



**Libretto - Arshin Mal Alan (The Cloth Peddler)  
Musical Comedy in Four Acts (1913)  
by Uzeyir Hajibeyov**

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*Translation (Azeri to English): Marjan Abadi  
Editing: Betty Blair and Aynur Hajiyeva  
Webmaster: Arzu Aghayeva*

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**Characters:**

*Asgar – a young, rich merchant  
Jahan – Asgar's aunt, a fat woman  
Suleyman – Asgar's friend  
Vali – Asgar's servant  
Sultan bey – an elderly landlord  
Gulchohra – Sultan bey's young daughter  
Asya – Sultan bey's niece  
Telli – Sultan bey's servant  
Neighbor girls*

**Act I**

*Asgar's home. The room is well decorated and the floor is carpeted. There are a table and chairs, too. As the curtain rises, Asgar is sitting on the left and his aunt on the right. Servant Vali is standing by the door ready to take orders. Music plays. The curtain rises. Asgar sings.*

**Asgar:** *The sound of my love is as loud as the sound of a ney<sup>1</sup> because of its moan.*

**Music**

*The sound of my love is as loud as the sound of a ney because of its moan,  
I won't stop moaning even if I am cut section by section like a ney.*

**Music**

*I won't stop moaning, I won't stop moaning  
If I am cut section by section, if I am cut section by section.*

## Music

*Fortune, help, otherwise it is not possible for the heart to reach its dream.*

## Music

*Fortune, help, otherwise it is not possible for the heart to reach its dream,  
As that stealer of my heart is without sorrow, but I am sorrowful.*

## Music

*I won't stop moaning, I won't stop moaning  
If I am cut section by section, if I am cut section by section.*

## Music

*My heart rejoices now and then,  
As that beauty opens her mouth with a smile, seeing my bitter cry.*

## Music

*I won't stop moaning, I won't stop moaning,  
If I am cut section by section, if I am cut section by section.*

*(Lines from one of Fuzuli's gazals.)*

## Music

**Jahan:** *May your aunt be sacrificed to you, what has happened that you are singing so sadly that one's heart feels for you?*

**Asgar:** *If it makes your heart feel for me, it means that you have spirit, aunt!*

**Jahan:** *I didn't get it, may your aunt be sacrificed to you, say that again so that I understand it.*

**Asgar:** *Never mind, I didn't say anything that should be repeated... Now look here, aunt. Just tell me how it can be that things remain just like this. If the world comes and goes like this, what will its end be?*

**Jahan:** *May your aunt be sacrificed to you, thank God, what happened to the world?*

**Asgar:** *I mean what its end will be, what its results will be. For example, yes, we grew up and became adults. Thank God we have wealth, riches and all that, but you know, things don't get straightened out with this, your heart doesn't get calmed, you still feel the need for something else. Am I right or not?*

**Jahan:** *May your aunt be sacrificed to you! Of course, you're right, but still I don't really understand what you're talking about.*

**Asgar:** *What I am saying is clear, aunt! To tell you the truth, I think about the things that I have, and I see that I am still lacking something.*

**Jahan:** *What! If there is anything that you are lacking, send the servant to the market so that he can buy it from there. Why should it be anything to think of?*

**Asgar:** *You don't understand what I'm talking about. You know, I'm talking about something serious with you, and you are telling me about the market. I'm wondering what the end of such a way of life will be. I have wealth, money, but the owner of money needs to own something else whereas the ones who have neither wealth nor money have a flock of them.*

**Jahan:** *May your aunt be sacrificed to you! You are a merchant, what do you have to do with a flock?  
(Vali shakes his head.)*

**Asgar:** *Oh, aunt! Didn't you understand again what I want?*

**Vali:** *(all of a sudden)* I know what my master wants.

**Asgar:** *(turns to him)* Hey, are you here, too? OK, say what I want.

**Vali:** *(grinning)* I know what you want.

**Asgar and Jahan:** If you know, say it, what are you waiting for?

**Vali:** You want... *(He suddenly goes out the door, laughing. Asgar smiles.)*

**Jahan:** Goodness, it's as if the guy is mad. *(To Asgar.)* May your aunt be sacrificed to you, just help me understand what you want.

**Asgar:** Aunt, look here! How old do you think I am?

**Jahan:** OK, not this Ramadan, but after the next Ramadan is over, you'll be 28. What are you worried about? You are still a child, may you live 100 years!

**Asgar:** Very good. Even though I'm still a child, I can already stand on my feet, can't I?

*(Vali re-enters and stands the same way that he was standing before.)*

**Jahan:** Of course you can. Thank God you are a healthy young man.

**Asgar:** OK, now what should this healthy young guy do? Just eat and sleep?

**Jahan:** Asgar, please, speak clearly with me so that I can understand you. After all, I am a Turkish-style woman, how do I understand Arabic, may your aunt be sacrificed to you?

**Asgar:** *(aside)* Hey, it's not a place to feel ashamed anymore. *(To Jahan.)* You know what, aunt? *(Loudly.)* I want to marry, you know, to marry!

**Vali:** You see, this is what I was thinking it was all about. *(Laughs.)*

**Jahan:** May your aunt be sacrificed to you. Say it so that I can understand it. Why would you complicate it like that?

**Asgar:** OK, so now you know that I want to marry.

**Jahan:** Good, I really appreciate it, may your aunt be sacrificed to you. May God bring us the day when I dance at your wedding party. *(Vali dances.)* See, Asgar, may your aunt be sacrificed to you, at last you came to what I was telling you. For a long time, I've been telling you: "Asgar, come marry, own a home, become a father." But it was useless. I stopped talking about it because you weren't listening to me. Now do you see that you have come to what I was saying? Of course, marry, organize your wedding, let your friends rejoice and your enemies grieve. *(Vali sighs.)* If you want, I can go today and look for a bride for you. My late sister was telling me till she gasped out her life: "Jahan, look here, I am leaving Asgar with you. Don't let him be alone, help him get married." *(She cries. Vali sighs deeply.)*

**Asgar:** Come on, it's not the right time to cry now. We have started a talk here, let's see what its end will be.

**Jahan:** Marry, may your aunt be sacrificed to you!

**Asgar:** But how? The question is that marrying is not an easy business.

**Jahan:** May your aunt be sacrificed to you, marrying is as easy as drinking water. What is difficult about it? Especially for a young guy like you. Thank God, you have both money and wealth, and plus you are young. By God, even if you ask for a padishah's daughter, he will give her to you. Look, it doesn't need a lot of thinking over. Let me go right away wearing my veil, to choose a bride for you. Or, you tell me which landlord's or merchant's daughter you want, and I'll go and ask her for you.

**Asgar:** But how do I know which landlord's or merchant's daughter is good so that I can tell you to go and ask her for me? I haven't seen them.

**Jahan:** What! May your aunt be sacrificed to you! Am I blind? By God, I'll go and choose such a bride for you that one can lose his mind when looking at her.

**Asgar:** *(laughs)* Then, aunt, I'll lose my mind and become mad. No, aunt, it doesn't work for me. I have to see the girl myself first, then if I like her, I'll marry her, if not, then I won't marry her.

**Jahan:** Then you tell me clearly what kind of girl you would marry. *(Sings and dances.)*

*I'll wear my veil,*

*I'll wear makeup on my face and eyes. (2)*

*I'll go and look for a bride for you,*

*I'll go everywhere looking for her. (2)*

## Music

*I'll look for her among the daughters of  
Landlords, khans and merchants. (2)  
I'll pick up the most beautiful one  
Of those flowers in the meadow. (2)*

## Music

*May your aunt be sacrificed to you,  
I'll take every trouble for you. (2)  
Look I'll dance like this  
At your wedding party. (2)*

## Music

*You, a man, how will you see the girl? Will people show their daughters to you?*

**Asgar:** *Yes, this is what I've been asking you all morning: what will the end be? I want to marry, but I don't know who to marry, because I haven't seen anybody and I'm not allowed to.*

**Jahan:** *May your aunt be sacrificed to you! Come marry in the traditional way like your ancestors did. It's not a concern of yours. Let me go and ask for a bride for you. If she turns out to be bad, I'll be the one to blame.*

**Asgar:** *Aunt, what are you talking about? I don't buy even the chintz for two shahis<sup>2</sup> if I don't see it, let alone a wife! No, I don't want to marry like this. If you can, show me a way to see the girl first before I marry her.*

**Jahan:** *May your aunt be sacrificed to you, what way can I show you?*

**Asgar:** *It seems that there is no way for it. That's why I don't marry.  
(Vali sighs. Silence. Music is played, then Suleyman enters.)*

