

ADEMDAI
or
=The necessary and the superfluous=

Operetta in two Acts

Libretto by Dario Salvi

based on a story by Ignaz Frank Castelli after the
Tale of the same name from "One Thousand and One Nights"

CHARACTERS:

SCHEHERAZADE, the story teller	spoken role
THE CALIPH HARUN-AL-RASHID	baritone
JAFFAR, his Vizier	bass-baritone
ADEMDAI, a young man from Baghdad	tenor
NAIMA, a Circassian slave	soprano
<i>Some slaves. Entourage of the Caliph.</i>	chorus

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Act 1

OVERTURE - 1

SCHEHERAZADE: Our story takes place In the fabled city of Baghdad, a place which exists perhaps only our imagination.

OVERTURE - 2

SCHEHERAZADE: The city is ruled by the mighty, the magnificent, Caliph Harun-Al-Rashid. Always caring for his subjects, the Caliph and his vizier, Jaffar, would wander the streets In disguise to experience the life lived by humble and ordinary men.

OVERTURE - 3

SCHEHERAZADE: A young man was walking the streets of Baghdad at night time. He was a poor workman by the name of Adem dai. Slowly, after he had finished his day's work, he was dragging his tired bones home when he suddenly heard a noise, and in the moonlight became aware of two men who were dressed like Armenian merchants.

1 DUET & PANTOMIME (Caliph, Jaffar)

JAFFAR

The crowns of the Universe adorn you,
you are spoiled by Earth and sea.

CALIPH

Oh, Jaffar, all these crowns,
Believe me, my friend, they weigh a lot.

JAFFAR

Millions indulge your will,
finding out what your secret desires are.

CALIPH

Do you know why they do it?
Is they fear me, that's the only reason.

JAFFAR

Riches are at your command.

CALIPH

Can I buy love for myself?

JAFFAR

Your halls are adorned with gold -

CALIPH

Are gold and luck all that matters?

JAFFAR

You are valued, and honoured, admired.

CALIPH

You think this gives me friends?

JAFFAR

You have a hundred beautiful women.

CALIPH

But not one who truly loves me.

CALIPH

Though everyone is struggling, longing,
Me always refuses me,
Believe me, dear friend,
My misery only arises from my happiness.

JAFFAR

To climb to your height,
The price is high, that's true!
And even so you're not happy!
Then mortals struggle in vain for Happiness.

PANTOMIME

(Suddenly six robbers were attacking them. Ademdai, courageous and soulful as he was, hurried to the aid of the poor unfortunate merchants, and although he was armed only with a thick stick, he succeeded by strength and boldness in chasing the robbers away. He then quietly continued on his way, without curiosity to get to know those men whom he rescued, and without counting on reward for a deed which he had performed without self-will. The next day, like all the previous ones, passed working hard, and at ten o'clock at night he sat by his fire and complained loudly about his fate.)

ADEMDAI: What an effort just to afford this poor, miserable life. Today I worked like a galley slave, and yet earned only half a drachma. Oh Mahomet, if I only had what is necessary, only what is necessary! I would be the happiest man alive!

2 SONG & SLEEP BALLET (Ademdai, Chorus)

ADEMDAI

Spread your gentle wings
Sweet sleep, come over me,
Show me here the future:
My table full of food!
Let my cups be golden
A Houris by my side,
rests on silken pillows,
Enjoy the wind of life!
Sleep, come down on me,
Last a long, long time;
Because, alas!
As soon as I awaken
This glory disappears:
This is not a comfy bed, it laughs at me,

Small and hard and rough,
Here I am now!
Who will say good night to me?

