

WILL. (*Offstage.*) Whoa, Suzanna! Yoo-hoo, Ado Annie, I'm back!

ADO ANNIE. Oh, foot! Just when - 'lo, Will!

(*WILL lets out a whoop offstage.*)

That's Will Parker. Promise me you won't fight him.

ALI HAKIM. Why fight? I never saw the man before.

(*WILL enters.*)

WILL. Ado Annie! How's my honey-bunch? How's the sweetest little hundred-and-ten pounds of sugar in the territory?

ADO ANNIE. (*Confused.*) Er - Will, this is Ali Hakim.

WILL. How are yuh, Hak? Don't mind the way I talk. 'S all right. I'm goin' to marry her.

ALI HAKIM. (*Delighted.*) Marry her? On purpose?

WILL. Well, sure.

ADO ANNIE. No sich of a thing!

ALI HAKIM. It's a wonderful thing to be married.

(*He starts off.*)

ADO ANNIE. Ali!

ALI HAKIM. I got a brother in Persia, got six wives.

ADO ANNIE. Six wives? All at once?

WILL. Shore. 'At's a way they do in them countries.

ALI HAKIM. Not always. I got another brother in Persia only got one wife. He's a bachelor.

(Exit.)

ADO ANNIE. Look, Will -

WILL. Look, Will, nuthin'. Know whut I got fer first prize at the fair? Fifty dollars!

ADO ANNIE. Well, that was good...

(The significance suddenly dawning on her.)

Fifty dollars?

WILL. Ketch on? Yer paw promised I cud marry you 'f I cud git fifty dollars.

ADO ANNIE. 'At's right, he did.

WILL. Know whut I done with it? Spent it all on presents fer you!

ADO ANNIE. But if you spent it you ain't got the cash.

WILL. Whut I got is worth more'n the cash. Feller who sold me the stuff told me!

ADO ANNIE. But, Will...

WILL. Stop sayin' "But Will" - when do I git a little kiss? ... Oh, Ado Annie, honey, y'ain't been off my mind since I left. All the time at the fair grounds even, when I was chasin' steers.

(Mimicking the actions as he speaks them.)

I'd rope one under the hoofs and pull him up sharp, and he'd land on his little rump...

(He looks lovingly at the imaginary steer's rump.)

Nen I'd think of you.

ADO ANNIE. Don't start talkin' purty, Will.

WILL. See a lot of beautiful gals in Kansas City. Didn't give one a look.

ADO ANNIE. How could you see 'em if you didn't give 'em a look?

WILL. I mean I didn't look lovin' at 'em – like I look at you.

(He turns and leans into her, slowly and deliberately, giving her an adoring and pathetic look.)

ADO ANNIE. *(Backing away.)* Oh, Will, please don't look like that! I cain't bear it.

WILL. *(Advancing on her.)* Won't stop lookin' like this till you give me a little ole kiss.

ADO ANNIE. Oh, whut's a little ole kiss?

WILL. Nuthin' – less'n it comes from you.

(Both stop.)

ADO ANNIE. *(Sighing.)* You do talk purty!

(WILL steps up for his kiss. She nearly gives in, but with sudden and unaccounted-for strength of character she turns away.)

No, I won't!

[MUSIC NO. 08 "ENTRANCE OF ENSEMBLE"]

WILL. *(Singing softly, seductively, "getting" her.)*

S'POSIN' 'AT I SAY 'AT YER LIPS'RE LIKE CHERRIES,
ER ROSES ER BERRIES?
WHUT YOU GONNA DO?

(Putting her hand on his heart.)

CAIN'T YOU FEEL MY HEART PALPATIN' AN' BUMPIN',
A-WAITIN' FER SUMPIN,
SUMPIN NICE FROM YOU?

I GOTTA GIT A KISS AN' IT'S GOTTA BE QUICK
ER I'LL JUMP IN A CRICK AN' DIE!

ADO ANNIE. *(Overcome.)*

WHUT'S A GIRL TO SAY WHEN YOU TALK THAT-A WAY?

