

The RUBÁIYÁT of OMAR KHAYYÁM

A screenplay by John Richard Sullivan

From a translation by Edward Fitzgerald (First Edition)

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1. EXT. CITY - DAWN

A young woman sits with her head bowed and eyes closed, as if she were asleep, or in trance. This is THE STUDENT. She slowly lifts her head, opens her eyes, and gazes forward with a foggy expression. The morning sun lights her face.

THE STUDENT

Awake! for Morning in the Bowl of Night has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight.

THE STUDENT turns and tilts her head slightly.

THE STUDENT

And Lo! the Hunter of the East has caught the Sultán's Turret in a Noose of Light.

In the far distance, the sun slowly rises between tall buildings or skyscrapers. Here the underscoring begins. Throughout the film, it will be comprised of percussion and idiophones from various world cultures.

Title card:

THE RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

2. EXT. CITY - MORNING

Three DANCERS emerge from steam in a street devoid of people or traffic, dancing to the underscoring. We follow their progress as they leap, gesticulate, and glide with joy and abandon.

Title card:

THE CARAVANSERAI

THE DANCERS arrive at the entrance to a tavern. THE VINTNER joins them, entering the frame from the right. THE VINTNER addresses the viewer as THE DANCERS cavort around her.

THE VINTNER

Dreaming when Dawn's Left Hand was in the Sky, I heard
voices within the Tavern cry –

THE VINTNER flings open the door of the tavern.

3. INT. THE CARAVANSERAI – MORNING

The room is lit by dusty sunlight coming through the windows. Assembled within the tavern is a small group of people. This is THE CHORUS. They look up and raise their wine glasses.

THE CHORUS

Awake, Little ones, and fill the Cup before Life's Liquor
in its Cup be dry.

THE VINTNER stands in the center of the room, addressing the viewer.

THE VINTNER

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before the Tavern
shouted –

4. EXT. OUTSIDE THE DOOR OF THE CARAVANSERAI – MORNING

Assembled outside the door of the tavern is another small group. This is also THE CHORUS. Their leader is OLD KHAYYAM, an aged man but still spry in both his voice and mannerisms. OLD KHAYYAM carries a staff, which he taps on the ground.

THE CHORUS

Open then the Door! You know how little while we have to
stay, and, once departed, may return no more.

THE DANCERS fling open the door and, with smiles and laughter, usher THE CHORUS inside.

5. INT. THE CARAVANSERAI – DAY

Those who were outside approach the bar. THE VINTNER, smiling, pours wine into glasses and hands them to the new arrivals.

THE STUDENT sits at the bar. She fondles an empty wine glass with one hand and holds a book with the other. She contemplates the book and then turns her gaze to the side.

THE STUDENT

Now the New Year reviving old Desires, the thoughtful Soul
to Solitude retires, where the White Hand of Moses on the
Bough puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

THE STUDENT addresses THE VINTNER while referencing the book.

THE STUDENT

Irám indeed is gone with all its Rose, and Jamshýd's Sev'n-
ring'd Cup where no one knows: but still the Vine her
ancient Ruby yields, and still a Garden by the Water blows.

THE VINTNER addresses THE STUDENT while filling her glass.

THE VINTNER

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring the Winter
Garment of Repentance fling: the Bird of Time has but a
little way to fly – and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.

THE STUDENT smiles and takes a sip of wine. She addresses THE VINTNER.

THE STUDENT

A thousand blossoms with the Day woke – and a thousand
scatter'd into Clay: and this first Summer Month that
brings the Rose –

THE STUDENT waves her book in the air.

THE STUDENT

– shall take Jamshýd and Kaikobád away.

*OLD KHAYYAM makes his way through the crowd with a nonchalant
air and approaches THE STUDENT at the bar.*

OLD KHAYYAM

Ah, come with old Khayyám and leave the Lot of sultans old
and kings forgot. Let Jamshýd lay about him as he will,
let them cry Supper – heed them not.

*OLD KHAYYAM takes the book gently from THE STUDENT and drops it
on the bar. THE STUDENT smirks at him. OLD KHAYYAM addresses
all assembled.*

OLD KHAYYAM

With me along some Strip of Herbage strown that just
divides the desert from the sown, where name of Slave and
Sultán scarce is known, and pity Sultán Máhmúd on his
Throne.

OLD KHAYYAM gestures towards a shadowy corner of the room.

