



**Libretto - Shah Abbas and Khurshid Banu
Opera in Four Acts (1912)
by Uzeyir Hajibeyov**

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Characters:

Shah Abbas, 35 years old
Vizier, 50 years old
Second Nobleman
Third Nobleman
Fourth Nobleman
Fifth Nobleman
Servant
Woodcutter
Woodcutter's First Son
Woodcutter's Second Son
Khurshid, the Woodcutter's daughter, 20 years old
Mastavar, the cook
Dostali, from Shiraz
Madman [actually, he's very smart, though people consider him to be mad]
First Prisoner
Second Prisoner
Third Prisoner
Fourth Prisoner
Fifth Prisoner
First Felt-maker
Second Felt-maker
Third Felt-maker
10 people from Shiraz
The troops and others

Act 1

A forest scene, in which a woodcutter is gathering wood with his two sons.

Woodcutter: (Based on the mugham Rast)
There's a saying that
"He who works hard will eat honey at the end."
I worked very hard, but I didn't get any honey,
And I didn't know what fun was.

Music

What kind of life, what kind of living is this?
There's no relaxation at all;
No money, no belongings either,
And my home is empty with nothing in it.

Music

First Son: What an unlucky one you were,
And you made us miserable as well.
What kind of hell is this?
Our life is so tough.

Music

Second Son: We are not considered human,
No one cares who we are.
What grief, what misery we have,
And you are the reason for all of these troubles!

Music

Both sons: Why did you become a woodcutter?

Woodcutter: Who, me?

Sons: Yes, you!

Woodcutter: What was my grandfather?

Sons: A woodcutter!

Woodcutter: What was my father?

Sons: A woodcutter!

Woodcutter: Who am I?

Sons: A woodcutter!

Woodcutter and his sons: We, you!

Woodcutter: That's why you also have woodcutters as your ancestors.

Music (Based on the mugham Tasnif)

Three together: It is already our profession to cut wood,
Others enjoy their time, but we suffer here.
Although we work very hard, we don't have enough to eat.

There isn't even any bread at home, and we have tons of troubles!

They start cutting wood, keeping time to the rhythm of the music. At each chop of the hatchet, they say "Hey!" and repeat six times, then sing again.

It's already our profession to cut wood.
Ooh, eh-hh, woodcutting is our trade!

They put their hatchets aside, lie down and fall asleep.

Music

Khurshid is singing from behind the curtain.

Khurshid: (Based on the mugham Bayati)
Spring has come already, flowers are blooming,
Meadows and fields are green and bright,
And all the grief in my heart
Has blossomed like a budding rose.

Music

Khurshid appears on the stage.

Khurshid: Nightingales sing their song
With their own melody.
Who can help me, oh God!
Who can cure my sick soul?

Music

Khurshid dances. The woodcutter and his sons dance as well.

Woodcutter: (Based on the mugham Shur) Khurshid, you seem so happy, as if you have no grief.

First Son: Do you think that she knows what grief is?

Second Son: She is not hungry. If she were, she would know that we have much grief and sorrow.

Khurshid: (Based on the mugham Samayi-Shams)
I do know what sorrow is, what sadness is,
But why do we have to be the slaves of sorrow and sadness?
If heaven gave us sorrow,
It shows us the way to handle it as well.
That way is called direction.

Woodcutter and his sons: (Based on the mugham Tasnif)
Oh, oh, oh!
We work like slaves from morning till evening,
We work like slaves from morning till evening,
Every morning,
Hey, every morning,
Hey, every morning, hey!
Chuchu-chuchu, tokkushchu, chuchu-chuchu, tokkushchu!
Chu, chuchu, chuchu, tokkushchu!
This is our life, this is our living!

Music

Khurshid: (Based on the mugham Shur)
Have you heard what one woodcutter said to Khatami-Tai?

Music (Based on the mugham Tasnif)

If everyone were satisfied with what he earned,
No one would ask Khatami-Tai for bread!
No one would ask Khatami-Tai for bread!

Music

All: If everyone were satisfied with what he earned,
No one would ask Khatami-Tai for bread!

Music

They hear the sound of the bugle and panic.

First Son (yelling): Let's run away. Padishah is probably out hunting.

Khurshid: Please don't be afraid, let's see what it is.

They hear the bugle again.

Sons: By God, let's run, they will kill us!

Khurshid: Don't be afraid, and don't move!

They hear marching. The troops arrive and stand at attention in a line. Shah Abbas appears. The troops, noblemen and others sing.

All: Long live our Padishah,
May God help you all the time,
May you defeat your enemies
And have no one against you.
Long live our Padishah! (twice)
May our Padishah live long
Because you are a fair shah
And show your mercy to us!

Music

Padishah: My soldiers, I'm completely satisfied with you.
(to Vizier) Tell all the troops in my name.
Every person should know that
Their Padishah will do a favor for them.
So let no one hurt another.
I will be ruthless to the cruel.
Let everyone know this command!