(She starts off, followed by the CROWD. As the CROWD exits, ALI HAKIM strolls on, meeting WILL ambling along with his bag.)

ALI HAKIM. Hello, young fellow.

WILL. Oh, it's you!

ALI HAKIM. I was just hoping to meet up with you. It seems like you and me ought to have a little talk.

WILL. We only got one thing to talk about. Well, Mr. Hakim, I hear you got yourself engaged to Ado Annie.

ALI HAKIM. Well...

WILL. Well, nuthin'. I don't know what to call you. You ain't purty enough fer a skunk. You ain't skinny enough fer a snake. You're too little to be a man, and too big to be a mouse. I reckon you're a rat.

ALI HAKIM. That's logical.

WILL. Answer me one question. Do you really love her?

ALI HAKIM. Well...

WILL. Cuz if I thought you didn't I'd tie you up in this bag and drop you in the river. Are you serious about her?

ALI HAKIM. Yes, I'm serious.

WILL. And do you worship the ground she walks on, like I do?

(He grabs ALI at his throat, almost lifting him off the ground.)

And this is one answer that better be yes.

ALI HAKIM. Yes - yes - yes.

WILL. *(Releasing ALI.)* The hell you do!

ALI HAKIM. Yes.

WILL. Would you spend every cent you had fer her? That's whut I did. See that bag? Full of presents. Cost fifty bucks. All I had in the world.

ALI HAKIM. If you had that fifty dollars cash...

WILL. I'd have Ado Annie, and you'd lose her.

ALI HAKIM. (*Thoughtfully.*) Yes. I'd lose her. Let's see what you got in here. Might want to buy something.

WILL. What would you want with them?

ALI HAKIM. I'm a peddler, ain't I? I buy and sell. Maybe pay you real money...

(*Significantly.*) Maybe as much as – well, a lot.

(*WILL becomes thoughtful. ALI fishes in the bag and pulls out an item.*)

Ah, what a beautiful hot-water bag. Looks French. Must have cost plenty. I'll give you eight dollars for it.

WILL. Eight dollars? That wouldn't be honest. I only paid three-fifty.

ALI HAKIM. All right. I said I'd give you eight and I will...

(*He pulls a nightgown out of the bag. It is made of white lace and is notable for a profusion of ribbons and bows on the neckline.*)

Say! That's a cracker-jake!

WILL. Take your hands off that!

(*Grabbing it and holding it in front of him.*)

That wuz fer our weddin' night!

ALI HAKIM. It don't fit you so good. I'll pay you twenty-two dollars.

WILL. But that's –

ALI HAKIM. All right then – twenty-two-fifty!

(*Stuffing it into his coat with the hot-water bag.*)

Not a cent more.

(WILL smiles craftily and starts to count on his fingers. ALI now pulls out a corset.)

WILL. Them – those – that was fer her to wear.

ALI HAKIM. I didn't hardly think they was for you.

(Looking at it.)

Mighty dainty.

(Putting it aside.)

Fifteen dollars. Le's see, eight and twenty-two makes thirty and fifteen is forty-five and fifty cents is forty-five-fifty.

(He looks craftily at WILL out of the corner of his eye and watches the idea percolate through WILL's thick head.)

WILL. Forty-five-fifty? Say, that's almos' – that's...

(Turning anxiously.)

Want to buy some more?

ALI HAKIM. Might.

WILL. *(Taking "The Little Wonder" out of his pocket.)* D'you ever see one of these?

ALI HAKIM. *(Frightened.)* What made you buy this? Got it in for somebody?

WILL. How d'you mean? It's jist funny pitchers.

ALI HAKIM. *(Examining it carefully.)* That all you think it is? Well, it's more'n that! It's...

(He breaks off as LAUREY runs on, a frightened look on her face.)

LAUREY. Whur is ev'ybody? Whur's Aunt Eller?

WILL. On t'other side of the house, Laurey.

JUD. *(Offstage.)* Laurey! Whur'd you run to?

(LAUREY runs off around the end of the house, putting her hamper on the porch.)

WILL. How much'll you give me fer this thing?