**Suleyman:** *Aunt Jahan, how is your mood? Vali, how are you?*

**Jahan:** *Thank God, I am good. Thank you, Suleyman!*

**Vali:** *Bey, may your kindness be more.  
(Suleyman sings as he goes towards Asgar.)*

## Music

### Suleyman:

*What is your problem, what is this moaning all about? (2)  
Why are your thoughts so destroyed? (2)  
Don't be shy, tell me your problem, (2)  
What sorrow has affected you like this? (2)  
There is no such trouble in the world that doesn't have a remedy. (2)  
Get the remedy for the trouble, enjoy the life. (2)  
Haven't you heard that there's such a saying that, (2)  
No matter the dream, one will find what he wants if he is looking for it! (2)*

*Hey, why are you sitting silently like this? Or are you the one to worry about the troubles of the world?*

**Asgar:** *Suleyman, it's so good that you came. After all, they say that you are a clever person. Come, let's see what you will advise.*

**Suleyman:** *You mean you don't believe that I am clever?*

**Asgar:** *I do, but if you give me a good piece of advice, I'll be absolutely assured.*

**Suleyman:** *Now tell me bit by bit what happened.*

**Asgar:** *What could happen? I am wondering what the end of this is going to be. If the world comes and goes like this...*

**Suleyman:** *(interrupts him) Stop, I know what you want.*

**Asgar:** *What do I want?*

**Suleyman:** *Of course, you want to marry.*

*(Everybody is surprised.)*

**Asgar:** *Wow, how did you know?*

**Suleyman:** *I can see it on your face. It's not difficult to know that. (To Jahan.) Is it so or not, aunt Jahan?*

**Jahan:** *Yes, my child, of course it's so.*

**Suleyman:** *(To Vali.) Is it so or not, Vali?*

**Vali:** *Bey, of course it's so.*

**Suleyman:** *(To Asgar.) Now do you get that I am clever?*

**Asgar:** *I partially got it. Friend, now there's something else. If you help me do something about it, then I'll understand that you are absolutely clever.*

**Suleyman:** *Now tell them bit by bit and I'll listen to you.*

**Asgar:** *Look, Suleyman, I am thinking that marrying a girl is like buying goods. Just as the goods can be both bad and good...*

**Suleyman:** *Stop, I know what you want.*

**Asgar:** *What do I want?*

**Suleyman:** *You want to see the girl first and then marry her.*

*(Everybody is surprised again.)*

**Asgar:** *(surprised) My God, how did you know that?*

**Suleyman:** *I understood it the moment you opened your mouth. It's not difficult to understand it. (To Jahan) Is it so or not, aunt?*

**Jahan:** *My child, of course, it's so.*

**Suleyman:** *Is it so or not, Vali?*

**Vali:** *Bey, you are right.*

**Suleyman:** *(To Asgar) Now do you understand that I am absolutely clever?*

**Asgar:** *There's just a little left. If you know one more thing, I'll undoubtedly believe in your being clever. OK, clever guy! How and where can I see the girl so that I can get to know her just a little bit?*

**Suleyman:** *What is easier than that? Disguise yourself, change your clothes, wear old stuff, take chintz and all that under your arms, take an arshin<sup>3</sup> in your hand, then go and sell material from yard to yard.*

*That way, you can choose one of the girls that you see and like, then send your friend and I'll go ask her for you and that's it.*

**Asgar:** *(rejoicing) What an idea!*

**Jahan:** *My child, of course it's a good idea.*

**Suleyman:** *There is no other way to it. (To Jahan.) Is it so or not, aunt?*

**Jahan:** *My child, of course, it's so.*

**Suleyman:** *Is it so or not, Vali?*

**Vali:** *Bey, you are right.*

**Suleyman:** *(To Asgar.) Now do you see that I am clever?*

**Asgar:** *You are clever, brother, you are clever! By God, I'll do just like you said.*

**Jahan:** *Suleyman, why do you let yourself get older but not marry?*

**Suleyman:** *I will marry, aunt. I am also thinking about it. Let's first help Asgar marry. It looks like he is in haste. Then I will marry. (Suddenly.) OK, aunt, what are your plans?*

**Jahan:** *Nothing, my child, what am I supposed to plan?*

**Suleyman:** *No, aunt, it's enough that you stayed a widow for such a time. Let's give you to one good man so he can pray for us.*

**Jahan:** *What, my child, it's so untimely for me to marry.*

**Suleyman:** *What? You are so little! Of course, it is time for you to marry. Is it so or not, people? Of course, it is so. (To Vali.) Hey, Vali, you get ready!*

*(Vali feels ashamed and bows his head.)*

**Suleyman:** *What, Asgar? What are you thinking about?*

**Asgar:** *By God, I'll become a cloth peddler from tomorrow on.*

**Suleyman:** *Good for you. May God help you reach your wish as well as us. Is it so or not, aunt?*

**Jahan:** *My child, of course, it's so.*

**Suleyman:** *Is it so or not, Vali?*

**Vali:** *Bey, you are right.*

**Suleyman:** *If the things turned out to be so, then listen! (Sings.)*

### **Music**

*Learn this trick, find your bride, and marry soon! (2)*

*Know that you won't get such a chance again. (2)*

*But, look here, don't forget us, don't forget us,*

*When you see the girls with black eyes and eyebrows.*

**Everybody:** *(except for Asgar)*

*But, look here, don't forget us, don't forget us,*

*When you see the girls with black eyes and eyebrows.*

**Music.** *Everybody dances.*

### **Jahan:**

*Let the day come that, my child, you get married, (2)*

*And make marrying a fashion among us. (2)*

*Now you teach us tricks, teach us tricks, teach us tricks,*

*Maybe then we'll see the nice sides of life, nice sides of life, nice sides of life.*

### **Everybody:**

*Now you teach us tricks, (3)*

*Maybe then we'll see the nice sides of life. (3)*

**Music.** *Dance.*

### **Vali:**

*Go to the market, to downtown, sell clothes, master Asgar! (2)*

*Look for the bride, find and marry her soon, master Asgar. (2)*

*You found a remedy for your trouble, for your trouble, for your trouble,*

*Open a way for Vali too, for Vali too, for Vali too.*

### **Everybody:**

*You found a remedy for your trouble, (3)*

*Soon open a way for us too. (3)*

**Dance.**

**Curtain.**

**Act II**

*A prelude of music is played, then the curtain rises. Gulchohra, Asya and Telli are sitting in front of Sultan bey's house, one of them sewing something, another one knitting a sock.*

**Gulchohra** *(singing as she sews):*

**Music**

*Everybody in the world is sad because of my sighs and wails.*

**Music**

*Everybody in the world is sad because of my sighs and wails.  
My being sad is because of my making everybody sad. (2)*

**Music**

*The sorrow of love in my poor heart is getting greater day by day.*

**Music**

*The sorrow of love in my poor heart is getting greater day by day.  
It's because I advise a cure to any sorrowless person. (2)  
It won't be for nothing if the stones fall over my head from heaven,  
It's because I've destroyed its foundation with the pickax of my sigh. (2)*

*(Taken from Fuzuli's gazal.)*

*Ah... Come, my sweetheart! (3)  
Come, my sweetheart! (3)*

**Asya:** *(sighs) Gulchohra, I feel so sad every time you sing.*

**Gulchohra:** *It looks like you don't like my singing.*

**Asya:** *No, I like it very much, that's why some sort of sorrow comes over me and I become so sad.*

**Gulchohra:** *Ah, isn't our life an entire sorrow itself?*

**Asya:** *Yes, by God, you are right.*

**Telli:** *Ladies, what has happened to make you grieve? God willing, Sultan bey will marry you off one of these days, you'll go own a house, become mothers and then you won't be grieving anymore.*

**Gulchohra:** *Ah, Telli, it would have been better if they didn't marry us off at all, than the way that they are marrying us off.*

**Telli:** *Why, khanim, why are you talking like that?*

**Gulchohra:** *By God, I am right. I don't like that kind of marriage in which you don't know who you are marrying, who your husband is going to be. You don't know whether he is young or old, whether he is bald or mangy, you don't know whether he's going to beat you or not.*

**Asya:** *(surprised) Then Gulchohra, do you not want to marry at all, but rather stay at home and keep company to a sack of flour?*

**Gulchohra:** *I don't mean to say that I want to stay at home all my life and keep company to a sack of flour. I want to say that one should first see who she's marrying. She should first see him, to see if she likes him or not, to get to know him and then marry.*

**Asya:** *(laughs) You are talking so that I bet even a cooked chicken would laugh at you. Who will you see within these four walls, poor you, (mocking her) that you can see if you like him or not?*

**Gulchohra:** *Then it's better to stay at home all your life as a spinster.*

**Telli:** *Come on, just let my master marry you off, I'll go and see your fiancé, see how his house and all that is, then come and tell you everything.*

*Gulchohra and Asya laugh.*

**Gulchohra:** *Then, Telli, it looks like it's enough just for you to see our fiancés, that there's no need for us to see them.*

