

THE ARGUMENT.

Cleopatra in Egypt, thinking herself aggrieved, to have her Son Ptolomy for a Partner of the Crown ; raised the People against him, and took from him his Wife Seleuca, with so much the more Rage, because he had already had Two Sons by her ; she forced him to go abroad, having call'd home her younger Son Alexander, and made him King in the room of his Brother. She was so far from being contented, with having chased Ptolomy out of the Kingdom, who took a Refuge in Cyprus; that she pursued him with War, and hunted him from thence too ; and put to death the General of the Army, for letting him escape out of his Hands alive ; altho' Ptolomy left the Island out of meer Shame, because he would not wage War with a Mother : From hence, Alexander being amaz'd, and shock'd at this Cruelty of Cleopatra, left her himself likewise, preferring a Life of Safety and Liberty, to a dangerous Reign : Thus Justin relates this Matter, in his 33d Book. Upon this Historical Foundation the following Fiction is form'd, according to the Rules of Probability; that Ptolomy, depos'd by his Mother, Cleopatra, lived secretly in Cyprus, like a common Shepherd, under the Name of Osmin : That Seleuca his Spouse went to him, and being sent by Cleopatra to Tryphon, Tyrant of Siria, she suffered Shipwreck, and was believ'd, by every Body, to have been Lost in the Sea ; but, in reality, saving her self, and knowing her Husband was in Cyprus, she got over thither, dress'd likewise in a Shepherdess's Habit, under the fictitious Name of Delia, in order to find him out. That Alexander was likewise sent by his Mother into Cyprus, with a powerful Army, in order to get Ptolomy into his Hands , altho' it was really his entire Design to save his Brother, and restore him the Crown : That in the mean Time, Araspes reign'd in Cyprus, who, together with his Sister Elisa, resided in a delightful Village, situated in a Maritime Country of that Island ; this King was in Love with the Shepherdess Delia, whose real Name was Seleuca ; and just so was his Sister Elisa in love with Ptolomy, the reputed Shepherd Osmin ; and this gives Birth to the several Incidents in this Drama.

The text in blue is not in the English libretto;
it is supplied after the Italian.

The text in red is in the libretto but not the score.
It is marked thus " in the Italian text, but not in the English.

The English translation is more inaccurate than usual, though it's hard to tell whether poor Italian or poor English lies behind this (possibly both, if two people were working together). There are also moments (see III.iii & iv) where the English seems to represent another version of the libretto than the printed Italian text – which must have puzzled the audience trying to follow it.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Country by the Sea-side.

Ptolomy and Alexander.

*Alexander is helped out of the Sea by Ptolomy,
and leans, fainting, on a Rock.*

PTOLOMY [ACCOMPAGNATO]

Proud Element !
Most cruel Minister of my hard Fate !
You've robb'd me of my All, my dear Seleuca !
Tyrannick Mother,
Cruel Cleopatra!
Who've chas'd me from the Throne of Egypt,
And plac'd my younger Brother there,
All that I bear and pardon ;
But then to rob me of her too,
Of her who was my Life !
To make an unjust Present to my Rival,
This drives me to Despair.
Why do I delay then,
Here by my Death, to end my Misery.

[Goes to throw himself into the Sea.]

ALEXANDER Good Heaven, your Pity ! *[From within.]*

PTOLOMY What miserable Voice is that I hear ?

ALEXANDER Help here for Heaven's Sake ! *[From within.]*

PTOLOMY

From a small Skiff
Which bulg'd upon yon neighbouring Rocks,
A Man, by Swimming, strives to save himself,
And makes to Shore :
I'll give him Aid ;
Seeking to lose my Own,
I save another's Life. *[He helps Alexander out of the Sea.]*

ALEXANDER Thanks be to Heaven,
But in vain to save my self I strive,
For still I faint, and die.

PTOLOMY He faints ;
'Tis good to help him, lean on yonder Rock.

[Rests him on a rock.]

But, — O just Heavens, what is't my Eyes Behold!
Is not this Alexander !
That perfidious Brother,
Who, with a Mother, has conspir'd my Ruin!
Yes, yes ! 'tis he, and let the Traitor perish.
But what, should I my self be an Example
Of that same Fault which I condemn in others ?
No, live ;
And let that Life, which I not long since gave you,
Be twice my Gift ; 'twill be a Pleasure to me
To tax him doubly with Ingratitude.