All: Long live our Padishah! (eight times)

Music

The troops start building tents.

Shah Abbas: (Looking at Khurshid, based on the mugham Rast)
Who is that girl?

Vizier: A woodcutter!

Shah: She seems to be smart, and she is pretty indeed.
What do you think? Is she suitable for being in a harem?

Vizier: If the Shah came to this decision,
There would be no rejection!

Shah: (based on the mugham Tasnif) That is probably her father. Bring him here!

Music

Vizier goes over toward the woodcutter.

Vizier: (Based on the mugham Rast) Hey, man, the Padishah is calling you. Come here!

Music

The woodcutter goes over to him. His sons are trembling with fear.

First Son (yelling): I told you we should have run!

Music

Shah (to the Woodcutter): Who are you? What's your profession?

Woodcutter: Your Majesty, your servant is a woodcutter!

Shah: How do you know that girl?

Woodcutter: Your admiration is my daughter.

Shah: (Based on the mugham Tasnif)
Do you agree to let your daughter join my harem?
Be quick, man!

Woodcutter: (Based on the mugham Rast)
My Padishah, if I must kill her, please, do so.

Shah: Hold on, listen to what I say.
I want to marry your daughter, do you grant your approval?

Woodcutter: My Padishah, you know better than I do.
If I did something wrong, please, order them to execute me.

Shah: What a stupid man!

Vizier: Hey man, the Padishah wants to marry your daughter. Do you agree?

Woodcutter: Ashhedi-la-ilahi-illallahi ve ashhad...

Shah: Let him go, he's a crazy, stupid man. Bring his sons!

Music

The vizier leaves.

Vizier: Quickly, follow me, the Padishah wants to see you.

Sons (crying loudly): What is our guilt? What did we do wrong? Why do you want to kill us? We submit ourselves as a sacrifice to you. Please, don't kill us. For God's sake, don't kill us.

Shah (angrily): Move them away, bring the girl.

They bring the girl.

Music

Shah (to the girl): I want to marry you.

If you are selected

To join my harem and have a place in the palace,

Would you agree?

Khurshid (courageously): No, never!

Shah (angrily): Hangman!

The hangman arrives with a sword in his hand. He stands firm and ready. The woodcutter and his sons are standing close to one another, trembling with fear. The others are silent. Khurshid looks at the Shah with pride and bravery.

Music (Based on the mugham Bayati-shiraz)

Vizier (to the Padishah):

You are famous in the world for your power and braveness,

And for your fairness and honesty as well.

There is nothing that is impossible for you to achieve.

There is no one who is able to go against you.

But, my Shah, it wouldn't offend your fame

If you listened to your old vizier.

Shah: Speak, what do you want?

Vizier: I was amazed by her braveness when she said, "No".

Don't you wonder what her reason is for saying no?

Shah: Yes, ask her.

Vizier: Tell me, Lady, where do you get your courage?

How could you refuse our great Shah?

You must have a reason for that.

Please, tell me, dear, don't sentence yourself to death.

Music

Khurshid: (based on the mugham Tasnif)
Let me tell you my reason, vizier! (twice)
Let everyone know my reason, vizier! (twice)
Does your Padishah have a profession, vizier? (twice)
I would never marry a man who has no profession.

Music

Never forget! If someone doesn't have a profession, (twice)
Life will be very difficult for him. (twice)
Does your Padishah have a profession, vizier?
Otherwise I would not marry your Padishah.

All (except for the girl): Does he need any profession,
While the whole country is in his hand, and the coffers are full?

Khurshid: It doesn't matter if he's shah or bey or khan,
Everyone should have a profession.

Music

Padishah is deep in thought.

Shah: (Based on the mugham Rast) I did like her suggestion. What do you think, vizier, about me learning a trade?

Vizier: Your Majesty, if you learn a trade, it will make you more popular.

Shah: You are such a smart girl. Come and stand by my side, please.

The girl approaches him, and he puts his hand on her shoulder.

Shah: Vizier, which profession would you recommend for me?

Vizier: My great Shah, felt-making is an honorable profession.

Shah: Find me a felt-maker immediately who can teach me this trade. (To the girl) Will you marry me now?

Khurshid: Yes!

Vizier: My Shah, I congratulate you on your new profession.

All: Congratulations, congratulations!

Music

Shah: (Based on the mugham Tasnif) I think I could benefit my people with my profession.

All: Definitely, yes!

Shah: I think I could benefit my people with my profession.

All: Definitely, yes!

Shah: I will learn felt-making and will be a felt-making shah! (twice)

All: Your fame will be a hundred times more than before,
And your works will be preserved forever!

Shah: I will learn felt-making and will be a felt-making shah! (twice)

All: Long live, long live, long live my Shah! (twice)
You are the fairest Padishah,
Because you have agreed to be a felt-maker! (twice)
From the suggestion of a simple girl.

Khurshid: I hope the day will come when
You realize how valuable this is.

All: Long live our Shah!
May our dream come true!