*A man sits at a table, upon which is seen a book, a loaf of
bread, and a glass of wine. This is THE SULTAN. He carries an
air of importance and world-weariness, though his appearance is
not particularly ostentatious.*

THE STUDENT turns and gazes at THE SULTAN with interest.

THE SULTAN gazes at THE STUDENT and addresses his words to her.

THE SULTAN

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough, a Flask of
Wine, a Book of Verse – and Thou beside me singing in the
Wilderness – and Wilderness is Paradise now.

THE STUDENT smiles at THE SULTAN.

THE SULTAN rises and approaches her.

THE CHORUS

How sweet is mortal Sovranty –

THE SULTAN

– think some: others –

THE CHORUS

How blest the Paradise to come!

THE SULTAN leans against the bar at THE STUDENT'S right hand.

THE SULTAN

Ah, take the Cash in hand and waive the Rest; oh, the brave
Music of a distant Drum!

Distant drums are now heard. They play a steady polyrhythm to which THE DANCERS perform amongst THE CHORUS. THE CHORUS playfully interacts with them.

After a few moments, THE SULTAN turns back to THE STUDENT.

THE SULTAN

Look to the Rose that blows about us – "Lo, laughing," she says, "into the World I blow: at once the silken Tassel of my Purse tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

OLD KHAYYAM leans against the bar on the other side of THE STUDENT and addresses both her and THE SULTAN.

OLD KHAYYAM

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon turns Ashes – or it prospers; and anon, like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face lighting a little Hour or two – is gone.

OLD KHAYYAM mimes his words.

OLD KHAYYAM

And those who husbanded the Golden Grain, and those who flung it to the Winds like Rain, alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd as, buried once, Men want dug up again.

OLD KHAYYAM turns and addresses all assembled.

OLD KHAYYAM

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai whose Doorways are alternate Night and Day, how Cæsar after Sultán with his Pomp abode his Hour or two and went his way.

THE STUDENT looks contemplative.

THE STUDENT

I sometimes think that never blows so red the Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled; that every Hyacinth the Garden wears dropt in its Lap from some once lovely Head.

THE SULTAN

And this delightful Herb whose tender Green fledges the River's Lip on which we lean – Ah, lean upon it lightly!

THE SULTAN places two fingers lightly on THE STUDENT'S chin.

THE SULTAN

For who knows from what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

THE SULTAN places two fingers to THE STUDENT'S lips. THE SULTAN then takes a bottle, raises it up, and fills THE STUDENT'S glass.

THE SULTAN

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the cup that clears to-day of past
Regrets and future Fears – To-morrow?

THE SULTAN sets the bottle down on the bar, grins at THE STUDENT, and shrugs.

THE SULTAN

Why, To-morrow I may be myself with Yesterday's Sev'n
Thousand Years.

THE STUDENT smiles at THE SULTAN in a winsome, bittersweet way.

THE STUDENT

Some we loved, the loveliest and the best that Time and
Fate of all their Vintage prest, have drunk their Cup a
Round or two before, and one by one crept silently to Rest.

THE SULTAN leans in towards THE STUDENT. OLD KHAYYAM muses from over THE STUDENT'S shoulder. THE SULTAN pulls back and regards OLD KHAYYAM with forced patience.

OLD KHAYYAM

And we, that now make merry in the Room they left, and
Summer dresses in new Bloom, ourselves must we beneath the
Couch of Earth descend, ourselves to make a Couch – for
whom?

THE CHORUS comes forward and addresses the viewer.

THE CHORUS

Make the most of what we yet may spend, before we too into
the Dust descend; Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and – sans goodbye.

OLD KHAYYAM steps forth from the bar and speaks as if in proclamation

OLD KHAYYAM

Alike for those who for To-day prepare, and those that
after a To-morrow stare, a Muezzin from the Tower of
Darkness cries -

OLD KHAYYAM points with a bony finger at the top of the stairs.

Leaning over and looking down at the group is THE MUEZZIN.

THE MUEZZIN

Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There!

*THE MUEZZIN comes quickly down the stairs, addressing all
assembled.*

THE MUEZZIN

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd of the Two
Worlds so learnedly, are thrust like foolish Prophets forth
-

THE MUEZZIN stands amidst the others and gazes around at them.

