

CARNES. (*Offstage.*) That you, Annie?

ADO ANNIE. Hello, Paw.

(**ANDREW CARNES** enters. *He is a scrappy man, carrying a shotgun.*)

Whut you been shootin'?

CARNES. Rabbits. That true whut I hear about Will Parker gittin' fifty dollars?

ADO ANNIE. That's right, Paw. And he wants to hold you to yer promise.

CARNES. Too bad. Still and all I cain't go back on my word.

ADO ANNIE. (*Glancing at ALI HAKIM.*) See, Ali!

CARNES. I advise you to git that money off 'n him before he loses it all. Put it in yer stockin' er inside yer corset where he cain't git at it...or can he?

ADO ANNIE. But, Paw - he ain't exackly kep' it. He spent it all on presents...

(ALI is in a panic.)

CARNES. See! Whut'd I tell you! Now he cain't have you. I said it had to be fifty dollars cash.

ALI HAKIM. But, Mr. Carnes, is that fair?

CARNES. Who the hell are you?

ADO ANNIE. This is Ali Hakim.

CARNES. Well, shet your face, er, I'll fill yer behind so full of buckshot, you'll be walkin' around like a duck the rest of yer life.

ADO ANNIE. Ali, if I don't have to marry Will, mebbe your heart don't have to be busted in two like you said.

ALI HAKIM. I did not say that.

ADO ANNIE. Oh, yes, you did.

ALI HAKIM. No, I did not.

CARNES. *(Brandishing his gun.)* Are you tryin' to make out my daughter to be a liar?

ALI HAKIM. No, I'm just making it clear what a liar I am if she's telling the truth.

CARNES. Whut else you been sayin' to my daughter?

ADO ANNIE. *(Before ALI can open his mouth.)* Oh, a awful lot.

CARNES. *(To ALI.)* When?

ADO ANNIE. Las' night, in the moonlight.

CARNES. *(To ALI.)* Where?

ADO ANNIE. 'Longside a haystack.

ALI HAKIM. Listen, Mr. Carnes...

CARNES. I'm lissening. Whut else did you say?

ADO ANNIE. He called me his Persian kitten.

CARNES. Why'd you call her that?

ALI HAKIM. I don't remember.

ADO ANNIE. I do. He said I was like a Persian kitten, cuz they was the cats with the soft round tails.

CARNES. *(Cocking his gun.)* That's enough. In this part of the country that better be a proposal of marriage.

ADO ANNIE. That's whut I thought.

ALI HAKIM. Look, Mr. Carnes...

CARNES. *(Taking aim.)* I'm lookin'.

ALI HAKIM. I'm no good. I'm a peddler. A peddler travels up and down and all around

(Using ADO ANNIE as a buffer, he plants her between himself and CARNES.)

and you'd hardly ever see your daughter no more.

(With his gun, CARNES nudges ADO ANNIE out of the way. She moves behind ALI to his right. CARNES lowers his gun and pats ALI on the back.)

CARNES. That'd be all right. Take keer of her, son. Take keer of my little rosebud.

ADO ANNIE. Oh, Paw, that's purty.

(CARNES starts to exit into the house.)

You shore fer sartin you can bear to let me go, Paw?

(CARNES turns.)

ALI HAKIM. Are you *sure*, Mr. Carnes?

CARNES. *(Patting his gun.)* Just you try to change my mind.

(He takes a firmer grip on his gun and exits into the house.)

ADO ANNIE. Oh, Ali Hakim, ain't it wonderful, Paw makin' up our mind fer us? He won't change neither. Onct he gives his word that you c'n have me, why, you *got* me.

ALI HAKIM. I *know* I got you.

ADO ANNIE. *(Starry-eyed.)* Mrs. Ali Hakim...the peddler's bride. Wait till I tell the girls.

(She exits. ALI leans against the porch post as the music starts.)

[MUSIC NO. 11 "IT'S A SCANDAL! IT'S A OUTRAGE!"]

(Then he starts to pace up and down, thinking hard, his head bowed, his hands behind