbeam. Both.

Abdallah. I am empowered by my office to say that you are possessed of an evil spirit. And I will recite to you a rhyming recipe for the casting out of devils, written by the most eminent Poet-Priest in Persia - myself.

Hassan. Don't trouble.

Abdallah. It is a pleasure. Listen.

A man is mad - some spirit bad has probably possessed him;  
And we proceed at once to bleed him - after we have blessed him;  
When he's so weak he cannot speak - our efforts do not falter;  
We tie his hands with leather bands, and hang him on a halter;  
When he almost gives up the ghost, we cut him down and kick him.

Hassan. What for?

Abdallah. To drive out the evil spirits. *(Continuing.)*

And afterwards with knives and swords we lacerate and prick him;

And then, to make that spirit vile dislike its human domicile,  
And deem possession not worth while -  
With towels wet we flick him!

Hassan. Thank you!

Sunbeam. And you intend to apply that prescription to him?

Abdallah. At once. (*To DANCING SUNBEAM.*) If you will provide me with a few strong cords, swords, whips, and perhaps a pitchfork, I will give him the first dose without delay.

Sunbeam. With joy and alacrity.

*Exit DANCING SUNBEAM.*

Hassan. A good, kind creature! (*To ABDALLAH.*) Will you excuse me if I make my will? (*Drawing parchment and pen from pocket.*)

Abdallah. It would not be worth the parchment you write it on. You are mad.

Hassan. Ah! My will would only be valid providing I am perfectly sane?

Abdallah. Yes.

Hassan. The reason I ask is, that I intended making a will absolutely in your favour. Now, you see, if I am mad, such a will would mean nothing; but if it means anything, it means that you inherit my fortune, and that I am perfectly sane. As an expert, which would you say I am - mad or sane?

Abdallah. My son, such a deed as you propose would prove conclusively that evil spirits have left you - and I would leave you in possession of as good spirits as my own.

Hassan. Then that's settled. Go in peace.

Abdallah. I will tarry a little until the will is written in case the evil spirits return to you.

Hassan. Oh, very well. (*Commencing to write.*) You are not afraid of my making another will revoking this?

Abdallah. No. For the laws of the Medes and the Persians is unalterable, and therefore as a Persian will is a Persian legal document, it cannot be altered.

Hassan. I never thought of that.

Abdallah. I did. (*HASSAN continues to write. <sup>5</sup>Drums heard in the distance.*) Hark! The royal drums! The Sultan has returned two days before he was expected.

Hassan. Oh! I take no interest in court and society.

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<sup>5</sup> The conductors cued score indicates three bars of solo Side Drum at this point which are included in the Band Parts.

Abdallah. Yet the Sultan takes an interest in you; for the other day I complained to him of you and your evil life.

Hassan. Oh, did you? Now look here, it is understood between us that when I have signed this, my evil life, as you call it, is nothing to anybody; it is a thing of the past - wiped out, eh?

Abdallah. Yes. When you have signed that, you can count your evil life as a thing of the past.

*Enter BLUSH-OF-MORNING, carrying ropes, swords, etc.*

Hassan. There! (*Handing document.*)

Blush. Oh, if you please, Dancing Sunbeam says are these what you require for casting out the evil spirit, and she is borrowing a chopper and a garden roller from next door.

Hassan. We don't require them now, thank you. (*Enter DANCING SUNBEAM.*) I'm cured.

Sunbeam. Cured? How was the cure effected?

Hassan. By will power.

*Exit HASSAN.*

Blush. (*to ABDALLAH.*) You must be in possession of a remarkable will.

Abdallah. I am. (*Pocketing will.*)

Sunbeam. Harken, Abdallah! The cure is not complete. Let our husband have this treatment; even if he succumb to it. We understand each other?

Abdallah. **I understand you. Listen** - I think there is a chance of his perishing suddenly in a few hours.

Blush. Oh, dear!

Sunbeam. Tush, girl! If misfortune take him, we shall take his fortune. Our cloud would have a golden lining. I am like Bluebeard's little Fatima. Social position is the one door closed against me; but some day I mean to open it, cost what it may!

### **No.3. - SONG - Dancing Sunbeam.**

Oh, Life has put into my hand  
His Bunch of Keys,  
And said, "With these  
Do aught you please!  
But one door only, understand,  
Is not for thee -  
Societee!

The Key of Gold will open wide that door-way;  
But recollect that one way is not your way!"  
So like a Peri at the gate

Of Fashion-land  
 I have to stand -  
 The sport of tantalizing Fate!  
 O Golden Key  
<sup>6</sup> That openest every door-way!  
 How glad my song of life would be  
 Could I make use of thee,  
 O Golden Key!  
 How changed my life and song!

**No.4. - RECIT. and TRIO - Blush-of-Morning, Dancing Sunbeam and Abdallah.**

Blush. Sunbeam! the Priest keeps saying, sotto voce,  
 "You'll soon be widows - five-and-twenty widows!"  
 I find his conversation most depressing!

Sunbeam. Depressing? Nonsense!

Abdallah. Five-and-twenty widows!  
 Unhappy lot!

Sunbeam. A lot - but not unhappy!

**TRIO.**

Abdallah. If a sudden stroke of Fate  
 Your Hassan eliminate -

Blush. I shall sit and sob and sigh,  
 "Woe is me, a widow I!"

Sunbeam. But you'll gradually grow  
 Quite accustomed to the blow!

All. Time will soften every blow -  
 That's a cheerful thing to know!

Abdallah. Nature needs (and gets) variety!

Sunbeam. Nature pleads for bright Society!

Blush. Widow's weeds may choke Felicity -

All. Time and his sickle the weeds may prune!

Abdallah. Longest lane will turn to happiness!

Sunbeam. Why complain of widow's-cappiness?

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<sup>6</sup> The conductors cued score and, presumably, the autograph manuscript, gives these two lines as, "That openest **wide that** door-way!/How **changed** my song of life could be"

Blush. Steps regain their elasticity -  
Time is a lover of happy tune!

All. Time will soften every blow:  
That's a useful thing to know!

### **DANCE.**

*Exeunt BLUSH-OF-MORNING and DANCING SUNBEAM to house, ABDALLAH to street.*

*Enter YUSSUF.*

Yussuf. Hassan! Ho, Hassan! Hassan, I say!

*Enter HEART'S DESIRE.*

Desire. Sir, do not call so loudly! The Royal Guard might hear you and -

Yussuf. Follow you? They would be more clever than I, for I cannot follow you, in your fear of them. But you and your friends can stay here in safety.

Desire. Do you know the Lord of this house?

Yussuf. By hearsay. Everyone has heard of "Mad Hassan."

Desire. Oh, is he a mad gentleman?

Yussuf. Nay, except that he keeps open house for all and any, and thus his charity begins at home, and<sup>7</sup> will end in the workhouse.

Desire. I will call my friends. *(Signals with her veil.)* Oh, sir, it is kind of you to have interested yourself in a poor party of dancing and singing girls.

Yussuf. It is in one only that I take an interest, and I shall take it wherever I go!

Desire. Sir, I am a perfect stranger to you.

Yussuf. Perfect you are indeed, but why should you be a stranger? Tell me your name, and whence you come and whither you go - *(putting arm round waist)* - and why you were frightened by meeting the Sultan and his guards? **Tell me?**

Desire. **Oh,** Do not press me, as you are a gentleman.

Yussuf. But I am not. I am a poor devil of a Professional Tale-Teller, who makes a sorry living out of telling funny stories - and here I think I have found one in real life!

Desire. I do not judge gentlemen by their coats.

Yussuf. Nor do I judge all dancing girls by their petticoats, or I should deem you and your companions as bold as brass - as such girls are - while, look! your three friends

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<sup>7</sup> The manuscript gives this word as, "but".

are creeping hither one by one, as timid as fawns crossing a glade. You are no professional dancers!

Desire.<sup>8</sup> You mistake, sir! We are indeed all as bold as - as -

*Enter HONEY-OF-LIFE, nervously.*

Yussuf. As one another?

Honey. Is it safe to hide here?

Desire. Hush! Why, what is there to be afraid of?

Honey. I like that! You have led us into this, perhaps you will lead us out!

*Enter SCENT-OF-LILIES. Drums heard.*<sup>9</sup>

Scent. Hark! That is how the drums roll when they execute anybody - just like that.

Desire. Hush! What are you afraid of?

Scent. Of being executed, of course.

*Enter ROSE-IN-BLOOM. She runs to HEART'S DESIRE and throws herself into her arms.*

Rose. Oh, Heart's Desire!

Yussuf. *(aside)*. "Heart's Desire!"

Rose. I trust myself to you!

Desire. *(aside)*. Be brave, royal mistress; all will be well. *(To YUSSUF.)* Good night, sir. We will claim this Hassan's hospitality for a little. Leave us - forget us - ask no more questions.

Yussuf. I need ask no questions, for I know your name, Heart's Desire, and I can guess whence you come and whither you go - the Sultan's palace. You are a party of royal slaves.

Rose. A slave - I!

Honey. Did she tell you that?

Scent. How did you guess that?

Desire. Yes; how did you make such a silly guess as that?

Yussuf. Fear not. I do not tell tales out of school. *(Looks earnestly at HEART'S DESIRE, who returns the look.)*

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<sup>8</sup> The manuscript has, "Oh Sir, you mistake. We are indeed as bold as - as -".

<sup>9</sup> Again, both the cued conductors score and the Band Parts indicate a three bar timpany roll at this point.

Desire. I thank you with all my heart.

Yussuf. All thy heart would be a greater gift than I could ever deserve. Yet some day I may ask for it. (*Goes to exit, and then turns before leaving.*) Do not fear. The Sultan and his guard will not return to the palace yet awhile. I know their ways. And when they have gone their ways I will return and tell you. Peace be on you!

***Exit YUSSUF.***

Desire. And on you Peace! (*Stands watching him off.*)

Scent. He is going to betray us. I am sure of it

Desire. Oh, no!

Rose. (*to HEART'S DESIRE.*) Run after him and watch!

Desire. Let me wait here, Rose-in-Bloom. When the coast is clear he will return.

Honey. I will go.<sup>10</sup> He may forget, and I want my supper. (*Exit.*)

Scent. Look!

Rose. Good gracious! What?

Scent. Your ring! You are wearing your royal signet! That is more than enough to betray us!

Desire. Give it to me. (*Takes ring from ROSE-IN-BLOOM.*) There is nothing to fear. He said so. This is an experience. We are seeing life - let us enjoy it while we can.

Scent. (*very gloomily.*) Yes, while we can. It won't be long, mark my words.

**No.5. - TRIO - Rose-in-Bloom, Scent-of-Lilies, and Heart's Desire.**

Desire. If you ask me to advise you,  
Finish what you have begun;  
No one here can recognize you -  
We are sure of lots of fun!  
Full of fun  
Risks we'll run -  
Harum-  
Scarum;  
Danger none!  
Harum-scarum, Royal lady!  
Harum-scarum, full of fun;  
Will the Sultan ever guess it,  
Harum-scarum - danger none!

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<sup>10</sup> The manuscript has, "Let me go."

Scent.           Something yet may advertise you  
As the royal "Rose-in-Bloom";  
If the Sultan should surprise you,  
Ours will be a horrid doom!  
Dreadful doom!  
Dangers loom!  
Bow-string  
(Slow-string)  
Watery tomb!  
Thus the Sultan may express it,  
"Harem-scare 'em! Watery tomb!"

Rose.            O, 'twixt Prudence and Temptation  
Almost equally I rock!  
Victim I of vacillation  
Like an airy shuttle-cock!  
(Shuttle-cock  
That you knock  
Hither -  
Thither -)  
So I rock!  
Harum-scarum, merry maiden!  
Harem-scare 'em, girl of gloom!  
Each of you, I must confess it,  
Influences Rose-in-Bloom!

Rose.            In danger,

Scent.           Ah! danger,

Desire.          No danger,

All.             Illah! Illah! Illah!

***Enter HASSAN.***

Hassan.         Peace be on you!

Girls.          And on your Peace!

Rose.          We are a party of poor dancers.

Hassan.         Ah! I am just going to collect a party of poor cripples. Are there only three of you?

Desire.         There is one more.

Rose.          Here she comes.

Hassan.         The more the merrier!

***Enter HONEY-OF-LIFE.***

Scent.          She doesn't look particularly merry. I'm sure she has bad news.

Honey. Oh, I do want my supper! I've had nothing since tea!

Hassan. Poor girl. (*Goes to house and claps his hands.*)

Desire. (*to HONEY-OF-LIFE*). Have the guards moved?

Honey. No. And I'm starving.

Scent. Then we are still cut off from the palace!

***Enter BLUSH-OF-MORNING.***

Hassan. You shall have supper - anything you like. (*To BLUSH-OF-MORNING.*) Conduct these ladies within.

Blush. Ladies! I wager<sup>11</sup> they cannot conduct themselves!

Honey. (*to SCENT-OF-LILIES*). Come along! (*Drums heard.*)<sup>12</sup>

Scent. (*shuddering*). I have no appetite.

Honey. Never mind. I have - enough for two.