THE MUEZZIN

- their Words to Scorn are scatter'd -

*THE MUEZZIN makes a gesture with his fingers as if stopping up
his own mouth.*

THE MUEZZIN

- and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

OLD KHAYYAM comes up to THE MUEZZIN and takes him by the arm.

OLD KHAYYAM

Come with old Khayyám, and leave the Wise to talk; one
thing is certain, that Life flies; one thing is certain,
and the Rest is Lies;

OLD KHAYYAM addresses the viewer.

OLD KHAYYAM

The Flower that once has blown forever dies.

6. EXT. GARDEN - DAY

THE DANCERS flit amongst flowerbeds, roses, and other flora to percussive and idiophonic music in the underscoring. Their dancing evokes sprouting buds and blossoming petals.

Title card:

THE STUDENT'S TALE

7. EXT. ROCK WALL - CITY PARK - DAY

THE STUDENT sits cross-legged on a low stone or retaining wall while THE DANCERS cavort around her, accompanied by the underscoring. THE STUDENT addresses the viewer with an ironic expression.

THE STUDENT

Myself when young did eagerly frequent Doctor and Saint,
and heard great Argument about it and about: but evermore
came out by the same Door as in I went.

THE STUDENT alights from the wall and proceeds along a path in the park. Accompanied by THE DANCERS, she continues to address the viewer in a wry manner.

THE STUDENT

With them the Seed of Wisdom did I sow, and with my own
hand labour'd it to grow: and this was all the Harvest that
I reap'd - "I came like Water, and like Wind -

THE STUDENT blows at the viewer.

THE STUDENT

- I go."

8. EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

THE STUDENT and THE DANCERS make their way hurriedly down a steep sloping hill, THE STUDENT'S voice heightened with physical exertion.

THE STUDENT

Into this Universe, and why not knowing, nor whence, like
Water fitfully flowing: And out of it, as Wind along the
Waste, I know not where, fitfully blowing.

THE DANCERS pick THE STUDENT up and carry her along.

THE STUDENT

What, without asking, hither hurried whence? And, without
asking, whither hurried hence!

9. INT. THE CARAVANSERAI - DAY

*THE STUDENT sits at the bar as before and thrusts an empty wine
glass towards THE VINTNER.*

THE STUDENT

Another and another Cup to drown the Memory of this
Impertinence!

THE VINTNER smirks, and fills THE STUDENT'S glass.

Title card:

THE SULTAN'S TALE

10. EXT. CATHEDRAL - CITY -- DAY

*THE SULTAN sits cross-legged upon the steps in front of a
cathedral, his eyes closed as if in meditation. Around him, THE
DANCERS move to the underscoring, but in a more understated,
minimal way, their faces shrouded in veils.*

THE SULTAN opens his eyes and gazes up into space.

THE SULTAN

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate I rose, and
on the Throne of Saturn sate, and many Knots unravel'd by
the Road; but not the Knot of Human Death and Fate.

11. EXT. CATHEDRAL DOOR - CITY - DAY

THE SULTAN hands grope the face of the cathedral door.

THE SULTAN (v-o)

There was a Door to which I found no Key:

12. EXT. CATHEDRAL - CITY -- DAY

THE SULTAN'S his face comes forward through a veil, gazing at the viewer as if in a trance.

THE SULTAN

There was a Veil past which I could not see: some little talk awhile of Me and Thee there seemed – and then no more of Thee and Me.

13. EXT. THE RIVERBANK - DAY

THE SULTAN comes forward, standing in a posture of anger and defiance upon the edge of a river, and declares his words to the sky.

THE SULTAN

Then to the rolling Heav'n itself I cried, asking, "What Lamp had Destiny to guide her little Children stumbling in the Dark?"

THE SULTAN addresses the viewer with a resigned expression.

THE SULTAN

"A blind Understanding!" Heav'n replied.

THE SULTAN squats down and picks a clay bowl up from the ground. He calms as he gazes into it.

THE SULTAN

Then to the earthen Bowl did I adjourn my Lip the secret Well of Life to learn:

THE SULTAN draws the bowl up to his mouth.

THE SULTAN

And Lip to Lip it murmur'd –

We peer inside the bowl. *THE SULTAN'S* voice is heard in a whisper.

THE SULTAN (o-s)

"While you live drink! – for once dead you never shall return."

THE SULTAN looks up and addresses the viewer with surprise.

THE SULTAN

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive articulation
answer'd, once did live, and merry-make; and the cold Lip I
kiss'd how many kisses might it take – and give!