RONDEAU (chorus)

Sleep, Ademdai,
Sleep, sleep tight
Oh Cradle, oh hope,
Wrap around me;
Drive my worries
away from here.
Give me comfort,
Happiness,
until tomorrow.
Sleep, Ademdai,
Sleep, sleep tight
Oh Cradle, oh hope,
Wrap around me;

SLEEP BALLET

(No sooner had he spoken these words than he heard knocking at his door; he got up to open it, thinking that one of his neighbours might need him; but how astonished he was when he saw a man in a long dress, white as snow, standing in front of him. The stranger had a shape that was pleasant and yet awe-inspiring. He held an ebony staff in his right hand; a turban of extraordinary height crowned his head, and a long white beard ran down his chest. Regardless of his courage, Ademdai could not avoid a certain horror which seized him at the sight of this figure; but the stranger addressed him as follows:)

3 UNDERSCORE & MELODRAMA (Genie, Ademdai)

GENIE: Fear nothing, Ademdai, I am your good Genie, and I visit you to do you good. I heard what you just said to yourself by the fire. Do you only wish to obtain what is necessary? "

ADEMDAI: Oh, my Guardian spirit! *(cried Ademdai, who had now recovered a little from his fear)* I only want what is necessary, and I think this wish is not too much?

GENIE: Certainly not, but what is this necessary? What do you need?

ADEMDAI: Very little! I am happy to eat rice every day to satisfy my hunger and to have enough wood to warm my room and maybe some clothes to cover myself, that way I'll have everything I can think of to be happy.

GENIE: And what amount do you think you need to get all this for you?

ADEMDAI: Oh, with one drachma a day I can buy what I need.

GENIE: Every eight days I will come back at the same time, and if a drachma is not enough for you, I will give you everything you ask for, until you have what is necessary. But understand me, only what is necessary, because I will not give you anything that is superfluous. *(with these words the Genie disappeared)*

(Ademdai, with a heart struck by mighty joy, looked delighted at the eight drachmas which the Genie had given him. Eight drachmas! In his whole life he had never been so rich.)

ADEMDAI: Now my life is safe for me, and without me having to toil. I will no longer have to work all day in the scorching heat in order to be able to afford a little rice in the evening. *(looks around a little with a thoughtful face - suddenly)*. Oh, by the Grace of the Prophet! I'm a big fool, I forgot to ask my Guardian Spirit for certain little things that I find very necessary. I have nothing in my house, and it is necessary for a house to be furnished. There is a miserable bed on which I sleep, and it is necessary for a man to have a comfortable bed; because sleeping is just as necessary to living as eating and drinking. I don't even have a sturdy chair to sit down on! I must have some chairs, one for myself and some for my good friends when they visit me; because if I sit, I can't leave them standing. I don't have a table to eat from; for when one eats it is necessary that one does it very leisurely."

(So poor Ademdai repeated briefly everything that still seemed necessary to himself, and waited longingly to see his Guardian Spirit once again. In the evening, when he ate his boiled rice, he sought to be able to busk in his happiness.)

MELODRAMA (Ademdai)

Plain rice is a very meagre diet,
I can wish for something
Something different sometimes,
even if just on red letter days.
Genie please do tell
If my wish is unnecessary,
Am I wrong?
Am I right?

It is necessary, necessary
for a man to change his diet.
God created things to eat,
And good reason did He have.
Eating asks for appetite,
and nothing spoils it more
than always eating only rice,
nothing else but boiled rice.

Holidays are for joy and amusement,
what amusement can I have
when all I eat is rice?
But since rice is for all
The cheapest food,
a drachma a day will not suffice
for eating food which is not rice,
for living not on grains of rice!

So, I will ask my Guardian Spirit to grant me one drachma for the week days and two drachmas for the festive days, that is certainly not asking too much. "

SHEHERAZADE: It was now the eight day and as promised the Genie appeared.

(The Genie listened to him calmly, and then said to him)

GEIE: *(in a soft voice)* Be careful, Adem dai, not to ask more of me than what is necessary. If you dare to desire something superfluous, I will leave you forever."

(Adem dai kneels to the floor, and tries to prove clearly that among all that he asked nothing is superfluous. The Genie is convinced; he gives Adem dai four gold coins to buy furniture, also grants him the two drachmas for the festive days, and leaves after having said that he would come back in eight days.)