**Telli:** *No, khanim, first I'll see them and then you.*

**Asya:** *OK, Telli, let it be as you say. Let them just marry us off, the rest is easy.*

**Gulchohra:** *No, I won't marry until I see and like my future husband. You go and marry without seeing him first.*

**Telli:** *By God, khanim, it's better to marry without seeing your future husband first; otherwise, it doesn't turn out good later. But when you don't see your future husband before the marriage, your heart hurries to see him soon. (Sings.)*

*You on that side, your sweetheart on this side,  
When you bend your neck like a gazelle,  
Your look takes thousands of souls away,  
And brings grief and sorrow over me.*

### **Music**

*You on that side, your sweetheart on this side,  
When you sometimes look askew,  
I can't take my eyes away from yours,  
And this brings grief and sorrow over me.*

### **Music**

*You on that side, your sweetheart on this side,  
When you let your hair down over your face,  
My sigh gets so loud that it reaches the sky,  
And this brings grief and sorrow over me.*

*(Retells.) They dress you well and put makeup on your face, then they mount you up into a carriage and take you to your husband's home saying: "Allah! Allah!" They even kill an animal as a sacrifice to you, then they take you to the room and seat you behind a curtain. You sit there waiting, with your heart leaping. Then you see the door open and the groom come in...*

*(At this moment, the door opens and Sultan bey comes in. The girls keep silent and go on with their work.)*

**Telli:** *(aside) God forbid that the groom is like him.*

**Sultan bey:** *(yawns) Hey, Telli, I've asked you a thousand times to cover me with a blanket when I fall asleep. Now I've slept without a blanket and it seems that I've caught a cold. (Yawns.) Ay... I wish Sona were still alive... Anyway, loneliness is not some business.*

**Gulchohra:** *Father, we would have covered you with a blanket if you had told us. We didn't know...*

**Sultan bey:** *I didn't tell you, I didn't tell you, it's late now. (Yawns.) Now get up and go inside, I'm going downtown. Take good care of the house. Get up! (The girls all get up and go into the house.) It doesn't work, loneliness doesn't work for me. For that past five years, I've been going backwards day by day. The day before yesterday, I told Doctor Mirza Husein that it hurts here, it hurts there. He told me: "Go marry." Where is the woman that I could meet and marry! Of course, nobody will give me his daughter. Because I am old, have little money and to marry again with guns and all that wouldn't become me. I need a widow so that the whole business is over with one Molla, three manats and a loaf of sugar. After*



*that, the wife will start dying my moustache with khina at night and washing it in the morning. And then I won't catch cold when I sleep. Anyway, let me go to the market and see what's going on. (He goes.)*

**Music**

*(Asgar sings behind the curtain.)*

**Asgar:** *Who wants to buy textiles! (2)*

*Who wants to buy textiles!*

*Bafta, tafta, bukhcha<sup>4</sup> hey!...*

*(Asgar comes out onto the stage with textiles under his arm and an arshin in his hand.)*

**Asgar:** *I've been walking around for exactly three days, but I haven't found what I'm looking for yet. Let me finish this day too and see what happens. Fortune, help me!*

**Music**

*(Sings again.)*

*Who wants to buy textiles! (2)*

*Who wants to buy textiles!*

*Bafta, tafta, bukhcha hey!...*

*( Gulchohra, Asya and Telli come out from one side and the neighbor girls from another side. The girls call Asgar.)*

**The girls:** *Cloth peddler, cloth peddler, come here!*

**The chorus of girls:**

**(Sopranos)**

*Cloth peddler, show us your goods,*

*Lay them down one by one and then show them to us.*

**(Altos)**

*Show us, show us whatever you have,*

*The girls want to get dolled up.*

**Music**

*Ah, what a beautiful textile,*

*And its flowers are buds.*

*It's khoncha, the decoration for a wedding, (2)*

*Khoncha...*

*I wish I had a dress sewn of it,*

*Then I would dance as much as I wanted.*

**Music** *(The chorus gets repeated once again.)*

**Asgar:** *(going over to them) Aha, it looks like I've fallen into a field of girls, a bunch of them appeared all at once. Let me go and see how they are. (To them.) Tell me, beautiful ladies, tell me what you want. Chintz, silk, velvet, bafta, tafta, I have everything.*

**Gulchohra:** *Open and let us see what you have that we like.*

**Asgar:** *Now, khanim! (Opens, paying attention to Gulchohra.)*

**Asya:** *(aside) What a handsome guy!*

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**Asgar:** *(looking attentively at Gulchohra again.)* Look, khanim, everything that a heart could want is here. *(Aside.)* What a girl!

**Telli:** Khanim, that material for a skirt is so good!

**Asya:** Come on, what will it be necessary for?

**Gulchohra:** *(To Asya.)* It won't be necessary for you, but it will be necessary for Telli.

**Asgar:** You are right, khanim. *(Aside.)* She is a clever girl! *(To her.)* How many arshins do you want me to cut for your servant?

**Gulchohra:** How much per arshin?

**Asgar:** Nothing, 12 gapiks. But I will sell it to you for two shahis.

**Gulchohra:** We always buy an arshin of such chintz for eight shahis. If you sell for the amount you mentioned, cut ten arshins of it.

**Asgar:** That's OK, let it be a sacrifice to you! *(Measures.)* One... Two... *(Aside.)* Looks like I've found what I've been looking for. Three... Four... By God, she has been destined for me. Eight... Nine... Looks like she has a beautiful inside just like her outer. Ten... Eleven... Twelve...

**Gulchohra:** Ten arshins will do.

**Asgar:** Oh, yes! I forgot, here, it's exactly ten arshins. *(Cuts and gives it to the servant.)*

**Asya:** Ah, you don't have anything that would become us.

**Asgar:** Khanim, I have a lot of things that would become you. But they are all at home now. Inshallah, I will bring them next time. *(Gulchohra gives him money.)* Khanim, let your home be always prosperous, the abundance that your hand brings is enough for me.

**Gulchohra:** How do you know that my hand brings abundance?

**Asgar:** It just occurred to me that your hand brings abundance. *(Aside.)* By God, this is what I want. *(To her.)* Khanim, isn't this Sultan bey's house?

**Gulchohra:** That's it.

**Asgar:** Let it be prosperous! Which one of you is Sultan bey's daughter?

**Asya:** That's her.

**Asgar:** Let her live long! *(Aside.)* She's a very beautiful girl!

**Asya:** Gulchohra, let's go home. If uncle comes and sees us here, he'll get angry. *(They go.)*

**Asgar:** Thank you, live long!

**Gulchohra:** *(going)* Thank you too!

**Asgar:** *(alone)* To tell the truth, I haven't seen a girl better than her; maybe I won't ever see one. Come, Asgar, call your fortune and marry her! Even though Sultan bey hasn't seen me, he has heard my name. He knows that I am a rich young merchant. He'll certainly give his daughter to me if I ask him. Now I wonder if the girl will marry me if I convince her that I am really a cloth peddler. I don't know what the girl will say, but if Sultan bey learns that I am a cloth peddler, he won't give his daughter to me by any means. I wish the girl would come out so I could see her again and talk to her. Wait a minute... *(Looks at the door.)* It looks like someone is coming. Let me hide myself and see who it is. *(He hides himself. The door opens and Gulchohra comes out.)*

**Gulchohra:** Just like Asya says, the cloth peddler was handsome. But now if you tell Asya that she should marry him, she'll scream and yell and say that the cloth peddler is not a match for her. But I think that cloth peddling is not a bad profession. A cloth peddler is just like a merchant. By God, I would marry him if my father agreed. Because I have seen him, I know that he isn't crippled or blind or bald, and I liked his face. His face looks like the face of a nobleman. By God, if you dress him well, he'll become as handsome a guy as the son of a landlord. He tells me that my hand certainly brings abundance and was looking at me in such a way as though he was seeing only me in the world. I wish I could see him again; then I could pay more attention to him.

