

Serse: a colloquial semi-translation

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Act I

Scene 1

Serse: Oh man, this tree is great. Nothing bad should happen to it. Seriously, best tree ever.

Scene 2

Arsamene: We're here! This is where my girlfriend lives.

Elviro: Got it. I'm tired; I'm going to lean against a tree.

Arsamene: What? Not allowed. I hear Romilda singing!

Elviro: This isn't too far from the city...

Arsamene: Shut up.

Romilda: Tra la la, Serse loves a tree...

Scene 3

Serse: Who just sang my name?

Romilda: ... The tree doesn't love him back, tra la.

Serse: Arsamene. Did you hear that?

Arsamene: ... Uh huh.

Serse: Who is that?

Arsamene: Uh...

Romilda: Tra la la, nature and high notes...

Serse: I'm in love with that! I want her as my courtesan!

Arsamene: What? No! Romilda is a princess!

Serse: I thought you didn't know her. Whatever, go tell your little girlfriend I'm going to marry her.

Arsamene: I have no desire to do that.

Serse: Arsamene, you are the worst. I'll tell her myself, and I won't be intimidated!

Arsamene: You'll tell her, and she won't listen because she belongs to me.

Scene 4

Romilda: Arsamene!

Arsamene: Romilda, everything is horrible. The king...

Atalanta: Who, Serse?

Romilda: What about him?

Arsamene: He wants to marry you.

Romilda: So? I'm not scared.

Arsamene: I am.

Atalanta: (Ahh Arsamene is hot and I want him.)

Romilda: Arsamene, calm down. I love you.

Arsamene: Okay good.

Atalanta: Romilda is literally always talking about how she lives for you alone.

Elviro: Hey, here comes Serse.

Arsamene: Okay, I'll hide.

Scene 5

Serse: Hi princess. Why are you outside? Are you meeting Arsamene?

Romilda: Me? What? No...

Serse: Whatever. I talked to fate and fate said you're going to be my queen.

Romilda: No thanks.

Serse: I know what's going on! Arsamene affronts me...

Arsamene: Hold on, what?

Romilda: He didn't know...

Serse: Shut up. Arsamene, you're banished. Unless you want to relinquish Romilda...

Elviro: Hey, that's a good plan.

Arsamene: I'd rather die. I'm leaving.

Scene 6

Serse: Beautiful Romilda, I love you. Who taught you to be silent and mock me? Either stop being so hot, or stop making me suffer.

Scene 7

Romilda: Sorry, I can't be unfaithful and make my beloved jealous.

Scene 8

Amastre: I dressed up like a man, but I still love Serse.

Scene 9

Ariodate: We won the battle!

Amastre: So the moorish king is vanquished? Joy!

Ariodate: Serse gets more powerful every day!

Chorus: Victory! Yay Serse!

Scene 10

Amastre: (Behold the sexy Serse.)

Serse: Ariodate, I'm so happy you got me a victory.

Ariodate: The glory is all yours.

Serse: Cool. As a reward for all the hardships your city went through, I'm promising you that your daughter Romilda is going to have a royal husband... of the lineage of Serse...

Ariodate: Everything is wonderful! I'm so lucky!

Chorus: Victory! Yay Serse!

Scene 11

Serse: These victories must mean that I'll also be victorious in love.

Amastre: (Aww, he's talking about me!)

Serse: I can't wait to marry her! But what will I do about Amastre and her offended father?

Amastre: (Wait, what??)

Serse: Even though she's isn't really royal, I'll just make her royal. I'm the king, and it'll be fine.

Amastre: You liar!

Serse: Who are you?

Amastre: I'm just a traveller, talking to my companion...

Serse: Why'd you say liar?

Amastre: My companion said that the bridge you just build isn't super stable.

Serse: Fools. Go away. I just want to think about Romilda. The more I think about her, the more excited I get!

Scene 12

Arsamene: Elviro, here's a letter for Romilda.

Elviro: Okay! Is that it? Do you want to say anything else? Did you know that I'm banished too? Are you sure?

Arsamene: Shut up and go.

Elviro: Okay! I won't screw this up.

Arsamene: How am I still alive? I'm really depressed.

Scene 13

Amastre: I'm royalty and Serse is betraying me. This is absolutely the worst. I'm furious and will find a way to avenge this.

Scene 14

Atalanta: So you're going to marry your Serse!