SCHEHERAZADE: When the next day dawned, Adem dai hurried to buy what was necessary, and had the furniture brought to his house, which he already could see in his mind turned into a palace. In the meantime, he soon made a reflection which filled him with grief. The furniture is brand new but the house is very old. He examined it and found that it needed a lot of repairs in order not to fall into ruin. He sent for a bricklayer who said to him: "Be careful, my friend, not to have this place mended, it could easily cost you more than if you had a brand new one built from the ground up". Poor Adem dai was deeply saddened to have to put the new furniture in the old shack, and thought to himself:

"If the roof collapses over my head, it will break all the beautiful furniture and crush the owner on top of that; So, it is certainly not superfluous to build a new house when the old one is about to collapse; for the most essential thing is to live under a roof without having to fear every moment that a beam will hit him." And so the Genie appeared for the third time:

4 DUET (Genie, Adem dai)

ADEMDAI

Oh, my happiness is limitless!
I would like to thank you, but I can't;
Tears are shining in my eyes
They are saying what my speechless mouth should.

GENIE

Adem dai! So, farewell!

ADEMDAI

Good Guardian Angel! Goodbye!
Wait! - I have almost forgotten one thing!
Something else I would need:
To sleep, to eat! A table, a bed!
Tell, does it not seem necessary to you?

GENIE

You should have it today, friend.
I will give you furniture.

ADEMDAI

Guardian Angel! Goodbye!
Wait! – Let me think about it -
That would look bizarre;
New furniture with this old house.

GENIE

Well, the house will be repaired.
Ademdai! So, farewell!

ADEMDAI

Guardian Angel! Goodbye!
Wait! – Here where all the nails
Improvement will not last;
I know that for this loot
I can have a new roof.
Oh, what could be more necessary?

GENIE

Well then, let that too be yours;
Should it be necessary.

GENIE

I always want to protect you
Whatever you should need,
From now on you should own
Nothing to excess.

ADEMDAI

I only wish to have, you know
What I need when I need it,
Let the Prophet protect me.
I ask not for abundance.

GENIE

Ademdai! So, farewell!

ADEMDAI: What luck! what luck to have a Guardian Spirit at my service who carefully watches over giving me everything I need. Thanks be to him, I will not lack anything in the future. I will only always ask him for what is absolutely necessary to me, and he will always grant it to me; because I don't care about what is superfluous. The necessary is everything, the superfluous is nothing. "

SCHEHERAZADE: The new house was soon ready, and Ademdai was finally putting his new furniture in it, which he could not stop admiring. He sat down on all the armchairs, his bed was so good that he hardly wanted to leave it. With the added drachma he was able to allow himself some extra pleasures once every eight days. Certainly, he now had what was

necessary - what was necessary? Do you have this as long as you are alone? Is there a good that one truly rejoices when one cannot share it? When he sees so many men around him who count twenty, thirty, even forty beautiful women in their Seraglio, is it superfluous for him to have at least one?

ADEMDAI: Yes, a woman is the only thing I still lack. A woman would look so good here! My house would appear a hundred times more beautiful, my bed a thousand times richer and warmer. I have to ask my Guardian Spirit whether a woman is something superfluous?

SCHEHERAZADE Busy with these thoughts, he went on the central square of Baghdad, and saw a slave trader who attracted a lot of curious people. A young beauty, which the merchant put out for sale, was especially noticed because of her heavenly stature and beauty..

(The good Adem dai could not refrain from looking at her, and in that moment his heart learned to know love. How great was his restlessness when he saw a richly dressed young man come to the slave dealer to buy the girl for whom his heart was blazing? The young girl now had to pull back her veil, and in front of Adem dai's gaze displayed so many charms that he had difficulty not expressing his admiration aloud. He stood there as rigid as a statue, partly with the pleasure of looking at the beautiful woman, partly out of fear to lose her.)

JAFFAR: The girl is a Circassian, she is not more than eighteen years old, plays the lute, sings excellently, dances with indescribable grace, and combines all the most precious talents of her sex. She costs 2,000 gold coins. "

5A TRIO (Caliph, Jaffar, Naima, Adem dai)

ADEMDAI

What use is a harem to me
I don't ask for excess,
I just want to find her,
The woman for me.