***Exeunt SCENT-OF-LILIES and HONEY-OF-LIFE with BLUSH-OF-MORNING.***

Desire. Sir, I will explain our presence.

Hassan. Don't trouble! Read what is written above my door!

Desire. "No Hawkers! No Circulars!"

Hassan. Give me enough - for no man needeth more;  
He who hath not enough hath less than I,  
And, like enough, enough he needeth sore;  
But whatsoe'er he need need not pass by -  
Mine is the house of Ever Open Door!

My own composition. Some day I may set it to music. In plain Persian it means Welcome whoever you are. Come often and stay late. Peace be on you! (*to HEART'S DESIRE*).

<sup>13</sup>"A Book of verses underneath the Bough,  
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread, and Thou

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<sup>11</sup> The manuscript has, "warrant".

<sup>12</sup> The cued conductors score and the band parts indicate a further 3 bar side drum roll at this point.

<sup>13</sup> A quote from The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, in the ever popular translation by Edward Fitzgerald (1859). That first edition reads "Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,/A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse - and Thou/Beside me singing in the Wilderness -/And Wilderness is Paradise enow." In the fifth edition (1889) this becomes, "A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,/A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread - and Thou/ Beside me singing in the Wilderness -/ Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!"

*Beside me singing in the Wilderness" -*

I have spoken.

***Exit HASSAN.***

Rose. Cannot we go back to the palace?

Desire. When the coast is clear he will tell us - I mean the Story-Teller. Have patience!  
*(Stands looking off.)*

Rose. But I have no patience! Now I am out in the world I am impatient to be back in the palace. And when I was shut up in the palace I was impatient to get out into the world. Now I longed for the chance. I felt like a girl waiting to see her lover!

Desire. So do I! - I mean, so did I!

***Exit HEART'S DESIRE.***

**No.6. - SONG - Rose-in-Bloom.**

'Neath my lattice through the night  
Comes the west-wind perfume laden:  
As a lover to a maid  
Sighing softly, "Here am I!  
Come, and wander where I wander in the silence of the stars!"

In the moonbeams' magic light,  
Cool and silent dewdrops glisten  
Where the roses weep to listen  
To my heart's impatient cry:  
"Shall the cage-bird leave her prison, golden through her prison bars?"

<sup>14</sup>Though the bars,  
Thy wing beat,  
To the stars, O sing!  
Let thy soul on wings of music soar beyond thy prison bars!

Ah!  
O bulbul sing to the stars,  
Ah!  
Let thy soul on wings of music soar beyond thy prison bars!

***Exit to house.***

***Enter HASSAN from street, bringing with him a crowd of ragged beggars, cripples, etc. His wives enter from the house and busy themselves in handing refreshments to the men, under HASSAN's direction.***

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<sup>14</sup> The printed libretto has four lines instead of three here. "Though thy wings/Beat the bars/Bulbul sing/To the stars!"

**No.7. - CHORUS.**

Men. Tramps and scamps  
And halt and blind,  
Empty beggar and cringing cripple too!  
Maimed and lamed,  
Who've wailed and whined  
Since the morning for food and tippie too!  
Here is truly hospitality!  
Take your seats without formality!  
Drown our care, conviviality!  
While there is sunshine make your hay!

Wives. Tramps and scamps  
Of every kind -  
Baksheesh beggar and cringing cripple too -  
Maimed and lamed  
And halt and blind  
Take his victuals and drink his tippie too!  
Here's mistaken hospitality!  
Disregard for all formality!  
Crazy unconventionality!  
What will his friends and neighbours say?

Hassan. *(to BEGGARS)*. My friends I am a fool!  
'Tis luck for you that I'm no wiser!

All. Wiser? Why, sir?

Hassan. With all impostors such as you  
I am a sympathiser!

All. Fie, sir! Fie, sir!

*(to one another)*. He knows we are impostors,  
And he is a sympathiser!

*(to HASSAN)*. But why do you on swindlers  
Cast a sympathising eye, sir?

Hassan. I've been one too!

**No.8. - SONG. - Hassan with Chorus.**

When my father sent me to Ispahan,  
Said he, "My boy, don't dread it:  
Here's the usual one-half crown, Hassan,  
You'll get some more, with credit.  
A nice new suit and a brush and comb,  
And a tongue that's smooth and witty,  
A man may be nothing at all at home -  
But something in the City!"

Chorus. That's all you want to feel at home  
As something in the City!

Hassan. So I came to town, where I said that I  
Was the owner of an island,  
Where the sea-birds flocked - and by and bye  
The gulls did flock to my land!  
As a sample soil I had mixed some loam  
With gold to make it gritty;  
A prophet I'd never been made at home -  
But made one in the City!

Chorus. A prophet He'd never been at home -  
But made one in the City!

Hassan. Now that gold of mine was a mine of gold  
That set the town a-whirling;  
So the public and the land I sold  
For half a million sterling!  
As the Romans do you must do in Rome  
(Where thieves are called banditti),  
But impudent robbery spells at home,  
"Promotion" in the City!

Chorus. That's what we call it here at home,  
"Promotion" in the City!

Hassan.<sup>15</sup> Now there's many a millionaire may thank  
The facts that I'm disclosing,  
For his riches and imposing rank  
Have sprung from rank imposing.  
If he shared your company, I declare  
He need not act from pity;  
Your company's worth as much a share  
As his was in the City!

Chorus. Our Company's worth as much a share  
As his was in the City!

*Enter YUSSUF from street.*

### **No.9. - RECITATIVE and SONG - Yussuf with Chorus**

Yussuf. Peace be upon this house!

All. And on you Peace!

Yussuf. A Story-Teller am I  
Of legends and romances,

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<sup>15</sup> This verse appears in the printed libretto, and is cued into the Conductor's score in my possession, but I have been unable to find it in any edition of the published vocal score.

Attend and I will try  
To charm you with my fancies!

Hassan. Lay down your burthen and sup,  
And then take up your burthen;  
Choose for yourself a cup  
Of silver, gold, or earthen!

*Exit HASSAN.*

Yussuf. I care not if the cup I hold  
Be one of fair design,  
Of crystal, silver, or of gold -  
If it containeth wine -  
And humble horn  
Will I not scorn  
If it do carry wine.

Fill high -  
Drink dry!  
The cup doth matter nought, I trow,  
If only it be deep enow!

For, though the cup  
Be earthen bowl,  
'Twill hold the juice of grape!  
Then up, up, up -  
And judge the soul  
And not the outward shape!

Chorus. For, though the cup  
Be earthen bowl,  
'Twill hold the juice of grape!  
Then up, up, up -  
And judge the soul  
And not the outward shape!

Yussuf. I care not how a man be clad,  
Or who a man may be,  
If he be one to make me glad  
To share his company;  
Oh, nought I care  
What he may wear  
While he's good company!

Fill high -  
Drink dry!  
For royal wine may sparkle in  
Your clumsy clay and crystal thin!

For, though the cup  
Be earthen bowl,  
'Twill hold the juice of grape!  
Then up, up, up -  
And judge the soul  
And not the outward shape!

Chorus. For, though the cup  
Be earthen bowl,  
'Twill hold the juice of grape!  
Then up, up, up -  
And judge the soul  
And not the outward shape!

***Enter HASSAN.***

Hassan. **My friends**, I have just arranged with a party of singing and dancing girls who are in the house to give us a refined entertainment.

***(All Cripples applaud with crutches, calling out "Song and Dance!" "Song and Dance!")***

But first, O Story-Teller, will you tell us a tale?

Wives. A tale! A tale!

Yussuf. With joy and alacrity! ***(Takes centre of stage.)***  
I'll tell you tales of long ago - old gems of legend lore;  
Or stories, if you bid me so, you never heard before.  
Terrific tales to make you start and quake with horrid fears;  
Or tender tales to touch your heart, and ask you for your tears.

Hassan. Dear me! Do you always talk in rhymed verse?

Yussuf. Frequently.

Hassan. I do a little that way myself, sometimes.

Yussuf. It is a usual accomplishment of a professional Story-Teller. ***(While he continues his speech, the Men and Girls become worked up by his eloquence.)***  
I've a terrible tale of the "Jinns" - unearthly and gruesome and gory!  
And the fall of proverbial pins can be heard when I'm telling that story!  
And people who hear that dreadful tale grow faint with fear and quake and quail  
And wake in the night from a dreadful dream and turn up the light and -

***(All the Girls scream.)***

Hassan. I don't think the ladies would like that story.

Yussuf. I've love tales of kisses and quarrels -  
Queer mixture of honey and gall -  
And some of those stories have morals,  
And others no morals at all -

Blush. Disgraceful!

*BLUSH-OF-MORNING rises and leaves as if shocked.*

Hassan. Please remember the ladies.

Yussuf. I have drawing-room tales -  
You will greet them as fit for your sister or aunt -

Hassan. That's better!

Yussuf. I have stories so short you'll repeat them;  
And others so broad that you can't!

*All Girls rise as if to go.*

Hassan. Do you know I really think we'll postpone your story-telling until the girls have gone to bed.

Yussuf. With joy and good will. (*Girls all sit down again.*) Why not summon the dancers at once?

Hassan. I will. (*Claps his hands.*) You don't mind, do you?

*Enter HEART'S DESIRE.*

Yussuf. Mind! (*Looks in admiration at HEART'S DESIRE.*)

Desire. Sir, one of our number will dance for you, by your leave - and then by your leave we will take our own, and bid you farewell.

Yussuf. Oh, how shall I paint in metaphor quaint or simile daring,  
The beauty and grace of form and face at which I am staring?

Hassan. My position as host allows me to boast - that feeling's de rigueur -  
(*Hesitating as if thinking of his rhyme.*)

Yussuf. But could language reach any figure of speech to speak of her figure?

Hassan. (*rather annoyed*). Precisely. I was about to make that remark. I see you are a thought-reader as well!

### **No.10 - ENSEMBLE with DANCERS and CHORUS.**

#### **Rose-in-Bloom, Scent-of-Lilies, Heart's Desire, Honey-of-Life, Hassan and Chorus.**

Rose, Scent and Desire. Musical maidens are we  
(We are three)  
And we deal in melodic frivolity!  
We sing and we dance,  
And we crave for a chance  
To afford you a taste of our quality!

Though damsels of lowly degree  
(As you see)  
We'll provide you with innocent pleasure -  
We're pretty maids,  
Witty maids,  
Step-dance and ditty maids -  
That is our accurate measure!

Rose. To sing my own praises I'm loth,  
But in both  
Song and dance  
I've experience ample;  
I'll play for you -  
Stay for you -  
Hours on top "A" for you -  
Listen to this for an example!  
  
Ah!

Scent & Desire. O, listen to this, listen!

Chorus. Musical maidens are they  
(So they say)  
And provide us with innocent pleasure!

Honey. (*entering*). That our voices are clear as a bell -  
You can tell -  
But of dancing I'll give you a sample;  
I'll trip for you -  
Skip for you -  
Twirl on toe-tip for you -  
Pray look at this for example!

*She dances.*

Hassan. Though vowed to the habit of sloth  
By an oath,  
I will give you myself an example  
Of Peri-like,  
Fairy-like,  
Steps light and airy-like -  
Pray look at this for a sample!

*He dances with HONEY-OF-LIFE. CHORUS joins the dance.*

## ENSEMBLE.

Wives.      Dance and Song To joys of life belong! Song and Dance A life of joy enhance! Both are fair Whiche'er you will! So go, dull Care, So go, dull Care, away!		Men.         Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah!
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*As the whole stage is filled with dancers, ABDALLAH enters.*

### No.11. - SONG - Abdallah with Hassan and Chorus.

Abdallah.    Peace be upon this house!

All.         And on you Peace!

Abdallah.    To stop your wild carouse  
              I bring police!

*Two Police enter.*

All.         He brings police!

Abdallah.    From Mahmoud, Ruler of the Nation,  
              I bring a Royal Proclamation;  
              So realize the proverb olden  
              That speech is silver, silence golden!

All.         Speech is silver, silence golden!

Abdallah.    Then hold your peace -

Hasan. *(aside)*. Behold, Police!

Abdallah.    A golden peace -

Hassan. *(aside)*. A golden piece!

*He gives a coin to each of Police.*

Abdallah.    And while I read my manuscript, O!  
              Attend on Expectation's tip-toe!

Hassan. *(aside)*. Now while he reads his manuscript, O!  
              Let every one creep out on tip-toe!

Abdallah.    We have come to invade  
              And raid

Your domicile  
If you object, I answer "Pooh!"  
Say that it's cool -  
Poor fool,  
I promise I'll  
Make it sufficiently warm for you!

Hassan. Warm for me?

Abdallah. Warm for you!  
I'll make it sufficiently warm for you!  
When I make my report  
At Court  
His Majesty  
Wouldn't believe my news was true -  
If a beggar you meet  
In the street,  
He cadges tea,  
Dinner and supper, and breakfast too!

Hassan. Supper -

Abdallah. Tea -

Hassan. Breakfast -

Abdallah. Too!  
These cripples you claim  
Are lame  
Of leg, are men  
Who I believe impose on you  
By command of the King  
I'll bring  
Those beggarmen  
Now to the palace for him to view!

