

**MÂROUF: THE COBBLER
OF CAIRO : COMEDY-
OPERA IN FIVE ACTS**

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Mârrouf: The Cobbler of Cairo : Comedy-opera in Five Acts by Lucien Népoty

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LUCIEN NÉPOTY

**MÂROUF: THE COBBLER
OF CAIRO : COMEDY-
OPERA IN FIVE ACTS**

G. SCHIRMER'S
COLLECTION
OF OPERA-LIBRETTOS

MAROUF
THE COBBLER OF CAIRO

COMEDY-OPERA
IN FIVE ACTS

FROM THE ARABIAN NIGHTS
AFTER THE TRANSLATION BY
DR. J. C. MARDEUS

THE LIBRETTO BY
LUCIEN NÉPOTY

THE MUSIC BY
HENRY RABAUD

ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY
MARTIA LEONARD

NEW YORK: G. SCHIRMER

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veiled Princess and her ladies. He is fearful that this new wife so forced upon him is but a second edition of the old one; when she finally lifts the veil he is astounded and conscience-stricken; he faints away, and the ladies would come to his assistance, but are dismissed by the Princess, who has fallen in love with Mârrouf in spite of certain strange revelations that he made before becoming unconscious. As the curtain falls she stoops and kisses him.

In Act IV the Sultan, by reason of the unaccountable delay in "the caravan's" arrival, has grown uneasy, though he tries to hide his uneasiness from the watchful eye of his Vizier. The latter persuades him to allow him (the Vizier) to have speech with the Princess, so that they may learn what manner of man Mârrouf really is. She fools them to the top of their bent, and the Sultan dismisses the crestfallen Vizier; yet a doubt still lingers in his mind, and he asks his daughter to find out exactly when Mârrouf expects "his caravan" to arrive. He goes out, and Mârrouf comes in. In answer to the Princess's inquiry Mârrouf gayly informs her that "the caravan" is only a figment of fancy, and that he was merely a cobbler, presented by Ali as a rich foreign merchant. She joins in his merriment, but is suddenly seized by fear of the consequences when the deceit is discovered; and finally decides to flee with Mârrouf. So she goes out to disguise herself as a youth, to Mârrouf's great delight and admiration, and to the astonishment of the attendant mamelukes. They run off together, and the galloping of horses is heard outside.

The final act is in a plain near Khattân. A fellah is urging his worn-out donkey to pull the plough; stopping, he goes out to draw water for the patient beast. Enter Mârrouf and the Princess afoot, but in high spirits; they are hungry and thirsty, however, and doubtful concerning the possibilities of the fellah's hovel; but the owner, entering, assures them that he is a masterhand at cooking lentils in oil, and goes into the hut to prepare the repast. Mârrouf meantime takes up the ploughing where the fellah left off; but something has caught the ploughshare, and the donkey is unable to make headway, so Mârrouf, looking for the cause of the difficulty, discovers a ring attached to a large flat stone. Raising this with great exertion, he finds a subterranean passage, but hesitates to explore it. Now, hearing the fellah approaching from the hut and fearing that they might have to divide any riches concealed below, in case he should also see the passage, they try to hide it from him, and Mârrouf, in his struggle to replace the stone, pulls the ring from its socket. It is engraved with mystic characters, to decipher which the Princess proceeds to polish the rusty ring; all of a sudden the fellah turns to them, transformed into a majestic, splendid Genie, who tells the affrighted pair that he is the slave of the ring, and ready to obey any commands; that he is the guardian of the hidden treasure beneath the stone, and that Mârrouf has merely to wish, to possess whatever he desires. At the Genie's kindly, though ironical, prompting, Mârrouf and the Princess wish themselves precisely such a caravan as Mârrouf had boastfully described in the marketplace. The Genie commands a swarm of dwarfs to bring out the treasure, and sinks into the ground. The dwarfs finish their task, and disappear likewise. Mârrouf and the Princess now hear the sound of approaching horses, which they take at first for the expected caravan, but which merely heralds the coming of the Sultan, led by his crafty Vizier in chase of the runaways. Mârrouf is seized and bound, and confronted with his partner in fraud, Ali; they are about to be executed, when the caravan summoned by the Genie really arrives; the repentant and overjoyed Sultan releases the captives, and all ends happily.

