



Aladdin

by Colin Barrow

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THE SCRIPT

Aladdin is one of the most popular pantomimes performed and with that comes the ever-present problem of finding a script that delivers something different from when you did it the last time. This script is one that can solve that problem with simplicity, but still tell the story in a traditional way. In this version the laundry scene has been taken out and the cave scene brought forward to earlier in act one. This has given rise to more story telling of Aladdin and the lamp with its journey of intrigue. There has also been a character change too, Wishy Washy has been dropped and replaced with a second Genie, who's an apprentice Genie and a comedy part. The plight of Widow Twankey and her laundry remain the same as does the Villainous Abanazar, but the journey it takes gives the audience something less predictable. This makes it a win-win situation for cast and the returning viewing audience alike.

SYNOPSIS

Aladdin has seen the girl of his dreams, Princess Pekoe, but to gain her hand in marriage he must have wealth, and a lot of it. Working in his mother's laundry is not what he feels he was put on this earth to do. Widow Twankey, Aladdin's mother wishes that instead of Aladdin dreaming and fantasising of what could be, he'd be more useful helping her wash Peking's dirty laundry. Abanazar, Aladdin's uncle, who has not seen Aladdin since a babe in arms, returns to entice his nephew into entering a cave for the magic lamp. But when Aladdin reaches the third and final chamber of the cave, there is not one lamp, but two! An old dirty lamp and a sparkling clean lamp, not knowing which to choose, Abanazar instructs that it must be the sparkling clean lamp that holds the power and not some dirty old bit of junk. How wrong he is, for the gleaming lamp holds none other than, Turkish Delight a comic apprentice Genie much to the disappointment and anger of Abanazar. The Vizier, who is side kick to Abanazar, and not as loyal as he ought to be with the Emperor, helps to get the lamps swapped, the new lamp for old! In the meantime, the Emperor, now a widower, and Widow Twankey rekindle their love for each other from the days of their youth. A comedy duo, Cheap and Cheerful, arrive in Peking and soon find themselves working in Twankey's laundry but more importantly, they become a distraction to swap the old lamp for a dud. Bheehi, the most powerful Genie in true pantomime style, thwarts evil and wrongdoings and returns the city of Peking back to be a city of love and harmony. And we hope everyone lives happy ever after.

Approximate running time:- Two hours (*not including interval*)

USEFUL INFORMATION

Casting:- The casting can be quite flexible to suit your available performers. Although some are best played by male, it would be quite possible for them to be played by a female if your performer availability dictate to do so

Chorus:- This script can be used with or without a chorus. Where there are chorus speaking lines and you have no chorus, these can be delivered by performers or adult/child members.

General staging:- The scenery and lighting can be as simple and easy as you wish, especially if tight budget and logistics have a strong influence with your production. This also applies to costuming and properties, and yet still providing a brilliant pantomime. Of course, if budget and logistics dictate otherwise, the skies are the limit!

Scenes:- The script is written to use three full stage scenes and two front cloth scenes. These are not set in stone and re-name some scenes if you wish to run more cloths. Likewise, if you are running with limitations. The full stage scenes could use the same back drop of a nondescript mottled effect. And dress each scene where needed to suit its title. The front cloth scenes could be done front of curtain or again in front a nondescript mottled effect.

Set dressing:- Dressing for the scenes is entirely up to you and the stage space available. It will also depend on what type of back drops you are using too. Especially for those working with no chorus and have more stage space available.

Misc:- Additional jokes can be slotted in where or if you feel they are required to your choosing.

MUSIC AND DANCE

Song/dance numbers:- The script is written to allow the *maximum time* of **one minute to one and a half minutes** for each song or dance routine. In each case choosing and ending to give a natural finish. These can be shorter but watch if too many run longer as this could alter the pantomime's whole running time.

Not all character song slots required to be executed. They are there as ideal spots if you wish to use them. This helps those cast who do not feel comfortable to sing to opt out. Additional songs can be added to your own discretion if you feel the need to do so.

You do not need to use all the slots allocated for chorus song/dance numbers, especially if your chorus numbers are very low. Select, the slots most suitable to your chorus.