THE SULTAN looks up.

A darkly veiled person sits on the steps in front of a fish market, thumping and shaping a wet bowl of clay on a potter's wheel.

THE SULTAN (o-s)

For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day, I watch'd the
Potter thumping his wet Clay: and with its all obliterated
Tongue it murmur'd –

14. INT. THE CARAVANSERAI – DAY

THE CHORUS approaches THE SULTAN from behind, speaking in a low murmur.

THE CHORUS

Gently, Brother, gently, pray!

THE CHORUS files past THE SULTAN and exits the tavern. THE STUDENT takes THE SULTAN by the hand and leads him outside.

From behind the bar, THE VINTNER fills an empty wine glass and sets the bottle down on the bar. She takes the glass of wine in hand, steps from around the bar, and addresses the viewer.

THE VINTNER

Ah, fill the Cup: – what boots it to repeat how Time is
slipping underneath our Feet: unborn To-morrow and dead
Yesterday, why fret about them if To-day be sweet!

THE VINTNER sips the wine and exits the tavern.

15. EXT. OUTSIDE THE CARAVANSERAI – LATE AFTERNOON

THE VINTNER emerges from the tavern and addresses the viewer.

THE VINTNER

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste, one Moment, of the Well of Life to taste – the Stars are setting and the Caravan starts for the Dawn of Nothing – make haste!

Title card:

THE CARAVAN

16. EXT. CITY PARK - DUSK

THE CHORUS, along with THE STUDENT, THE SULTAN, OLD KHAYYAM, THE VINTNER, and THE MUEZZIN, proceed along a wide path or road in an urban park. They make a somewhat haphazard processional, and appear to be slightly inebriated.

THE STUDENT and THE SULTAN stroll along tipsily in each other's arms.

Various members of the group brandish wine bottles and glasses.

THE DANCERS dance along the sides of the path. The underscoring accompanies the group's pace. THE DANCERS are the only ones who appear to be sober.

The setting sun glimmers through the trees. The twilight is golden.

OLD KHAYYAM marches in the front with his walking staff and muses aloud.

OLD KHAYYAM

How long, how long, in definite Pursuit of This and That endeavor and dispute? Better be merry with the fruitful Grape than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

You know, my Friends, how long since in my House for a new Marriage I did make Carouse: divorced old barren Reason from my Bed, and took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

The others laugh.

THE VINTNER comes up next to OLD KHAYYAM.

THE VINTNER

And lately by the Tavern Door agape, came stealing through
the Dusk an Angel Shape bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder;
and he bid me taste of it; and 'twas – the Grape!

THE VINTNER produces a cluster of grapes. She plucks one and hands the rest to OLD KHAYYAM, who plucks a grape and passes it on, as do the others.

OLD KHAYYAM studies his grape.

OLD KHAYYAM

The Grape that can with Logic absolute the seventy-two
warring Sects confute: the subtle Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute.

OLD KHAYYAM pops the grape into his mouth and continues to lecture the others, pausing to finish chewing the grape.

OLD KHAYYAM

The mighty Máhmúd, the victorious Lord, that all the
misbelieving and black Horde of Fears and Sorrows that
infest the Soul scatters and slays with his enchanted
Sword.

OLD KHAYYAM illustrates the previous line with his staff.

OLD KHAYYAM

But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me the Quarrel of
the Universe let be: and, in some corner of the Hubbub
coucht, make Game of that which makes as much of Thee.

THE DANCERS move amongst and around THE CHORUS.

OLD KHAYYAM (o-s)

For in and out, above, about, below, 'tis nothing but a
Magic Shadow-show, play'd in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,
round which we Phantom Figures come and go.

THE VINTNER turns and addresses the others, walking backwards while she speaks.

THE VINTNER

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press, end in the
Nothing all Things end in – Yes – then fancy while Thou
art, Thou art but what thou shalt be – Nothing – Thou shalt
not be less.

THE SULTAN frowns in reply.

OLD KHAYYAM raises an arm.

OLD KHAYYAM

While the Rose blows along the River Brink, with old
Khayyám the Ruby Vintage drink; and when the Angel with his
darker Draught draws up to Thee – take that, and do not
shrink.