[ARIA]

Unequal Heaven may pour down
Its Thunder on my Head,
Yet I am not guilty made ;
It is my Misery,
And not my Heart, or me,
Which can your most unworthy Triumph crown.
Unequal, &c.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

Eliza to Alexander.

ELIZA Alas ! unfortunate Eliza.
Where now is your vain Pride,
Shall your proud Breast sink down
To think of a mean Shepherd !
But see! what Object strikes my wond'ring Eyes !

ALEXANDER Am I alive ? That's what I can't yet tell,
Perhaps e'en now in the Elisian Fields
I breath ; 'tis so, I breath that happy Air,
Since I behold one like a Goddess fair.

ELIZA Who art thou ? say. Thy Name, thy Fortunes tell
To one, whose Power may make thee less unhappy.
Know, I the Sister of Araspes am,
Who reigns chief Sovereign here.

ALEXANDER I too can boast my self of Royal Blood,
I'm Alexander, Cleopatra's Son,
That o'er all Egypt bears Imperial Sway,
*And with a Squadron of arm'd Ships am come
To Cyprus, by my Royal Mother's Mandate,
In quest of Ptolomy, my elder Brother,
Who here has shelter'd his devoted Head :
In a small Boat I strove to gain the Shore,
Which splitting on a Rock, I swam for Life.*

ELIZA Be pleas'd, my Lord, within this neighbouring Cottage,
(Tho' little it becomes your high Degree)
To take what small Refreshment that can yield
After your past Disasters.
These Maids of mine shall guide you, and attend you.

ALEXANDER I go with all Obedience,
(But fain I'd tell you first how I adore you.)

[ARIA]

My Lips too faint and feeble are,
T' express the mighty Flames I bear ;
My fiery Eye-balls, as they roll,
As to the Fair they turn,
Will say how much I burn,
And my warm Countenance shall speak my Soul.
My Lips, &c.

[Goes out with two Damsels.]

SCENE IV.

Eliza and Ptolomy.

ELIZA Now sweet these rustick Cottages appear
To my fond Eyes, where my lov'd Osmin lives !
But here he comes most opportunely to me.

PTOLOMY Still a'n't you satisfy'd tyrannick Stars !
Thought you 'twas too much Comfort for a Bride,
That she might die where her lov'd Lord has dy'd !

ELIZA O Osmin, Osmin, must I ever find thee
Lamenting thus, and bursting with Complaints ?

PTOLOMY Such is the Nature of my sad Misfortunes,
That they will know no Bounds.

ELIZA Tell me, I pray you, cannot I, pray tell me,
Make your hard Destiny grow less severe ?

PTOLOMY I know not if it be within the Power
 Of all the Gods to do it.

ELIZA Well, all that Trouble I will take on me,
 (My Heart; now thou hast said too much)
 Osmin, who changes Climates, changes Fortune :
 Therefore thou from the Country straight shalt go,
 And change it for a Court.

PTOLOMY And how can I, O beauteous Fair, presume
To go to Court ?

ELIZA Reply no further, to the neighbouring Village
 Proceed you on, there I'll attend ; adieu.

[ARIA]

If you some beauteous Flow'r survey,
That strives in vain to bud and shoot,
In some new Soil transplant its Root,
Soon shall its rising Form display,
Its radiant Glories, without Envy, gay.
Just so it fares with Love; if it should be,
Not, at this Hour, so fortunate to thee ;
Then tear it, root it from thy Heart away,
Plant thou some new Affection in its Place,
In which thy Soul may find its Fill of Peace.

If you, &c. *Exit.*

PTOLOMY Full well I learn by this last sad Mishap,
That, in her Breast, a mad and fev'rish Flame
Boils up her am'rous Blood ; but, ah ! Seleuca,
That lies unburied, that neglected lies,
Calls out aloud to me to seek for Vengeance.
Yet, say ye Heav'ns, how, how shall I lift up
Anger's and War's vindictive Arm against
A Mother's Bosom, and a Brother's Blood !
How stand I compos'd round with mighty Woes !

[He goes to sit down.]

[CAVATINA]

My Tyrant Thoughts sink down, for once, to rest,
And yield a Moment's Quiet to my Breast.

[He composes himself to sleep.]

SCENE V.

Seleuca and Ptolomy, who is sleeping.