*My God, look what I'm saying. Who knows? Maybe he has a wife and kids. (She is taken away by her thoughts.)*

**Asgar:** *(coming out with arshin under his arm)* Khanim, I'm sorry...

**Gulchohra:** *(frightened.)* Oy, I got frightened ...

**Asgar:** *Don't be frightened, khanim. I think I've left my arshin here.*

**Gulchohra:** *It would have been here, if you left it here.*

**Asgar:** *That's OK. I have another arshin at home.*

**Gulchohra:** *(aside) He's looking that way again. I feel like I'm struck by thunder when our eyes meet.*

**Asgar:** *Khanim, I wish Sultan bey had twelve daughters like you!*

**Gulchohra:** *What do you want to say?*

**Asgar:** *I want to say that in that case he would give one of his daughters to a landlord, one to a khan, one to a merchant, one to a Molla, one to a seyid and at the end one to me.*

**Gulchohra:** *So what?*

**Asgar:** *But no. He won't give, of course, he won't. He is a landlord, but I am a cloth peddler. He won't give his daughter to me. (teasing her) And even if he did, his daughter wouldn't want to marry me.*

**Gulchohra:** *Looks like you are single.*

**Asgar:** *Yes, I am. And thank God, my business is going well. I can earn my living myself and I don't suffer from hunger.*

**Gulchohra:** *Then why haven't you married yet?*

**Asgar:** *How can I marry? I won't marry the girl that I haven't seen. There is only one girl that I like among those that I have seen and they won't give her to me.*

**Gulchohra:** *Don't you think the girl will marry you herself?*

**Asgar:** *She certainly won't, because she is the daughter of a landlord.*

**Gulchohra:** *You should first ask the girl, then talk like this. How do you know that she won't marry you?*

**Asgar:** *You are right, khanim. Then tell me if you'll marry me.*

**Gulchohra:** *(surprised) Who? Me?*

**Asgar:** *Yes, you. The girl that I like is only you.*

**Gulchohra:** *I thought you were talking of another girl.*

**Asgar:** *She can be no one else, but you.*

**Gulchohra:** *Then did you like me by just seeing me once?*

**Asgar:** *Of course, khanim. My eyes saw you and my heart loved. My heart started leaping for joy the moment I saw you.*

**Gulchohra:** *(aside) By God, it was the same with me.*

## **Music**

**Asgar:**

*I learned a trick and became a trickster,  
So I became the object of mockery for others. (2)  
I went through all kinds of sorrow,  
But I saw you and I loved you. (2)  
I loved you so, I loved you so,  
I loved you so, sweetheart!  
I can't live without you.*

## **Music**

**Gulchohra:**

*I wouldn't see anybody,  
And I wouldn't tell my secret to anybody. (2)  
I didn't know what it meant to fall in love,  
But I saw you and I loved you. (2)  
I loved you so, I loved you so,  
I loved you so, sweetheart!  
I can't live without you.*

## Music

### **Asgar and Gulchohra together:**

*With the help of Fortune,  
The time has come at last. (2)  
I felt myself so happy,  
When I saw you and loved you. (2)  
I loved you so, I loved you so,  
I loved you so, sweetheart!  
I can't live without you.*

## Music

**Asgar:** *Khanim, I am not a match for you.*

**Gulchohra:** *I don't know, but I like you.*

## Music

**Asgar:** *It seems what they say is right, that heart wants heart, khanim.*

**Gulchohra:** *Don't call me khanim, my name is Gulchohra.*

**Asgar:** *Gulchohra, now how do we get your father to give you to me?*

**Gulchohra:** *If he agrees to marry me to you, then everything will be OK. But if he doesn't, I won't marry anybody else.*

**Asgar:** *(aside) Very good! (To her.) Your father will marry you off by force.*

**Gulchohra:** *I won't marry by force.*

**Asgar:** *They will take you away by force.*

**Gulchohra:** *I will suffocate myself then.*

**Asgar:** *God forbid. Then let me think, maybe I can find a way out. Now you go home, or they might see us. Bye.*

**Gulchohra:** *Bye! But keep in mind that I have said what I have said. (She goes.)*

**Asgar:** *(alone) By God, I say that our hearts are the same. Poor girl, say she liked me too. And she doesn't know that I am a rich merchant. I'm not telling her that I am a rich merchant on purpose. I want to put her to the test. Very good! Now let me go and send my aunt here with some excuse so that she can see the girl that I've chosen. (Goes.)*

*(Gulchohra comes out, looks here and there, then sits down and is taken away by thoughts.)*

**Gulchohra:** *What did I do? These words I said to a stranger can become no girl. I don't know where he came from. He's a good guy, he has a good manner of talking. I can't get him out of my head. Oh, my heart is so sorrowful! (Sings.)*

## Music

*I fell in love with such a fresh beautiful flower.*

## Music

*I fell in love with such a fresh beautiful flower  
That she has gotten me into trouble with her whims. (2)  
I fell in love (3)  
With such a fresh beautiful flower. (2)*

## Music

*I dyed my breast red with the blood of my eyes, (2)*  
*And its thanks to that fearless idol, (2)*  
*To that fearless, to that fearless.*  
*This thing is making me as thin as a needle*  
*And causing me to fall into a love that is as long as a yarn. (2)*  
*I fell in love (3)*  
*With such a fresh beautiful flower. (2)*

*(Taken from Fuzuli's gazal.)*

*(Asya and Telli come out and sing.)*

**Asya and Telli:**

*Why are you so sad,*  
*Gulchohra, Gulchohra!*  
*What are these sighs and cries?*  
*Tell us quick, tell us quick.*  
*Why has your face faded?*  
*Gulchohra, tell us quick. (2)*  
*It doesn't become a girl*  
*To grieve and be sorrowful. (2)*  
*What are these sighs and cries?*  
*Gulchohra, tell us quick,*  
*Gulchohra, tell us quick. (2)*

*All of them enter the house. Asgar comes out with his aunt. Jahan is covered with a veil.*

**Asgar:** *Look, aunt, the very girl lives in this house. Take this velvet to her and say that the cloth peddler has sent it. If someone asks you who you are, say that you are the cloth peddler's aunt. Do you understand?*

**Jahan:** *I understood, may your aunt be a sacrifice to you, I am going. (She enters the house.)*

**Asgar:** *(alone) I am getting more and more tied to this girl. If I see Suleyman, I'll send him right today to go and ask her for me. I found what I wanted. This house, this yard and this path are all smiling to my face. (Sings.)*

**Music**

*I looked for you and found you, did you love me too, my sweetheart?*  
*See, I am in such a case that I don't see the world because of my joy. (2)*  
*Come, come, my deer, come; come, come, my gazelle, come! (2)*  
*I loved you, sweetheart, I loved you, my eyes won't see anybody else.*

**Music**

*Good for you, Suleyman!*

**Music**

*Good for you Suleyman, you are such a dodger, you devil!*  
*You taught me and sent me out, and I met my sweetheart. (2)*  
*Come, come, my deer, come; come, come, my gazelle, come! (2)*

*Now let me not stay here. Let me go home, let my aunt come and let's see what she says. (He goes.)*

*(Sultan bey comes home from the market, talking to himself.)*

**Sultan bey:** *Everybody is saying what I say. I wish I found a widow so that the whole business is done with one Molla, three manats and a loaf of sugar. What do I do now? Where can I find such a wife? Come, hey wife! Where are you? Come! Come! (The moment he says these words, Jahan comes out and walks towards him to pass by. Sultan bey is surprised.) Wow! Or am I seeing a ghost? No, it seems to be a real woman. And she came out from our house. It seems that God sent me what I wanted. (He goes towards Jahan.) Hey, sister, who are you? What were you doing at our house?*

**Jahan:** *I had taken some textiles to show to the girls.*

**Sultan bey:** *(aside) She is a woman, but it wouldn't be bad if I saw her face. (To her.) OK, sister, tell me that you are not a man covered with a veil, are you?*

**Jahan:** *What, brother, what are you talking about?*

**Sultan bey:** *Then show me your face a little, so that I don't have any doubts.*

**Jahan:** *(opens her face and shows to him.) Did you see that I am a woman?*

**Sultan bey:** *Yes, I did. (aside) You are a woman—the type of woman that I'm looking for. (To her.) Now help me understand who you are, what you are doing and whose family you are from.*

**Jahan:** *I am the cloth peddler's aunt and sell material to girls and women.*

**Sultan bey:** *OK, but you didn't tell me whose family you are from.*

**Jahan:** *Bey, I am broker Karbalayi Nasir's family, maybe you know him?*

**Sultan bey:** *No, I don't. I don't have anything to do with brokers and the like. OK, so your husband is a broker and you sell cloth.*

**Jahan:** *Yes, My husband was a broker.*

**Sultan bey:** *Was a broker? What is he doing now?*

**Jahan:** *God knows what he's doing now. He died 12 years ago.*

**Sultan bey:** *(gets happy) You don't say! (Coughs and adjusts himself.) You say that you husband died 12 years ago and you are a widow. Very good, how do we do it now?*

**Jahan:** *(surprised) How do we do what?*

**Sultan bey:** *(confused) No, I wanted to say that my wife passed away five years ago. It's so bad to lose a spouse. You remain alone and don't know what to do. (aside.) Good that I found her, I don't have to let her go. (Jahan wants to go, Sultan bey stops her quickly.) Wait a second, where are you hurrying to?*

**Jahan:** *I am in a hurry, I have something to do.*

**Sultan bey:** *What thing could be nicer than this, we are having a pleasant talk. You are a widow and I am a widower, let's talk about our problems. OK, now you say that you are a widow, right?*