Hassan. Him to see?

Abdallah. Him to view -  
I'll bring them all for him to view!  
To prove that I don't  
And won't  
Exaggerate,  
This is the course I now pursue -  
As a type of a guest  
Arrest  
A cadger eight  
Ten, or a dozen, or all the crew!

Hassan. All there be?

Abdallah. All the crew!

Both. As a type of a guest  
Arrest  
Six, seven, eight,  
Ten, or a dozen - in fact, the crew!

*By this time all the beggars have made their exit unseen by ABDALLAH. The Wives have disappeared into the house.*

Abdallah. *What?* Your boon companions have gone?

Hassan. Why, so they have! How very unbooncompanionable!

*Enter ROSE-IN-BLOOM and Slaves, stealthily, with YUSSUF, from House.*

Abdallah. *(to Police).* Bah! Then arrest those girls!

Rose & Slaves. Us!

Yussuf. Her! Over my dead body first!

Hassan. And over mine second!

Abdallah. *(to HASSAN).* Do you resist the order of the Sultan?

Hassan. I don't say that. But I must say, O Priest, after what has passed between us, I consider this intrusion most unwarrantable!

Abdallah. Here is my warrant, O Blind One - to bring before the Sultan types of persons whom you entertain! *(To Police.)* Arrest the girls.

Desire. What for?

Abdallah. To be brought before the Sultan in the morning.

Rose. *(aside).* Before the Sultan! We shall lose our heads!

Desire. *(aside).* Keep your heads now, and I will save them altogether. *(Aloud.)* O Priest, listen! You are laying your hands on the Sultana!

Abdallah, Yussuf, & Hassan. The Sultana!

Rose. *(aside).* Why do you tell them that?

Scent. A nice way to save us!

Honey. Now you've done it!

Desire. Not quite! *(Aloud.)* See - the Royal Signet! I am the Sultana!

Yussuf. You! *(Looks overwhelmed, then goes up as if dazed.)*

Abdallah. *(glancing at ring).* It is true.

Hassan. *(to ABDALLAH)*. I can assure you there is nothing whatever between me and the Sultana.

Abdallah. You can assure the Sultan.

Hassan. I suppose you will tell the Sultan?

Abdallah. I think so. *(Stands contemplating.)*

Hassan. I thought so. *(Stands contemplating.)*

Rose. *(to HEART'S DESIRE)*. Why did you tell him that? That you are me!

Desire. Don't you see - the Sultan will think I stole the ring and impersonated you, while you were at home and in bed.

Abdallah. I shall tell the Sultan in the morning.

Hassan. *(to ABDALLAH)*. I suppose I shall be executed?

Abdallah. I think so.

Hassan. I thought so. It won't make any difference her having come here against my will?

Abdallah. Not a bit.

Hassan. No.

Abdallah. Speaking of wills, your will will be executed directly you have been.

***Enter DANCING SUNBEAM.***

Hassan. That will make no difference to me.

Abdallah. It will to me.

Sunbeam. What's this I hear? Police? What does it all mean?

Hassan. The Sultan is going to have me executed. That's all.

Sunbeam. *(aside to ABDALLAH)*. You've arranged this?

Abdallah. I am going to.

Sunbeam. *(in pretended distress)*. And your poor little wives are to be left widows?

Hassan. Yes. That's all you will be left - a widow.

Abdallah. The rest of the property is to be left to me!

Sunbeam. To you? *(Realizing what he means.)* Oh! Is this how you have helped me?

Abdallah. The Prophet says, "Providence helps him who helps himself."

Sunbeam. Don't talk to me of Prophets! (*To HASSAN.*) Think of your wives! What will become of them?

**No.12. - OCTET - Rose-in-Bloom, Scent-of-Lilies, Heart's Desire, Honey-of-Life, Dancing Sunbeam, Hassan, Yussuf and Abdallah.**

Sunbeam. The Sultan's Executioner  
The Royal Retributioner,  
Will of course dispose of you  
Without the <sup>16</sup>smallest fuss;  
You'll p'r'aps be led  
To a public place  
By the hair of your head,  
As a mark of disgrace;  
Anyhow, you'll be dead  
In a very short space -  
But what will become of us?

Others. Yes - what will become of them?

Hassan. No - what will become of me?

All. For the Sultan's Executioner  
The Royal Retributioner,  
Will of course know what to do -  
He acts with amazing phlegm!  
You'll p'r'aps be led  
To a public place  
By the hair of your head,  
As a mark of disgrace;  
Anyhow, you'll be dead  
In a very short space -  
But what will become of us/them?

Hassan. No - what will become of me?

Sunbeam. When the Royal Life-Long-Limiter  
Has sharpened up his scimitar,  
You'll very likely ride  
In a sort of a private 'bus;  
By a vulgar throng  
To be roundly hissed;  
But it won't be for long,  
So I wouldn't resist;  
At the sound of a gong  
You will cease to resist!  
But what will become of us?

Others. Yes - what will become of them?

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<sup>16</sup> The cued conductors score has "slightest".

Hassan. No - what will become of me?

All. When the Royal Life-Long-Limiter  
Has sharpened up his scimitar,  
Misfortune's angry tide  
Too late you will be to stem;  
By a vulgar throng  
To be roundly hissed;  
But it won't be for long,  
So I wouldn't resist;  
At the sound of a gong  
You will cease to resist!  
But what will become of us/them?

Hassan. No - what will become of me?

*Exit DANCING SUNBEAM.*

Abdallah. In the morning I shall tell the Sultan. Peace be on you.

All. And on you Peace!

*Exit ABDALLAH.*

Desire. *(to ROSE-IN-BLOOM).* I will see if the way be safe - then we will run to the palace.  
Wait here. *(Exit.)*

Yussuf. *(looking after her).* The Sultan's wife!

Hassan. I have a happy thought.

Scent. Then be sure it is the only one here. Pass it around in little pieces, a bit for each of us.

Hassan. I will. It is in this box - in little pieces of sweetmeat.

Honey. I am partial to Persian sweetmeats. But I don't think even rose-leaves fried in sweet oil with vanilla flavouring would make me forget I may never have another breakfast!

Hassan. But this will. I am serious.

Rose. So are we all - very.

Hassan. This is a drug called "Bhang." Have you heard of it?

Girls. No.

Yussuf. I have; it is worse than opium.

Hassan. It is better than opium. In times of severe mental worry it gives dreams much more delightful and extravagant.

Yussuf. A dream - and then comes the awakening. *(Sighs.)* Such is life!

Hassan. In our case there will be no awakening! Such is - ! We shall still be dreaming when - !

Girls. Don't!

Yussuf. I never heard of a single man who was happier for eating Bhang.

Hassan. My dear sir, that's just it. I am not a single man. When you have been married twenty-six times you will see the charm of this drug, believe me. If you eat enough of it you will be able to sit out the most lengthy and complicated choruses of feminine complainings, and imagine you are listening to a promenade concert. I've tried it often. Twice a day. For years.

Honey. We might taste it.

*The drug is passed round - the Girls eat a little.*

Hassan. A drug that will affect your imagination as to make you enjoy a curtain lecture from Dancing Sunbeam will carry you through a paltry execution. I believe a double dose will enable me to imagine that decapitation is rather less trouble than having one's hair cut. I shall reserve a double dose, and you can have the remainder. I shan't want it.

Honey. It's not bad. Peculiar, but not bad.

Scent. Things really do seem a little brighter!

Rose. Yes. Much!

Scent. Not much. But a little.

Yussuf. Not to me! (*Sighs deeply.*)

Hassan. What's the matter with you? You are not going to lose your head.

Yussuf. No. But I have lost my heart - to the Sultan's wife - the Royal Rose-in-Bloom.

Rose. What impert - oh, by the way, that girl who went out is not the Sultana, you know.

Yussuf. Not the Sultana? Not the Sultan's wife?

Hassan. Not - ! Why didn't you say so before?

Honey. I don't see that it makes any difference.

Scent. Not a bit.

Yussuf. No difference! If she is not the Sultana I can ask her to be my wife - and perhaps she will - and I needn't commit suicide! That's the difference!

Hassan. If the Sultana has not been here, there is no reason why I should be executed. That's all. Little enough - but there it is.

*YUSSUF and HASSAN shake hands and show every sign of mutual congratulations and delight.*

Scent. She was not the Sultana - but she is. (*Indicating ROSE-IN-BLOOM.*)

Rose. Yes. I am.

Hassan. You are? Then you have been here!

Rose. Yes. All the time. I am still.

Hassan. I shall have to take a treble dose of Bhang now, instead of a double one. (*Going to exit.*) I don't know what the effect will be, but I mean to be off my head before they take my head off.

*Exit HASSAN.*

Yussuf. Ha! Ha! This is delightful. Where is Heart's Desire?

*Enter HEART'S DESIRE, agitated.*

Desire. I am here! Run into the house - all of you! Hide! Quick!

All. What's the matter?

Desire. The Sultan himself is coming this way!

All. The Sultan!

Desire. With the Grand Vizier, Physician-in-Chief, and Executioner.

All. (*groaning*). Ugh!

Desire. All disguised as Dervishes! They are coming here!

Yussuf. Into the house - quick! I will warn Hassan - if he will listen to me!

*Exeunt.*

*Enter GRAND VIZIER, PHYSICIAN, EXECUTIONER, and SULTAN one by one.*

**No.13. - QUARTET and DANCE - Sultan, Vizier, Physician and Executioner.**

Vizier. I'm the Sultan's vigilant Vizier,  
Who lets the Sultan know the coast is clear,  
When he (the Sultan) takes a private stroll;  
Assuming such an assuming role  
As Dervish!

Physician. I, the Sultan's Chief Physician, lug  
The Sultan's private chest of dose and drug,  
And follow his (the Sultan's) Grand Vizier,  
Who lets the Sultan know the coast is clear,  
When he the Sultan takes a private stroll;

Assuming such an assuming role  
As Dervish!

Executioner. I, the Sultan's Executioner,  
Come just behind His Majesty of Per-  
Sia's Chief Physician, who (the latter) lugs  
His (that's the Sultan's) private chest of drugs,  
And follows his (the Sultan's) Grand Vizier,  
Who lets the Sultan know the coast is clear,  
When he (the Sultan) takes a private stroll;  
Assuming such an assuming role  
As Dervish!

Sultan. I'm the Persian Sultan So-and-So,  
Engaged in walking out about incognito,  
With my (the Sultan's) Executioner;  
Who walks behind my Majesty of Per-  
Sia's Chief Physician, who (the latter) lugs  
My Sultan's chest of my (the Sultan's) drugs,  
And follows his - my - (Sultan's) Grand Vizier,  
Who lets me (the Sultan) know the coast is clear,  
When I (the Sultan) take a private stroll;  
Assuming such an assuming role  
As Dervish!

Vizier. Dancing Dervish!

Physician. Holy Dancing Dervish!

Executioner. Lowly holy Dancing Dervish!

Sultan. Simple souly lowly holy Dervish!

### **ENSEMBLE.**

Physician. Twirling whirling simple souly lowly Holy Dog of a  
Dancing Dervish!

Vizier. Simple souly lowly Holy Dog of a Dancing Dervish!

Executioner. Quaintly curling twirling whirling twirling  
Whirling Dog of a Dancing Dervish!

Sultan. Tee-to-tummy rummy slummy quaintly curling  
Twirling whirling simple souly lowly Holy Dog of a  
Dancing Dervish!

All. Ah! Ah! Ah!  
Joyful gyrate  
High-rate my rate  
Unromantic, frantic, antic  
Tee-to-tummy, rummy, slummy,

Quaintly curling, twirling, whirling,  
Lowly Holy Dog of a Dancing Dervish!

*As they engage in a Dervish Dance<sup>17</sup>, HASSAN enters; he appears excited, and from time to time eats Bhang.*

Sultan. Is this Hassan the eccentric?

Vizier. (*aside*). O King, live for ever! It is.

Hassan. (*regarding the SULTAN, etc.*). You are - let me see - four or eight - no four Dogs of Dervishes!

Sultan. True, O Hassan!

Hassan. (*with an air of condescension*). You don't know what I am. I didn't know myself, till quite lately. I am the one man in all Persia who doesn't care a fig for the Sultan!

Sultan. What?

Hassan. Or his Executioner. (*Eating Bhang.*)

Sultan. (*aside*). Does he know me?

Exec. O King, I don't see how he can!

Phys. O Commander of the Faithful! This man is mad from the effects of an overdose of Bhang.

Sultan. You are sure?

Phys. I know the symptoms, O King! He will consider himself a person of more and more importance, until he suddenly falls unconscious. Then he will sleep for ten hours.

*Enter YUSSUF.*

Hassan. If the Royal Executioner were to come here and try to execute me, I'd wring his neck!

Yussuf. Madman!

Sultan. And why do you care nothing for the Sultan?

Hassan. Why, dog? Because I am his equal in birth, breeding, education, and personal appearance. I see you are sniggering. (*To YUSSUF.*) Will you go away? (*To SULTAN.*) What would you say if I were to tell you that I am the Sultan himself, myself.