Shah: I will learn felt-making and will be a felt-making shah! (twice)

All: It will be helpful for your people.

Shah and the girl: Definitely, it will.

All: Yes, it will.

Act 2

The scene takes place in one of the Shah's rooms. After the prelude, the curtain rises. Shah Abbas and three other felt-makers are making felt. One piece of felt that is already ready has been laid on the table and is being viewed by the people. The other one is on the carpet, and the felt-makers and the Shah are still working on it.

Shah Abbas: (Based on the mugham Chahargah-Tasnif)
(stopping for a minute)
A day will come
When I will realize the importance of this profession.
My God, bring me the day
When my profession will come to my help.

Music

If you don't work hard,
You will never know what pleasure is.
My God, show me the day
When my profession will come to my help.

Shah: (Based on the mugham Chahargah)
I promised Khurshid and spent some time.
I did my best to learn this profession.
Even if I haven't had any benefit from it yet,
I feel joy every minute in my heart.

Music

A day will come when I will benefit from it.
Then I will treat Khurshid with more respect
By rewarding her with more jewelry and honor.
I'll appoint her head wife.

Music (Based on the mugham Gusha-Mukhalif)

Let the Woodcutter's daughter (remember, how she was in the past)
Be honored because of her cleverness.

(Based on the mugham Chahargah)

A poor man can be famous because of the Shah.
The people who are clever
Are the happiest creatures in the world.

While the Shah sings, the felt-makers roll the felt and finish it. When the Shah finishes singing, they sing the following Tasnif. While making the felt, they pound their feet, keeping the rhythm. They also start making new felt.

(Lower on the mugham Chahargah)

All: (Based on the mugham Tasnif)

A day will come when
This trade will be of use to our Shah,
God, bring that day
When this trade will be of use to the Shah!
If one doesn't work hard,
He will never know
What pleasure is, what pleasure is.
God, bring that day
When this trade will be of use to our Shah!

Music

The felt-makers bow to the Shah and leave.

Shah: (Based on the mugham Rahab)

Even though I was a Padishah
And was satisfied with my wealth and position,
I found felt-making as my profession.
Hey, if you look down on someone who has a trade,
It is a sin in front of God.

Music

Your profession is always ready to help you,
You can be happy if you have a profession that you like.
Only your profession gives you a chance to have an orderly life.
If one doesn't have a trade, one's life becomes meaningless.

Music

Khurshid enters.

Shah: (Based on the mugham Tasnif)
Khurshid, I have kept my promise.
I am a felt-maker now.
I made a promise to you,
And I kept it until the end. (twice)

Music

You see, this is all the felt
I made myself.
And every night, until morning,
I worked hard and learned how to make it.
I kept my promise until the end. (twice)

Music

Khurshid looks at the felt.

Khurshid: (Based on the mugham Bayati-Kurd)
My Shah,
It is unbelievable that
You learned felt-making just because of one word from a poor girl.
Now you are the best example among people,
And every khan and bondman shows interest in having a trade!

Shah: You did give treasure to our state.
I'll do my best to increase the respect of trade.
My Khurshid, I'm thankful to God for meeting you
Because it's impossible these days
To find a wife who is both clever and pretty indeed.

Khurshid: It was just a word that I said.
Thanks goes to you, you didn't ignore it.
I hope that one day, we will witness its importance
By having trade be honorable in the whole country.

Shah: Now it's time for you to tell the truth.
When I first saw you in the forest,
I fell in love with you, and my love is growing from day to day.
Now tell me, do you love me?
If not, I can set you free.

Khurshid: My Shah, I fell in love with you that very day.
That's why I'm here today.
You can kill me, you can love me,
But I know what I feel inside is love.

Shah: I love you, you are my all,
All I want is to be with you.
A shah never tells a lie.
You are my moon, and also the stars!

Khurshid: You, the star of my destiny, are so bright,
I am so thankful that my destiny
Was to meet someone that I could love as my sun!

I am so drunk with my love
That I can sacrifice myself with great pleasure to you.

Shah: Come and sit with me, my Khurshid, let's talk about love.
There is no one else here, only you and me.
It's a good chance, tell me about your love.
Come and sit with me, come, come, my beautiful lady.

Music

Khurshid goes to him, and they sit embracing each other.

Together: It feels so good, to sit and talk with your sweetheart, (twice)
To talk about love, to flirt with your beloved.

Music

They stay this way for a couple of minutes. When the music changes, the Shah stands up and goes toward the door. At that moment, the vizier enters.

Vizier: (Based on the mugham Chahargah)
Your Majesty, there are some people here from Shiraz. They have a complaint for you. If you allow, they will come in and make their complaint clear.

Shah: Let them come. (to Khurshid) Khurshid, stay here.

The people from Shiraz enter and bow.

Shah: Vizier, what complaints do these people have?

Vizier: Long live my Shah, they told me everything. If you allow, I will tell you.

Shah: Go ahead!