JAFFAR

He already feels it,
Cupid's sweet tormenting,
He stares at her figure with delight.

CALIPH

Here's something else
to get for Adem dai.

ADEMDAI

Come on! Bring her to me!

JAFFAR

No, I can't!

ADEMDAI

Bring her quick! Quick!

JAFFAR

The money is not here

ADEMDAI
Do not worry!
JAFFAR
Two thousand gold coins!
ADEMDAI
Let my Guardian Spirit pay.

ADEMDAI
What use is a harem to me
I don't ask for excess,
I just want to find her,
The woman for me.

JAFFAR
He already feels it,
Cupid's sweet tormenting,
He stares at her figure with delight.

CALIPH
Here's something else
to get for Adem dai.

JAFFAR (*to himself*)
So the Genie wants to pay,
And then punish him.

ADEMDAI
Why the punishment for me?
It is just necessary.

ADEMDAI
Hurry, O hurry,
End the joke
Bring the beauty
That she may heal my heart;
I know she is worth it,
A significant amount.

JAFFAR
Well then hurry
Your pain moves me,
I will bring the dear to heal your heart.

Give me money
I will give her to you!

GENIE
Cupid's arrow
hit his heart!
It is necessary
He is cured.
For Adem dai,
He does not have

Money and crowns!

5B DANCE OF THE MARKET PORTERS

SCHEHERAZADE [During Dance]: Ademdai's rival offered 1,500 coins. Ademdai trembled, the merchant stuck to his price. Ademdai drew breath again. The young man offered 1,800 coins, the merchant seemed to be thinking about it, and Ademdai felt a cold sweat of fear on his forehead; but the merchant did not want to drop a drachma from the price, and the young man, less in love than Ademdai, renounced the possession of the beautiful slave. Poor Ademdai felt this fear more than once that day, which only inflamed his love even more. Fortunately, the merchant finally left the square without having sold the beautiful Circassian.

5C RONDEAU (Ademdai)

ADEMDAI

Soon Naima will come home
And lift my heart,
Lift the sorrow from my breast.
My heart still feels oppressed
With longing and lust!

O Fortune,
Guide our nuptial bed,
Give us beautiful children
A pledge of our love!

I will live happily
Floating on joy,
Love untarnished.

No husband is like me
in the whole of the Empire,
not like me,
the Empire where the half-moon rules.

SCHEHERAZADE: The Genie had to appear that evening; because it was already the eighth day. Ademdai awaited him with a longing of love; and when the Genie knocked on his door, he opened it and threw himself at his feet in a moment.

GENIE: *(in a soft voice)* What news have you got, what sorrow clouds your head? Why do tears flow from your eyes? Have I not given you all that is necessary?

ADEMDAI *(laying on the floor trembling, shouting)*: O my Guardian Spirit! You believe you have given me what was necessary; So, tell me if a woman is superfluous? Am I condemned to always live alone without having a companion who shares joys and sorrows with me? If a woman is something superfluous, I feel that the superfluous is a very necessary thing. "

GENIE *(not being able to hold back a smile)*: You are right, Ademdai, you need a woman. A woman is necessary to the happiness of a righteous man. Desire the daughter of some

craftsman and I will not oppose this marriage. Your house is newly built and furnished, every girl of your class will gladly shake hands with you.

ADEMDAI (*sighing*): Oh! that's not what I want. I'm in love like a fool and when a person is in love, isn't it necessary for him to receive the object he loves?

GENIE: Inevitably necessary.

ADEMDAI: Good for me! So you will make me the happiest of all people, for you have promised me what is necessary. I love to the point of frenzy a young slave who is so beautiful, so beautiful that I have never seen anything more beautiful in my entire life. The price wanted for her is alas too expensive for me ".

GENIE: How much is she?