If you are working without a chorus and not using the song/dance slots allocated. You can add an extra cast member song or two or lengthen the other cast songs allocated slightly to make up the time.

The script does supply some song suggestions, but they do not need to be used. All other song/dance numbers are to your own choice. This allows the cast who are involved to select something that's comfortable for them and perhaps a little more modern. It also prevents the repetition of music from recent past productions you have staged.

Song/dance not with time restrictions:- The opening number, Principle boy and girl duet, the community song and finale song can take their own natural time length as they are important numbers. By keeping to these parameters, the production will run at a good pace; and be fresh and entertaining to your audience.

DISCLAIMER:- The performing licence of this script does NOT include permissions, licences or royalties of ANY music/songs used with the staging of this script.

For **ALL** music and song selected to stage this script, any royalties, licenses or permission has to be obtained by **YOU** the group, club or company according to the music performing rights laws. **These include ALL parody suggestion given with-in the script.**

*(The majority of premises are registered and you **must** contact to make sure the music/song selections used comply with the licence held by the premises. Do this prior or at the start of rehearsal to avoid complications near or on the production dates.)*

CHARACTERS

3 male, 2 female, 5 either

Aladdin.....Principal boy
Princess Pekoe.....Principal girl
Widow Twankey.....Dame
Cheap.....One of a comedy duo
Cheerful.....One of a comedy duo
Emperor
Vizier.....Semi villainous
Abanazar.....Villain
Beehi.....Genie
Delight.....Apprentice genie

Chorus (*if you have one*) **And/or adult/child members wishing to participate**

Two chorus speakers or towns folk (can be doubled up by the performers playing the genies if required)

CHARACTER GUIDELINES

Aladdin: Principal boy. Played by a female. Costumed as a traditional principle boy in a Chinese style.

Princess Pekoe: Principal girl. Played by a female. She is quite determined in her speech and manner. Costumed as a traditional principle girl in a Chinese style.

Widow Twankey: Dame. Can be male or female. Costumed as a traditional Dame for an oriental pantomime. For act two, scene one, a costume for a comedy ballet routine will also be required

Cheap: One of a comedy female duo. Can be male or female and Dame like in character. A male would give a more comedy element to the character if you have the availability, otherwise the character can be played by a female. The costuming should be quite sensational, fashion conscious and on the side of tarty. For act two, scene one, a costume for a comedy ballet routine will be required and a slinky outrageous costume for act two scene three.

Cheerful: One of a comedy female duo. Can be male or female and Dame like in character. A male would give a more comedy element to the character if you have the availability, otherwise the character can be played by a female. The costuming should be quite sensational, fashion conscious and on the side of tarty. For act two, scene one, a costume for a comedy ballet routine will be required and a slinky outrageous costume for act two scene three.

Emperor: Best played by a male. Although regal, he has a happy go lucky attitude with a sense of fun. Costumed typically like an Emperor. For act two, scene one, a costume for a comedy ballet routine will also be required.

Vizier: Best played by a male. Semi villainous with quite a stern attitude. Costumed typically of his status.

Abanazar: Best played by a male. The villain. Requires a pointed type chin beard or full facial beard. Costumed in a traditional way for a villain of his type.

Bheehi: Can be male or female but would work best as a male. A powerful type of traditional Genie and costumed as such.

Delight: Can be male or female. Quite a comedic character that walks prettily and daintly. The character is written so if played by a male, a 'effeminate style to the character and can be played with finesse and precision. With an edge of femininity through dialogue or acted with the full-blown works of 'camp'. If played by a female the dialogue lends itself to be very feminine with the Prima-donna or dolly-bird type of character.