Vizier: It is a very strange story they have told. In Shiraz, a very strange thing has been going on for five months. During this period, more than 200 people left their home in the morning for work but never returned. No one knows what happened to them. They just disappeared.

Shah: All at once?

Vizier: No. One day it was one person, the next day it was five, the day after that it was three, and so on. Even the astrologers can't understand what is going on. Now the whole city is in a panic, because they can't figure out the reason.

People from Shiraz: (Based on the mugham Tasnif)

Your Majesty, you are the only one
Who can help us.
Only with your help
Can we get rid of the problem.
There is no other way,
Discover this secret, help us please,
If you don't help, there will be upheaval.
Think of your people
You will leave all the women crying, (twice)
All the children crying. (twice)

Music

Padishah goes into deep thought.

People from Shiraz:

Shah, we need your help,
This problem can be solved
Only, only with your help.
There is no other solution.

Shah: You can leave, I'll think it over and figure out what I can do. Calm down the people. (They leave.) (To Vizier) Vizier, it is too strange, it seems there is some cunning here. I can't stay here any longer. Have my dervish clothes brought here. I will go myself.

Vizier: If you agree, I could go investigate what is wrong.

Shah: No, I have to go myself. Do what I ordered you to do.

Vizier: It is my duty. (He leaves.)

Music

The Shah goes into deep thought.

Khurshid: (Based on the mugham Shushtar)

I am anxious, I am so worried about you.
I am afraid this trip may bring you trouble.
My Shah, please let me go with you.
I can sacrifice myself for you.

Shah: Don't be afraid, my Khurshid, it's not my first such trip.
I have stayed face to face with my enemy.
I'll return soon, with the mercy of God.
I wouldn't let my people suffer.

Music

Vizier and a servant return with dervish clothes in their hands.

Shah: (putting on the clothes) I would never agree
To let cruelty happen in my country.
Let those who did this crime
Wait and see.
I will give them a good lesson.
To those who bothered my people,
I will erase their generation from the earth.

Vizier, I am leaving you in my place. Please, fulfill all tasks decently. Don't forget, Khurshid is my wife, and everybody should respect her. Pay special attention to her until I get back. Now I'm leaving. So long. (He leaves in a hurry.)

Curtain

One of the large markets of Shiraz. On the left side of the stage is Cook Mastavar's store. He is selling food to people in front of his store. There are different kinds of stores on the other side of the stage. Gypsies are dancing on one side. After the prelude, the curtain rises. A young gypsy is dancing. The head gypsy is singing and playing the tambourine while the others sing along.

Gypsy: Come, come, baby, I beseech you!

Others: Come, come, baby, I miss you. Come, baby, I have you!

Gypsy: Hug me, I beseech you!

Others: Come, come, baby!

Gypsy: I hear you have another beloved.

Others: My baby, I am mad about you, my dear, crazy for you!

Gypsy: You have bud and khar. [You are too beautiful, so there are a lot of people admiring you.]

Others: Oh, dying for you, dying for you.

Music

The people make a circle around them.

Gypsy: One gray-eyed, slender lady
Won't ease my sorrow.
Flirtatious girl, it would be so good
If I could get just one chance to see you. (twice)
I am in the fire of love,
Can't stop thinking of you.
Show your mercy, at least. (twice)

Music

My heart is torn by love,
Why don't you cure it?
I don't know what to do. Come to me!
My flirtatious lady won't look at me! (twice)

Music

The gypsy turns over her tambourine, and the people throw money into it. At that moment, the Shah appears in dervish clothes. Dostali, one of the people from Shiraz, yells at the gypsies.

Dostali: (Based on the mugham Shur) What kind of party is this on such a mourning day? Half of the city is in mourning, but you are singing and dancing here. And then you expect us to give you money. You really are gypsies.

Music

The gypsies leave the stage.

Shah Abbas: (to Dostali) Let me know, why is the city in mourning?
What's the reason? What went wrong?

Some people gather around them until there is a small crowd.

Dostali: Dervish, you seem to have just arrived here. For the last couple of months, the people of this city have been disappearing. But we don't have any idea who kidnapped them.

Crowd: It's true.

Dostali: A lot of families are left without husbands, fathers without sons, sisters without brothers. They are crying all the time.

Crowd: It's true.

Dostali: No one knows the secret behind it; reveal this secret if you are a witch.

Crowd: Reveal, reveal, dervish, reveal.

Music

A madman comes and listens.

Shah: Tell me, whose store is over there? Why does everyone go there?

Dostali: Poor dervish, it seems you haven't tasted Mastavar's delicious meals yet.

Crowd: Poor you!

Dostali: Mastavar is such a good cook, even Shah Abbas doesn't have as good cook as him in his palace!

Crowd: No, he doesn't!

Dostali: No cook was able to compete with him, and all the other restaurants closed down. If you don't want to miss this chance, go and taste his meals. Be quick, it's almost evening. He might close his store soon.

Crowd: Be quick, dervish, be quick!