ADEMDAI: Two thousand gold coins

GENIE: That's a quite expensive, but because you are in love, this expense is necessary. If you were sick, it would be necessary to give you a cure at whatever price. And you are sick, very.... very sick, poor Adem dai. Take, here are the two thousand coins.

6 TRIO (Jaffar, Naima, Adem dai)

JAFFAR

Look up, you shall see your beauty,
I'm paid and she is yours.

ADEMDAI AND NAIMA

I look, to see the woman / the man
To whom I'll be bound.

ADEMDAI

I thank you!

JAFFAR

She is not expensive!
You won't regret the sale.

Raise this gauzy veil
Show yourself in radiant light.

NAIMA and ADEMDAI

I know he / she will love me
As soon as he / she will just see me.

JAFFAR

Will she love him?
Let's see what happens!

NAIMA and ADEMDAI
O heaven!

ADEMDAI

I don't know what to do!
And I stand like a stone!

Can I believe it?
This Goddess is mine:

NAIMA

I don't know what to do!
And I stand like a stone!
Who can stay calm?
I can't be his wife.
JAFFAR
They don't know what to do
They just stand like stone;
Is it love or hate,
Anyway, the money is mine!

SCHEHERAZADE: At these words the Genie departed and left Ademdai to the outpouring of his indescribable joy. Now the lucky Ademdai found himself in possession of the most precious treasure, the woman whom he loved. Certainly, he would never complain again, certainly he now has everything necessary.
In the meantime, the beautiful Naima had hardly set foot in his house when...

NAIMA (shuddered in horror): Great Prophet! Where are you taking me? Should I live in this house? Why did you buy a woman for yourself who could be the most precious ornament for the Seraiglio of the richest and most powerful men? I am supposed to be the slave of a wretched man who has only one dark cave. Tell me how could you pay the 2,000 coins for me? You surely stole it?

ADEMDAI: Oh, these 2,000 coins made up my entire fortune, and I gave them up to own you. But calm down, we might not be rich, we will not indulge in abundance, but we will have what is necessary.

SCHEHERAZADE: Ademdai was wrong, for he had only one drachma a day to eat for himself, and now two people were supposed to live on it. He made this remark a little too soon. He had to wait for the next appearance of his guardian spirit, and eight days slowly went by for the poor and unhappy couple. In the meantime, he himself prepared the meagre meal which he was now compelled to share.

Naima refused to eat and kept crying. A woman, so young, so beautiful, made by her talents and charms to shine in the Seraglio of a Sultan, or at least a Vizier, had sunk into being the slave of a common artisan; the thought revolted her inwards, and when poor Ademdai held up to her the bowl of rice which he had prepared himself, she pushed it away with the utmost dislike. She could not sit on those hard chairs, and the bed, which poor Ademdai found so excellent, was the worst of all the beds for her. It was also a little uncomfortable for two people; because Ademdai had it made for himself only.

NAIMA: How dare you appear before me in these mean, disgusting rags? You pretend to have a Spirit who always provides you with the essentials; does he then think it is superfluous to dress properly? I, unfortunate one, will soon find myself hurt by the need to wrap myself in such coarse clothes as well? O God! Without any perhaps! I already shone in the richest fabrics of India! Cause of my torments, you demand that I should love you but I can only hate you with all my soul!

7 RECITATIVE, MELODRAMA & RONDEAU

(Naima, Genie Chorus, spoken: Ademdai, Scheherazade)

NAIMA

This scruffy Ademdai loves me,
But my happiness is gone because of him,
Shall I languish here in misery,
Forgetting Elegance, Splendour and Riches?
Now joy laughs at me,
And it will flee me forever!

MELODRAMA

SCHEHERAZADE: These words saddened Ademdai, and he felt a hundred times unhappier than he was at the time of his greatest poverty.

SCHEHERAZADE: The eight days had passed, and the Genie appeared.

ADEMDAI: (running towards him, with bitterness): You promised me what was necessary, and I am now the unhappiest of all people!