**Jahan:** *My God, I said that my husband died 12 years ago.*

**Sultan bey:** *After all, the thing is that I am also a widower.*

**Jahan:** *So what? It's the order of God. You are not the only one.*

**Sultan bey:** *I know.*

**Jahan:** *Then what don't you know?*

**Sultan bey:** *Let's do something together, just the two of us.*

**Jahan:** *What thing?*

**Sultan bey:** *Something that will keep you from remaining a widow.*

**Jahan:** *How do we do that?*

**Sultan bey:** *We do it with one Molla, three manats and a loaf of sugar and that's it.*

**Jahan:** *I don't understand what you are saying at all.*

**Sultan bey:** *You don't understand? What a muddle head you are! Then listen attentively and see what I am saying, you muddle head! (Music. He sings, snapping his fingers.)*

*I bought a horse and galloped it everywhere,  
Come, let me marry you, let me marry you, you muddle head!*

*At last I came to find you, my deer, my deer, you muddle head!  
Aman, aman, oy, you arch-browed, oy!  
Come, let me marry you, let me marry you, my deer, you muddle head!  
(Dances.)*

### **Music**

*I built a house, it is on the stones,  
Come, let me marry you, let me marry you, you muddle head!  
Whatever you say, I'll do it immediately,  
Come, let me marry you, my deer, you muddle head!  
Aman, aman, oy, you arch-browed, oy!  
Come, let me marry you, my deer, you muddle head!(Dances.)*

### **Music**

*You are a widow, I am a widower, come let's get tied together,  
Come, let me marry you, let me marry you, you muddle head!  
Whatever I say, you agree with it,  
My deer, my deer, you muddle head!  
Aman, aman, oy, you arch-browed oy!  
Come, let me marry you, my deer, you muddle head!  
(At this moment, Asgar comes and see them.)*

**Asgar:** *Aha! Things are working for my aunt, too. Very good! (He comes up and shouts in the ear of the dancing Sultan bey.) Bey! Bey! Stop for a moment, I have something to tell you. (Sultan bey winces and stops.) It's not good, you know, you are singing a love song to another man's wife.*

**Sultan bey:** *Who are you? It's none of your business.*

**Asgar:** *What do you mean it's none of my business? She is my aunt.*

**Sultan bey:** *Is she? So you are the cloth peddler?*

**Asgar:** *Yes, I am.*

**Sultan bey:** *Very nice, very good. Don't you have any conscience at all?*

**Asgar:** *What happened?*

**Sultan bey:** *What can happen? You have kept his poor woman a widow for 12 years and don't want to marry her off.*

**Asgar:** *(smiles) What can I do? I can't find a good man.*

**Sultan bey:** *Good man? That's me. Come! Come, let's become relatives. I am a widower, too.*

**Asgar:** *(aside) Aha, this is a good chance. (To him.) Are you serious, bey, or are you joking?*

**Sultan bey:** *Are you my peer that I would joke with you? I'm very serious.*

**Asgar:** *OK, bey, let's suppose that I gave my aunt to you. Then what would you give me in return?*

**Sultan bey:** *What do you mean, what would I give to you in return? Your reward will be that you'll become a relative of such a landlord like me. Your aunt's reward will be that she'll find peace. And my reward will be that I'll do a good deed. What more do you want?*

**Asgar:** *No, bey, it doesn't suit me like that.*

**Sultan bey:** *Then how does it suit you?*

**Asgar:** *Look here, bey, if you want to be a relative with me, let's become double relatives.*

**Sultan bey:** *(surprised) How do we become double relatives?*

**Asgar:** *We become double relatives by my giving my aunt to you and your giving your daughter to me.*

**Sultan bey:** *(very angrily) You idiot! What are you talking about? (he grabs his dagger.) Give my beautiful daughter to a cloth peddler? Go to hell, you and your aunt, too! You impudent guy, I'll slap you so hard that all of your teeth fall into your stomach. Get out of my sight!*

**Asgar:** *(calmly)* Aunt, come, let's go. *(They go. Aside.)* He didn't give his daughter to the cloth peddler Asgar, but he'll give her to the merchant Asgar.

**Sultan bey:** *Be quick, get away from here! (He goes towards the house, stops by the door and watches them leave. They leave.)* Look at this impudent guy; he dares to ask for my daughter! *(He takes out his dagger and runs after them.)* I will kill you, you, impudent's son! *(He comes back and is taken away by thoughts.)* No. I have no luck. It was as though the woman had fallen into my hands from heaven, and she was just what I wanted. A good widow and the business would have been done with one Molla and a loaf of sugar. Noxious guy, where did he come from? Ruined everything. Ruined my plan. Ey vay...  
*(Sings.)*

*My mood became so bad,  
Come, let me marry you, let me marry you, you muddle head!  
My sweetheart slipped away from my hands,  
Come, let me marry you, my deer, you muddle head!  
Aman, aman oy!...  
(Goes in.)*

**Curtain.**

**Act III**

*At Sultan bey's home, Gulchohra is sitting alone and singing. Music is played.*

**Gulchohra:**

*I am a crying nightingale away from your flower-like face.*

**Music**

*I am a crying nightingale away from your flower-like face,  
I am a dumb parrot away from your sugar-sweet talks. (2)*

**Music**

*I thought I would be patient if I parted from your beauty.*

**Music**

*I thought I would be patient if I parted from your beauty,  
I didn't know that being away from your presence was so difficult. (2)*

*Ah... aman-aman... aman-aman!*

*I didn't know that being away from your presence was so difficult. (2)  
Come, my sweetheart, come, my sweetheart,  
Come, my sweetheart, come, my sweetheart.*

**Music**

*I lost my mind away from your intelligence,  
I've become poor away from your luxury. (2)*

**Music**

*My life became dark away from your hair and mole,*



*My home became a desert away from your wild gazelle. (2)*  
*Ay aman... (4)*

### **Music**

*My home became a desert away from your wild gazelle. (2)*

*(Taken from Fuzuli's gazal.)*

*Come, my sweetheart... (4)*

### **Music**

*She buries her face in her hands and cries.*

**Asya:** *(enters and comes up to Gulchohra) Gulchohra, please, tell me what happened that you have been so mournful these past few days.*

**Gulchohra:** *By God, I don't even know myself. I've obviously fallen ill.*

**Asya:** *After all, the one who is ill feels pain somewhere in his body, it seems to me that you don't feel any pain, thank God.*

**Gulchohra:** *Ah, Asya, why do you bother to ask? Please, leave me.*

**Asya:** *No, Gulchohra, you have changed during these past few days. You are distracted, cheerless and quiet all the time, apparently there's some reason from this. Girl, maybe you have fallen in love with someone, ha?*

**Gulchohra:** *(stirs) Who shall I fall in love with?*

**Asya:** *No, no. You blushed. I see that you have fallen in love with someone. But who is that someone? Nobody came to us except for that cloth peddler. (Suddenly.) You've obviously fallen in love with that riffraff.*

**Gulchohra:** *Why should he be riffraff?*

**Asya:** *OK, it's clear! You have fallen in love with the cloth peddler. Girl, is it something that can become you? You—a bey's daughter—have fallen in love with riffraff... And the reason is that he's good looking. By God, even if he shines as a light, I won't pay attention to him. He's not a match for me...*

**Gulchohra:** *(as though she has some guilt) By God, I don't understand myself what kind of case this is. (On the verge of tears, she buries her face in her hands.)*

**Asya:** *(giving advise) You are a grown-up girl, forget these kinds of things. Some riffraff from the market is not a match for you. And if you are falling in love, fall in love with someone who can be your match. Secondly, falling in love itself is a very bad thing for a girl. Look, I am a girl like you, but have you ever seen me fall in love with someone? And by God, your father might hear about it, if he does, be sure that he'll cut you into pieces.*

**Gulchohra:** *Let my father know and kill me so I'm free of this.*

**Asya:** *Don't be stupid, don't be stupid! Come on, let's go into another room and see what I tell you. She takes Gulchohra by the hand and they go.*

**Sultan bey:** *(Enters alone.) That damned cloth peddler's aunt came my way, but it didn't work. She was just the type of woman that I was looking for. A widow, with a good body and the whole thing would be done with one Molla, three manats and a loaf of sugar and that'd be it. But I have no luck... Impudent's son, wants my beautiful daughter in return for his widow aunt. As though I'm bored with my daughter that I'll marry her to some riffraff from the market... I am a landlord whose name all my acquaintances know by heart. I don't eat plov with a khan so that my moustache doesn't get soiled, now some riffraff wants to be my son-in-law... But I would marry his aunt, and if someone said anything to me about that, I'd say that she was a poor widow and I felt for her and married... Anyway, the woman had come my way by herself, but that devil's son ruined everything and didn't let us do our business... Ah,*