Romilda: He is so not my Serse.

Atalanta: Arsamene isn't yours either.

Romilda: He is. I love him.

Atalanta: He's banished. You should have Serse... And I'll take Arsamene.

Romilda: Get off of my boyfriend. If you think you can steal him from me, think again. We're tied together and nothing can untie us.

Scene 15

Atalanta: I'll steal him yet. I'm really good at flirting.

Act II

Scene 1

Amastre: Oh hope, don't forsake me again!

Elviro: My silly accent and I are just selling flowers, don't mind us... I sure hope the king doesn't find out about this letter...

Amastre: King? What?

Elviro: I think Arsamene is going to be upset, and Serse is going to marry her. But Serse really shouldn't marry a commoner and not be so dishonorable.

Amastre: So I've been scorned? Traitor! Hey, buddy...

Elviro: Uh oh.

Amastre: Stop. I'm talking to you.

Elviro: ... Do you want to buy flowers?

Amastre: No. Tell me who the king is trying to marry.

Elviro: Why...?

Amastre: Just a curious traveller.

Elviro: Makes perfect sense. Here's a huge secret: Serse wants Ariodate's daughter Romilda, but she says she'll die if he does because she loves his brother.

Amastre: All hope is gone, but I'm still faithful.

Scene 2

Elviro: That was weird. Oh look, Atalanta!
Atalanta: I'm going to be alone forever.
Elviro: Flowers, anyone?
Atalanta: Come here. Flowers will make me feel better.
Elviro: Don't you recognize me?
Atalanta: Oh yeah. What do you have there?
Elviro: A letter to Romilda from Arsamene.
Atalanta: ... I'll just take that and read it... and I'll totally pass it along.
Elviro: Where's Romila?
Atalanta: Writing letters to the king, because she loves him.
Elviro: What about Arsamene?
Atalanta: She's already forgotten about him.
Elviro: What an unfaithful tigress!
Atalanta: The king is coming, get out!
Elviro: Tra la la, flowers...

Scene 3

Atalanta: The letter will make me feel better.
Serse: Loving a cruel beauty is the worst. Hey Atalanta, what's that? Is it a love letter?
Atalanta: Uh... You can read it if you want...
Serse: It's from Arsamene! "At night I see your eyes in the stars. I'll die if I can't be yours." To whom is he writing?
Atalanta: To me.
Serse: No but really.
Atalanta: Yep.
Serse: That makes no sense, he loves Romilda.
Atalanta: Actually... he pretends to love her and really loves me.
Serse: I like this a lot better. I'll make sure he marries you.
Atalanta: Thanks! Also, he'll tell you he doesn't love me, but he totally does.
Serse: Okay, give me the letter as proof and go away.
Atalanta: Just remember he loves me even though he says he doesn't.

Scene 4

Serse: Romilda, you're being deceived. Arsamene actually loves Atalanta. See this letter?
Romilda: I'm heartbroken.
Serse: Great! So you don't love him anymore!
Romilda: No, I'll love him forever and just be depressed.
Serse: If you insist on loving someone who hates you, I should probably hate you... But I can't because I don't know how.

Scene 5

Romilda: This can't be happening. My boyfriend and my sister are the worst. I'm so jealous and will suffer forever.

Scene 6

Amastre: I'm going to kill myself now.
Elviro: What are you doing? How can you kill yourself if food and alcohol exist?
Amastre: You're right. Plus I should tell Serse I forgive him before I die.

Scene 7

Elviro: What a weirdo.

Arsamene: What did Romilda say??

Elviro: Didn't see her. But I gave Atalanta the letter, and she said Romilda loves the king.

Arsamene: This is officially the worst. Did you maybe misunderstand?

Elviro: No she said so. And there's no way she could be lying...

Arsamene: She is unfaithful and therefore Heaven will punish her.

Scene 8

Chorus: Only a genius could build a bridge from Asia. Serse is the best!

Serse: Ariodate, I made a bridge. Go unite the troops. I want it to take three days to get to Europe.

Ariodate: You, Sire, are the absolute best.

Chorus: Only a genius could build a bridge from Asia. Serse is the best!

Scene 9

Arsamene: Someone should just put me out of my misery already.

Serse: Hey, brother. Where are you going?

Arsamene: To be drunk and sad. Forever.

Serse: Calm down. I want to marry you off to the woman you love.