RONDEAU

NAIMA

Oriental robes!
Lace and ribbons,
Pearls, rubies,
A hundred servants
All well trained
To look after me!

Look what I have here,
Not the glory I deserve:
A poor little hut,
No table, no shrine,
A pile of straw
in-stead of soft bed,
and this man who likes to sing!

Oh, my heart is ready to burst-
O Mahomet, answer my pleading,
Let me escape this misery,
Let me live in elegance.

GENIE

Your wish, Naima, is granted,
The poor hut shall disappear,
and you shall quickly find
Whatever satisfies your longing.

CHOIR

Sing beautiful songs of praise,
Fall down at her feet
Adorn her with beauty.
She, with heaven's charms
Will be beautifully adorned.
Will be beautiful.

GENIE (*with astonishment*): Did I not give you everything you asked for?

ADEMDAI: Yes, of course, the fault lies only with me. I believed that there was very little that was necessary, and I was deceived.

GENIE: Let's see, explain yourself!

ADEMDAI: You allowed me to take a wife because you considered it necessary. I had a drachma to eat a day when I was alone, and now the expense is double. If it was necessary for me to buy something....look, isn't it also necessary that I give to her what she deems necessary?

GENIE: Very necessary.

ADEMDAI: Well then! She would neither drink nor eat nor sleep; sorrow deprives her of all pleasure, as it does it for me too. The dishes that I can offer her and with which I contented myself are far too heavy for a stomach as delicate as hers. What was necessary to me is not necessary to her. But since I've bought her once, and love her more than my life, is it necessary that I get her all that she needs?

8 ARIETTE & DANCE OF THE MERCHANTS

(Naima, Ademdai, Chorus)

NAIMA & CHORUS

Oriental robes!
Lace and ribbons,
Pearls, rubies,
A hundred servants
All well trained
To look after me!

That is how I shall dress
I understand it well:
Undergarments of silk
White, like fresh snow,
not too wide, not too tight,
Straight and neat,
Richly embroidered with silver thread,
adorned with pearls and precious gems.

But no - no, no!
They can't be pearls!
Pearls mean glistening tears,
I only wish to be happy here.

ADEMDAI

Oh! Oh! that will be quite marvellous!

NAIMA & CHORUS

That is how I shall dress

I understand it well:

The green of hope

Adorns the caftan,

All its fur of fine ermine,

Ruby's fire shines around the veil,

And black taper rises royally, on the head.

But no - no, no!

It can't be black;

Black means sorrow,

I only wish to be happy here.

ADEMDAI

O! O! that will be very splendid!

DANCE OF THE MERCHANTS

The Genie tried to leave, but Adem dai calls him back.

ADEMDAI: Oh, I still have a few things to ask you. I love Naima, so it is necessary for me to be loved back. But she can't even look at me in these coarse clothes. She says that if it hadn't been for me, she would now be the wife of a rich, neatly dressed man. So, if it is necessary that she loves me, it is also necessary that I please her, and if it is necessary that I please her, it is also necessary that my clothes are different. Some dainty clothes wouldn't be superfluous either.

GENIE: Not at all.

ADEMDAI: She then keeps on saying if it hadn't been for me she would now be wearing what she love the most: beautiful fabrics from India! So, if I want to be loved by her, it is necessary that I give her what she loves? "

GENIE: Without doubt.

ADEMDAI: She has talent, she sings and plays the lute. I can't take away the fruits of such a brilliant upbringing from her, and since she has talent it is necessary to cultivate it. So, I would like a nice, good quality instrument for her - that would certainly give her pleasure.

GENIE: All that you ask me to do seems very necessary, but... tell me, how much can it all cost?

ADEMDAI: Around a thousand pieces of gold, I believe.

GENIE: That's fair, goodbye. Go and get what you need.