Sultan. I should say that you were not quite your own self.

---

<sup>17</sup> Although printed in the published Vocal Score, the dance is omitted from the D'Oyly Carte band parts. It is restored to in the 1999 BBC recording, as are all other cuts.

Hassan. Well, I am not really myself - I am the Sultan! You are sniggering again! If I am not the Sultan, why is Rose-in-Bloom, the Sultana, in my house, eh?

Sultan. Rose-in-Bloom?

Yussuf. Fool - what are you saying?

Hassan. You must be very deaf *if you didn't hear*. I said, if I am not the Sultan, why is the Sultana in my house, eh?

Sultan. Do not joke of her. It is dangerous!

Hassan. Joke? (*A short pause - then quickly.*) I will fetch her.

Yussuf. He is mad! -

*Exit HASSAN.*

Sultan. Quite!

Yussuf. (*aside*). What can I say to them? (*Aloud.*) It is a dancing girl that his mad imagination has dubbed Rose-in-Bloom. He believes himself the Sultan, and this dancer has taken advantage of his madness and called herself the Sultana! And he believes it! Ha! Ha! It was a merry jest of the girl.

*Exit YUSSUF.*

Sultan. A sorry jest for the girl to call herself my Rose-in-Bloom - to bring contempt upon the Queen! She shall be punished. And this Hassan too shall be cured of Bhang-eating. (*To VIZIER, etc.*) Go, all of you, change your disguise for your official dress, and return hither at once with the Royal Guards. Accept this madman's story - treat him as if he were the Sultan - confirm his statement that Hassan and the Sultan are the same - and conduct him to the palace, willy-nilly. Leave me here, and leave the punishment of this impudent dancer to me. Go, and return quickly.

All. We hear you and obey.

*Exeunt VIZIER, PHYSICIAN, and Executioner.*

## **No.14. - FINALE - ACT I.**

*Girls enter from house.*

Girls. Oh, luckless hour!  
Oh, dreadful day!  
Oh, quake and cower!  
Oh, grief display!  
Let tears be shed!  
Oh, weep and wail:  
Throw dust on head,  
And rend each veil!

Sunbeam. (*entering*). Oh, beat the breast!  
Oh, slap the face!  
Grief so expressed  
Is full of grace!

*With BLUSH-OF-MORNING, who has entered, and others.*

Oh, luckless hour!  
Oh, dreadful day!

Sultan. Oh, ladies what assails you?

Sunbeam. 'Tis our husband!  
He has gone mad!  
Our luckless husband Hassan!

Sultan. Nay, nay!

Sunbeam. Yea, yea! He swears he is the Sultan!

Sultan. Dost thou forget the saying of the Prophet -  
"Sound sense has often senseless sound,"  
And "Truth than fiction stranger may be found"?

Sunbeam. What mean you?

Sultan. That, perchance, he is the Sultan!

Sunbeam. Our husband is the Sultan! <sup>18</sup>How?

Sultan. Oh, listen!  
  
You'll understand that now and then,  
Eccentric and peculiar men,  
Though undetected by their wives,  
Have led respected double lives!

Sunbeam & Blush. We've heard of men who, now and then,  
Have led disgraceful double lives!

Sultan. Throughout the day (when you would guess  
He was away at business)  
His palace he perhaps has sought!  
His nature deeper than you thought!

Sunbeam & Blush. His business he mentioned less  
Than quite an honest husband ought!

Sunbeam, Blush & Sultan. Alas that men  
Should now and then  
Lead unsuspected double lives!

---

<sup>18</sup> The cued conductor's score indicates that the word "How?" should be spoken.

*Drums heard in the distance.*

Sunbeam & Blush. Hark the distant roll of drums!

Sultan. Nearer - nearer - nearer!

Sunbeam & Blush. 'Tis the Sultan's guard that comes!

Sultan. Nothing could be clearer!

Sunbeam & Blush. Marching quickly down the street,  
Faster, faster, faster!

Sultan. Doubtless they have come to meet  
Hassan - their Royal Master!

All. Hark the distant roll of drums!  
Nearer - nearer - nearer!  
'Tis the Sultan's guard that comes!  
Nothing could be clearer!  
Marching quickly down the street,  
Faster, faster, faster!  
Doubtless they have come to meet  
Hassan - their Royal Master!

*The SULTAN's Guards enter.*

Guards. With martial gate -  
With kettle-drums -  
(Metal drums)  
All complete -  
We've marched in state -  
While boys silly  
Noisily  
Dogged our feet!  
Gallant company  
Sworn to thump any  
Lack of loyalty  
In the street!  
Guards of Royalty!  
Keen to kill any  
Dogs of villainy  
In the street!  
Kettle-drums (metal drums)  
Rattle tunes (battle tunes) -  
Boys silly noisily  
Halloaing following,  
Down the street!

*Enter the GRAND VIZIER, PHYSICIAN-IN-CHIEF, and ROYAL EXECUTIONER, in their official dresses.*

Trio. Attended by these Palace Warders,  
Each of us now arrives -  
The Grand Vizier -  
Physician-in-Chief -  
And Royal Executioner!  
Obedient to the Sultan's orders,  
Carrying to his wives  
Some news, we fear,  
Beyond their belief -  
Attend to what we now aver!

Chorus. Some news, they fear,  
Beyond our belief -  
Attend to what they now aver!

Vizier. He whom you call Hassan -  
(Prepare for great surprise) -  
Is quite another man -  
The Sultan in disguise!

Sunbeam. Our husband, our Hassan -

Blush. The Sultan in disguise!

Chorus. The Sultan in disguise!  
The Sultan in disguise!

Physician. Endeavour, if you can,  
This fact to realise;  
The Sultan is Hassan,  
And vice-versa-wise!

Sunbeam. The Sultan is Hassan,

Blush. And vice-versa-wise!

Chorus. The Sultan is Hassan,  
And vice-versa-wise!

Executioner. Each is another man -  
That is, id est, or viz,  
The Sultan is Hassan,  
Hassan the Sultan is!

Sunbeam. The Sultan is Hassan!

Blush. Hassan the Sultan is!

Chorus. The Sultan is Hassan,  
Hassan the Sultan in!

Sultan. Distinguish, if you can,  
Their mixed identities:  
The Sultan is Hassan!  
Hassan the Sultan is!

Sunbeam. The Sultan is Hassan!

Blush. Hassan the Sultan is!

All. The Sultan is Hassan, etc.

Sunbeam. See, here he comes! Oh, recollect  
To grovel on the floor!  
Nor high-flown compliments neglect,  
Wrapped up in metaphor!

Women. Oh, fit the arrows of respect  
To bows of metaphor,  
And flights of flattery direct  
At him whom we adore!  
To load the camel of good taste  
With bales of welcome haste!  
Invite the Sultan to the tent  
Of Eastern compliment!

All. Let Adulation's pleasant breeze  
His Royal nostrils reach,  
Perfumed with spice of similes  
And fragrant flowers of speech!  
Let dull and leaden-coloured clouds  
Of ordinary crowds  
Before the Sun of Royal Pride  
Respectfully divide!

***HASSAN enters, leading ROSE-IN-BLOOM, who is veiled; as she passes the SULTAN, she draws her veil closer. HASSAN is met by the EXECUTIONER, who introduces himself to him, making obeisance.***

Hassan. I am the Sultan, and I now  
Shall introduce to you  
The fair Sultana, and allow  
Her face to be one view!

Sunbeam. Oh, husband dear!

Hassan. Avaunt, avaunt!  
Oh, woman gray and gaunt!

Blush.<sup>19</sup> She is Sultana!

---

<sup>19</sup> The Vocal Score has this as, "I am Sultana!", which is obviously incorrect.

Hassan. Go away!  
Oh, woman gaunt and gray!  
*(To ROSE.)* Veiled so thickly,  
Royal lady,  
How can I your presence prove?  
Therefore quickly,  
O Zubeydeh,  
If you please that veil remove!

**ENSEMBLE.**

Wives.  
Fate is prickly.  
In the heyday  
Of success he doth  
remove  
Favours quickly  
To a shady  
Girl of lowest social  
groove!

Sultan and Men.  
Thinking quickly  
Singer shady  
My/His Sultana will he  
prove!  
Truly quickly  
Made a lady,  
Mate for King in single  
move!

Rose. Hassan! Thy pity I entreat  
And at thy feet  
A suppliant, lo! I kneel;  
Respect my maiden modesty  
I beg of thee -  
Turn not from my appeal!  
Thine oriental etiquette  
Dost thou forget?  
To force a maid to raise her veil  
Before a male?

Chorus. Turn not, turn not, Hassan!

***SCENT-OF-LILIES, HEART'S DESIRE, and HONEY-OF-LIFE enter veiled with  
YUSSUF.***

Hassan *(to ROSE)*. O lady, do not fail  
Your life or death to choose!  
Remove your modest veil  
At once, or -

Rose *(in desperation)*. I refuse!

Hassan. Then, Executioner,  
With scimitar await;  
Perhaps you'll kindly her  
At once decapitate!

All. Oh, horror!

Royal Slaves. Mistress!

Yussuf. I will speak!

Rose. Nay, nay! 'Tis Fate - it has been written!

Executioner (*to SULTAN*). Shall I slay her? <sup>20</sup>

Sultan. Yes; obey in all things.

Executioner. I obey!

Hassan. The signal take from me!  
It will be very brief:  
I'll say, "One, two, three,"  
Then drop my handkerchief!

All. Just "one" and "two" and "three,"  
Then drop his handkerchief!

Hassan. One!

Royal Slaves. Can naught be done?

Hassan. Two!

Rose. <sup>21</sup> What can ye do?

*HASSAN begins to stagger, and is unable to speak.*

All (*watching HASSAN*). Like a leaf  
He shakes with palsy!  
Handkerchief  
Will never fall - see!  
He himself will fall instead! (*He falls.*)  
He has fallen - fallen dead!

Rose. Oh, sweet reprieve!

Royal Slaves. Oh, sweet reprieve!  
Hassan is dead!

Chorus. The Sultan dead!

Men. The Sultan dead! (*Laughing.*)

Sultan, 3 Men. Ho, ho, ho, ho!  
The Sultan's dead!

Physician. Not so! He will be better soon!  
(*Aside to SULTAN.*) It is the drug! (*Aloud.*) It is a swoon!

---

<sup>20</sup> The Vocal Score allocates this line to Abdallah incorrectly.

<sup>21</sup> The cued conductors score allocates this line to Yussuf with the words "What can we do?"

Wives. It is a swoon! O joy! O joy!<sup>22</sup>

Sultan. Conduct him to the palace!

*HASSAN is put into the Royal litter.*

**ENSEMBLE.**

Men. With martial gait,  
With kettle-drums  
(Metal-drums)  
All complete!  
Gallant company  
Sworn to thump any  
Lack of loyalty  
In the street -  
Kettle-drums (metal drums)  
Rattle tunes (battle tunes)  
Halloaing down the street.

Rose, Royal Slaves & Yussuf.

Homicidal  
Was his madness;  
Fortune tidal  
Turns to gladness!  
Safe the royal lady now!

Wives.

Suicidal  
Was our sadness;  
Fortune tidal  
Turns to gladness!  
We are Royal Ladies now!

All. Conduct him to the palace, and  
To mark well mark his coming,  
Commence, O loyal Royal band,  
Your (metal) kettle drumming!

*HASSAN is placed in the Royal litter; the Guards prepare to conduct him forth.*

**END OF ACT I.**

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<sup>22</sup> The Chappell vocal score has “O joy! O boon!” which contradicts their own published libretto.

## ACT II.

*SCENE. - Open audience hall in the SULTAN's palace. HEART'S DESIRE discovered.*

### No.15. - DUET - Heart's Desire and Yussuf.

Desire. Oh, what is love?  
A song from heart to heart;  
When each doth compliment  
Its counterpart.

Oh, where is love?  
'Tis ever near at hand;  
Where earth and heaven meet  
In fairyland.

Oh, why is love?  
It maketh us to see  
That Heaven may be reached  
By you or me;  
By bond or free!

*YUSSUF enters.*

The Song of self  
Is but a melody;

Yussuf. Love lends of sympathy  
A counter-theme;

Both. And life becomes a dream  
Of Heaven's harmony.

Yussuf. Heart's Desire!

Desire. There! I thought I heard your voice. How did you pass the gates? And where have you come from? And why are you so ragged?

Yussuf. I have not passed the gates, for I passed the night in a rose bush in the Royal garden.

Desire. But why?

Yussuf. When I had seen you enter the Palace last night, out of breath, but in the nick of time - I did not leave the garden!

Desire. Oh, that was foolish!

Yussuf. I forgot I was in the garden, when you left it; for you took the perfume and the moonlight with you.

*Enter HONEY-OF-LIFE and SCENT-OF-LILIES.*

Desire. And I thought I had left Fairyland outside - with you.

Honey. Breakfast is ready!

Scent. *(to YUSSUF)*. What are you doing here?

Yussuf. I am waiting to see the Sultan, when he gives public audience, to ask him to give me my Heart's Desire; to tell him frankly and openly and proudly how and when I met her, that I love her, and want her for my wife.