Arsamene: That's not funny.

Serse: No, I read your letter and know how much you love her.

Arsamene: Let me kiss your hand to celebrate!

Serse: We can have a double wedding and be the happiest. I'll marry Romilda...

Arsamene: Who am I supposed to marry?

Serse: Atalanta, obviously. I know you love her.

Arsamene: I really don't. So you're not giving me Romilda?

Serse: You don't even want her.

Arsamene: I do want her, and I'm going to have her, and if I don't I'm going to invoke monsters and ghosts.

Scene 10

Atalanta: I bow to you, supreme King.

Serse: Arsamene denied loving you, and you really need to stop.

Atalanta: I can't, I love him!!

Serse: Everything would just be fine if one could fall in and out of love at his own leisure. But it doesn't work that way, and I'm always in limbo.

Scene 11

Elviro: I can't find my master, and now it's raining. Oh great, the bridge is falling apart. I hate when water falls from the sky. I just want to be drunk.

Scene 12

Serse: I'm jealous and it sucks. I'm spurned for another man.

Amastre: I'm depressed and it sucks. I'm betrayed for another woman.

Serse: Oh, cruel Romilda!

Amastre: Callous Serse!

Serse: Who's talking?

Amastre: I used to be a soldier for you but was wounded.

Serse: Would you serve me again?

Amastre: Not sure.

Serse: Did you find me ungrateful?

Amastre: I've been deceived.

Serse: Let's talk about this later; my beloved is coming.

Scene 13

Serse: Romilda, how long are you going to do this to me?

Romilda: Happiness is more important than a hundred fortunes.

Serse: I can't deal with this anymore. Give me your hand and let's get it over with.

Romilda: Uh... I have to think about this.

Serse: No, now.

Amastre: Stop! The king is deceiving you!

Serse: What the hell? You're under arrest.

Amastre: I'll die first!

Serse: What is this nonsense? I'm leaving.

Romilda: Whew! Soldiers, leave him alone.

Amastre: Thanks for saving my life.

Romilda: Sure. But why did you do that?

Amastre: He was trying to force you to be his wife, and you don't want that.

Romilda: Okay bye. ... Women who give up easily don't know real love.

Act III

Scene 1

Arsamene: Stop pretending.

Romilda: You wrote to Atalanta!

Arsamene: Elviro will tell you.

Romilda: Atalanta will tell you!

Arsamene/Romilda: Everything sucks.

Scene 2

Atalanta: (Everyone knows I lied. What am I going to do?)

Elviro: I'm sick. The rain is the worst. Atalanta, just tell them what you told me.

Atalanta: Yeah, I lied, but only to make the servant go away. And then Serse took the letter, and I said it was for me to help you out!

Arsamene: Oh Romilda, I adore you!

Romilda: Oh, Arsamene, I love you! Atalanta, you can't have him!

Atalanta: Fine. I can get another lover. I know how to make men love me.

Scene 3

Romilda: Here, Arsamene, is my right hand.

Elviro: Serse's coming!

Arsamene: Oh great.

Elviro: I'm leaving.

Romilda: Hide!

Serse: Romilda, why did you let that warrior go?

Romilda: He was brave.

Serse: You can do anything you want; my whole kingdom is yours, and my heart.

Romilda: I don't want that.

Serse: Stop denying me.

Romilda: I'll deny you forever.

Serse: I know how to break you down, if you know what I mean...

Romilda: (What'll he do to me??)

Serse: I'm not leaving. Now what do you say?

Romilda: Uh... You have to get my father's permission, and then I'll obey my king.

Serse: And then you'll marry me. I'll go to him now, and then, my pretty, I'll come back. I'm like a moth to your light.

Scene 4

Arsamene: What was that "I'll obey my king" nonsense?

Romilda: I'm dying. I'm fainting. Go away. The king will kill me

Arsamene: You hate me.

Romilda: I love you. Goodbye.

Arsamene: Farewell.

Romilda: Where are you going?

Arsamene: Wherever cruel fate takes me. And you?

Romilda: To die.

Arsamene: Don't say that. Say you're going to the throne.

Romilda: Goodbye...

Arsamene: Love has no pity for me. I can't deal with this.

Scene 5

Serse: As the royal we have already told you, Romilda will marry someone of our blood.

Ariodate: Do I know this person?

Serse: Yes. Do you approve?