SELEUCA And where, O where, shall I once ever turn
My Love-directed Steps, to find the Treasure
That my fond Soul has lost ?
Ever more unjust and cruel Heavens
You allow before I can find him
Who alone I search for,
That he lose both Kingdom and life?
If you allow it, you Stars.
You are but too unjust.

[ARIA]

Friendly Fountains, breezy Air,
With Murmurs purling,
In Whispers curling,
Ye do soft promis'd Joys declare.
I shall enjoy him, when? ye Fountains tell ;
Tell me, ye gentle breathing Zephirs, when ?
'Tis Flatt'ry to say, I know too well,
That I shall see my well-lov'd Lord again.
Friendly, &c.

[As she is going off, she steps first towards Ptolomy, who lies a-sleep.

But who's that Swain, whose Eyes are seal'd with Sleep ?
How, at the Sight of him, my Bosom pants?
Ah! what is't I see? Is't Ptolomy ?
Belike, Desire to my fond Fancy paints him,
And yet it is not he. I'm sure I'm broad awake ;
That Hand which shadows o'er, in part, his Visage,
Still keeps me in Uncertainty and Doubt.
I will draw nigher to him.

SCENE VI.

Araspes, who comes in upon them, and the aforesaid.

ARASPES Delia so close approaching to a Shepherd
That seems to lie a-sleep !

SELEUCA O Love, do not this Time betray my longing Hopes.

ARASPES Hope ! Love ! This to a sleeping Swain,
While I meet nothing from her but Contempt,
Slights, and Abuses.

SELEUCA I wish I could unveil his Face a little.

ARASPES What do I see ! perhaps she will so strangely forward grow,
To give him an Embrace.

SELEUCA O no, my Hope does not at all deceive me,

ARASPES Stop, worthless Woman !

SELEUCA How much am I unhappy ?

ARASPES And this is, is it, that Gallant
For whom you set at nought the generous Flame
That fills a Monarch's Breast ?

SELEUCA O good, my Lord, if ever I ——

ARASPES False Woman, you cannot excuse yourself,
 Nor hide your Crime ; but for your Punishment,
 He shall fall dead before your very Eyes ;
 As my Heart suffers, yours shall suffer too.

SELEUCA Stop, Heavens ; quick, Swain, awake and fly.
[Exit.

PTOLOMY *waking.]*
 Dearest Spouse! beloved Shade !
 Now did'st thou disappear e'en now ?
 But, O my Lord, do you then arm against me ?
 In what has a poor Swain offended you ?

ARASPES You're Delia's Lover, and my Rival grown.

PTOLOMY I know not who Delia is ; and as for Life,
 That you may take from me, since Death's more welcome;
 Open my Breast, and there you'll see engraved
 A much more beauteous Fair than Delia is,
 Whom I adore with Constancy and Truth.

ARASPES Then live, but hear me, from this Time forward,
 As you shall hold your Life for dear and precious,
 Keep far from hence your Haunts ;
 For well you ought to know,
 What the meer Shadow is of Jealousy,
 If ever in your Life you've been a Lover.

[ARIA] Take Breath, my Breast, a little while,
 Well as thou canst, my Heart, beguile
 Thy wrecking and tormenting Pain,
 Now that Love's mighty potent Fire,
 So high has lighted up Desire,
 Where Jealousy does reign.
Take, &c. [Exit.

PTOLOMY There's still some Martyrdom,
 There are some further Torments still
 That I, it seems, am bound to undergo.
 Ah ! from my Breast could I but blot th' Remembrance
 Of my Seleuca, and the Woes that brings :
 But what? Would I then lose and forfeit all the Sweet,
 The dear Remembrance of my Bosom's Darling ?
 No, No ; let me not that sweet Mem'ry lose,
 Tho' Pain on Pain, beyond all Period, grows.

[ARIA] For one single Moment turn,
 Dearest Shade, again appear,
 If you turn you, there will come
 So much Joy for me to share,
 That the meer Shadow of such Pleasure
 Would cure Afflictions beyond Measure.
For one, &c.

THE END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Country with a delightful Village, as above.

Eliza, and then Ptolomy.

ELIZA [CAVATINA]

Say, where is to be found, O where
The dearest Idol of my Heart !
In Pity, pray, this News impart,
Sweet whisp'ring Zephirs, to my longing Ear.

[Enter Ptolomy.]