Music

Everyone closes their stores and joins the crowd.

Madman: Hee-hee-hee! Be quick, dervish, be quick! (Based on the mugham Shur) Do you know what Mastavar feeds you with? Do you know what meat it is that you eat every day? You call me crazy, mad, but you are crazier than I am. You still don't know what you eat.

Crowd: What's he talking about?

Madman: I'm telling you, do you know what he gives you everyday? Do you know what you eat everyday?

Crowd: Delicious meals!

Madman: Hee-hee-hee! Delicious meals! Be quick, dervish, go and eat as soon as possible. Hey, naive people, don't you know that Mastavar makes meals from the human body? Understand? The human body!

Crowd: Shut up! What a stupid thing to say.

Dostali: You really are crazy!

Madman: Yes, you're right. I'm crazy, but I'm still more clever than you are. He kidnaps the people, cuts their heads off and then prepares meals for you... Be fast, dervish, you could miss your chance.

Crowd: (clapping) Hey crazy, crazy, move. There's no one listening to you, move, get out.

Music

The madman leaves. After some time, the rest of the people leave. There are only two people on stage: the Shah, and Mastavar in his store.

Shah: (Based on the mugham Shur)

The truth from a madman? What he said sounds more reasonable than what the others say. I wonder how he cooks such delicious food? What about going and talking to him? He looks like a hangman.

Music

He approaches Mastavar.

Shah: You are famous throughout the whole city for your delicious food,
Everyone talks about the taste of your meals.

I do want very much
To taste your delicious food.

Music

Mastavar: (secretly examining him from head to toe)

True, dervish, true!

I should invite you to be my guest.

(aside) You came into the trap

On your own accord.

(to him) True, master dervish, true!

I should invite you to be my guest.

Come closer, a little more, a little more, and more

Ahead, hee-hee-hee.

Suddenly the Shah falls down into a dark underground pit. Although he tries to get out, he can't. Then he realizes he trapped in a sort of well.

Mastavar: Oh! Yeah! Hee-hee-hee! (He laughs in a nasty way.)

Act 3

A dark cellar. There are five more prisoners with Shah Abbas. After the prelude, the curtain rises.

Prisoners: (to the Shah, based on the mugham Tasnif)

Poor dervish, what is your guilt?

How did Mastavar catch you?

Come and join us, let's grieve together.

Oh, poor us, time is our enemy.

Shah: (Based on the mugham Shushtar)

Tell me, what is his purpose in doing this?

Why do we have to suffer here?

But don't get depressed,

We are in a cellar, not a grave, nor are we dead.

Ask Mastavar, what are his plans for you?

Prisoners: (Based on the mugham Tasnif):
Dervish, he will cut off our heads one by one.
We don't know anyone as cruel as he is.
He will cut us into pieces like a sacrificial animal,
Then make delicious meals from our bodies and
Sell them to people!

Shah: (Based on the mugham Shushtar)
We can't defeat him by crying,
Let's stop him from killing us.
Let's get together, attack and arrest this cruel man.
This cruelty has to be judged fairly!

Prisoners: (Based on the mugham Tasnif)
Give up this idea, poor dervish!
We tried it before, but met with failure!
There were 11 of us then, dervish. We attacked him
In vain; we were all defeated in the end!

Shah: (Based on the mugham Tasnif)
Tell me, what can be done about it? (twice)
How can we sit here, knowing our fate?
I would rather die than live this way.

Music

Light.

Prisoners: (in fear) There, he's coming!

Music

The light gets brighter.

Prisoners: There, he's coming! Over there, he's coming!

Music

They stand together in fear.

Mastavar: (entering, with a sword in his hand)
Ooh, nice to see you, glad to see you, my sheep, my lambs. I need to cook a meal, so I came to cut up
two of you and prepare a meal.

Music

Mastavar: Run to me. (They run to him.) Move back slowly. (They move.) Run to me and move back
slowly. You have been trained enough, my dears.

Music

He sharpens his sword. The prisoners cover their faces with their hands and start to cry. Shah Abbas
watches this scene in astonishment.

Mastavar: Ah! I am a shepherd, a shepherd, a shepherd, and you are my sheep. I am a shepherd, you are my sheep. Come and stand in line one by one. First you, then you, you, you. Then you, you, you, you. Dervish, you are at the end. Be quick! It's too late, almost sunset. Be quick, it's late!

Prisoners: (begging) Take pity, have mercy, don't kill us. (three times)

Mastavar: Ah! Stand in line, quickly, one by one, quickly. Quick-quick-quick-quick! I came to cut up two of you for today's meal. (Music) Run to me. (They run.) Move back slowly. (They move.) Oh, you do a good job, you have been trained enough, hey, hey! (He keeps sharpening his sword.)

Shah: (to himself, based on the mugham Bayati-Shiraz) Let Your throne be plundered, Shah. Why aren't you able to do something about this? You see the tyranny, but you can't do anything. Even you yourself are a sacrifice to it.