*let me go and take a little rest, my back is hurting again... (He goes into another room, Telli comes out of a different room.)*

**Telli:** *(alone) My master went to take a rest again. I am sick and tired of this man, now he'll start again with that "Hey girl, Telli, come and cover me with a blanket."*

*(Sultan bey's voice is heard): Hey girl, Telli, come and cover me with a blanket.*

**Telli:** *Venom, mar to you... (softly) I'm coming, my dear master, I'm coming. (Goes.)*

**Asya:** *(enters, alone) I give her so much advice, but it doesn't work. It looks like the girl has really fallen in love with that riffraff. She cries non-stop, I feel for her. I don't know where this cloth peddler came from. It'd be OK if he were a bey's son or a merchant. But he's some riffraff from the market. (Looks towards the window.) Who is he that is coming to us? What a good-looking guy he is! He's just like a bey's son. When you fall in love, you should fall in love with such a guy! I wonder why he is coming to us, let him bring good news! He's coming, coming right to us, let him come, I won't run away. OK, he came...*

*There's a knock on the door, and Asya opens it. Suleyman enters. Asya tries to hide her face with her hands.*

**Suleyman:** *Is Sultan bey at home?*

**Asya:** *Yes, he is. Take a seat here, I'll go and call him. (Goes.)*

**Suleyman:** *(alone) She's evidently Sultan bey's daughter for she's very beautiful—good for Asgar! It shows that the guy has really good taste to have chosen such a girl. I didn't know that Sultan bey's daughter was so beautiful. If I knew, I would have married her myself. Pity! But she's a very good girl. By God, I've made a big mistake. I should have married this girl myself. Nevertheless, now I have come to ask her for Asgar. Or, maybe, I ask her for myself when I've already come? No, that'd be disloyal to our friendship. Asgar has trusted me and sent me to ask the girl for him and he's in love with her. How could I disappoint him, deuce take it! One should be loyal in friendship. What can I do? I'll look for a beautiful bride for myself; treachery is a bad thing.*

*Sultan bey enters.*

**Sultan bey:** *Oh, Suleyman, it's a surprise to see you here. Let you bring good news, sit and tell me what's up. (They shake hands and sit.)*

**Suleyman:** *Bey, what else could it be other than something good? Thank God that everything is in order.*

**Sultan bey:** *Very good, now tell me what else is up.*

**Suleyman:** *Bey, you know, the affairs of this world are such that a human being needs a human being, a man needs a man. It happens so that first you don't know one person at all, but then you get acquainted, and then you even become relatives. But there's also this side to the matter that when you become relatives with someone, you should make sure that he's worth it, is wealthy and has a reputation. For example, let's take our young merchant Asgar.*

**Sultan bey:** *Who is he?*

**Suleyman:** *Bey, even though you don't know him, you know his father very well. I'm talking about the late salesman Mursal, who was one of the nice persons.*

**Sultan bey:** *Yes, I know him very well. Indeed, he was a very nice person.*

**Suleyman:** *Yes, now this Asgar I'm talking about is his son, and he is a nice person just like his father and a smart guy. And thank God he has his own wealth and all that. And his business is making very good progress.*

**Sultan bey:** *OK, what does Asgar say?*

**Suleyman:** *What Asgar is saying is that he wants to be your relative.*

**Sultan bey:** *But my daughter is still a child.*

**Suleyman:** *Bey, I think she shouldn't be a child. But keep in mind that Asgar is a different kind of a man. Becoming relatives with a guy like him would be beneficial for you in everything.*

**Sultan bey:** *You are right in that. Indeed, I like merchants very much. I don't want to have anything to do with these engineers, doctors, advocates, teachers and the like, and I don't like them. But the thing is, I haven't seen Asgar, even though I know that his father was a nice wealthy man. But you know, a good man could have a bad child.*

**Suleyman:** *No, bey, Asgar is a very nice guy. He is a very smart, good-looking and intelligent guy. I ask you to believe my words and trust me when it comes to this. Would I ever ask your daughter for Asgar, were he, God forbid, a bad person?*

**Sultan bey:** *Then let God bless them, I agree.*

**Suleyman:** *(shakes his hand.) Let God bless them, let God make them both happy. Let them have kids together.*

**Sultan bey:** *(gets up) Now, this way please. Let's go to another room, have tea and continue our conversation there. (They get up and go into another room.)*

**Asya:** *(enters, alone) By God, I have never seen a handsome guy like him. Now let me look through the hole of this door. (She bends down and looks through the hole of the door.) And I will fall in love with this guy. (Angrily.) So what? Why shouldn't I fall in love with a young guy like a bey's son when Gulchohra falls in love with riffraff? I can fall in love with him so that I'll leave Gulchohra behind. (Amorously.) Indeed, when you fall in love, you become so doleful! (Sings.)*

#### **Music**

*My handsome sweetheart,*

#### **Music**

*I have something to tell you, my handsome.*

#### **Music**

*Look at this poor lover of yours  
Now and then, my handsome!*

#### **Music**

*I fell in love with you,*

#### **Music**

*You didn't have grace for me.*

#### **Music**

*Look at this poor lover of yours  
Now and then, my handsome!*

#### **Music**

*I'm burning in the fire of love,  
You didn't come to my help.  
Look at this poor lover of yours  
Now and then, my handsome!*

## Music

*My handsome sweetheart, my handsome sweetheart.*

*Dances and then leaves.*

**Telli:** *(comes out) Thank God that the guest came and saved me from my master's hands. Or "cover me here, cover me there, massage me here, massage me there." He's killing me. I've never seen such a lascivious man. By God, I wish some good man would marry me and rid me of him. But where's such a good man? (The moment she says this, there's a knock at the door.) Who is that? Or did God send this good man to me? (She goes and opens the door, Vali enters.)*

**Vali:** *Is this Sultan bey's house?*

**Telli:** *Yes, that's it, what do you want?*

**Vali:** *Is there a guest at your house?*

**Telli:** *Yes, so what?*

**Vali:** *Why would you get angry then?*

**Telli:** *Why should I get angry? Who are you?*

**Vali:** *I'm a kilim<sup>5</sup>-weaver. (Aside.) But what a girl! She's evidently the servant.*

**Telli:** *What's a kilim-weaver?*

**Vali:** *You tell me first: who are you?*

**Telli:** *I am the servant of this house.*

**Vali:** *And I am the servant of that house.*

**Telli:** *Which house?*

**Vali:** *I mean, that house, that.*

**Telli:** *My God, it's as though the guy has gone mad.*

**Vali:** *Why should I be mad, my deer!*

**Telli:** *I am not a deer.*

**Vali:** *You are a deer for me, I'd give my soul to you as a gift. So, so... so... (Sings.)*

## Music

*Let the bey take the khanim,  
And marry her very soon. (2)  
And let me marry you,  
And become a bey too. (2)*

**Telli:** *Do you have money?*

**Vali:** *Yes, I do! (2)*

**Telli:** *If you have money, then I'll marry you.*

**Vali:** *I know that you will.*

**Telli:** *Then you are my sweetheart.*

**Vali:** *Then you are my soul.*

**Music.** *They dance.*

**Telli:** *I'll marry such a man  
Who has a lot of money. (2)  
Who has a lot of money  
And few problems. (2)*

Do you have money?

**Vali:** Yes, I do. (2)

**Music.** They dance.

**Together:** Let the bey take the khanim,  
And marry her very soon. (2)

**Vali:** And let me marry you.

**Telli:** And let you marry me. (2)

**Vali:** And become a bey too.

**Telli:** So you become a bey too. (2)

(Alone) Do you have money?

**Vali:** Yes, I do. (2)

**Music.** They dance.

**Telli:** (likes it.) Hey, come on then, tell me quick what you want.

**Vali:** I want you, you, did you understand?

**Telli:** Goodness, what a thing did I get myself into!

**Vali:** Light of my eyes, now go ask that guest to come out to the door, I have something to tell him.

(Telli goes.) Go, my deer, go! Go, my gazelle, go! What a girl! By God, let my master marry his bride, and I will marry this one so that we have our weddings on the same day. (He rubs his hands together.)

Suleyman and Sultan bey come out.

**Suleyman:** Vali, is that you? I know what you've come for, let's go. (To Sultan bey:) Bey, bye for now.

**Sultan bey:** Bye, be safe. (They go. Sultan bey accompanies Suleyman to the door and comes back.)

Telli, call Gulchohra and Asya here. Let me tell the girl and see what she says. Yes, the affairs of the world are so. There were times when we were young, too. Now...

The girls come in.

**Sultan bey:** OK, take your seats. Gulchohra, why are you so mournful? What happened? Are you sick?

**Gulchohra:** No, dad, I'm OK.

**Sultan bey:** Very good, my daughter, do you know what happened?

**Gulchohra:** No, dad.

**Sultan bey:** Then know that I'm marrying you off.

Gulchohra stirs, Telli becomes happy, Asya is regretful.