Ariodate: I only want to obey you.

Serse: Great! So this someone is going to come to your house, and I want you to have your daughter accept him as a husband.

Ariodate: So this is a person from your family? And I know him?

Serse: Just like Serse. Goodbye.

Ariodate: ... So it's got to be Arsamene. I knew it! I'm such a lucky guy!

Scene 6

Romilda: I refuse his crown. I'm going to tell him.

Scene 7

Serse: My bride!

Romilda: Please don't call me that.

Serse: Why not?

Romilda: Because Arsamene has been my lover...

Serse: This isn't starting off very well...

Romilda: He was modest and faithful and chaste and quiet...

Serse: You're killing me here.

Romilda: Well... he...

Serse: He kissed you, didn't he?

Romilda: Yes.

Serse: You're probably lying to avoid marrying me, but I don't actually care. I'm having Arsamene executed.

Romilda: Oh god.

Scene 8

Romilda: Valiant warrior...

Amastre: My lady...

Romilda: I need you to do something for me.

Amastre: You saved me, so I'll do anything.

Romilda: Go tell Arsamene that Serse want him dead.

Amastre: I'm off. Also, could you take this letter to the king?

Romilda: I will. Oh, life is hard.

Amastre: I know why I suffer. It's because I love a traitor.

Scene 9

Arsamene: Is the faithless Romilda still thinking of me?

Romilda: Romilda, who adores you, thinks of you always.

Arsamene: You're telling me my sentence to make me go away, not to save me.

Romilda: You insult my loyalty.

Arsamene: You deceive mine.

Scene 10

Chorus: That which Jupiter has destined cannot be impeded by man.

Ariodate: Here's the bridegroom! You're here to bring great honor to me!

Romilda: Ah! My father!

Ariodate: Don't leave!

Arsamene: What are you saying?

Ariodate: That I'm giving you my daughter. Serse told me to.

Romilda: What?

Ariodate: Aren't you here to take her as your wife?

Arsamene: That is literally the only thing I want.

Romilda: Oh I'm so happy!

Ariodate: Great! Clasp your right hands and let's get you married! ... Now let's go thank Serse!

Chorus: Now everyone who was unhappy before is happy again!

Scene 11

Serse: Ariodate is coming! It's time to tell him that I'm the one who wants Romilda.

Ariodate: I bow before you. What an honor!

Serse: Where's Romilda?

Ariodate: With her bridegroom.

Serse: What! What bridegroom??

Ariodate: I did what you commanded! Equal to you, of your blood, and he came to my house!

Serse: Are they married?

Ariodate: Yes.

Serse: You are the worst. You betrayed me. ... What is this random letter arriving to me? Oh, it's from Romilda. What an insult. You read it.

Ariodate: "Ungrateful lover, I came here to become yours and you left me for another woman. I'm leaving, but heaven will punish you and I will be sad forever. Amastre."

Yeah, this letter isn't from Romilda.

Serse: This is the most annoying. I'm pissed and hereby invoke the furies. Let the sun be eclipsed at this anger that breathes from my breast!

Scene 12

Serse: You are all traitors! Why are you here?

Ariodate: What furor!

Arsamene: Stop! We're being humble...

Serse: You're all laughing at me.

Arsamene: How so?

Serse: You took Romilda!

Arsamene: It was your command.

Ariodate: True.

Romilda: Yep.

Serse: What is even going on. Arsamene, go stab her in the breast.

Arsamene: You want me to kill my wife? I'd rather kill you.

Amastre: Give me that, I'll do it.

Serse: And who are you, always bothering me?

Amastre: One who seeks vengeance. Do you think that someone who betrays the one who loves them should be killed?

Serse: Yes.

Amastre: Then die. I'm Amastre, betrayed yet forever faithful, and you are the worst.

Serse: Okay, kill me.

Amastre: I want to die.

Serse: Stop! I repent!

Amastre: Will you love me again?

Serse: Yes, but I don't deserve you.

Amastre: Oh, just come here. I forgive you.

Elviro: I'm trembling!

Ariodate: All the grief is gone!

Arsamene: I'm amazed.

Romilda: I'm consoled.

Atalanta: I'm going to go look for a boyfriend.

Serse: Friends, forgive my bad mood and enjoy your loves.

Romilda: Love is the best!

Chorus: Calm is restored and joy has returned.