Honey. I wouldn't do that.

Scent. No, I don't think that would be wise.

Desire. Why not, pray?

Honey. Oh, we're not jealous - don't think that.

Scent. Some people notice us, you know.

Honey. The Grand Vizier is quite good enough for me!

Scent. The Royal Executioner is all I want!

Honey. But if you blurt out how and when you met us we shall be thrown down a well. We've found that out.

Scent. I have been sitting on the Executioner's knee, looking at his illustrated Book of Tortures. That's what happens to girls who disguise themselves and leave the Harem. A deep -

Honey. Dark -

Desire. Dry -

Yussuf. Well!

Desire. *(to YUSSUF)*. Perhaps it would be wise to disguise the facts, dear, a little, if you can - to the Sultan.

Yussuf. I am a Story-Teller by profession - not in private life. Can you marry me if I tell deliberate falsehoods?

Desire. Well, darling, I sha'n't be able to if you don't - that's the point.

Scent. That's it.

Honey. In a nutshell.

**No.16. - QUARTET - Scent-of-Lilies, Honey-of-Life, Heart's Desire, and  
Yussuf.**

Girls. If you or I should tell the truth  
We all shall be executed,  
So won't you try, O noble-minded youth,  
To tell the truth diluted?  
As we all shall be thrown down a well,  
Pell-mell,  
If the truth we tell,  
(You and I as well),  
In a heap down a deep dark well -

Yussuf. Well, well!  
We'll tell the truth diluted!

All. *(to one another)*. As I'm loth that we both  
Take a leap in a heap,  
Down a steep and a deep, dark well,  
Well, well?  
We'll tell the truth diluted!  
Just a little tarradiddle-iddle-id diluted!

Yussuf. As you and I, the truth to tell,  
Have naught but the truth to dread, dear,  
We'll let Truth lie at the bottom of a well -  
Or we shall be there instead, dear!  
As we both shall be cast down a well,  
Pell-mell,  
If the truth we tell,  
(You and I as well),  
Very fast down a nasty well -

Girls. Well, well!  
We'll tell a fib instead, dear!

All. *(to one another)*. As I'm loth that we both  
At the last shall be cast  
Very fast down a nasty well,  
Well, well,  
We'll tell a fib instead, dear!  
Just a little tarradiddle idyll fib instead, dear!

***DANCE and Exeunt.***

***The Court Slaves and Officials enter, Men and Girls.***

**No.17. - CHORUS and SOLOS - Physician, Grand Vizier and Royal Executioner.**

From Morning Prayer  
The Sultan of Persia comes!  
Let trumpets blare  
And loudly attack the drums!  
The flutes as well  
Including the quaint bassoon,  
And let them boldly blow  
An apropos  
And popular Persian tune!  
Your bodies bend!  
Your popular Sultan comes!  
Your hands extend!  
Respectfully cross your thumbs!  
And with salaam  
Endeavour to sing (or croon)  
In key that's quite correct  
(As he'll expect)  
A popular Persian tune!

Vizier. (*entering*). Outside a mob  
Of people expectant hums;  
Their pulses throb -  
Their popular Sultan comes!  
And when they see  
Their popular Sultan soon  
They'll all break out  
And sing (or shout)  
This popular Persian tune!

Physician & Executioner. (*entering*). Good news we bring -  
Your popular Sultan comes!  
Upon him fling  
Selected encomiums!  
Address him as  
The Sun or the Rising Moon;  
And don't forget  
Your praise to set  
To a popular Persian tune!

Good news we bring -  
Your popular Sultan comes!  
Upon him fling  
Selected encomiums!  
Address him as  
The Sun or the Rising Moon;

And don't forget  
Your praise to set  
To a popular Persian tune!

Chorus. From Morning Prayer, etc.

*The SULTAN enters. Everyone is prostrated.*<sup>23</sup>

Sultan. Are the Royal Slave Girls and Officials all present?

Vizier. Yes, O King!

Sultan. Where is the man Hassan?

Vizier. O King, he is **being carried hither** still sleeping from the effect of Bhang.

Sultan. Last night he boasted he was as good as I!

Vizier. Shall he die, O King?

Phys. For the lie, O King?

Exec. Shall I, O King? (*Drawing scimitar.*)

Sultan. No, no.

All. We hear you and obey.

Sultan. When he said he was as good as I he may have spoken the truth. He is the first man who has ever said such a thing - to my face; and he has given me an idea. Take him, while he still sleeps, and dress him in a royal robe, and put a crown upon his head - (*Taking off his own crown*) - and when he wakes, see that he finds himself seated on the throne.

Vizier. The throne, O King?

Phys. Your own, O King?

Sultan. Yes.

All. We hear you and obey.

Sultan. And see that he is treated exactly as if he were Sultan - in every respect. See that you treat me exactly as if I were not Sultan - with no respect. You can begin at once by assuming a perpendicular position.

All. We hear you and obey.

Vizier. (*kneeling*). O King, it will be impossible to treat another as we should treat you!

---

<sup>23</sup> The cued conductors score indicates a side drum roll for the entrance of the Sultan.

- Sultan. Oh, no, not at all. If I find the experiment successful, I shall leave him here to be grovelled to, while I go for a few weeks to the seaside, disguised as a cheap tripper. The truth is - I don't want to offend you - but I'm a little tired of you all - just a leetle bit tired of seeing everybody crawling about on their stomachs. (*Lifting up VIZIER.*) I don't blame you. I know you can't help it. I know you're unhappy now, because you're not cringing, aren't you? Well, well, I won't be cruel - down you get.
- Vizier. (*kneeling*). O King, this is not a natural attitude. But it is natural to be unnatural when Kings are about.
- Sultan. Exactly. It's human nature. Bless you, there's nothing new in that. People talk about Society nowadays being artificial. Not a bit. Modern manners are only original human nature some years in bottle.

### No.18. - SONG - Sultan and Chorus

Let a satirist enumerate a catalogue of crimes  
 Though he label them the outcome of our shallow modern times;  
 Yet a Persian Punch's pencil, in a prehistoric peep,  
 Would show us human nature just as shallow - or as deep.  
 It is money more than manners nowadays that make a man;  
 And a man may make his money in such manner as he can;  
 And the more he makes of it, the more his friends will make of him -  
 That has always been the way since human sharks began to swim! And cynics  
 may complain  
 That Society is mixed;  
 But I gather in the main  
 Its ingredients are fixed;  
 And Society has always been a sort of "ginger-pop,"  
 The dregs are at the bottom, and the froth is at the top!

Chorus. And Society has always been a sort of "ginger-pop,"  
 The dregs are at the bottom, and the froth is at the top!

Sultan. <sup>24</sup> Now philosophy may frown upon the follies of the froth -  
 Where bounce has beaten brains and vulgar shoddy's counted cloth,

---

<sup>24</sup> The following version of verse two, not shown in any printed edition of the libretto or vocal score, was used as an encore: \* The word "song" is given as "ring" in the cued score.

Sultan. Now philosophy may frown upon the follies of the froth -  
 Where bounce has beaten brains and vulgar shoddy's counted cloth,  
 Where sentiment is "silly," and politeness "out of date,"  
 And hearts, instead of golden, are a cheap electro-plate;  
 But a woman is a woman, and a man is but a man,  
 And the froth has always floated ever since the world began;  
 And the froth of human nature is the sycophantic \*song  
 Of snobbery and robbery that circles round a king.  
 And cynics may complain

Where sentiment is "silly," and politeness "out of date,"  
And hearts, instead of golden, are a cheap electro-plate;  
But a woman is a woman, and a man is but a man,  
And the froth has always floated ever since the world began;  
And the froth of human nature is the feeble-minded mob  
Of animated fashion-plates that make the genus "snob."  
And cynics may complain  
That Society is mixed;  
I am ready to maintain  
Its ingredients are fixed;  
And the world of men and women is a social "ginger-pop,"  
The dregs are at the bottom, and the froth is at the top!

Chorus. And the world of men and women is a social "ginger-pop,"  
The dregs are at the bottom, and the froth is at the top!

***Exeunt CHORUS, PHYSICIAN and EXECUTIONER.***

Sultan. *(to VIZIER, who has again prostrated himself).* Dear, dear! Please stand up! I do think that even a Sultan's Court officials might occasionally be upright.

Vizier. *(rising).* O King, the light of your countenance blinds me!

Sultan. Well, I'll turn my face away for a little, and you can get used to the notion comfortably. Understand, I want you to treat me as nobody of any consequence - quite your own equal. Keep repeating that to yourself - you'll soon grow accustomed to the idea. *(Turns his back.)*

Vizier. O King, the idea is painful to me!

Sultan. Nonsense! Shut your eyes and keep repeating it.

***HONEY-OF-LIFE appears, looking round entrance.***

Honey. *(to VIZIER).* Vizzie-Wizzie! *(Embraces VIZIER.)* Darling, I've been looking for you everywhere.

Vizier. *(embarrassed).* Ahem! *(Indicates presence of SULTAN.)*

Honey. Oh, the Sultan. *(prostrating herself).* O Commander of the Faithful! I did not recognize you, with your back turned and without your crown.

---

That Society is mixed;  
I am ready to maintain  
Its ingredients are fixed;  
And it's only human nature for a king to like a drop  
Of something more refreshing than the froth that's at the top!

Chorus. And it's only human nature for a king to like a drop  
Of something more refreshing than the froth that's at the top!

Sultan. (*turning to her*). Eh? Get up, girl! (*Raising her*.) Dear me - a very pretty face. You are to treat me exactly as you would treat the Vizier.

Honey. Exactly as I would treat the Vizier? (*Astonished*.)

Sultan. Yes. He says the idea is painful to him.

Honey. I dare say. He is frightfully jealous.

Sultan. I don't see what jealousy has to do with it. All I want you to do is to treat me exactly as you would him; that will give him a lesson.

Honey. Do you really mean it, O King?

Sultan. Don't call me "O King." Address me as you would him.

Honey. Well - if I must, I must. Sit down, Vizzie-Wizzie! (*pointing to throne steps*.)  
There!

Sultan. (*sitting on step of throne*). Eh?

Honey. (*sitting beside him*). And there! (*Kisses him*.)

Vizier. Ugh!

Sultan. Dear me! And what would the Vizier do?

Vizier. (*angrily*). He would say, "Keep your place, naughty girl - and I will keep mine."

Sultan. A good idea. (*to HONEY-OF-LIFE*.) Keep your place, naughty girl - and er - yes - I will keep mine. Would the Vizier do this? (*Kisses her*.)

Vizier. Certainly not!

Sultan. Then he can have no objection to my doing it perhaps?

<sup>25</sup> *Kisses her as the PHYSICIAN leads in DANCING SUNBEAM and BLUSH-OF-MORNING and SONG-OF-NIGHTINGALES.*

Sunbeam. That is exactly what I expected.

Sultan. Indeed, madam? Well - the other Vizier is disengaged.

*(SULTAN Kisses HONEY-OF-LIFE.)*

Sunbeam. You will both be disengaged very quickly, if you don't do as I bid you. Lead me to the Sultana's apartments.

Sultan. Who is this?

Honey. Oh, I came to announce them. They are a Deputation.

---

<sup>25</sup> Printed libretto has this stage direction as, "*Kisses her as enter DANCING SUNBEAM and BLUSH-OF-MORNING followed by HEART'S DESIRE.*"

Blush. We are wives of the man called Hassan, who, we learned last night, is no other than the Sultan.

Sunbeam. And I claim my rights.

Sultan. Do you mean that you wish to be recognized as the Sultana?

Sunbeam. Precisely. I *am* the Sultana! *If Hassan is the Sultan.*

Vizier. She undoubtedly is - if Hassan is Sultan. What will Rose-in-Bloom say, eh? (*Digs SULTAN in ribs - SULTAN rather annoyed.*)

Sultan. And you consider yourself fitted to take exalted rank?

Sunbeam. Emphatically!

**No.19. - SONG - Dancing Sunbeam with Others.**<sup>26</sup>

Sunbeam. In the heart of my hearts I've always known -

Others. She's always known -

Sunbeam. I've always known  
I should one day grace a social throne!

Others. A social throne she'd grace!

Sunbeam. I dreamed at the age of slim fifteen -

Others. Far dim fifteen -

Sunbeam. Of slim fifteen  
I should be what you see - a Social Queen!

Others. Then take your proper place!

Sunbeam. For to stand at the top  
Of a wide staircase,  
Till you're fit to drop  
With a fixed grimace

Others. (That is meant for a smile  
Of enjoyment keen),  
Is the way  
To be gay  
As a Social Queen -  
And that's your proper, proper place!

All. That's your proper, proper place!

Sunbeam. There are women I've known, and I sha'n't forget -

---

<sup>26</sup> Vocal Score allocates a line in this number to HEART'S DESIRE. As she is not on stage at the time, this is obviously intended to be taken by SONG-OF-NIGHTINGALES.

Others. She can't forget -

Sunbeam. I sha'n't forget -  
Who were Queens in my suburban set -

Others. A far inferior race!