**Asya:** (aside) Pity, the guy slipped out of my hands.

**Gulchohra:** Father, I don't think I'm old enough to marry.

**Sultan bey:** You are old enough. You are not a child, you know and understand everything. I'm marrying you off to a merchant guy who is both young and wealthy.

**Gulchohra:** Father, don't get angry, but I won't marry!

**Sultan bey:** (softly) Look here, don't be stupid! I promised the matchmaker.

**Asya:** (aside) Thank God, the guy who came was the matchmaker.

**Gulchohra:** No, father, I don't want to marry!

**Sultan bey:** OK, OK, don't put on airs now, I know that you are happy inside.

**Gulchohra:** No, Father, I am serious. I don't want to marry. Kill me if you want, but don't marry me off.

**Sultan bey:** It looks like you're really serious! (Loudly.) What stupid words! What do you mean you don't want to marry? You won't stay at home all your life and become old?

**Gulchohra:** (crying) I don't want to marry!

**Sultan bey:** (very loudly) Don't be impudent, for God's sake! What right do you have to say words like this! Your father is marrying you off and your duty is to obey!

**Asya:** Of course, Gulchohra, listen to what your father says. Now when they are marrying you off, your duty is to do it. There's no need for hassles here.

**Gulchohra:** Let my father kill me, but not marry me off.

**Asya:** After all, what right do you have to speak like this!

**Sultan bey:** I'm telling you not to be stupid! I'm marrying you off to such a guy that you won't find anybody else like him. What are you thinking of?

**Gulchohra:** Marry Asya off to that guy, let me stay at home as a spinster.

**Sultan bey:** Don't talk nonsense. If they ask for Asya, I'll marry her off, too. Now they are asking for you and I have to marry you off first.

**Asya:** Of course, that's so.

**Gulchohra:** I don't want to marry!

**Sultan bey:** (angrily) That's none of your business, how dare you not marry! You father is telling you to marry, marry! If you go on like this, I'll nail your ears to the wall.

(Gulchohra cries. Silence. Sultan bey goes to and fro angrily. After awhile he says softly.) My daughter, do you think that I'm marrying you off to a bad person? You can be sure that you're going to marry a guy who's a merchant and has a lot of money and wealth! Am I crazy to marry you off to a bad person? You are my only daughter, the light of my eyes, can I make you unhappy? (Kisses his daughter on the forehead.) Listen to your old father's words, don't do stupid things!

**Gulchohra:** (crying) Father, by God, I don't want to marry. What can I do? Please, don't marry me off, let me stay at home.

**Sultan bey:** My daughter, don't be obstinate! Obey what your father says, otherwise God won't make you happy, you'll be unhappy and keep this in your mind that my word is my word, I promised the guy. God willing, very soon you'll get engaged, marry and have your wedding. You'll marry, your husband will be a nice wealthy man, you'll have kids, you'll have your own house and I'll find my peace and be comfortable in this old age of mine. Listen to what I'm telling you!

**Gulchohra:** Father, if you want me to marry, then let me marry who I want.

Asya is surprised.

**Sultan bey:** (with surprise and astonishment.) My daughter, who is the one that you want to marry? Tell me.

Asya is frightened.

Music.

**Gulchohra:** (singing)

The cloth peddler has got me into such an unseen sorrow, (2)

That I have no more strength, I'm burning in the fire of love, (2)

All day and night I'm thinking about the cloth peddler, (2)

I can't think about anything else, I'm burning in the fire of love. (2)

I fell in love with the cloth peddler the moment I saw him, (2)

I became more and more sorrowful day by day, I'm burning in the fire of love. (2)

**Sultan bey:** (gets very angry) My daughter, who is the cloth peddler? (aside) Or is it the one with his aunt?

**Gulchohra:** If I marry, I'll marry only him.

**Sultan bey:** (screams all of a sudden) What are you talking about, you idiot's daughter! You'll marry riffraff from the market? Are you crazy or something? By God, I'll slap you so hard that all your teeth fall into your stomach. Yes, now Sultan bey's daughter has fallen in love with riffraff, great! Now I understand

why you don't want to marry. But you keep this in your mind that if you do stupid stuff like this, I swear by my father's grave that I'll teach you such a lesson that you'll take your breath just once. You are doing something that dishonors me. What right do you have to look at the cloth peddler? Let me see that cloth peddler again, I'll shoot him with a bullet so he disappears forever. Keep this in your mind that I'm called Sultan bey. I am not a person who will accept dishonor. I can kill you as well as him!

**Gulchohra:** (crying) Father, by God, kill me so that I'm free of all this.

**Sultan bey:** (screaming) I will kill! Let me not deserve to carry this hat if I don't cut you into pieces if you mention the cloth peddler's name once again! Can there be such a dishonor that my daughter falls in love with riffraff! (He hits the ground with his foot.) Get up right now and get out of my sight! Be off! Honorless! (Gulchohra gets up and leaves, crying bitterly. Sultan bey goes to and fro hastily. To Asya and Telli.) When did the cloth peddler come here?

**Asya:** (frightened) By God, I have no idea.

**Sultan bey:** What do you mean you have no idea? You are hiding it from me! You go to hell, too! (Asya and Telli run away.) What a trick I got into. Some riffraff comes to my house and makes my daughter fall in love with him. Can there be such a dishonor! Now I understand why he was asking for my daughter in return of his aunt. To hell with his aunt, too, I don't want her anymore. The girl is crazy. I should marry her off soon, or something worse might happen. If I see Suleyman, I'll ask him to let Asgar know that they should abduct the girl. It seems it won't be possible in a mild way. And I can get angry and kill her. Asya, Telli! Come here. (Asya and Telli enter.) Look here, I'm going to the market, you give advice to Gulchohra and help her understand. Otherwise, by God, I'll kill you all! (Leaves for the market.)

**Asya:** (angrily to Telli) Now, poor us, what can we do? Are we to blame that Gulchohra has fallen in love with riffraff? Go call Gulchohra here! (Telli goes.) Look at this! Look at the girl's courage! She tells her father that she's fallen in love with the cloth peddler. This girl is doing risky stuff.

Gulchohra and Telli come in. Gulchohra falls onto the bed again.

## Music

### Asya and Telli:

*This much of your sighs and wails will do. (2)*

*What is this scream for? (2)*

*Do you think it's OK that you have a sweetheart, (2)*

*And your father becomes a stranger for you? (2)*

### Gulchohra:

*I've lost my strength, (2)*

*There's no help from anybody.*

*My case became so pitiful,*

*How can I help screaming! (2)*

### Asya and Telli:

*It doesn't become you to sigh. (2)*

*Come on and be happy just like us. (2)*

*Make efforts so that you leave (2)*

*A good reputation among the people. (2)*

### Gulchohra (singing):

*Cloth peddler! (2)*

*I've lost my strength,*

*I who took your breath away,*

*Who put you into the fire of love,  
Have become so pitiful now.  
I didn't know how love would affect me,  
I would have never thought that  
I could get into trouble and torture like this.  
I loved you,  
But you put me into sorrow  
Without feeling any mercy for me.  
Ah, I am burning in the fire of love!*

#### **Act IV**

*Asgar's home. The house has been well decorated and Asgar himself has dressed well.*

**Asgar:** *Poor Gulchohra, I gave her a hard time. Now the poor girl thinks that they are really marrying her off to a stranger. But I like how she kept her promise. She didn't want to marry in a mild way. That's why, according to her father's request, I've sent people to abduct her. That's OK, my trick will be disclosed in an hour or two, then the girl will be happy as well as me, her father and everybody. But my heart is in such a haste, I want them to bring the girl soon so that the poor thing doesn't suffer anymore, but what a thing I did! Look with what trick I married! But I didn't do anything bad, I did good. Let Suleyman's father's soul rest in peace, what a thing he taught me. Now I'm marrying the girl I saw and loved and the girl loves me too. Anyway, let me go and see if my aunt has prepared the things that I asked her to. (Goes.)*

*The door opens after awhile. They've abducted Gulchohra. Some guys bring Gulchohra in, taking her by the arms, close the door and go away. Gulchohra falls onto the bed crying loudly. After awhile she says:*

**Gulchohra:** *What a trouble this is that I'm taking! They are marrying me off by force. I don't know who I'm marrying, they are separating me from my lover. I don't want this wealth, this luxury! I want my lover. (She buries her face and cries.)*

#### **Music**

##### **Gulchohra:**

*Fate brought me the sorrow of separation,  
And thought I deserved this much torture. (2)  
I have no more strength, no more endurance for patience,  
I'd rather die than suffering these torments. (2)  
God, have mercy on me, God, have mercy on me!  
God, help me, please, have mercy on poor me!*