Chorus (if you have on) And participating adults/children: Costumed to fit the scenes they are participating in

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

- Scene one** - PEKING CITY (Full stage)
- Scene two** - THE MOUNTAIN SIDE (Front cloth)
- Scene three** - PEKING CITY (Full stage)
- Scene four** - SOMEWHERE IN PEKING (Front cloth)
- Scene five** - INSIDE THE CAVE (Full stage)
- Scene six** - SOMEWHERE IN PEKING (Front cloth)
- Scene seven** - PEKING CITY (Full stage)

ACT TWO

- Scene one** - THE ROYAL PALACE (Full stage)
- Scene two** - THE MOUNTAIN SIDE (Front cloth)
- Scene three** - THE ROYAL PALACE (Full stage)
- Scene four** - SOMEWHERE IN PEKING (Front cloth)
- Scene five** - THE ROYAL PALACE (Full stage)

ALADDIN

ACT ONE
SCENE ONE
PEKING CITY (*full stage*)

Opening dance/song:-

Aladdin should be sat on stage near the front and appears to be deep in thought. At end of the routine two town folk come forward to Aladdin as the cast exit if they were used. If a chorus was used, then they stand about the stage as set by the director

1st: Why do you look like you've the world on your shoulders, Aladdin?

Aladdin: Oh, I'm sorry. I was thinking about something.

2nd: If your mother finds you like this she'll have much to say.

Aladdin: (*stands and moves*) Mother always has much to say, most of it rubbish.

If you have more chorus, the following lines can be divided between them instead just using the two as scripted

1st: Are you in love, Aladdin?

Aladdin: There is someone I think about often.

2nd: Do we know her name?

1st: Is she a local girl?

Aladdin: Yes to both your questions. I am in love with Princess Pekoe

All: The Princess Pekoe!

2nd: But those who set eyes upon the Princess must die.

1st: And where would you find the wealth her father wishes for her dowry?

Aladdin: I know! I know! I can't look at her because I am a peasant and I haven't any money for her dowry. But she is the most beautiful girl I have ever seen.

2nd: Oh, Aladdin, you had better stop dreaming about her immediately.

Aladdin: I suppose you're right, but if I become rich one day, rich enough for her dowry, then I shall marry the Princess. I've been put on this earth for better things than washing the stinky laundry of Peking.

1st: And we had all better get back to the laundry before your mother, Widow Twankey, catches us away from it.

Dame enters

Dame: Did I hear my name mentioned? *(See Aladdin)* So here you are, you lazy good for nothing rascal. Why are you not getting all hot and bothered and steamed up in the laundry?

Aladdin: I came out here to...

Dame: *(cuts in)* I bet you have! Eighteen years I've looked after you. Eighteen years out of my thirty-four on this planet, feeding you, clothing you and teaching you everything I don't know and the little bit I do know...

Aladdin: *(cuts in)* But Mother. I just stepped out for a breath of fresh air.

Dame: *(taking no notice)* Eighteen years of my glamorous life gone to the dogs. And seventeen of those years without your father getting under my feet, god rest his soul. And all you have time for is to play and make eyes at the girls.

Aladdin: I play with the boys too, Mother!

Dame: *(with shock)* You what! *(Realising)* Oh. I see, and all these years I've been working my fingers to the bone to put food on the table.

Aladdin: What food?

Dame: Exactly. I can remember when we had no bread to put the butter on. I can even remember when we had no butter to put on the bread too!

Aladdin: And more often than not, it's a plate with neither!

Dame: It's difficult for a woman on her own with no husband. *(Sobs a little)* I still remember the last words your father said to me as he drew his last breath.

Aladdin: *(shakes head and moves away slightly)* No, not tonight please!

Dame: *(astonished)* How did you know that?

Aladdin: I didn't, but this is not the time or the place.

Dame: Yes, he said that too. But what really shed a tear of the heart was when he said, "I love you more than all my twenty-four mistresses,"

Aladdin: *(astounded)* Twenty-four mistresses!

Dame: Only whilst I was washing clothes in the laundry and it stopped him getting rusty. And now, I'm all alone. *(Sobs)* No money to buy food, no money to buy clothes, no money to pay rent. And worse still, no money to go to Bingo.

Aladdin: But you will marry again one day, Mother. And one day, I will live in a big fine house with my wife.

Dame: And one day you'll realise life isn't that simple.

Aladdin: But intend to marry the Princess and live in the Palace.

Dame: Marry the Princess! And what may I ask do you intend to pay the dowry with? Smelly socks and grubby knickers from..... *(local group or person)*

Aladdin: Our luck must change soon, Mother.