Sunbeam. They'll learn there's a wider gap between -

Others. A gap between -

Sunbeam. A gulf between  
Them and me (you'll see) now I'm a Queen!

Others. You'll put them in their place!

Sunbeam. For to turn up your nose  
At the people who  
Are precisely those  
Who have once snubbed you -

Others. For to patronize them,  
Or to cut them clean,  
Is the height  
Of delight  
To a Social Queen!  
And that's your proper, proper place!

All. That's your proper, proper place!

### **DANCE.**

***Exeunt DANCING SUNBEAM, HONEY-OF-LIFE, BLUSH-OF-MORNING, HEART'S  
DESIRE, and PHYSICIAN.***

Sultan. *(to VIZIER)*. Where have they gone?

Vizier. Honey-of-Life is taking them to the western door of the Harem.

Sultan. But before they go in there, my joke must be explained to Rose-in-Bloom. She won't understand another lady marching in, calling herself Sultana. Run after Honey-of-Life!

Vizier. I had been running after her for weeks, when<sup>27</sup> you just now took up the running.

Sultan. Tut, tut, man! That was part of the joke - one of the best parts. Go and tell Honey-of-Life to tell Rose-in-Bloom about Hassan.

Vizier. I hear and obey. *(At exit.)* Rose-in-Bloom shall be told the whole of your joke - especially the best part.

***(Exit L.U.E.)***

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<sup>27</sup> The manuscript has “until” instead of “when”.

Sultan. (*calling after him*). No - not that part!

***Enter HEART'S DESIRE, R.U.E.***

Desire. O King, the favoured Rose-in-Bloom approaches, praying for an audience.

Sultan. Is she coming from the western door?

Desire. No, O King - from the eastern.

Sultan. It is well. (*Going quickly to L.U.E., then turning.*) Tell her, if you see her first, that another lady is calling herself Sultana - in a moment I will return and tell her why.

***Exit Sultan. Enter SCENT-OF-LILIES.***

Desire. A new Sultana!

Scent. What's the matter?

***Enter ROSE-IN-BLOOM.***

Desire. The Sultan has disgraced Rose-in-Bloom. Another Sultana is already installed in her place.

Rose. What?

Scent. Ah!

Desire. He has ordered me to tell you.

Scent. What did I tell you?

Desire. In a moment he will return and tell you why.

Rose. There's no need for that. He has found out everything.

***Enter SULTAN.***

Sultan. Ah! Here you are! You heard my message?

Rose. Yes. Pardon!

Desire. Pardon!

Scent. I know it's very little use, but - pardon!

Sultan. I beg your pardon - what do you mean?

***Enter HONEY-OF-LIFE.***

Rose, Scent, & Desire. We didn't mean any harm - we didn't mean anything wrong. Pardon!

Honey. Pardon!

Sultan. (*to HONEY*). What do you want?

Honey. The Vizier sent me to help you explain your joke to the Sultana. He says he is sure you will forget the best part.

Sultan. Ah! I prefer to talk to the Sultana privately.

Rose, Scent, & Desire. To the Sultana? (*Looking at one another.*) Is she/Am I still the Sultana?

Sultan. Now I think I understand. Dear me! You misunderstood my message. I am obliged to allow a certain lady to call herself Sultana as part of a joke I am playing on a man named Hassan.

Rose. A joke?

Sultan. Yes.

Honey. The Vizier told me to remind you that you said the best part of the joke -

Sultan. Yes, I remember. (*To ROSE-IN-BLOOM.*) Would you mind dismissing these girls?

Rose. Oh, I don't mind anything now!

Sultan. You really thought you were disgraced! And it was only part of a joke. Ha! Ha! Ha!

Girls. (*forcing a laugh*). Ha! Ha! Ha!

Sultan. But what did you imagine you had been disgraced for?

Rose. Oh, well - (*to Girls.*) Why, I didn't *really* think I had been. Did I?

Girls. No!

Sultan. But you were praying for pardon - what for?

Desire. Oh, that was part of our joke! Ha! Ha! Ha! (*forced laugh*)

Girls. Yes, that was *our* joke! Ha! Ha!

***Exeunt HEART'S DESIRE and SCENT-OF-LILIES, with forced laugh.***

Honey. The Vizier says he won't speak to me again if I forget to remind you that you said the best part of your joke was -

Sultan. Yes - I remember - run away!

***Exit HONEY-OF-LIFE.***

Rose. Haven't you told me all of the joke?

Sultan. My dear, the whole matter is that I went last night in disguise to the house of a man named Hassan -

Rose. Yes, I know.

Sultan. Do you? How?

Rose. Well, I declare - I must have *dreamed* that you did! I often dream of you going about in disguise - and - and meeting other girls - and - and kissing them.

Sultan. **Yes. Yes.** Dreams generally have nothing to do with what has really occurred.

Rose. No - that's what comforts me. Now the other night I had an *absurd* dream that I actually went out of the Palace in disguise.

Sultan. How ridiculous!

Rose. **Yes,** Wasn't it? Suppose I ever *did* such a thing - what would the punishment be?

Sultan. Oh, death, I suppose.

Rose. Are you sure?

Sultan. I might try to think of something worse. It would depend, of course, on my mood. Why do you want to know?

Rose. Because, in my dream, you did find me out, and said, "Oh, well, you've done no real harm - I sha'n't punish you at all."

Sultan. How absurdly people talk in their dreams, don't they?

**No.20. - DUET - Sultana (Rose-in-Bloom) and Sultan.**

Rose. Suppose - I say *suppose* -  
 That your silly ickle wife  
 Just for once in all her life  
 Were to foolishly forget  
 Oriental etiquette  
 And infringe a regulation  
 Formed for persons of her station -  
 Would oo blame oo ickle wifie?  
 Would oo punish wifie-pifie?  
*(Earnestly.)* Would she meet a dreadful doom?

Sultan. *Suppose* my lovely Rose,  
 My Royal Rose-in-Bloom,  
 My Royal spouse Zubeydeh,  
 Could forget she is a lady -  
 Then my silly ickle wifie  
 Oo would lose oo ickle lifie!

**ENSEMBLE.**

Sultan.  
For queens must not forget,  
My pet,  
They owe to etiquette  
A debt;  
And Royalty must ever be  
Upheld in perfect dignity!

Rose-in-Bloom.  
For queens must not forget  
Their "set,"  
They owe to etiquette  
A debt;  
And Royalty must ever be  
Upheld in perfect dignity!

Rose.           Suppose - I say *suppose* -  
                  That one night she couldn't sleep,  
                  So she thought that she would creep  
                  Like a silent little mouse  
                  Down the stairs and out the house  
                  And about the city trotted -  
                  Would she have to be garotted?  
                  Would a nasty knifie-pifie  
                  Put an end to ickle lifle  
                  Or a bow-string be her doom?

Sultan.        My wifie-pifie knows,  
                  My Royal Rose-in-Bloom,  
                  If she did what you refer to,  
                  Then the Executioner to,  
                  With his great big knifie-pifie,  
                  I should send my ickle wifie!

**ENSEMBLE.**

Sultan.  
But as I can't suppose  
My Rose  
Forgetting what she knows  
She owes  
To rigid Royal etiquette,  
We will not talk of that, my pet!

Rose-in-Bloom.  
But as you can't suppose  
Your Rose,  
Forgetting what she knows  
She owes  
To rigid Royal etiquette,  
We will not talk of that, as yet!

***CHORUS enter with HASSAN, who is carried in still unconscious, and set upon the throne. He is dressed in ill-fitting Royal garments.***

**No.21. - CHORUS with SOLOS - Hassan, Physician, Vizier and Executioner.**

Chorus.        Laughing low,  
                  On toe-tip,  
                  Finger so -  
                  On each lip!  
                  Whispering,  
                  (Undertone,)

Set the King  
On the throne!  
King Hassan!  
Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!  
Laugh pian-  
Issimo. Ho! ho! ho!  
Hush, hush, hush, hush!

*They watch HASSAN, who slowly begins to wake.*

Hassan. (*opening his eyes*). Where am I - where?

Vizier. Where art thou - where  
But in thy palace rich and rare,  
Where none can say thee nay.

Chorus. Where everyone  
Will rush and run  
And race to get thy bidding done -  
We hear thee and obey!

Hassan. (*astonished*). But hear me speak -

Physician. But hear him speak,  
And other music's flat and weak  
Beside his golden speech!

Chorus. His lightest word  
Is far preferred  
Beyond the music any bird  
Could ever hope to reach!

Hassan. (*more bewildered*). Attend to me -

Executioner. Attend to him  
And bring a goblet to the brim  
With Persian sherbet filled!

Chorus. And when he dips  
His Royal lips  
Let dainty damask catch the drips,  
That none of them be spilled!  
Attend to him!

Hassan. Has Dancing Sunbeam had the house re-decorated, and invited a party while I've been asleep? (*To VIZIER.*) Is this my house?

Vizier. O King, are you not the Sultan?

Hassan. Don't be silly! If this is a joke on the part of my wives, it is a very cheap form of wit - or very expensive. These decorations - (*looking round, he sees the EXECUTIONER.*) Aren't you the Sultan's Executioner?

Exec. Yes - I am your Executioner.

Hassan. My Executioner! *(In a sudden access of terror.)* I remember now. I'm going to be executed. Mercy! Mercy!

*HASSAN throws himself at feet of the EXECUTIONER. Enter SULTAN.*

Sultan. What is happening to the Commander of the Faithful?

Phys. I think that while he slept he was troubled by a bad dream, and the shadow of his nightmare still lingers with him.

Sultan. Is that so, O King?

Hassan. *(after a pause)*. A dream! Would it be possible that everything that is real I should have forgotten, and that everything I remember is only a dream?

Phys. Quite.

Hassan. And who are you?

Phys. Your Physician-in-Chief, O King. Do you not know me?

Hassan. No. And yet I seem to have a cloudy recollection of having seen you somewhere - and you - and you *(to VIZIER, SULTAN, and EXECUTIONER.) (To EXECUTIONER.)* I actually recognised you, didn't I?

Exec. O King, it was a great joy to me.

Hassan. Somehow it wasn't to me. Do you really mean to say that I am the Sultan?

Sultan. May your shadow never grow less.

Hassan. Talking of growing less - how is it that my clothes fit so badly? I seem to have shrunk.

Sultan. O King, you have just awakened from a long illness.

Hassan. Have I?

Sultan. That is why your memory and your body have both shrunk.

Hassan. My memory has simply shrunk to nothing. Except my delirium, I can't remember - Have you ever heard of a man called Hassan - whom folks call "Mad Hassan"?

Vizier. Mad Hassan?

Sultan. Who is he, O King?

Hassan. I - I don't quite know.

Sultan. Is there such a man, O King?

Hassan. I - I'm not quite sure. *(Almost weeps. Buries his face in his hands.)*

Vizier. *(to SULTAN)*. Shall the people enter who crave audience?

Sultan. Yes. You have warned them they are to address him as if he were myself?

Vizier. Yes, O King.

Sultan. Anything he grants wisely I will confirm.

Vizier *(reading from list)*. Yussuf, a Story-Teller, craves a boon of the Full Moon of Full Moons.

***Enter HEART'S DESIRE.***

Sultan. Bring Yussuf, the Story-Teller! *(Enter HONEY-OF-LIFE.)*

Vizier. Yussuf, the Story-Teller! *(Enter SCENT-OF-LILIES.)*

Phys. Yussuf, the Story-Teller!

Exec. Yussuf, the Story-Teller!

***(Enter YUSSUF.)***

Yussuf. I am here - Yussuf, the Story-Teller!

Desire. *(Aside to YUSSUF)*. Be very careful!

Scent. *(aside)*. Mind what you say!

Honey. *(aside)*. Don't get flustered!

Yussuf. I have come to - to - that is to say -

***HASSAN has raised his head and is regarding him earnestly.***

Sultan. To say what?

Yussuf. That I would ask for one of the Royal Slaves for a wife!

Hassan. Listen: did you meet the slave at the house of a man named Hassan?

***HONEY-OF-LIFE whispers to YUSSUF.***

Yussuf. No - er - O King!

Hassan. Do you know a man named Mad Hassan?

***SCENT-OF-LILIES whispers to YUSSUF.***

Yussuf. No - er - O King!

Hassan. It is most extraordinary. *(Sinks back. Then leans forward and points to HEART'S DESIRE.)* Is not that the slave you would take to wife?

Yussuf. No - I don't know her - I don't know Hassan - I don't know -

Sultan. Don't you know whom you do want to marry?

Yussuf. No.

Hassan. Young man, you seem to be one of those who rush very blindly into matrimony. Remember, that in the matter of wives you will find that five-and-twenty are practically - *(To SULTAN.)* How many wives have I?

Sultan. In the Royal Harem there are six hundred and seventy-one, O King.

Hassan. Good gracious! You don't say so!

Sultan. Stand back, O Story-Teller, and if your other stories equal this story of your love, I should join another profession.

Desire. I think you tell stories magnificently.

Vizier. Abdallah the Priest begs an audience.

Hassan. Eh?

Sultan. Bring Abdallah the Priest.