PERSONNAGES

LA PRINCESSE SAAMCHEDDINE	M ^{mes} . DAVELLI.
FATTOUMAH, LA CALAMITEUSE	TIPHAINÉ.
MÂROUF	MM. Jean PÉRIER.
LE SULTAN	VIEUILLE.
LE VIZIR	DELVOYE.
ALI	VIGNEAU.
LE FELLAH	DE CREUS.
LE PÂTISSIER AHMAD	AZÉMA.
LE KÂDI	PAYAN.
PREMIER MARCHAND	CAZENEUVE.
DEUXIÈME MARCHAND	AUDOUIN.
UN ÂNIER	DONVAL.
LE CHEF DES MARINS	DE CREUS.
PREMIER MUREZZIN	,
DEUXIÈME MUREZZIN	THIBAUD.
PREMIER HOMME DE POLICE	DELOGER.
DEUXIÈME HOMME DE POLICE	CORBIÈRES.

Mameluks, Caravansiers, Esclaves, Dames du Harem, Hommes et Femmes du peuple.

Acte I : au Caire.—Acte II : au souk de Khattân.—Acte III : palais du Sultan à Khattân.—Acte IV : au harem à Khattân.—Acte V : dans une plaine aux environs de Khattân.

CHARACTERS

PRINCESS SAAMCHEDDINE.	FIRST MERCHANT.
FATTOUMAH, the Kill-joy.	SECOND MERCHANT.
MÁROUF.	A DONKEY-DRIVER.
THE SULTAN.	A SEA CAPTAIN.
THE VIZIER.	FIRST MUEZZIN.
ALI.	SECOND MUEZZIN.
A FELLAH.	FIRST POLICEMAN.
AHMAD, the Pastry-Cook.	SECOND POLICEMAN.

Mamelukes, Caravaneers, Slaves, Ladies of the Harem, Populace.

Act I. In Cairo.—Act II. The Marketplace of Khattán.—Act III. Palace of the Sultan
at Khattán.—Act IV. The Harem at Khattán.—Act V. A plain
in the environs of Khattán.

MÂROUF

Comedy-Opera in Four Acts

ACTE PREMIER

LE CAIRE.—Une misérable échoppe de savetier. A droite, une petite porte. Au fond, des fenêtres s'ouvrant largement sur la rue du souk. A gauche, en pan coupé, une grande porte, aveuglée par un rideau usé.

SCÈNE PREMIÈRE.

MÂROUF, SEUL.

(Il donne quelques coups de marteau, sans entrain, sur une vieille babouche.)

MÂROUF

Il est des musulmans dans la ville du Caire, qui se délectent d'épouses à la chair beurrée — O ces épouses ! — Limpide est leur beauté comme l'eau des étangs. Leurs yeux — ô les yeux des adolescents ! — sont des lacs pleins de lune. Leurs pieds — ô leurs pieds ! — sont des fers de lance, et leurs cheveux sont des cheveux bénis, crinières des nobles cavales .. O le bonheur de ceux, dans la ville du Caire, ayant tant de blancheur pour éclairer leurs nuits !... Hélas ! moi, ô Mârouf ! ô pauvre ! je dois subir — Allah le veut — une vieille calamiteuse...

(Il a dit les derniers mots en baissant la voix et en tournant la tête avec inquiétude vers la porte de droite. Alors, il aperçoit Fattoumah qui est entrée sans bruit.)

SCÈNE II.

MÂROUF, FATTOUMAH.

FATTOUMAH.

Maudit soit le Lapidé !... Encore dans ta paresse, ô chien des savetiers !