Mastavar: I'm waiting for you. Stand in line!

Shah: (to himself) I'm not afraid of death. I'm worried about this tyranny. I have to take revenge, I have to stop it.

Mastavar: I'm waiting for you. Stand in line, quickly!

Shah: What on Earth can I do? My God, help me, how can I get rid of this trouble? I can't concentrate at all, my mind is gloomy.

Mastavar: Stand in line, quickly!

Shah: My God, help me, help me think of an idea that will rescue us. Don't let this bloodthirsty man kill people for such a stupid reason.

Mastavar: Stand in line, quickly!

Music

Mastavar thrusts himself among the prisoners, seizes one of them and prepares to cut his head off.

Shah: (yelling) I found, I have found, felt-making... Hey, man, (Based on the mugham Rast) Stop for a minute. I have a suggestion for you.

Music

Mastavar takes his hands off the prisoner.

Mastavar: What suggestion?

Shah: Why are you killing all these people? To make money?

Music

Mastavar: Of course, it's all for money!

Shah: Then give me a month, and I'll make a lot of money for you.

Mastavar: How?

Shah: I, a dervish, can make marvelous felt. It's priceless. Listen to what I say!

Mastavar: What's that?

Shah: Buy some wool and felt-making tools for me. I will make felt, and the others will help me.

Mastavar: So what?

Shah: Then take the felt to Shah Abbas's palace and give it to his vizier. He will give you a great amount of money, more than what you will make killing all these prisoners.

Mastavar: I agree. But what about if the vizier doesn't give me a penny?

Shah: Then I forgive our blood to you.

Mastavar thinks about the offer.

Shah: (to himself) Now my only hope is my vizier. I hope that when he sees the felt, he will understand that I am in trouble.

Mastavar: I agree, dervish, but...

Music (Based on the mugham Tasnif)

Mastavar: If I find out that you are lying,
I will cut your head off with more trouble.

Music

I am Mastavar, don't forget it.
No one can deceive me, I would end his life.

Music

Even if everyone from Shiraz comes,
They wouldn't understand that I kill people to make meals.
(He leaves.)

Prisoners: (Based on the mugham Tasnif)
Dervish, we are so thankful to you.
May God reward you for your mercy.
And may you have very little grief and sorrow in your life!

Shah: Let's wait, everything is in the hands of God!

Act 4

The Shah's palace. The vizier and five other noblemen are on the stage. After the prelude, the curtain rises.

Vizier: (Based on the mugham Chahargah)
The Shah has been gone for almost six months, and there's been no news from him!

Music

I'm so anxious, melancholic and surprised!

Music

First Nobleman: Yes, his trip has lasted too long. He has never been away from the capital for such a long time.

Music

Second Nobleman: Maybe something is wrong with him, he is in trouble but...

Vizier: Hold your tongue and don't make negative comments like that! If the people should hear it, chaos could sweep the entire country.

Music

Third Nobleman: However, I think we should ask the successor to the throne to come to the capital.

Fourth Nobleman: I don't think we have to get into a panic. Through the mercy of God, the Shah will return safe and sound. There's no point in suffering this much.

Second Nobleman: No, it's not in vain!

Fourth Nobleman: No, it is in vain!

Third Nobleman: Not at all, it's not in vain!

Fifth Nobleman: Yes it is!

First Nobleman: I'm too worried!

Fifth Nobleman: I'm not worried at all!

Fourth Nobleman: Me, either!

Second Nobleman: Huh, you don't care!

Fifth Nobleman: No, I do care, but you don't.

Third Nobleman: Hey, hold your tongue. Pay attention to what you say.

First Nobleman: Idiot, blockhead!

Fifth Nobleman: You're an idiot!

Fourth Nobleman: You are!

Second Nobleman: You yourself are an idiot!

Fifth Nobleman: You!

Fourth Nobleman: You!

It becomes very noisy.

Vizier: Quiet! You'll make an uproar before the people. Let's think about it and see what we can do. Poor Khurshid, she cries all day. Anyway, let's wait a few more days and see what happens.

Music

The servant enters.

Servant: Khurshid Banu [lady] asks for permission to talk to you!

Vizier: Of course, let her come in!

Music

Khurshid enters.

Khurshid: Days have passed, months have passed, but my Shah hasn't come back.

I can't bear this separation anymore. Why is he not back yet?
I'm going blind from crying for him everyday.
He gives trouble to me like my enemy. He is not back yet!

I had a bad premonition about this trip.
I was worried that something bad would happen to him.
Almost six months have passed, and there is no news from him yet.
What's wrong, my God, why is my sweetheart not back yet?

Music (Based on the mugham Tasnif)

Vizier and Noblemen: (Based on the mugham Tasnif)
Khurshid, what's the use of suffering this much? (twice)
Be patient, don't torture yourself with nightmares! (twice)
He aimed to help his people with this trip. (twice)
Be patient, don't torture yourself with nightmares! (twice)

Khurshid: I am afraid that he is in so much trouble that we won't ever see him again. (twice)
How can I stop crying? (twice)

Music

Khurshid cries, covering her face with her hands.