Desire. *(to YUSSUF).* If he speaks of the Sultana, you shall hear me tell my story. *(Goes up.)*

Vizier. Abdallah the Priest!

Phys. Abdallah the Priest!

Exec. Abdallah the Priest!

***Enter ABDALLAH.***

Abdallah. I am here - Abdallah the Priest!

Hassan. Ah! Do you know a man that folks call Mad Hassan?

Abdallah. Yes, O King!

Hassan. *At last!* Where is he?

Abdallah. He is at the point of death.

Hassan. Why - why do you think that?

Abdallah. Because, when the Sultan knows that his Sultana visited this man's house last night, he will assuredly put Hassan to death.

Sultan. Is this true, Hassan?

Hassan. Then I am Hassan!

Sultan. And I am the Sultan!

Hassan. Well, I'm not sorry! Six hundred and seventy-one wives - and I've not forgotten my past life!

Sultan. Make the most of the recollection - for you have little enough in the future, if this be true. Speak, dog!

Abdallah. It is true, O King. I saw the Sultana in his house, wearing the Royal signet.

Sultan. What?

Hassan. O King, it is true that she dropped in - unexpectedly - but if you will listen to me -

Sultan. Listen, dog! Have I not heard enough? (*To EXECUTIONER, who has moved across.*) Slay this man! And the Sultana - Rose-in-Bloom - she favours low company; marry her to the Story-Teller, who wants a wife, and cares not who it is. I have spoken.

Desire. O King - hear me! Rose-in-Bloom is innocent. The signet was worn by -

Sultan. I have spoken.

*Exeunt SULTAN and ABDALLAH.*

Scent. I said that idea wouldn't come off.

**No.22. - QUINTET and CHORUS - Scent-of-Lilies, Heart's Desire, Yussuf, Hassan, and Executioner.**

Scent. (*to EXECUTIONER.*) It's a busy, busy, busy, busy day for thee  
Very busy, busy, busy must a morning be  
For any man  
Who has to plan  
For a wedding and a beheading.

Executioner. For the marriage order carriages at half-past two:  
(*To HASSAN.*) And the block at two o'clock, but that will be for you!  
And, bless my heart,  
It's time to start,  
Or I shall be late for the wedding!

*Exit EXECUTIONER.*

Chorus. But bless my heart,  
It's time to start,  
Or I shall be late for the wedding!

Yussuf. (*to DESIRE.*) Of overpowering high degree  
Th'exalted dame who marries me!  
But we must part,  
My own sweetheart,  
Must part, my true sweetheart!

Scent. (*to DESIRE*). It's a mise-mise-miserable day for thee!  
Ah! mise-miserable will the marriage be!

Desire. (*to YUSSUF*). I'll plot and plan,  
And, if I can,  
Upset the fate you're dreading!

Hassan. (*to YUSSUF*). At your marriage, though the carriages obstruct the view,  
It's the block at two o'clock that I shall not get through!  
And bless my heart,  
It's time to start,  
Or I shall be late for beheading!

Chorus. Or I shall be late for the wedding.

### **ENSEMBLE.**

Scent-of-Lillies, Yussuf. Of overpowering high degree, etc.

Heart's Desire. I'll plot and plan, etc.

Hassan, Executioner, Chorus. It's a busy, busy, busy, busy day, etc.

*A guard appears and takes YUSSUF off.*

*Exeunt all except YUSSUF and HEART'S Desire.*

Desire. So, if all goes ill, are you to marry Rose-in-Bloom instead of me?

Yussuf. Yes. Life seemed a poem; but as we read it by the light of Hope, Fate crept behind us and blew out<sup>28</sup> the lantern.

Desire. (*sighs*). Rose-in-Bloom is very beautiful.

Yussuf. What value has beauty to me when the whole world is pitch-dark?

Desire. If she were not young and beautiful - if she were middle-aged and quite plain - would you be just as pleased?

Yussuf. Just as displeased.

Desire. Are you sure? Absolutely certain?

Yussuf. Yes. It makes no difference to me.

Desire. It would to me. It's beastly of me, I know - but it would! But she is young and beautiful, and some day she will light the lantern again, and you will go on reading your poem, or another one that you think much nicer.

Yussuf. I think there is only one page of poetry in all the book of a man's life.

---

<sup>28</sup> The manuscript has "snatched away" in place of "blew out".

- Desire. Only one page, perhaps. But it may have a lot of poems on it - little ones - all different. Your poetry page is likely to be immense.
- Yussuf. Whatever it is, Fate is turning it over. The story is finished - the Bazaar is empty - the lights put out - and you and I must go out into the darkness.
- Desire. But not hand-in-hand.

**No.23. - SONG - Yussuf.**

Our tale is told,  
 And now is growing old!  
 For Fate, who holds the book  
 Of childhood, youth, and age,  
 Her finger now doth crook  
 To turn another page.

Try to forget -  
 Although a soft regret  
 Like some poor faded rose-leaf life  
 (To mark the place)  
 Within the book where thou and I  
 Have read one passage full of grace!  
 Try to forget!

<sup>29</sup>The desert's wide -  
 And we must mount and ride!  
 Each with a caravan  
 That's laden with our sighs;  
 To barter, if we can,  
 Our loads in Paradise.

Try to forget!  
 Our caravans have met  
 Amid the burning desert space,  
 Ah!

Where thou and I  
 Have rested in a shady place  
 A little while, and then passed by!  
 Try to forget!

***Exit YUSSUF, leaving HEART'S Desire. Enter ROSE-IN-BLOOM.***

- Rose. Heart's Desire, I have been summoned to the ceremony of my divorce and disgrace! How am I looking?
- Desire. Are you ready for your wedding with my Story-Teller?

---

<sup>29</sup> In many productions this section is sung in unison with Heart's Desire.

Rose. Cannot you do anything to save me?

Desire. I wish I could. I tried to tell the Sultan that it was only myself impersonating you at Hassan's house, but he wouldn't listen.

***Enter BLUSH-OF-MORNING.***

Rose. He might later on - if we could only put it off.

***Enter SCENT-OF-LILIES, then HONEY-OF-LIFE.***

Blush. Oh, which one of you is the Sultana?

Rose. I am - for a minute or two longer.

Blush. Well, Dancing Sunbeam says you left off being Sultana half an hour ago, when she came. And she wants to know if it is true that a message has just been sent to the Sultana, and, if so, why it was not brought to her!

Honey. The Sultan did say she was to be treated as Sultana.

Scent. Do you think we could manage? -

Desire. Yes. Yussuf said he wouldn't mind if she were middle-aged and plain, and I'm bound to believe him; and it would comfort me.<sup>30</sup>

Scent. Here she comes! *(Drums.)*<sup>31</sup>

Honey. And here's the Executioner!

Desire. *(to ROSE).* Run back - to the eastern door. She shall take your place.

***Exit ROSE-IN-BLOOM. Enter DANCING SUNBEAM.***

Sunbeam. Are you not aware that I am Sultana - and that it was I who should have been summoned to this ceremony, whatever it is?

Blush. They understand now. They made a mistake.

Scent, Honey, and Desire. We apologize.

Sunbeam. Well, well, you can enlighten me on a small point of etiquette that, curiously enough, I am ignorant of. Should I be veiled, or not, for this ceremony?

Scent. Of course.

Desire. It is most important!

Honey. There will be men present - horrid men! Don't you know that the Queen's face must never be seen by any man but the Sultan? *(They begin arranging the veil.)*

Sunbeam. Men are absurdly jealous!

---

<sup>30</sup> The cued conductor's score indicates a three bar side drum solo at this point.

<sup>31</sup> The cued conductor's score indicates a further three bar side drum solo at this point.

Blush. But what is the ceremony?

Sunbeam. I have an idea that I am to be publicly acknowledged Queen. In a few minutes you will see me attain the summit of even my Ararat of ambition!

*She is veiled - the GIRLS twist her round, humming:*

Girls. Giddy girl this way, giddy girl that,  
Say if the world be round or flat!  
Say if the world be upside down!  
Which will you marry, a King or a Clown?

*Exeunt HONEY-OF-LIFE and HEART'S Desire. Enter EXECUTIONER followed by a ROYAL GUARD.*

Exec. Is the Sultana here?

Sunbeam. I am she.

Scent. *(going to him).* Yes, that is she!

Exec. When I have pronounced the decree your veil will be removed, that all and sundry, high and low, may gaze upon your beauty.

Sunbeam. A very good idea.

Scent. *(to EXECUTIONER).* You have never seen the Sultana's face, have you?

Exec. No man has, except the Sultan. You ought to know that.

Scent. The reason I mention it is, if you had, you will find her greatly changed. The anxiety she has gone through during the last half-hour has added at least twenty-five years to her appearance; even her voice has turned into a contralto.

*(Exit SCENT-OF-LILIES.)*

Exec. Bring in the Story-Teller. *(Enter YUSSUF with ROYAL GUARD.)* I am going to pronounce the decree.

Sunbeam. Don't waste any more time.

*The EXECUTIONER unfolds a scroll.*

Exec. By the decree of the Sultan, I pronounce you divorced - eternally disgraced - and married to this vagabond. Remove your veil - take twopence from the poor-box - go in peace - I have spoken.

*The veil is removed - Picture.*

Sunbeam. What did you say? }  
Blush. What did it mean? } *(together.)*  
Yussuf. Married to her? }

Exec. The thing's quite plain.

Yussuf. It is. And middle-aged. This is what Heart's Desire meant.

Exec. You're married. It's all over. Now it's over, I don't mind acknowledging I'm sorry for both of you. I've never felt any qualms at executing anybody; but marrying 'em is different. I'm not a marrying man. Scent-of-Lilies says I am - but I'm not. It upsets me.

*Exit EXECUTIONER.*

**No.24. - RECIT and MADRIGAL - Blush-of-Morning, Dancing  
Sunbeam, Yussuf and Royal Guard.**

Blush, Sunbeam, & Yussuf. What does it mean?

Yussuf. Upon what hidden trap  
Have I now stumbled?

Sunbeam. One moment Queen  
Then comes a thunderclap

Trio. And I lie humbled!

Yussuf. So surely swings the pendulum of Fate  
That maketh joy and sorrow alternate.

**QUARTET.**

Joy and sorrow alternate:  
Every hour that passeth by  
Till tomorrow fickle Fate  
May ordain you laugh or cry!  
So the clock that strikes the time  
Rings at first a merry<sup>32</sup> chime;  
Then, to mock the marriage bell,  
Tolls a melancholy knell!  
Or the melancholy gong  
Tolls a solitary "Dong!"  
A Dong! Dong! Dong!  
Then you hear the joy-bells ring,  
Ring-a-ding-a-dong-a-dong!  
So the clock doth indicate  
Joy and sorrow alternate!  
Ding! dong! Ding! dong!

*Exeunt YUSSUF, SOLDIER, and BLUSH-OF-MORNING. Enter SCENT-OF-LILIES,  
followed by HEART'S DESIRE, followed by VIZIER - all excitedly.*

Scent. Stop the marriage!

Desire. Don't go on with it!

<sup>32</sup> The manuscript has, "merry".

Vizier. Delay the wedding!

Three. *(together)*. Where's the Executioner?

*Enter EXECUTIONER.*

Exec. Here! *(He brings on HASSAN.)* The wedding is over.

Vizier. Over! But the Sultan has relented!

Scent. And is going to give the Sultana the chance of an explanation. *(SUNBEAM looks up.)*

*Enter PHYSICIAN and SULTAN.*

Phys. O King, you are too late!

Sultan. *(to EXECUTIONER)*. Dog, what have you done?

Sunbeam. *(to HASSAN)*. An explanation! It's high time I had an explanation from you! How dare you let this brute divorce me and marry me to a wretched Story-Teller?

Hassan. *(to EXECUTIONER)*. Have you divorced her and married her to someone else?

Exec. Yes. It went against the grain - I'm not a marrying man!

Hassan *(taking his hand)*. I don't know why you have done it, but let me thank you for lightening the gloom of my declining moments.

Sultan. Is it you who have been married?

Sunbeam. Who else? Have you had a hand in it?

Sultan. My dear Executioner, you've made a mistake.

Exec. Yes, O King! I've always looked on marriage as unlucky.

Scent. Nonsense!

Exec. Shall I execute myself at once - or wait till I've finished this?

Hassan. Don't wait for me.

Sultan. You've married the wrong woman! That's all. I'm very pleased. I'll see about restoring this lady to her proper husband when I have time.

Hassan. *Oh suspicious king* Not during the next five minutes. I am to be beheaded in five minutes. Wait till after that!

Sultan. Very well!

Sunbeam. *(to HASSAN)*. Do you mean to say you're not the Sultan?

Hassan. Go and talk to your husband, *the story teller!*

***Exit SUNBEAM. Enter ABDALLAH.***

Desire. O King, hear me now. It was I who was at this man's house. It was I who wore the Sultana's Royal Ring, and showed it to the Priest. It was I who called myself Sultana. Ask him.

Sultan. Is this so?

Abdallah. It was even so. Is not this Rose-in-Bloom? (*Indicates HEART'S DESIRE.*)

Sultan. Then Rose-in-Bloom is innocent - and has been falsely accused! (*To ABDALLAH.*) You shall die!