PTOLOMY Where is the Person that demands my Death ?
Where is my Brother ? where, where's the Tyrant ?
My Mother where ?
Where all the Furies of the deep Abyss ?
For fain I'd go and face them all together.

ELIZA Arises, Osmin, all this mighty Mourning
From being forc'd at Distance from thy Delia ?

PTOLOMY What Delia? or what Osmin ? I'm not Osmin,
I am that Ptolomy, I, I am He
Whom thy own Brother, whom Araspes seeks
To find, thro' ev'ry Corner of his wide Domains.

ELIZA (Osmin at last prov'd Ptolomy ? By Heav'ns my Soul
Grew fond, enamour' d with a good Presage,
And could not be so captiv'd by a Shepherd.)

SCENE II.

Araspes and the aforesaid.

ARASPES Osmin, how Osmin, art thou thus presuming
To break upon the Presence of a Prince,
When I but lately told thee to be gone
Far at a Distance hence ?

PTOLOMY Araspes, 'tis not Osmin ——

ELIZA It is not Osmin that offends you ——

PTOLOMY Madam, you try in vain ——

ELIZA No, if your innocence appears unblemish'd,
It will not be in vain to bring Araspes,
My Royal Brother, to be well pleas'd.
Grant me, my Lord, I may, for some short Minutes,
Conduct this Osmin into Delia's Presence ;
Soon shall I find whether he feigns a Falsehood,
Or what he speaks, be true.

ARASPES The Care of that I will commit to thee :
Discover thou which Way his Soul is bent,
And let him live unhurt, if innocent. *[Exit.]*

ELIZA O Ptolomy, whose Bravery and Courage,
More than thy Words, do tell me, thou art he ;
Discover not thy Person yet, confide in me ;
In whom thy wretched State raises more Pity
Than thou can'st well imagine.

PTOLOMY That is a cruel and mistaken Pity
 That will not let a Man, who's desperate, die. *[Exit.]*

ELIZA I know not whether Pity 'tis, or Love,
 That for the Prince my troubled Breast does move.

[ARIA] How gladly does the little Warbler fly,
 Free from Care, and o'erjoy'd with Liberty !
 But in my inmost Soul
 Thoughts most tormenting roll,
 Love Shadows Truth with Lies,
 And mingles Grief with Pleasure.
 How, &c.

[Exit.]

SCENE III.

SELEUCA *sola.*

Could I but hope one Day would end my Pain,
I would a double Load of Woe sustain.

[ARIA]
Winds transmit
All that's fit
Of the smart in my heart
To my dear one.
Him pursue
To my view
That his face may chase
Away my grief.
 Winds, &c.

[As Seleuca is about to leave, she meets Eliza and Ptolomy entering.]

SCENE IV.

Eliza, Ptolomy, and Seleuca.

ELIZA Stay, for a Minute, Delia. *(To Ptolomy)* See, that's she,
 That moves most jealous Thoughts in fond Araspes !

PTOLOMY Am I awake, what do my Eyes behold ?
 This, this is my Seleuca,
 Unless it be her Ghost, my lov'd Seleuca.

SELEUCA *(Unwary he does his own self discover)*
 (It fits that I should act with some Disguise,)
 What say'st thou Shepherd ?
 I know thee not, and less know what thou mean' st.

PTOLOMY Thy well-known Voice confirms my warmest Wishes ;
 Yes yes, I will embrace thee.

SELEUCA What ! Art thou mad? doest rave ?
 Not to expose me to the Insolence
 Of one so senseless, I'll depart from hence.

 (Thus, in one Moment, while I seek my Love,
 The Fate that makes me meet him, makes me prove
 That I must lose him, and once more remove.)

[Exit.]

PTOLOMY I know not what to say, or what to think :
I seem to see, and yet I do not see ;
I seem to hear, and yet I do not hear ;
Thus my each Sense conspires to betray me.

ELIZA You've now, my Lord, discover'd to me more
Than I would wish to know : Now, if you will,
With equal Warmth, repay my ardent Love ;
It shall be easily within your Power
To save your Life ; and, by my Brother's Arms,
Remount the Throne of Egypt.

PTOLOMY You have, Eliza, plainly now discover'd
That I adore the Beauty of Seleuca,
If she still lives ; that, if the Fair be dead,
I yet pay Adoration to her Memory.
Long have I been to her a destin'd Spouse;
And should I give my Heart away to you,
False were that Heart, the Gift ungrateful too.