*As they stroll along languidly, THE SULTAN embraces THE STUDENT,
nuzzling her neck, but also glancing at OLD KHAYYAM with
impatience. THE STUDENT responds dreamily (or drunkenly) to THE
SULTAN'S caresses.*

THE STUDENT

'Tis all a Chess-board of Nights and Days, where Destiny
with Men for Pieces plays: hither and thither moves, and
mates, and slays, and one by one back in the Closet lays.

THE CHORUS

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, moves on: nor
all thy Piety nor Wit shall lure it back to cancel half a
Line, nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

*The voices of THE CHORUS echo through the park. The trees are
stark in the evening light.*

THE CHORUS (o-s)

And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky, whereunder crawling
coop't we live and die, lift not thy hands to it for help –
for it rolls impotently on as You or I.

*OLD KHAYYAM once again raises an arm and addresses the group as
if in priestly benediction.*

OLD KHAYYAM

With Earth's first Clay They did the last Man's knead, and
then of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed: Yea, the first
Morning of Creation wrote what the Last Dawn of Reckoning
shall read.

*THE SULTAN, agitated and drunk, releases THE STUDENT, and
addresses OLD KHAYYAM.*

THE SULTAN

The Vine had struck a Fibre; which about It clings my Being –
OLD KHAYYAM and the others, including THE DANCERS, pause and turn towards THE SULTAN.

THE SULTAN makes a dismissive gesture at OLD KHAYYAM and affects a haughty manner.

THE SULTAN

– let the Súfi flout; of my Base Metal may be filed a Key
 that shall unlock the Door he howls without.

THE SULTAN wanders alone off the path and into the trees, sitting down angrily at the root of an oak.

OLD KHAYYAM and THE STUDENT share a sympathetic look.

OLD KHAYYAM and the others proceed on.

THE STUDENT turns, defiant, and addresses the viewer.

THE STUDENT

This I know: whether the one True Light kindle to Love, or
 Wrath consume me quite, one Glimpse of It within the Tavern
 caught better than in the Temple lost outright.

THE STUDENT wanders off the path, into the trees to where THE SULTAN sits. All the while, she turns to address some unseen presence with a sneer.

THE STUDENT

Oh, Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin beset the
 Road I was to wander in, Thou wilt not with Predestination
 round enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin.

THE STUDENT approaches THE SULTAN, who gazes up at her wearily. THE STUDENT continues to address the unseen presence.

THE STUDENT

For thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make and who with
 Eden didst devise the Snake –

THE STUDENT pauses before THE SULTAN, turns, and once more addresses the viewer.

THE STUDENT

For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man is blacken'd,
Man's Forgiveness give – and take!

THE STUDENT turns and comes down onto her knees, into the lap of THE SULTAN, and their foreheads touch. Cut to black.

17. EXT. GARDEN – NIGHT

Fade in. THE DANCERS are ankle-deep within a small fountain or pool set within a moonlit garden. Their steps are solemn and minimal, as if gliding over the surface of the water. They move almost like wind-up dolls. The music in the underscoring is also minimal, comprising chimes and finger-cymbals, and the babbling waters of the fountain. THE DANCERS appear ghostly in the moonlight.

Title card:

THE POTTER'S SHOP

18. INT. THE POTTER'S SHOP – NIGHT

OLD KHAYYAM emerges from a doorway and addresses the viewer.

OLD KHAYYAM
Listen again.

OLD KHAYYAM enters into The Potter's Shop. The room is lit by lamplight. Arranged on countertops around the room are pieces of pottery of various shapes, sizes, and purposes. OLD KHAYYAM continues to address the viewer.

OLD KHAYYAM
One Evening at the Close of Ramadán, ere the better Moon
arose, in that old Potter's Shop I stood alone with the
clay Population round in Rows.

And, strange to tell, among that Earthen Lot some could
articulate, while others not: and suddenly one more
impatient cried –

The mordant face of THE SULTAN emerges next to a piece of pottery from below the countertop.

THE SULTAN
Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?

OLD KHAYYAM
Then said another —

The desperate face of THE STUDENT emerges next to a piece of pottery from below the countertop.

THE STUDENT
Surely not in vain my substance from the common Earth was taken, that He who subtly wrought me into Shape should stamp me back to common Earth again.

OLD KHAYYAM
Another said —

The sneering face of THE MUEZZIN emerges next to a piece of pottery from below the countertop.

THE MUEZZIN
Why ne'er a peevish Boy would break the Bowl from which he drank in Joy; shall He that made the Vessel in pure Love and Fancy, in an after Rage destroy?