***HASSAN dances with delight.***

Hassan. Another three minutes and it would have been too late for me, O King. I suppose you will have to go through the form of granting me the usual free pardon for what I never did!

Sultan. Pardon you! No, indeed! You distinctly said my Royal Rose-in-Bloom did visit you, Dog! and so besmirched her Royal character with calumny. You shall die! And this slave who brought the name of Rose-in-Bloom into such contempt, she shall die! You shall all die - you and the Priest and the slave! I have spoken.

***Enter HONEY-OF-LIFE.***

Honey. The Royal Rose-in-Bloom approaches!

Vizier. Let all men turn away their faces.

***Men turn their backs. Enter ROSE-IN-BLOOM.***

Rose. Let my slave live, O husband! Just to please me!

Sultan. Have you any reason why this girl should not be executed?

Rose. Yes, indeed! She - the fact is - she - (*to HEART'S DESIRE*) - say something!

Desire. O King, the Sultana is much given to letting me tell stories for her amusement. She is much interested in a story I am engaged in telling her now.

Rose. Yes, that's it! She has been telling such a lovely story for me - and I do want to know that it ends happily!

**<sup>33</sup> COUPLETS – (Rose-in-Bloom and Scent-of-Lilies with Honey-of-Life, Heart's Desire, Sultan, Hassan, Physician and Executioner).**

Rose. Let her live a little longer!  
Let her live her lowly life!

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<sup>33</sup> This number was discovered by Robin Gordon-Powell, David Eden and Will Parry in December 2005 when they were given access to the composer's autograph full score which had been bequeathed to Oriel College, Oxford. It is believed that the number was never used in a stage performance. It was first performed at the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society festival at Portsmouth on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2006. St David's Playerrs intend to perform this number in 2009, this being the first stage performance in context.

Can there be a reason stronger  
Than to please your loving wife?  
If you lift your little finger  
(‘Tis your Royal prerogative).  
Lamp of Life alight will linger,  
Will you, won’t you let her live?

Ah! Will you, won’t you let her live?  
Tell me truly, little finger,  
Will he let her live and linger  
Thro’ her lowly little life,  
Just to please his little wife?

If you do not tell me true,  
I will beat you black and blue!  
Not too fast,  
Not too slow;  
Yes, No,  
Yes and No!

All. If you do not tell me true,  
I will beat you black and blue!  
Not too fast,  
Not too slow;  
Yes, No,  
Yes and No!

Scent. Will you let a lady linger  
All her life-time on her knees?  
Won’t you lift your little finger,  
Just your little wife to please?  
Let her live a little longer!  
Countermand the cruel knife!  
Can there be a reason stronger,  
Than to please your loving wife?

Ah! Than to please your loving wife?  
Tell me truly, little finger,  
Will he let her live and linger  
Thro’ her lowly little life,  
Just to please his little wife?

If you do not tell me true,  
I will beat you black and blue!  
Not too fast,  
Not too slow;  
Yes, No,  
Yes and No!

All.           If you do not tell me true,  
                  I will beat you black and blue!  
                  Not too fast,  
                  Not too slow;  
                  Yes, No,  
                  Yes and No!

Sultan.       Very well. She shall live until she has finished her story. Is it a very interesting story, and original?

Desire.       Yes, O King.

Sultan.       Where did you get it from?

Hassan.       From me, that's why she has been in the habit of visiting me. I am telling it to her in instalments. I merely mention this because if I am executed I sha'n't be able to finish it to her, and she won't be able to finish it to the Sultana. That's all. It's quite immaterial to me.

Sultan.       You shall be spared till the story is finished. Is it funny?

Hassan.       Excruciating!

Sultan.       And has a happy ending?

Hassan.       A happy ending! It has a dozen!

Sultan.       I will return in three minutes and listen to it myself. Come, Rose-in-Bloom. (*To HASSAN.*) You are sure it has a happy finish? I abominate unhappy endings.

***Exeunt all except HASSAN, ABDALLAH, HONEY-OF-LIFE, and HEART'S DESIRE.***

Hassan.       So do I. But I don't think I am going to have one after all.

Desire.       Why, all we have to do is think of a story that's so interesting and funny and long, that we can go on telling it for years and years without boring the Sultan, and we shall be all right.

Honey.       Yes, that's all you have to think of - in three minutes.

Hassan.       Two and a half now!

Abdallah.    Tell the Sultan you get your story in instalments from me - and I will help you - think of one.

Hassan.       And give me back my will?

Abdallah.    Yes. (*Hands document, which HASSAN tears up.*)

Hassan.       Very well. Now out with your story!

Abdallah.    I haven't thought of one yet.

Hassan. I've got as far as that! (*Enter EXECUTIONER and SCENT-OF-LILIES.*) Do you know any good stories?

Exec. What?

Hassan. Can you tell me anything interesting, but funny, that has ever happened to you, that it would take a long time to repeat?

Exec. The funniest thing that has ever happened to me has happened just now. Scent-of-Lilies has persuaded me to propose to her, and I've been accepted!

Hassan. And now I suppose you can think of nothing else?

Exec. Nothing else. I'm dazed! (*Exit.*)

Scent. He is so happy. (*Following him.*)

Hassan. (*detaining her.*) Then let him alone and stay here and help me think of a funny story - that will do for the Sultan.

*Enter YUSSUF, followed by DANCING SUNBEAM.*

Hassan. (*to YUSSUF.*) The very man! I want a very long, interesting, funny story at once - to save my life with. Can you help me?

Yussuf. No: I can think of nothing now but my marriage with your wife.

Hassan. How abominably selfish young newly-married couples are!

Sunbeam. I will help you. The Sultan said he would rectify this absurd marriage. And if he does, I shall want to come back to you.

Hassan. Do you know, I'm not so sure it's worth while to bother about a story at all. I really begin to think it's better to let the law take it's course.

Sunbeam. Think of me, dear!

Hassan. I am!

Desire. (*jumping up.*) Oh, I've just thought - no, that won't do for the Sultan!

Hassan. Once upon a time - no, that won't do for the Sultan!

Sunbeam. Listen! Do you think this will do - I'm sure no one has heard it before.

Hassan. I suppose it's only some silly bit of scandal - or we shouldn't hear it now.

**No.25. - SEPTET - Scent-of-Lilies, Honey-of-Life, Heart's Desire,  
Dancing Sunbeam, Yussuf, Hassan and Abdallah.** <sup>34</sup>

Sunbeam. It has reached me a Lady named Hubbard  
Proceeded one day to her cupboard,  
And openly went  
With intent to present  
Her poor dog with a bone from her cupboard.

Scent. And the dog of that person named Hubbard  
Accompanied her to the cupboard;  
But when they got there  
They were plunged in despair -  
There was nothing at all in the cupboard!

All. There was nothing whatever at all in the cupboard!

Scent. Have you heard of that harrowing story?

Honey. I have - it's in my category!

Yussuf. And I!

Desire. So have I!

Abdallah. So have I!

Hassan. So have I!

All. It's a horribly harrowing story!  
So that won't do for the Sultan  
To make him rejoice and exult! An  
Unfortunate end  
Will his temper offend  
So that won't do for the Sultan!

Desire. It is said a young lady named Muffet  
(Selecting a seat on a tuffet)  
Was breaking her fast  
With a modest repast  
When she suddenly fled from the tuffet!

Honey. She spied a she-spider beside her!  
The spider beside her espied her!  
Beside herself she  
Would undoubtedly be  
Having spied a big spider beside her!

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<sup>34</sup> The allocation of verses at this point is a matter for conjecture. They are presented here as in the published Vocal Score. However, the cued conductor's score allocates them thus: - verse 1 – Sunbeam/Scent; verse 2 – Desire/ Honey; verse 3 Yussuf/Hassan.

All. Having spied a big spider beside her!

Sunbeam. Have you heard of that horrible story?

Desire. I have - it's in my category!

Yussuf. And I!

Scent. So have I!

Abdallah. So have I!

Hassan. So have I!

All. It's a horribly harrowing story!  
So that won't do for the Sultan, etc.

Yussuf. Have you heard of the "Hey-diddle-diddle,"  
That quaint zoological riddle,  
The cat they accuse  
Of invoking her "mews"  
On a stringed instrument called a fiddle?

Hassan. At the cow, who was not an inert one,  
The little dog laughed (what a pert one!);  
But oh, it is feared  
That the dish disappeared  
With the tablespoon or the dessert one!

All. With the tablespoon or the dessert one!

Sunbeam. Have you heard of that horrible story?

Desire. I have - it's in my category!

Yussuf. And I!

Scent. So have I!

Abdallah. So have I!

Hassan. So have I!

All. It's a horribly harrowing story!  
So that won't do for the Sultan, etc.

*As they are thinking of another tale, enter VIZIER, PHYSICIAN, and EXECUTIONER.*

**No.26. - SCENA - Tutti**

Vizier. Hassan, the Sultan with his Court approaches!  
All looking forward to your story!

Physician. I trust the Sultan won't be disappointed -

Executioner. For that means your execution!

*Enter CHORUS.*

Chorus. Comes the King and all his Court  
Anxious to be testing  
If your story be the sort  
Tale that's interesting.  
If you've not yet got a plot  
He won't think you're jesting,  
You will perish on the spot,  
Now isn't that interesting!

*The SULTAN enters.*

Vizier. The royal Rose-in-Bloom unveiled approaches,  
Let all men turn respectful backs upon her!

*ROSE-IN-BLOOM enters and goes to SULTAN.*

Sultan. Now, Hassan, we are ready for your story!  
Remember, though the plot may not allow it,  
I do command it have a happy ending - begin! begin!

Hassan. *(nervously.)* Ahem!

Sultan. Commence - I am impatient!

Hassan. *(nervously.)* Ahem!

Sultan. Go on!

*BLUSH-OF-MORNING whispers to HASSAN.*

Hassan. *(aside.)* Ahem! Ah! Happy thought! I'll try it!

**No.27. - SONG - Hassan with Chorus.**

There was once a small Street Arab,  
And perhaps his little name was Tom;  
And he lived in Gutter-Persia  
Where street arabs rightly all come from;  
And like little Gutter-Persians  
(Every one and one and all)  
His young spirits were elastic  
As an India-rubber ball!

Chorus. His young spirits were elastic as a ball!

Hassan. And all day long he sang a song  
A merry little ditty as he danced a cellar-flap:  
"The life I lead is all I need,  
I know no better" - the lucky little chap!

Chorus. The life I lead, etc.

Hassan. Now among the bricks and mortar  
Did his wretched little lifetime pass;  
He had never seen a flower  
Or a single, simple blade of grass;  
But one day he found a daisy,  
And he thought that simple thing  
Was a wondrous flower from heaven,  
And he took it to the King.

Chorus. And he took that simple daisy to the King.

Hassan. He meant no wrong, and through the throng  
He struggled to the Sultan and then laid it on his lap;  
(That simple weed - he did indeed),  
He knew no better - the stupid little chap!

Chorus. That simple weed, etc.

Hassan. But the Sultan gravely thanked him, saying  
"Would that would that I were wise  
Enough to take a daisy  
For a lovely flower from Paradise!  
But I will not now reward thee,  
Or exchange thy simple lot  
For great riches would but rob thee  
Of a wealth that I have not!"

Chorus. Would but rob thee of a wealth that I have not!

Hassan. So all day long he sang his song  
A merry little ditty as he danced a cellar-flap:  
"The life I lead is all I need!"  
He knew no better - the lucky little chap!

Chorus. The life I lead, etc. <sup>35</sup>

***HASSAN falls at the feet of the SULTAN***

Sultan. Is the story finished?

Hassan. That is only the beginning, O King. That little boy was myself - and the Sultan was your father - and the story I have been telling to the slave, which she has been telling to the Sultana, is the story of my own life - and, O King, this is the point: you have yourself commanded that the story - which is my life - is to have a happy ending.

Sultan. By the beard of my grandfather, you have played an odd trick upon me!

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<sup>35</sup> The orchestra continues with 18 bars of melodrama under the following dialogue.

Hassan. It is the odd trick, O King, that wins the game!

Sultan. But not the rubber. Take back your wife - I restore her to you. (*Handing SUNBEAM to him.*) I fancy that's the rub.

Hassan. Yes, you've won.

*YUSSUF joins HEART'S DESIRE.*

**No.28. - FINALE - ACT II.**

All. A bridal march  
The funeral dirge becomes!  
Let heaven's arch  
Re-echo the band of drum!  
O happy pairs  
United this afternoon  
We greet you one and all  
Both great and small  
With popular Persian tune!

Oh, raise your voice  
In epithalamiums!  
O King rejoice,  
And Tale-Teller of the slums!  
To high or low  
True love is an equal boon,  
There's no one here too base  
To find a place  
In popular Persian tune!  
Illalah! Illalah!<sup>36</sup>

**End of Opera.**

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<sup>36</sup> For some reason the vocal score issued for the Lyric Theater of San Jose, CA, production in 2008 changes this line to "A popular Persian tune". There appears to be no evidence in either the Chappell vocal score or libretto to back this change up.