[ARIA] As but one Heart alone resides
Included in this Breast ;
So it, but o'er one Flame presides,
Of one sole Wish possest.
And thou, its only Object too,
Thou, and only thou, dost know,
How, and why my Soul, by Turns,
With Anguish and with Pleasure burns.
As but, &c. [Exit.

ELIZA Cannot thy Love, Eliza, thus neglected,
Slighted, despis'd, abandon'd to Despair,
The Arms of Wrath, t' avenge that Slight, prepare ?

SCENE V.

Alexander and Eliza.

ALEXANDER Madam, this Day the Lot of all my Fortune
On you alone depends ;
Since the warm Rev'rence, with which I worship you,
Does not offend my Brother.

ELIZA Prince, I do not refuse
The generous Present of your noble Heart :
But, while that Ptolomy exists on Earth,
During his Life, how stands your Throne secure ?
Therefore dispatch him first.
Then shall I quickly see whether your Valour
(Opening his Breast) will ope, thro that, a Passage
Into my Heart.

[ARIA] My Heart has never yet been taught
With low and vulgar Flames to burn ;
My Love must be most dearly bought,
By one that dares all Dangers scorn,
That knows no Reason, no Respect, or Awe,
But just for me, and makes my Will his Law.
My heart, &c.

[Exit.

ALEXANDER

A Passion that will know, nor Law, nor Reason,
If it can suit your Heart, will ne'er suit mine.
I am conscious that the Crown of Egypt
Belongs of Right to him ; and nourish Hopes,
I shall restore him to his Realm and Freedom.

[ARIA]

Ah! now, ye Heav'ns, I feel my Breast
Not with a perfect Calm is blest ;
Eliza's charming Air and Face
Invite me to pursue Love's Chace :
But then Eliza's Cruelty
Again takes Place, and bids me flie,

[To my Love sweet Zephirs flie,
Gently whisper in her Ear,
Tell her, that for her I die.]

Ah! now, &c. *[Exit.*

SCENE VI.

A Wood.

Seleuca and afterwards Ptolomy.

SELEUCA [ARIA, THEN DUET]

Tell me, ye Rural Powers,
Tell me where
My Love abides.

Him, sylvan Gods, when you find
Change to swiftest Gales of Wind,
Teach him, I pray you, to flee
Like sweet Zephirs back to me.

PTOLOMY *within]* Tell me.

SELEUCA Tell me where
My Love abides.
Tell me ye sylvan Gods.

PTOLOMY *within]* Restore her to my longing Eyes.

SELEUCA Where is my Love ?
Where art thou, Dearest Ptolomy ? *[Exit.*

PTOLOMY *comes in* My Name I heard
From that sweet deceiving Voice.

PTOLOMY [ARIOSO]

Tell me, ye silvan Gods,
Where my true Love is !

Follows Seleuca.

SELEUCA *comes in*

I have sought for you and cannot find you ;
I am your Seleuca.
Tho' I then dissembled.

SCENE VII.

Araspes and the aforesaid.

ARASPES Does Delia wander all alone
In this solitary Wood,
Flying from him that adores her !

SELEUCA (Oh! what dismal Encounter !)

ARASPES Permit me.

[She pushes him off, as he goes to embrace her.

Most cruel ! In what have I offended ?

Tries once more to embrace her.

PTOLOMY *enters.]*

Stand off, Traitor ; I am in her Defence.

ARASPES Vile Osmin ——

PTOLOMY I'll bear no longer with the Name of Osmin.
I'm Ptolomy, and I ne'er will suffer
That she shall undergo from thee an Outrage,
Who, if she ben't indeed my lov'd Seleuca,
Bears, at the least, my lov'd Seleuca' s Image.

SELEUCA Yes, I am that Seleuca ; Pity my Lord,
Have Pity of my Spouse and of my Lover ;
Pity of me, Pity of our Disasters,
Which ought to find even in Savages,
Much more within a Royal Bosom, Pity.

ARASPES Pity you'll have, when you deserve my Pity :
Mean while, conduct that Woman to Elisa ;
And let this Man be in strong Fetters bound :
You weep in vain, in vain you shed those Tears. ——

[Ptolomy is put in Chains by Araspes's Guards.