#### **Music**

*No, I can't bear this anymore. I have no more strength to endure. The best thing is to commit suicide by hanging myself and free myself from all this. (She opens her kerchief to hang herself, but hearing the cloth peddler's voice at that moment, listens to it in surprise and likes what she hears.)*

**Asgar** *(singing behind the curtain): Who wants to buy textiles?*

#### **Music**

*Asgar comes in and greets her.*

**Gulchohra:** *(looking surprised) Is that you or a stranger?*



**Asgar:** *That's me, Gulchohra, that's me, don't worry!*

**Gulchohra:** *(cries) Do you see what they are doing to me? I'd have committed suicide if you came a little later. How did you come here? They'll kill you if they see you here. Let's run away if there's such a chance. (Pulls him hastily.)*

**Asgar:** *(laughs) Where should we run from our home?*

**Gulchohra:** *What are you talking about? Whose house is this?*

**Asgar:** *This is my house and then it'll be yours too.*

**Gulchohra:** *I don't understand anything. Who has abducted me?*

**Asgar:** *The people that I sent.*

**Gulchohra:** *(thoughtfully) And I thought that I had been abducted by the people sent by the merchant my father is marrying me off to.*

**Asgar:** *Of course, it's so.*

**Gulchohra:** *(gets surprised) I didn't understand again. For God's sake, help me understand this trick.*

**Asgar:** *(laughs) Look, Gulchohra! I am both the cloth peddler who fell in love with you and the merchant guy who your father is marrying you off to. I disguised myself as a cloth peddler to find a bride for myself. Then I found you, asked you from your father and he agreed. But your father had no idea that I was the very cloth peddler, because he hasn't seen me yet from the beginning.*

**Gulchohra:** *You are merciless! Didn't you feel for me that I went through this much trouble, that my father wanted to kill me? I wanted to commit suicide. I wouldn't have fallen in love with you, if I had known it.*

**Asgar:** *Well, the good part is that our happiness washes away all those troubles, doesn't it, my dear, Gulchohra?*

**Gulchohra:** *(agrees in the end) Yes, it does.*

**Asgar:** *Then come on, let's go see all the rooms and my aunt, too.  
(They go to another room.)*

*Sultan bey enters from the door.*

**Sultan bey:** *By God, it's a father's heart anyway, it couldn't stand. I decided to come and make sure that the girl hasn't done anything to hurt herself. (Looks around.) Where are they anyway? Hello, anybody there?*

*Asgar enters.*

**Asgar:** *Salam aleykum, Sultan bey, welcome to us.*

**Sultan bey:** *(first with a happy face, then surprised) You... Are you Asgar or that cloth peddler?*

**Asgar:** *No, bey, I am Haji Mursal's son Asgar and I'm a merchant by profession.*

**Sultan bey:** *I see. But somehow it seemed to me that I'm seeing that riffraff in front of me.*

**Asgar:** *Which riffraff?*

**Sultan bey:** *Forget about it, there was this riffraff selling textiles.*

**Asgar:** *I know. You wanted to marry his aunt, but he wanted to marry your daughter in return, so you got angry and turned him out of your yard, right?*

**Sultan bey:** *(surprised) Yes, how did you know?*

**Asgar:** *How wouldn't I know unless I was that same person?*

**Sultan bey:** *(with astonishment) What are you talking about?*

**Asgar:** *Yes, yes. I did so on purpose so I would see the girl first and then marry her.*

**Sultan bey:** *Are you serious?*

**Asgar:** *Here, your daughter will confirm it. (Calls Gulchohra.) Gulchohra!*

**Gulchohra:** *(enters and goes up to her father) See, father, this is what both you and I wanted. Asgar played a trick on us and caused you anger and me trouble. He's to blame for everything.*

**Sultan bey:** *(wakes up) OK, now I understand. What a trickster you are! Your late father was not so at all. Ya Allah! (Shakes his hand.) Are you OK? Gulchohra, come here! (Gulchohra goes up to him, her father*

kisses her on the forehead.) Very good, very nice, you Asgar! But what a trickster you were!  
(Remembers something.) OK, where's your aunt then? Was she your real aunt or she was a trick, too?

**Asgar:** No, she's my real aunt.

**Sultan bey:** And is she a widow herself? (Gets happy.)

**Asgar:** Yes, she is.

**Sultan bey:** Then call her here!

**Asgar:** Let her come, what do I say? Gulchohra, call my aunt here please.

Gulchohra goes.

**Sultan bey:** Let me marry her! She's a widow just like me and the doctor told me that I should marry. I think if the doctor sees your aunt, he'll tell her that she should marry.

**Asgar:** I'm OK with that, marry her if you want and we'll become double relatives. Did you understand now what being double relatives means?

**Sultan bey:** (laughs) Yes, I did, I did, you trickster!

Gulchohra and Jahan enter.

**Sultan bey:** (to Jahan) Come on! Step ahead! Do you see what a trickster your nephew is? OK, what do you say now? Are you OK with one Molla, a loaf of sugar and three manats? Let's organize our wedding on the same day as Asgar and Gulchohra's.

**Jahan:** I'm OK with it, let God give his blessings.

**Everybody:** Amen, amen!

**Sultan bey:** Those guys are alone at home and must be worried now, waiting to see what has happened. Send your servant to bring Asya and Telli here, too.

**Asgar:** Just a moment, I'll send him now. (Goes out.)

**Sultan bey:** By God, I feel like I have become young again because of joy. (Corrects himself quickly.) I mean, I'm not old, I'm just like a young guy. Good for me!

Asgar comes.

**Asgar:** I sent him.

This moment Suleyman comes in.

**Suleyman:** Salamun aleykum.

**Sultan bey:** Suleyman, aleykassalam. What a trickster friend you have, ha?

**Suleyman:** Yes, he's such a trickster. I don't know who he learned it from.

**Asgar:** What do you mean who I learned it from? Didn't you teach me all this? Here, let my aunt tell!

**Jahan:** He's right. Suleyman is the reason for all this, he taught Asgar.

**Sultan bey:** You don't say! Suleyman, I didn't know that you were this way, where did you learn such stuff?

**Suleyman:** Bey, I just came up with them from my own head.

**Sultan bey:** Let your head be safe and sound!

**Suleyman:** (suddenly sees Gulchohra and pays attention to her.) OK, is this Gulchohra?

**Asgar:** Yes, that's her.

**Suleyman:** But the girl that I saw didn't look like this.

**Sultan bey:** You've obviously seen Asya.

**Suleyman:** Who is Asya?

**Sultan bey:** She's my niece.

**Suleyman:** (gets happy) Really? You know, why should I stay single then? Give her to me so that I can also marry!

**Sultan bey:** Are you serious?

**Suleyman:** Of course.

**Sultan bey:** Then I give her to you, marry!

**Everybody:** Let God give his blessings, let God give his blessings! It's so nice!

**Suleyman:** (aside) This is how the end of an honest friend is.

Asya, Telli and Vali enter.

**Sultan bey:** Here they come. Asya, will you marry this guy if I give you to him?

**Asya:** (ashamed) Yes, I will.

**Sultan bey:** You are a brave girl. You are more obedient than Gulchohra. Very good, very nice. (Vali and Telli look at each other. Vali sighs deeply.) What a deep sigh you took, my son, what's your problem?

**Asgar:** What will his problem be? You gave Gulchohra to me, Asya to Suleyman and are marrying my aunt yourself. Now give Telli to him!

**Everybody:** He's right, he's right.

**Suleyman:** (To Vali.) You see, didn't I tell you to get ready?

**Sultan bey:** Telli, will you marry Vali?

**Telli:** (bravely) Yes, I will.

**Sultan bey:** Vali, will you marry Telli too?

**Vali:** (is ashamed and then suddenly) Yes, I will! (Laughs.)

**Everybody:** Let God give his blessings!

**Sultan bey:** OK, when should we start our weddings then?

**Everybody:** Right away today.

**Sultan bey:** OK! Then let's start, everybody take your match!

Everybody stands by his match and they dance. First they dance slowly to the music, then quickly as the music gets more quickly, they dance till the curtain falls.

## CURTAIN

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<sup>1</sup> Ney – an Eastern reed instrument much like a flute.

<sup>2</sup> shahi – a monetary unit used in Azerbaijan during earlier times.

<sup>3</sup> arshin – a piece of wood or some other material that was one arshin (arshin is an old unit of measure equal to 28 inches) long, which was used during old times in Azerbaijan to measure textiles when selling them. Such materials were called “arshin mali” which means goods of arshin—in other words, materials that can be measured with arshin. The person who was selling them was called “arshin malchi” – the person who sells “arshin mali.”

<sup>4</sup> Bafta, tafta, bukhcha – names of different textiles.

<sup>5</sup> kilim – a woven type of rug.