Dame: We have loads of luck, Aladdin, and it's always bad! Now, enough of this day dreaming stuff and go do some work. *(Begin to exit)*

Aladdin: Okay, Mother. I'll be with you in a minute.

Chorus begin to exit

Dame: Your idea of a minute is my idea of thirty! *(Exits)*

Aladdin: I suppose she's the best mum a boy could have. Trouble is, she won't let me go and I need to break free and make my own life.

Song:-

After the song Aladdin sits. Abanazar head just appears stage side left

Abanazar: *(try to get Aladdin attention)* Psssst. Psssssst!

Aladdin: Yes.

Abanazar: *(just enters onto the stage)* Come here boy.

Aladdin: *(stands and moves toward Abanazar)* How can I help?

Abanazar: I'm looking for a boy called, Aladdin. Do you know of him?

Aladdin: I am Aladdin, but I'm afraid I do not know you.

Abanazar: As a babe in arms you'd be too young to remember me. I am your fathers' brother, and I have been travelling the world since a few days after you were born. *(Moves toward Aladdin)* My name is Abanazar.

Aladdin: No one has ever said that I have an uncle, not even mother, and I'm sure she would have done so.

Abanazar: Possibly not my boy. I was not popular with the family. Now, Aladdin. I want to help you and your mother, it's what my brother would have wanted. Times are hard for you and money is scarce. *(Offers Aladdin some bank notes)* Here, take this money, give it to your mother with my regards.

Aladdin: *(holding the money)* I can't take your money, Uncle.

Abanazar: I wish to help you, now take it.

Aladdin: *(to audience)* Oh, dear should I take it or not?

Abanazar: Oh, yes you should.

Some audience participation could happen here and do business as required

Aladdin: If you insist, Uncle. If I can repay in anyway, you only have to ask.

Abanazar: I wouldn't dream of asking you, it's a gift. There is nothing - *(slight pause)* – well as a matter of fact.

Aladdin: Yes, Uncle?

Abanazar: There is something you could do for me. That's if you don't mind?

Aladdin: I don't mind at all.

Abanazar: If you come with me I will show you something that will surprise you and I need your help with it.

Aladdin: I should tell mother, or she might worry about me.

Abanazar: She'd be up to her elbows with soapsuds and wouldn't appreciate you interrupting her.

Aladdin: That's true. Well, Uncle, show me this surprise that requires my help?

Abanazar: With pleasure, Aladdin. With pleasure. (*Leading Aladdin*) Come, follow me and let me show you.

Aladdin and Abanazar exits left

An upbeat good strutting piece of music/song is played and at a suitable point Cheap and Cheerful enter right like two parading fashion models

Cheap: Here we are boys and girls, two luscious babes of a certain age.

Cheerful: We're Cheap and Cheerful and in our prime. I'm Cheerful (*indicating*) and this is Cheap!

Cheap: Do you mind! I might be reasonable, but never cheap!

Cheerful: Let's face it dear, the only thing we've pulled so far is a bit of tough street food from our teeth.

Cheap: But taking them out your mouth to do it, was going a bit far.

Cheerful: It was the only way I could see what I was doing.

Cheap: Well, I can't go another step. I'm knickered!

Cheerful: Don't you mean knackered?

Cheap: No, knickered. My breath is coming out in short pants! We've not found one wealthy man to spend his money on us.

Cheerful: That one was keen down Chow Mien street.

Cheap: But he was living in a card board box up the ally! That's not the sort of luxury I wish to be accustomed too.

Cheerful: We've done the rough end of the market now for years, it's time we sampled the better life we hear so much about. And to do that, we need money 'cos we ain't even got enough for prawn crackers!

Cheap: And that means getting a job. What skills have you got?

Cheerful: I got a Black Belt in origami! *(Taking a Kung Foo stance)*

Cheap: That's Japanese paper folding!

Cheerful: But I wear a black belt to do it.

Cheap: *(looking at cheerful)* I fancy you've put on weight recently?

Cheerful: That's 'cos I've had a lot on my plate!

Cheap: I could enjoy a full roast and all the trimmings right now.