[ARIA]

Weep, but no Hopes e'er entertain,
That you can any Pity gain,
Or mollify my Wrath with Tears ;
A Sea of Tears it would require,
Nor would that serve to quench the Fire,
Where Jealousy appears.

Weep, &c. *[Exit.*

SCENE VIII.

Ptolomy and Seleuca with Guards.

PTOLOMY Seleuca !

SELEUCA Ptolomy !

PTOLOMY Still does my Fair one live !

SELEUCA

I live, because ill Fate will have it so,
And does reserve me for Death's harshest Blow.

PTOLOMY

Thee living! willing I my Life resign.

SELEUCA

No Torment, sure, did ever equal mine!

[DUET]

FOR 2. If your Heart fails you, O my Dear / O my Love.

PTOLOMY So many bitter Pangs to bear ;

SELEUCA So many bitter Grievs to prove.

FOR 2. { I know not what to say to you ——
But this; my Love, my Life, Adieu.

FOR 2. { Well, now I go to suffer certain Death,
But, in the Pangs of my last parting Breath
You never shall forgotten be by me,
Whom I adore ev'n to Idolatry.
If your, &c.

THE END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Closet in the Apartments of Araspes.

Alexander, and afterwards Araspes.

ALEXANDER *with a Letter.*] [ACCOMPAGNATO]

Mother, at last, that Tribute thou hast paid,
From which no Mortal that was ever made,
No Creature ever born, was yet exempt.
Yet from my weeping Eyes receive that Duty,
Which filial Reverence is bound to Pay.

ARASPES My Lord, if that as yet escapes your Knowledge,
Now learn, that Ptolomy is in my Power.

ALEXANDER I am well pleased to hear it :
Because, just now, I have Advice from Egypt,
That my Imperial Mother sudden died ;
Therefore, I, quickly, must depart from hence ;
So must my Brother too.

ARASPES I pray be counsell'd; rather let him stay,
Upon these Lands remote, a breathless Corse.

ALEXANDER O no, (Fiction is here a necessary Thing)
While he remains fast bound in Custody,
I, then, can free my self from every Fear.
*Yet, but a little ; and my faithful Squadrons
Will join me here, that I have nam'd to guard him.
Mean while, yourself may give the proper Orders,
That are convenient for the End we aim at.*

[ARIA]

If the Great Gods do our Interiours spy,
I of their Favour never will despair ;
But still, how hard, if from a beauteous Eye,
Love will disfavour me, and grow severe !
If, &c. *[Exit.*

ARASPES Unless my Thoughts err much,
This Alexander would not have the Odium
Fall on himself, of his own Brother's Death ;
But much he would be pleas'd, some other Hand
Should rid him of this World:
*Elisa shall discover (Ay, that shall be the Blind)
How much she takes his Part ; that so I may
With seeming Justice him to Death betray.*

[ARIA]

I shall not be a Tyrant, but just,
If I should bid him fall transfix'd to Dust,
Altho' he does not guilty seem to be.
Not I condemn him ; no, it is not me:
Seleuca is the Crime, his Soul does stain ;
And 'tis his Fault, that he has Pow'r to reign.
I shall, &c.

Exit.

SCENE II.

Seleuca and Elisa.

SELEUCA What would Elisa? would she seek the Death
 Of the worst Wretch, that draws his vital Breath ?

ELIZA Far from it ; all that I desire or crave
 Is, both thy Life and Ptolomy's to save.

SELEUCA Ah ! were, what thou so kindly say'st, as true ;
 What is it, for that good End, I would not do?

ELIZA Yield him to me you must ;— if you deny,
 You leave him, then, to Death's sure Destiny.

SELEUCA And is it at this Price, you'd sell your Favours ?
 *However, I accept them ; — each Price seems light
 For his dear Life ; — for that, I'd ought resign,
 And Ptolomy, for me, is wholly thine.*

ELIZA *But that's not all ; that does not still suffice.*

SELEUCA *What can I further do ?*

ELIZA *Why bring him to consent ;* you'll see him here,
 Then put it to him, tell him, he must try
 To like, and marry me ; or else must die.

[ARIA] To a Heart inflam'd with Love,
 If Love's refus'd again,
 Affection chang'd will straight remove,
 And turn to fierce Disdain.
 If, when still ask'd, he'll still deny
 With these soft Measures to comply ;
 My Heart, you'll find, can't long endure
 Such Pain, and be deny'd the Cure.
 To a, &c.

[Exit.