SCHEHERAZADE: The Genie disappeared at these words, and the good Adem dai hurried back to his house with eyes sparkling with joy that he tried to hide. He did not want to deprive his beloved Naima of the pleasure of a complete surprise. He didn't say a word to her about the conversation he had just had with his Genie, but he went out first thing the next morning to do the shopping. He began by dressing himself in the most precious and delicate fabrics, and

then came home followed by a crowd of merchants, for whom it was not a little astonishing that a man in such splendid clothes should have such an ugly home. Naima could hardly understand what all this meant. At first she struggled to recognise Adem dai in the splendid clothes he had chosen.

ADEM DAI (*approaching her*): Didn't I tell you that my Guardian Spirit grants me everything that is necessary for me? So, calm down, dear Naima, we will not lack anything, provided that we do not desire anything superfluous. Choose from these beautiful fabrics that are presented to you.

SCHEHERAZADE: Naima found this language and the speaker very amiable. The splendid items were spread out in front of her. She chose what she liked best, and as she was very careful to choose enough that she could use at present and be sure to have enough for future necessities. She also chose a lute engraved with pearls. Adem dai heard her sing and believed he was in heaven. His eyes hung eagerly from her lips, and each of her words, each of her tones struck a new wound in his heart:

9 RONDEAU (Naima)

NAIMA

Do not accuse your cruel fate,
It has grieved you enough now.

A young, handsome, generous man
Is always loved by us women.

Whoever sprinkles incense on our desires,
Captivates our sweetest instincts,
and from the feeling of gratitude
Then arises the fieriest love.

SCHEHERAZADE: When the young man heard these words, his joy reached the highest level. He paid for the lute and the fabrics and sent the merchants away. He is loved, what is still missing? Doesn't he have what is necessary?

The two lovers passed the first three days in a frenzy of joy. On the fourth day, around 6 p.m., Adem dai went for a walk to get some fresh air, and after crossing a few alleys he returned; he was only a short distance from his house than he saw a man sneaking around the window. It was a well-dressed young man who was cautiously, with the help of the darkness, creeping away when he noticed someone was watching him.

ADEM DAI (*to himself*) : Certainly, this man had the plan to sneak into my house and seduce my young Naima. She is so beautiful. No wonder he's in love with her too if he's seen her even only once? He even looked familiar to me. Right...now I know! It was the same young man who bid the 1,800 dinars for Naima at the market, there is no doubt about that it was him. But I want to thwart him, I won't leave my house in the future.

(He stepped into his room, his eyes perturbed, and he was breathing heavily)

SCHEHERAZADE: Naima asked him why, and seemed very restless; but he was silent, and only threw dark and furtive looks at her from time to time, as if he wanted to discover in her a secret crime that deserved punishment. Finally, he couldn't control his jealousy anymore and asked her if she hadn't seen someone sneaking around the house? Naima swore to him that she had seen no one. He looked at her with a bitter smile, and at that moment he had lost calm and happiness. O wretched jealousy! what a terrible disease you are! The same remedies that are used to heal you only irritate more. Once you find entrance into a heart, you tear it up; your deep fire destroys all human happiness. You show him phantoms that frighten him; he believes everything that he suspects is real; he often speculates on the impossible, and trembles before his own shadow. Poor Adem dai found himself in this position; he no longer dared to leave the house, which contained a treasure which became all the more precious to him as he was afraid of losing it at any moment; and when his guardian spirit visited, he found him sad and withdrawn once again.

GENIE: How? haven't you got what you need yet?

ADEMMDI: Oh! There is still something missing.

GENIE: Well what?

ADEMMDAI: Isn't it necessary that a person sometimes leaves his house, be it to do business or just to get some fresh air?"

GENIE: Certainly so!

ADEMMDAI: Isn't it necessary that a man who owns a beautiful slave whom he loves also is sure that she is not stolen from him?

GENIE: Yes, this certainty is necessary for his happiness.

ADEMMDAI: Well then, venerable Guardian Spirit, if I stay at home all the time, I'll get sick in the end, and if I go out, who will look after my slave? I would have to buy eunuchs, and I'm too poor for that.

GENIE (*astonished*) : Eunuchs?