Cheerful: That sort of talk will send me daft with dizziness.

Cheap: You can't go daft when you already are.

Cheerful: I resemble that remark!

Song:- *Anything of a comedy element that would befit the situation and the two characters*

Cheerful: *(looks off right)* Look out, we've got a visitor, looks like something the cat dragged in.

Cheap: *(looks)* And rejected!

Dame enters right

Dame: Good day. *(Puzzled)* – Err – well – are you rejects from a dolly factory?

Cheerful: Saucy mare, have you looked in the mirror lately?

Dame: No, because there is always an old woman looking at me in the thing.

Cheap: We're Cheap and Cheerful.

Dame: So I see! I'm Delores Twankey, I run Peking's most illustrious laundry. What are you doing here?

Cheerful: Like all ladies of a certain age, we are looking for love.

Dame: You won't find anything like that here. I'd know because I've been looking for years.

Cheap: So no young men at all?

Dame: Now I didn't say that. I have my son Aladdin.

Cheerful: And is he available?

Dame: The lazy good for nothing is always available. The hardest thing he does of a day is to get out of bed!

Cheap: I don't think he's our sort.

Cheerful: We want a man each with lots of money.

Cheap: Or with enough vigour and will go to work and earn lots of money.

Dame: The only man with money here is the Emperor, and if anyone is going to iron his unmentionables, it's me! But if you're looking for work, my illustrious laundry could do with a couple of laundrettes. And if you're lucky, my son Aladdin will help you but as usual he's gone again.

Cheerful: Gone where?

Dame: Goodness knows. He's got no father you see to keep an eye on him.

Cheap: Perhaps we could find him for you between washing clothes?

Dame: I'd be grateful if you could.

Cheerful: We saw an old man with a young lad not that long ago.

Dame: (*alarmed*) What old man?

Cheap: Some old geezer with a pointed beard off his chin.

Dame: Did Aladdin know him?

Cheerful: They seemed quite friendly. Like a Pal.

Dame: A Chum.

- Cheap:** Don't know about his Pedigree but he did have a Royal Canine about him.
- Cheerful:** A bit of a Wagg and resembled a Bakers Complete.
- Dame:** *(thinking)* It could be him...
- Cheap:** What, Aladdin?
- Dame:** No. That Wolfhound you described with a beard.
- Cheerful:** Is it someone you know?
- Dame:** *(with some thought)* Well – I mean – it could be, I suppose. Or am I confusing them with someone on the telly!
- Cheap:** *(well known female soap star or a celebrity)*
- Cheerful:** *(repeat the chosen name)* hasn't got a beard!
- Dame:** Will you two be quiet! I'm thinking. *(Pause)* I've got it! I've got it!
- Cheap:** We don't want it, you keep it.
- Dame:** Hanky Panky had a brother.
- Cheerful:** Who?
- Dame:** My late husband, Hanky Panky had a brother. Not a nice person and always up to no good. His name is Abanazar, but we called him Flung Dung.
- C & C:** Flung Dung!
- Dame:** And normally from a great height! He left just after Aladdin was born and I was told he died in an accident. 'Course it may have been a lie and he still lives. Oh, dear, I hope Aladdin has not been kidnapped?
- Cheap:** You can rely on us to help.
- Cheerful:** We women will stick together.
- Song:** *A song of unity, friendship, camaraderie or similar*

The chorus can enter to join in if wished

Black-out

ACT ONE

SCENE TWO

THE MOUNTAINSIDE (*front cloth*)

Abanazer and Aladdin enter stage left

Abanazar: Here we are, no need to go further.

Aladdin: There is nothing here.

Abanazar: Everything is here. I shall show you the wonders that only you will see.

Aladdin: You are just having fun with me. It just a crummy lump of mountain outside of Peking.

Abanazar: (*points off stage right*) Look, Aladdin, look. What do you see?

Aladdin: It looks like an entrance to somewhere. (*Goes to right side of the stage and looks off*) It is an entrance, but it's very small. (*Looks back at Abanazar*) Does it lead anywhere?

Abanazar: Obey me and you will not be sorry for it.