SELEUCA Behold he comes, views me with joyful Eyes ;
 But at his Sight, my Soul bursts forth in Sighs.

SCENE III.

Ptolomy and Seleuca.

PTOLOMY

Fair one, I find my Stars grow less severe ;
Tho' they've pursu'd me long with their Disdain,
The pleasing Sight of thee o'er-pays the Pain.

SELEUCA

My Dear; a Kingdom, and long Life is thine,
But, never, never, must thou more be mine :
Elisa's Hand does, back to thee restore,
What mine, more wretched, robb'd thee of before.

PTOLOMY

And can'st thou ever think, that thou shalt see
Me live and reign, my Love, and not with thee ?
Alas, Seleuca! with Elisa's Hand,
Would'st sooth my Hopes, because thou wouldst command
That of Araspes, in the Nuptial Band?

SELEUCA

Now, cruel Man, thou hast found out the Way
To overcome my Soul with deep Dismay ;
Have you such wretched Jealousies in Store
For me, whom you pretended to adore ?
Rather than turn, to such sad Thoughts, thy Breast,
Die Ptolomy, Seleuca die, and rest.

[ARIA]

So grieves the Turtle when she's left,
So Sobs, when of her Mate,
Does Groans on Groans repeat :
Just so she sighs, just so she cries,
And so does moan, when left alone,
By her beloved Mate.

So grieves, &c, [Exit.

SCENE IV.

Elisa and Ptolomy.

ELIZA

Well, what are you determin'd on at last?
On Life, or Death?

PTOLOMY

My Soul can't long suspended stand in Strife ;
Which I'd first lose, Seleuca, or my Life.

ELIZA

Am I so odious to thee, monstrous Man?
Soon we shall find, if thy bold Heart's so brave,
When thou Seleuca see'st dragged to her Grave.

PTOLOMY

Thy cruel Ministers of Death command,
Bid them come forth, why do'st thou loit'ring stand?
With an unmov'd, and with a steady Brow,
I will behold the Blood I worship, flow ;
Grateful to me shall be those Wounds of Fate,
And 'gainst thee, deeper Root my deadly Hate.

ELIZA

Well, then ye both, believe me, both shall gain,
An End of Fears, an End of all your Pain.
Back' where he came from, let this Wretch be led ;
There, ruthless Man, there Wretch ungrateful, wait,
As thou desir'st it, the Stroke of Fate.

[ARIA]

Thou shalt repent, thou shalt, base Man,
That thou didst treat with foul Disdain,
A Heart so loving, and so true,
And if my Love thus falls by Fate,
Then she that caus'd the dire Debate,
And snar'd his Heart, shall perish too : ——
Thou shalt, &c.

[Exit.

PTOLOMY Come forth, why do you, cruel Guards, delay ?
Why not this furious Woman's Will obey ?
Behold, my Bosom bare, in Death there's Rest,
So empty all your Fury on my Breast.

[ARIA] I'm like some Rock that Waves surround,
Which breaks their Force, contemns their Rage,
Nor fears their formidable Sound:
Which nought but Thunder down can throw,
And then, below the Waves, it lies
Opprest, but can no Sorrow know.
I'm like, &c.

[Exit with the Guards.]

SCENE V.

A Wood.

Alexander alone, and a little afterwards, Seleuca brought in between two Guards.

ALEXANDER In this remotest Part of all the Wood,
I told Orontes, that he must conduct
To me the faithfullest and trustiest Leaders
*Of our Egyptian Cohorts ;
For here, I would propose to them to swear
Oaths of Fidelity, and firm Allegiance,
As they in Justice ought to Ptolomy.*

SELEUCA *from within.]*
And whither, whither now, would you still further
Lead me along ? *[She appears between two Guards.]*

ALEXANDER Ah ! Traitors, what, what do my Eyes survey ?
Treat you so fair a Maid, so vile a Way ?

[The Guards flee.]

SELEUCA Prince, is it you, that thus preserve my Life?
Ah ! for your Hand alone, reserve you would
The Joy of shedding my devoted Blood :
Your Hand, which has, perhaps, but just before,
Been bath'd and reeking in a Brother's Gore.

ALEXANDER Seleuca! and alive ? why this strange Habit ?
Believe me, I am no Enemy of his,
As you, deceiv'd, imagine ; shortly, you'll see,
That, by my Means, he lives, and reigns through me.