Vizier and Noblemen: Khurshid, what's the use of suffering this much? (twice)
Be patient, don't torture yourself with nightmares! (twice)

Music

Khurshid: (Based on the mugham Mansuriyya)
The whole night, I cry in my bed without getting a wink of sleep.
I gasp with sorrow, wail with grief and give trouble to myself.
When you went, my Shah, I asked you to take me,
To be behind you when you were in trouble.

Vizier: (Based on the mugham Chahargah)
There's no use in crying, it's idle to cry.
There's a solution to every problem.
We have to wait for a few more days
And see what we can do about it!

Noblemen: No doubt, we have to wait.

Vizier: Khurshid, please, go ahead and get some rest. Don't worry, just be patient. Your prayers are always with the Shah. (Khurshid leaves.) Be ready for any news, to be on the safe side. But don't let the ordinary people know anything about it. Let's wait five more days. If he comes in five days, good, if not, then...

Servant: (enters) Long live, Vizier, there's someone from Shiraz who wants to see you.

All: Aha!

Vizier: The Shah has probably sent this person. Thank God! Please leave me and wait in the next room for a couple of minutes.

Music

The Noblemen leave. Mastavar enters. He has rolled felt on his arm.

Vizier: (Based on the mugham Rast) Tell me, what do you want?

Mastavar: A dervish appeared in Shiraz. He made this felt and sent it to you.

Vizier: (aside) Oh, I recognize it, this is the Shah's felt. (To Mastavar) All right, leave the felt. Here, you're free to go. (aside) OK, I have to go congratulate Khurshid. (He goes.)

Mastavar: (to himself in anger)

Go? But what about my money? Where's my money?

(Based on the mugham Tasnif)

This damned dervish has deceived me,

Telling me to take this felt to the palace.

But they didn't pay me.

So stupid, I wasted so much time.

I will give a good lesson to you, dervish!

I am coming to punish you.

I will reward you with a lesson that

All people will take as an example.

Music

He leaves.

Music

Vizier and Khurshid enter from one side and the noblemen from the other side.

Vizier: (Based on the mugham Shikasteyi-Fars)

Congratulations to you, Khurshid, there is news from your beloved,

He is safe and sound, there is good news from your beloved.

(Based on the mugham Rast)

Look, this felt is a sign from the Shah.

He has showed himself here. There is good news from your husband.

When Khurshid sees the felt, she bursts into tears and kisses it.

Khurshid: I dreamt about him tonight, let me tell you.

All: Tell us, tell us. (They listen.)

Music

Khurshid: As soon as it got dark, I started crying as usual, (music)

When I fell asleep, I dreamed about the Shah. (music)

He had lost something. (music)

When he saw me, he said: "Come, come to me, come!

Khurshid, come, come to me quickly, come!"

Music

I saw that my Shah was in a well. (music)

I ran and looked down the well. (music)

When he saw me, he called: "Come, come to me!

Khurshid, come, come quick, come to me!"

Music

He asked me to give him a hand and get him out of there. (music)

Turn to people for help, cry for help. (music)

I reached for the Shah and held him by his hand. (music)

When he got out of the well, he called: "Come, come, come!

Come, Khurshid, come, come to me,

Hey, come, quickly."

Music

Vizier: (Based on the mugham Chahargah) Hope for good, it is a good dream.

All: Hope for good, it is a good dream.

Khurshid: A strange idea has come to my mind.

Vizier: What are you talking about?

Khurshid: What is the Shah's purpose in sending this felt to the palace?

Vizier: No doubt he wants to say that he is safe and sound.

Khurshid: No, I'm thinking of a different thing.

All: What?

Khurshid: I'm wondering if he might be in danger; maybe it's a sign that he needs help.

Vizier: No! (He thinks a little.) Yes, it might happen. Where's that person who brought the felt?

Servant: He has already left.

Khurshid: Oh no! Go after him and bring him back!

Vizier: Yes, you have to return him to the Palace. We have to ask him where the Shah is!

The servant leaves.

First Nobleman: Khurshid's guess sounds reasonable to me.

Second Nobleman: Yes, the Shah could be in trouble.

Third Nobleman: Well, what can we do about it?

Servant: (enters) That person left for Shiraz, should we go after him?

Khurshid: No, no, the vizier had better take a troop and chase him.

Vizier: Yes, I agree. We don't have any time to lose. Let's go (to one of the nobleman). Command the troop to be ready. All of us, including Khurshid, have to chase him to see where he is going. To tell you the truth, I didn't like his face. He looked like a hangman.

All: (Based on the mugham Tasnif)

Let's go and see who that person is!
Where did he see Shah Abbas? Maybe he's a criminal or a robber?
Let's go quickly! (They leave.)

Curtain

Back in the cellar. The prisoners and Shah Abbas sit and grieve. After the prelude, the curtain rises.