Aladdin: I am ready to obey your commands, Uncle. What must I do? (*Looks off stage right*) There's a big rock in the way. (*Turns to look at Abanazar*) I can't get beyond that!

Abanazar: My spell will move the rock, now listen carefully. Enter the cave and you will find some steps. Go down them carefully and at the bottom you will enter the first cavern. It will be full of gold and ornaments of great value. Do not touch any of it until the curse has been lifted. Continue into the second cavern before finally entering the third cavern where you will see its only treasure, a lamp that has a burning flame. Go to the lamp and be very careful not to touch anything,

Aladdin: I'm not so sure about this.

Abanazar: Silence! Do as I say, and no harm will come to you. Go to the lamp, pick it up and then blow out it's flame. Once you have that, retrace your steps and bring the lamp to me.

Aladdin: Just the lamp?

Abanazar: Yes, the lamp is the only item I require from the cave. Once I have it you can return and remove any treasure you wish for your own keeping.

Aladdin: What of the curse?

Abanazar: It will be lifted once the flame is blown out. Now go, I will guide you.

Aladdin: The rock, Uncle, you said, "you'd move the rock?"

Abanazar: *(as if casting a spell)* Allakazam. Allakazee. Move the rock, so we can enter thee!

The sound of the cave opening is heard

Aladdin: It's done it, Uncle. *(Exits off stage)* There's a lot of steps, and it smells like..... *(somewhere local)* I have found the first cavern.

Abanazar: That's the way boy. Now go to the next cavern.

Aladdin: *(off)* There's loads of treasure here, Uncle, that's not been affected by a credit crunch.

Abanazar: Keep going boy, keep going.

Aladdin: *(off)* WOW. You should see what's here in the second cavern. It's like the inside of Amazons bank vault.

Abanazar: Go to the lamp, it's in the next cavern.

Aladdin: *(off)* There are two lamps, Uncle. One is bright and shinning that looks the business and worth a lot. The other is a dirty filthy thing that needs throwing away.

Abanazar: Pick up the shinning bright one you fool. That's the one I want, not some worthless bit of junk. Pick it up and blow out the flame and bring it to me.

Aladdin: As you say, Uncle. Oh, Uncle, do you think there is a cat down here? 'cos I've just trodden in something and it smells awful.

Abanazar: Never mind the smell, it's good for the nostrils. Are you nearly here?

Aladdin: (off) Yes!

Abanazar: Now hurry I'm getting cold out here.

Aladdin: (off) You should be in here, if my points aren't frozen yet, they soon will be! (*Holding the lamp at arm's length but not coming onto the stage*) Here it is, Uncle.

Abanazar grabs the lamp with gusto

Abanazar: That's it boy, now go and get your treasure.

Aladdin's arm disappears

Aladdin: (off) Thanks, Uncle. I shall be able to have my Princess after all.

Abanazar: (*Casting a spell*) Allakazam. Allakadore. Close the cave for evermore!

The sound of the cave closing is heard

Aladdin: (off) Hey. What have you done, you two faced, good for nothing, creep?

Abanazar: Aha, ha, ha. Cheerio, Aladdin. For now, the lamp is mine! I shall have all the power I want with any wish I ask to the Genie inside. Ha, ha, ha.

Song:- *Any suitable baddie song*

Black-out

ACT ONE
SCENE THREE
PEKING CITY (*full stage*)

The scene can open with a chorus dance if wished. If this is done, the chorus can remain on the stage after the routine

Dame, Cheap and Cheerful enter

Dame: (*crying*) There's no food in the house, no money and no Aladdin. Two days and no sign of him.

Cheap: (*comforting*) There, there. We shall continue to look.

Cheerful: I don't know about that, my feet hurt something rotten. I got more athletes foot down there than all the athletes at the (*sporting event*)

Cheap: Twankey has fed us for the last two days, it's the least we can do is to help her.

Cheerful: If you call having soup made from someone's old sock, and bacteria on stale toast, food. You must have eaten in some pretty grim places.

Dame: (*still sobbing*) My dear Aladdin, gone. I worry as he has had no experience, and how can you experience, experience, when you have had no experience?