ACT THE FIRST

CAIRO. A poverty-stricken cobbler's booth. Small door, right; wide windows, back, opening on an alley of the market. At an angle, left, a large door covered by a worn curtain.

SCENE I.

MÂROUF, ALONE.

(He strikes a few desultory blows with his hammer on an old last.)

MÂROUF.

To think there are Mussulmans in this town of Cairo who possess delectable wives with shining skins! Ah, what wives!—Their beauty gleams like the water in deep pools!—Their eyes!—O the eyes of budding youth!—are as lakes beneath the moon! Their feet—oh, such feet!—are as the heads of spears, and their hair is a benediction, flowing like the manes of noble steeds! Ah, happy they, in this town of Cairo, that have such whiteness to light their nights, whilst I, alas, O wretched Mârouf, must endure—so Allah wills it—an old witch! (Lowers his voice at the last words and turns his head uneasily towards door R. He perceives Fattoumah, who has come in quietly.)

SCENE II

MÂROUF, FATTOUMAH

FATTOUMAH.

Plague upon thee! Art idling again, dog of a cobbler!

MÂROUF.

O fille de l'oncle ! Allah n'a pas laissé tomber de mon côté le plus petit ressemelage.

FATTOUMAH.

Cela n'est point bon pour ta tête, car mon destin m'a fait concevoir une envie. Si tu ne peux la satisfaire, à coup sûr je mourrai d'un grand désir rentré.

MÂROUF (*timidly*).

Et... cette envie ?...

FATTOUMAH.

C'est une kénafa sucrée au miel d'abeilles, bénédiction d'Allah ! — Apporte-la moi ce soir même, ou bien ta nuit sera plus sombre, ô savetier, que les nuits de Job, l'ancien patriarche. O quel désastre sur ta tête, si tu n'apportes à l'épouse la blonde kénafa, sucrée au miel d'abeilles ! (*Elle sort.*)

SCÈNE III.

MÂROUF, SEUL, PUIS LE PÂTISSIER.

(*Mârouf reste un instant accablé, puis il reprend ses lamentations où il les avait interrompues l'arrivée de Fattoumah.*)

MÂROUF.

Hélas moi, ô Mârouf ! ô pauvre ! je dois subir—Allah le veut—une vieille calamiteuse, un mélange de poix et de goudron, un fléau sur mes yeux, un emplâtre insupportable sur mon cœur de savetier. Sa colère éternelle ayant noirci ma vie, je quittera le jardin de ce monde, sans emporter la moindre fleur dans le pan de mon manteau.

(*Il va s'appuyer à une des fenêtres du fond. De la ruelle, le pâtissier, qui est devant sa boutique, l'aperçoit, et lui adresse le bonjour.*)

MÂROUF.

O, daughter of my uncle! Allah hath not vouchsafed me so much as the resoleing of a slipper.

FATTOUMAH.

Then thy head shall suffer for it, because I have been taken with a great desire! If thou canst not satisfy it, it will turn upon me and I shall die.

MÂROUF (*timidly*).

What is this desire?

FATTOUMAH.

It is for a cake, sweetened with the honey of bees—the blessing of Allah! Bring it me this evening without fail, or thy night will be blacker than the night of the patriarch Job. Misfortune fall upon thee if thou bring me not the golden cake, sweetened with the honey of bees! (*Exit.*)

SCÈNE III.

MÂROUF, ALONE; THEN THE PASTRY-COOK

(*Mârouf stands for an instant overcome, then takes up the lamentations interrupted by Fattoumah's entrance.*)

MÂROUF.

Ah me! Alas! Wretch that I am! I must endure—so Allah wills—an ancient witch, a mixture of brimstone and pitch, a plague to my eyes, and an unbearable load upon my cobbler's heart. Her everlasting rages have blackened my life—I shall leave the garden of this world with never a flower upon the border of my cloak!

(*He goes to lean from one of the windows. The Pastry-Cook, before his shop in the alley, salutes him.*)