OLD KHAYYAM pauses momentarily and paces the floor, looking down. He then looks up and addresses the viewer.

OLD KHAYYAM
None answer'd this; but after Silence spake a Vessel of a more ungainly Make:

The sorrowful face of one of THE DANCERS emerges next to a piece of pottery from below the countertop, her neck hunched in posture.

THE DANCER
They sneer at me for leaning all awry; what! Did the Hand then of the Potter shake?

OLD KHAYYAM
Then said another with a long-drawn Sigh —

The smirking face of THE VINTNER emerges next to a piece of pottery from below the countertop, letting out a long-drawn sigh in the process.

THE VINTNER

My Clay with long oblivion is gone dry: but, fill me with
the old familiar Juice, methinks I might recover by and by.

*OLD KHAYYAM moves to the center of the room and points a finger
to the ceiling/sky. As he speaks, the group stands as one and
comes forward to the center of the room, gazing upwards.*

OLD KHAYYAM

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking, one spied
the little Crescent all were seeking: and then they jogg'd
each other -

The crescent moon is visible through an upper window.

The group speaks in unison, as a CHORUS.

CHORUS (o-s)

Sister! Brother! Hark to the Porter's Shoulder-knot a-creaking!

Title card:

THE GARDEN

19. EXT. GARDEN -- NIGHT

*Lying on the ground is a body covered in a white shroud. THE
SULTAN, THE STUDENT, THE VINTNER, THE MUEZZIN, and THE CHORUS
stand behind the body, each carrying in one hand an empty wine
glass. THE DANCERS stand nearby, carrying torches.*

OLD KHAYYAM (v-o)

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide, and wash my Body
whence the Life has died, and in a Winding-sheet of Vine-
leaf wrapt, so bury me by some sweet Garden-side.

*The others come forward and gently raise the body up over their
heads, and proceed forth in a processional, with THE DANCERS
solemnly leading the way in funereal dance.*

*They carry the body along a tree-lined avenue, the trees hung
with paper lanterns.*

OLD KHAYYAM (v-o)

That ev'n my buried Ashes such a Snare of Perfume shall
fling up into the Air, as not a True Believer passing by
but shall be overtaken unaware.

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long have done my Credit
in Men's Eye much wrong! Have drown'd my Honour in a
shallow Cup, and sold my Reputation for a Song.

*THE STUDENT carries the body, lit by torch and lantern light,
her face sad and thoughtful.*

OLD KHAYYAM (v-o)

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before I swore – but was I
sober when I swore? And then and then came Spring, and
Rose-in-hand my thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

*THE VINTNER carries the body, lit by torch and lantern light,
her face sad and thoughtful.*

OLD KHAYYAM (v-o)

And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel, and robb'd me of
my Robe of Honour – well, I often wonder what the Vintners
buy: one half so precious as the Goods they sell.

*THE SULTAN carries the body, his face lit by torch and lantern
light, his face sad and thoughtful.*

OLD KHAYYAM (v-o)

Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose! That
Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should close! The
Nightingale that in the Branches sang, Ah, whence, and
whither flown again, who knows!

*In the far distance, the procession traverses the lamplit
avenue. THE DANCERS' torches move like fireflies.*

OLD KHAYYAM (v-o)

Ah, Love! Could you and I with Fate conspire to grasp this
sorry Scheme of Things entire, would not we shatter it to
bits – and then re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

20. EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

Moonlight is reflected in the waters of a river.

OLD KHAYYAM (v-o)

Moon of my Delight who know'st no wane, the Moon of Heav'n
is rising once again: how oft hereafter rising shall she
look through this same Garden after me – in vain!

21. EXT. GARDEN - DAWN

The procession has arrived. THE SULTAN, THE STUDENT, THE VINTNER, THE MUEZZIN, THE CHORUS, and THE DANCERS recline upon the grass around a patch of flowers. Each carries an empty wine glass. They gaze contemplatively at the patch of flowers. Torches sputter nearby in the early morning light.

OLD KHAYYAM (v-o)

And when Thyself with shining Foot shalt pass among the
Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass, and in thy joyous
Errand reach the Spot where I made one - turn down an empty
Glass!

The cast and chorus turn over their glasses and place them on the ground. Cut to black.

THE CHORUS recites the following title card in voice-over:

Title card:

The moving finger writes
And having writ
Moves on.

Closing credits.

TAMAM SHUD