Cheap: (*suggesting*) To get experience!

Dame: (*stops sobbing*) And that's what worries me. He might enjoy those experiences and want more! And it's all to do with that bearded rattlesnake of an uncle of his. My day could not get any worse if it tried.

Vizier enters

Vizier: And what have we here?

Dame: Correction, it's just got worse.

Any chorus can exit here

Vizier: It has come to my attention that you owe a considerable rent on that so-called laundry of yours. Pay up or get out!

Cheerful: Who's he?

Dame: The Vizier.

Cheerful: The fizzy what?

Vizier: I am the Vizier.

Cheap: I got it! He's Peking's optician. Vizier express!

- Vizier:** I am Vizier to the Emperor. Now, Widow Twankey, who are these two bits of mutton dressed as lamb?
- Dame:** Cheap and Cheerful!
- Vizier:** Are they indeed. And I'd say they're overpriced!
- Dame:** It's the inflation. You don't get much for your Chinese Dollar these days.
- Vizier:** So I have witnessed with the bill for the washing. It would seem the smaller the garment the higher the price!
- Dame:** It's the fiddle tax.
- Vizier:** The fiddle tax!
- Dame:** The smaller the garment the more fiddle to launder. So, if you up graded to proper knickers instead of flossing yourself with them posing pouches you'd save yourself a fortune.
- Vizier:** The garments you refer to are those of the Emperors.
- Dame:** He's such a nice man and if it wasn't for you keep sticking your nose in, I could be well onto being an Empress. And if I had my way you'd be given the boot!
- Vizier:** You have no chance of that! (*Moves to exit*) He has a soft heart and whilst I am in the Emperors employ, I will advise to give you a very wide berth. And if I had my way, scum like you would be given my boot! (*Exits*)
- All:** (*calling after*) So it's scum to that has it!
- Cheap:** I don't think he likes us.
- Dame:** (*bitterly*) He don't like anybody. (*Not amused*) Do you know, when I was a little girl and I broke wind in the bath I thought I'd lost my heart in the bubbles!
- Cheerful:** What made you think that?
- Dame:** 'Cos that toe-rag had put a frog in the water. Five minutes I sat there waiting to die whilst watching what I thought was my heart hop about!

Cheap: You've known him a long time then?

Dame: It seems longer than that sometimes. Abanazar was my late husband's brother. And Abanazar and old Vizzy pants are old friends and were the top rankers of Peking's nasty gang.

Cheerful: But Abanazar is not a Chinese name?

Dame: That because Abanazar and my late husband's parents came from Egypt. Somewhere near the Sphinx.

Cheap: It's the drains. They stink something rotten at times.

Dame: Sphinx, not stinks!

Cheerful: *(looking off)* Shh. Someone's coming?

They all look off left as the Emperor enters right

Emperor: And what have we here?

They all jump and face the Emperor

Dame: Well if it isn't old skimpy knickers himself. *(Curtseys and stumbles)*

C & C: Who?

Dame: It's the Mint Imperial of Peking.

All three curtsies

Emperor: *(with glee)* A man could go mad with desire in the presence of such beauties. It's like being in a sweet shop and being surrounded by sumptuous temptations.

Dame: Before you go mad. I'm mad with that Vizier of yours, threatening me with eviction. You know I charge as much as I can, spend as much as I can, and if there is enough for rent, I pay it. And there hasn't been enough!

Emperor: *(dismissing)* Take no notice of him, I am your landlord and I make the final decision. *(With keenness)* But please, who are these fabulous girls?

Cheap: *(takes a pose)* I'm Cheap.

Cheerful: *(takes a pose)* I'm Cheerful.

Dame: *(moving right up to the Emperor flauntingly)* And I'm free!

Emperor: *(to audience)* Is it not like waiting for a rickshaw? You wait for ages to get one, and then you have three to choose from! *(To the three ladies)* I feel like a honey bee and not knowing which Queen to choose.

D,C&C: Then we shall help you!