10 MELODRAMA (Adem dai)

ADEMMDAI

Yes, yes, yes, please

Eunuchs are a man's best friends

They prevent his death

from the biggest ill

a man can know,

death from rotten jealousy!

The solution here, excuse me,

Is a handful of eunuchs!

No solution is simpler

But to get me six eunuchs!

One, two, three, four, five and six

Is the number I believe

Can protect my sanity

And avoid that jealousy!

(The Genie could not answer)

ADEMDAI: You seem to silently agree with me. Furthermore, my house is very small, it can hardly contain me and Naima; if I have 6 eunuchs, it is necessary to give them shelter, I have to feed them, clothe them, etc. To all of them the two tomans that you give me during the day are not enough. So, if my house is too small, it is not superfluous to buy a bigger one. The other day, when I was walking down the great street of Baghdad, I saw a nice house for sale, and with all its furnishing included. I was very pleased with that, but it is a little expensive.

GENIE: How's much? I think that you really need it, and I always promised to get you what you truly need.

11 ROMANCE & FINALE

Instrumental

ADEMDAI: Well, and you will see for yourself that I have certainly not desired anything superfluous?"

ROMANCE

GENIE

1.

In the lowly little hut,
Lives a virtuous man,
Who worships with clear mind,
What he cannot gain,
Ah, all his happiness is confined
In this little place:
Virtue his only wealth
and contentment his treasure.

2.

Between these bare walls
He praises and extols,
Full of thanks to the prophet
Who gave him this little,
He daren't request any more,
Though covetous is his look,
Just leave him in his hut
Don't rob him of his only happiness.

GENIE: No, I will do justice to your humility! How much does this house cost?"

ADEMDAI: Fifteen thousand tomans

(Immediately the Genie gave him an order for 15,000 tomans to withdraw from the treasury of the Caliph; to this he added 1,500 tomans to buy the eunuchs.)

ADEMDAI: O benevolent Guardian spirit, what gratitude do I owe you for so many good deeds? Now I only lack one essential thing. If my house is larger, it necessarily follows that it is always kept in the best condition I will see that the rooms and furniture are kept clean. Cleanliness is necessary. So, I will have nothing superfluous if I buy two slaves to take care of the house.

GENIE: Yes, two slaves are not too many.

ADEMDAI: Furthermore my eunuchs will be overworked if they are to closely guard the object of my love. In all I have ten people to feed, and I can't feed them with the two tomans that you give me every day – I cannot provide what is necessary; to support a house like mine, 20 tomans a day will not be superfluous.

GENIE: That is fine! Here are 160 Tomans for the eight days, and 200 Tomans to buy the two slaves you need.

FINALE ACT I

CHORUS

What is superfluous?
What is necessary?
A regal palace, a shanty hut?
Sumptuous garments,
Tasty food?
An adoring wife
An adoring man?

Refrain:

Ademdai, you will learn,
Trust your Genie!
Naima, Naima,
list and learn,
stop the whining!
On the morrow we shall see
What the day shall bring us!
Scheherazade, we demand!
Let us hear it,
Let us see it!

What superfluous is? (ADEMDAI: To be loved and to love back!)
What is necessary? (NAIMA: All these riches and my man?)
A regal palace, a shanty hut? (GENIE: If you deem it necessary...)
Sumptuous garments, (NAIMA: Ooooh)
Tasty food? (ADEMADAI: Once can hope!)
An adoring wife (NAIMA: I can be)
An adoring man? (ADEMDAI: I can be)

Refrain:

CHORUS AND TUTTI
Ademdai, you (I/he) will learn,
Trust your (my) Genie!

Naima, Naima, (NAIMA: Tell me all)
list and learn,
stop the whining! (NAIMA: Don't say so!)
On the morrow we (I/you) shall see
What the day shall bring us (you)!
Scheherazade, we demand!
Let us hear it,
Let us see it!
Scheherazade, Scheherazade,
Scheherazade, Scheherazade,
Let us hear it,
Let us see it!
Let the morning sun arise
That is very necessary!
Scheherazade, we demand!
Let us hear it,
Let us see it!