Shah Abbas: (Based on the mugham Kurd-Shahnaz)
I found trouble when I was separated from my beloved
And witnessed the punishment given to people in love.
What kind of punishment is this,
When my only gift is being in love?

While being in a palace and being a shah to the whole country,
A shah is in jail now, under the rule of the oppressor.
I saw my beautiful Khurshid again in a dream.
She was mourning with tousled hair.

What's the remedy of this trouble, great God?
Jail is killing my soul, I have no patience left.
Will the day come when I'll be free from this jail,
Or am I doomed to die here?

Music

Prisoners: (Based on the mugham Tasnif)
Set us free, dervish.
Set us free, dervish.
Ask God for help, cry for help, dervish.
Ask God for help, cry for help, dervish.
You are our lifesaver, come to our help.
You are our lifesaver, come to our help.
Ask God for help, cry for help, dervish.
Ask God for help, cry for help, dervish.

First Prisoner: (Based on the mugham Shur) By God, if only Shah Abbas knew about our situation, he would definitely erase this cruelty from the earth.

Second Prisoner: Oh, poor you, right now Shah Abbas is in his palace having a good time with his beautiful wives. He would never think of this kind of cruelty, not even in his dreams.

Third Prisoner: By God, they say that sometimes he travels throughout the country in a dervish's clothes to see how his people live. When he comes across injustice, he ends it in a second.

Fourth Prisoner: Yes, that is true. But unfortunately, Shah Abbas looks for injustice on the earth. How could he know what's going on under the earth?

Fifth Prisoner: Dervish, have you ever had a chance to meet Shah Abbas? Because dervishes meet each other very often.

Shah: No, it has never happened to me.

Music

The prisoners seem sadder. They sit, hiding their heads between their knees.

Shah: (Based on the mugham Simayi-Shams)
My soul is burning from these words.
They blow me and make me disappointed.
(He puts his hand on his heart.)
Be calm, my anxious heart, don't beat so fast.
Either I will rescue them, or I will die for them.

Music

If my vizier doesn't come to my help,
I will have to fight with this hangman.
With God's mercy, I will attack him with a roar.
I will show bravery that suits my name.

Music

I don't have a weapon or anything to fight with,
And I don't think anyone in this cellar can help me.
But truth and fairness are on my side, and these
Are enough for me to defeat the enemy.

Music

The prisoners raise their heads in fear.

Prisoners: (with fear) He seems to be coming. Yes, he is coming...

They stay close to each other. Mastavar enters. He looks at the Shah with great anger, with his arms folded against his chest.

Mastavar: (with anger) You deceived me, deceived me!
Deceived me, oh, you deceived me! (He takes out his sword.)

Music

Come forward!

Music

Come forward!

Music

You bought some time, you sent me to the palace of the Shah,
And you deceived me!
I will kill you right now, I will kill you!
Oh! (music), come! (music) Come! Forward!

Music

He tries to attack the Shah, who puts his hand on Mastavar's chest.

Shah: (Based on the mugham Bayati-Shiraz)
You damned, cruel hangman,
I'm not afraid of you, go ahead and start.

Music

The Shah and Mastavar make a circle in the cellar, preparing for a fight. The Shah grabs Mastavar's sword and throws it to the ground. The prisoners watch the fight with fear. While Mastavar attempts to pick up the sword and attack the Shah again, the doors open. Khurshid, the vizier, the noblemen and the troop enter the cellar. When they see the situation, they tie Mastavar's hands behind his back. Shah Abbas and Khurshid embrace each other.

Vizier: (Based on the mugham Rast, to Mastavar) Hey, poor, stupid man, do you know who you were fighting against? Don't you know that this is the well-known honest shah, Shah Abbas?

When the prisoners hear it, they fall to the ground and crawl toward the Shah's feet.

Troop: (in a loud voice) Long live the great Shah!

Shah: (to prisoners) Stand up and know that Shah Abbas is as good at finding injustice under the ground as he is at finding injustice above ground.

Prisoners: Great Padishah! Great Padishah! (They start crying.)

Troop: Long live the great Shah!

Shah: Khurshid, I'm so happy that I met you. I'm also happy that I listened to your words and learned this trade. It has rescued me and my people from the teeth of a bloodthirsty man. It seems that you are God's reward to me for my service and love for my nation. As of today, you—a woodcutter's daughter—will become part of the Shah's harem! Let your parents be proud of you. You are now my head wife. Long live my Khurshid!

All: Long live Padishah and Khurshid Banu!

Shah: Take this damned man and hang him from the gallows in front of all the people in Shiraz. Let the criminal be paid with his punishment.

All: Long live Padishah, Long live Padishah!
May God make you happy, Shah. (twice)
May the people remember you forever. (twice)
Hey, Padishah, don't forget your country. (twice)
Don't forget your people, make your country happy.
Shah, long live and live for your country!
You are a present to this country!
God sent you to your people!
God sent you to your people!

Curtain