Song: *Suggestion :- **Kiss me, Honey Honey, Kiss me** (composers, Michael Julien, Al Tomothy) Sung by Shirley Bassey 1958
Dame, Cheap and Cheerful each sing a line of the song in rotation as set by the director. All three do this whilst the Emperor laps up the attention as they each seductively in a comic way toy with him in turn. This will give rise to a well-rehearsed piece of choreography which will never fail to cause laughter. Be inventive and use your strengths to suit your audience*

Emperor: *(moves stage right)* I enjoyed that, I must say. Maybe we could do something together one day. *(Turns to face them)* What do you say?

Cheap: *(moves and stands beside the Emperor)* I'm ready, willing and able.

Cheerful: *(moves and stands beside the Emperor knocking Cheap out of the way)* I'm light footed, rhythmic and a fast mover.

Dame: *(moves and stands beside the Emperor knocking Cheerful out of the way)* And I'm like a coiled spring ready to burst all over the place!

Emperor: *(Moves to stage centre)* Then we shall do it.

Vizier enter left

Vizier: *(bows)* Your, Highness, Princess Pekoe wishes to speak with you.

Emperor: My daughter can speak to me whenever she pleases, Vizier.

Vizier: *(points to the ladies that are stage right)* But you are in the presence of three factory rejects of the worse kind. They must not see the Princess.

Emperor: You should get out more, Vizier. They are not rejects, just worn around the edges.

Vizier: *(moves to stage left)* And threadbare some would say. Old Chinese proverb says, “when one gets down to the canvas, it's time to throw away and buy new rug”. If you permit, I shall do the throwing away! *(Moves as if to eject the three ladies)*

Emperor: *(goes to the Vizier)* You will do no such thing. Now, what does my daughter want?

Vizier: She will not tell me, your Highness.

Emperor: Then take me to her this instant, Vizier.

Vizier: If you will follow me, your Highness. *(Exits left)*

Emperor: *(faces the three ladies)* I must leave you my dears, it is my daughter. *(Sighs)* The vision I have before me is one that no one would believe unless they saw it for themselves. Three little maids that look so young, one would think they had just left school. *(Exits left)*

Song: *Suggestion:- **Three Little Maids From School Are We.** (written by Gilbert and Sullivan) From the Mikado*
Singing this can make a very funny routine with some simple choreography. It is a number which can allow for some good visual fun to the audience if given some inventive thought. If you have a chorus they can also join in if you wish

Black-out

ACT ONE
SCENE FOUR
SOMEWHERE IN PEKING *(front cloth)*

Emperor and princess enter stage right

Emperor: So, what is it my child that you wish to speak to me about?

Princess: Oh, Father. It's this silly idea that the man who pays the highest price for my dowry has my hand in marriage.

Emperor: It is the way that it is done here. And a centuries old tradition.

Princess: But it is so outdated. I want to marry the man I love, not some dented bucket with loads of money.

Emperor: Beauty is only skin deep my dear.

Princess: I know that, Father. You have always had the hots for Delores Twankey and it takes a strong stomach to see beyond her skin to see any beauty.

Emperor: This is true, and she has that little something I can't quite put my finger on that makes her different to other women.

Princess: And from what I've heard, you might want to wash that finger once you've found that little something!

Emperor: And now, two more song birds have come into my heart. It's a troubled time we live in when one must choose the best out of three women of the opposite sex.

Princess: And an even more troubled time when I am given to the man for the highest dowry. Father, you must change this rule, I want love of my choosing. Not learn to love he who marries me because of his wealth.

Emperor: I will speak to the Vizier. He will know what can be done.

Princess: (*firmly*) That rusty old nail lives in the dark ages. He is not the man you think he is, Father. He is only out for his own gains and I do not like the company he keeps.

Emperor: What company?

Princess: Many that I would not wish my worst enemy onto. But one, the bearded one, he gives me the creeps and he's old!

Emperor: My child. The world through young eyes on those who are senior and termed as old biddies by the young, is an old fashioned and ancient world. But we have wisdom on our side and with that wisdom I am aware of the Vizier and his failings. For many years now, he has tried to

discourage any dealings that I might have with the Widow Twankey. And if I allowed him, he would have evicted Widow Twankey and her son Aladdin from Peking into the wilderness years ago.