SELEUCA O let me falling prostrate at thy Feet —

ALEXANDER Rise beauteous Excellence, my Queen are you,
And ought to take my Homage, that's your Due.

SELEUCA *But Ptolomy, my Lord, where, where is he ?*

ALEXANDER *Soon to my Care he will committed be
Out of Araspe's Hands.*

SELEUCA *What do I hear !*

ALEXANDER *What fear you?*

SELEUCA *Much, ah! very much I fear,
That, as Elisa does my Blood desire,
Araspes should, with equal Thirst, require
To have his likewise spilt.*

ALEXANDER **That he'll not dare ;**
 But, for your greater Certainty, I go
 To mend your Fortunes, and to cure your Woe.

[Exit.]

SELEUCA [ARIA]

Stars, shall I believe you ? No.
Tho' so pleasantly you show ;
Still I fear, for all your Smiling,
You my Wishes are beguiling.

Tir'd with Grief, and worn away,
I can never more grow Gay,
Never chase the stinging Smart,
From my aching, panting Heart.
 Stars, &c.

Exit.

SCENE VI.

Ptolomy alone, with a Cup of Poison.

PTOLOMY

Why, longer, lingring Lips, do you delay,
By these few Drops, with which this Cup is fraught,
(Elisa's Present) to drink Life away,
And quench her thirsty Fury by the Draught ?
Yes, yes, most heartily I'll quaff it all :

He drinks the poison and throws down the cup.

[ACCOMPAGNATO]

Inhuman Brother, barbarous Mother !
Unjust Araspes, Elisa cruel Maid,
Ye Gods, or rather Furies of the Sky,
Implacable tyrannick Destiny,
That, like sworn Foes, deny me every Aid,
On every one of you I call,
To see, with Pleasure, how I fall :
But you ! my Bosom's best beloved Spouse,
Let no sad Sorrow set upon thy Brows,
When, from glad Lips, my parting Spirit flows,
Suffice it that you send one pitying Sigh,
To meet the Soul, that from this Breast shall fly,
And waft it up, with Rapture to the Sky.

[Goes to seat himself.]

[ARIA]

Bitter Drops, ah! now I feel,
With Death, through all my Breast, you steal.
Now I feel ye smother Pain,
Feel ye make me blest again.
 Bitter, &c.

[Falls down.]

SCENE THE LAST.

Araspes, Alexander, afterwards Seleuca, and all the Others.

ARASPES Behold, O Prince ! thy Brother, and I hope,
I thus have made the Present pleasing to thee.

ALEXANDER Just Heavens ! what do I see ?
Soon shall you know, base Tyrant, you shall,
I'll make vast Ruin on your Kingdoms fall.

ARASPES I value not thy Threats ;
For now my Rival Ptolomy is dead,
Safe I'll lead fair Seleuca to my Bed.

ELIZA By me Seleuca, weltr'ing, buried lies
In her own Blood ; cold Death has seal'd her Eyes.

ARASPES Perfidious Sister!

ELIZA In Recompense for the Error I had done,
I strove, by saving Ptolomy, to atone. *[Speaking to Alexander.*
In Poison's Stead, a sleeping Draught I gave,
And now, see waking, he eludes the Grave.

ALEXANDER O Prodigy !

ARASPES O Amazement !

PTOLOMY Who are ye, say? and where do I now dwell?
Thou Fury, or thou Shade of Hell,
Where is my Seleuca ? tell.

ALEXANDER Behold her, Ptolomy,
See thy Seleuca's here.

PTOLOMY And lives Seleuca ! and am I alive !

SELEUCA Me, of my Love, how long did Fate deprive ?

[They embrace.

FOR TWO.] Now is this enamour'd Breast
Full of Joy, and full of Pleasure ;
'Tis now all blest, because possest,
Of thee, my dearest Treasure.
Deceit has now quite lost his Sting,
Love to be Tyrant ceases ;
Nay, truly sweet turns the Deceit,
That thus our Bosoms pleases.
Now, &c.

ALEXANDER O Brother, let me fold you to my Breast,
Thine are the Realms of Egypt : Thy Mother dead,
At length, restores them ; now they are all thy own.

PTOLOMY Forget we all past Crimes, and mount the Throne.

CHORUS

May the Joy that was fled
Return to each Breast,
Grief is now ceas'd,
Let all rejoice.

THE END OF THE OPERA.