

URUSEI YAUSURA ONLY YOU

Who are all these people anyway? Urusei Yatsura is one of Japan's comedic gems. Starting out as a hit Manga (comic-book) series, it spawned a long-running animated TV series, and a series of feature films and OVA's (short, made for video specials).

For the benefit of those of you who have never seen Urusei Yatsura before, here is a guide to the characters and situations.

Ataru Moroboshi is the least lucky and most lecherous lout in the Universe. Bar none. Deep down, he has a good soul, but he tries to hide it, and usually succeeds. Alas, it's about all he ever succeeds in!

Lum is the princess of the Oni, a race of very strange aliens who inspired Japan's demon legends during a previous visit. When they come back to take over the Earth, they give us one chance to save our planet; a champion, chosen at random, must defeat Lum in a game of Tag (their national sport, and "the game of the Oni" in Japanese). Unfortunately for Earth, Ataru is picked as champion.

Miyake Shinobu is Ataru's long-suffering semi-girlfriend. When all seems lost, she promises that she'll marry Ataru if he beats Lum. Inspired to new lows of deviousness by the prospect of finally getting lucky, Ataru manages to beat Lum, but his victorious cry of "Now I can be married" is misinterpreted by Lum as a wedding proposal, which she accepts.

After more misadventures, Lum is living in Ataru's closet, and Shinobu is wondering if she's been jilted or saved from a life of misery. Ataru, for his part, can't bring himself to settle down with Lum: "so many women, so little time." Unfortunately for him, Lum has a high-voltage way of expressing her ire.

Mendou Shutaro is the scion of the richest family in the world. Thier private army is bigger than Japan's, for example. Like most men, Mendou has the hots for Lum, and can't deal with Lum's infatuation with Ataru. By the time period of "Only You," Shinobu is starting to give up on Ataru and is becoming interested in Mendou.

Lum's Stormtroopers are her self-appointed guardians, and they are always getting on Ataru's case for some Lum-related misdeed.

Ten is Lum's little cousin. He's always setting Ataru up for a fall.

Ataru's Father reads the newspaper and tries to ignore the chaos. His Mother bemoans her fate and loudly wishes she'd never given birth to Ataru.

Cherry is a demented Buddhist monk whose mission (which he accepts only if there is free food) is to destroy evil spirits. Cleansing Ataru of his bad luck would be his crowning achievement, not

to mention he figures it to be a life-long meal ticket.

Sakura is Cherry's niece, a Shinto sorceress who has taken the job of School Nurse for reasons unknown. All the boys have the hots for her.

Benten is a rooting-tooting intergalactic biker-babe, and one of Lum's best friends. She totes a big gun, and is notoriously inaccurate.

Oyuki is the cultured and refined princess of Neptune. She is of course a “cool character.”

Rei is Lum's ex-fiance. He looks like a god, is as dumb as a post, and transforms into a giant “Tiger-cow” when he gets upset.

Princess Kurama is the princess of the crow goblins, another race of aliens. She is fated to marry the man who awakened her with a kiss; alas, due to an error by a drunken crow goblin, it was Ataru. Needless to say, she'll do anything to escape her destiny!

Ran is one of Lum's childhood friends. Don't let the cute airhead demeanor fool you -- she's not a nice person, and she's out to get Lum for a variety of alleged slights and misdeeds.

What on Earth did that mean? Urusei Yatsura is full of cultural references and jokes that cannot easily be translated given the restrictions of the subtitling medium. For this reason, we've prepared these Translator's Notes to give you some extra background materials.

“Is that a sexual perversion?” During the students' gossip sequence after the opening titles, one of the students wonders if Ataru is committing bigamy by marrying this Elle person when he's supposedly already married to Lum (or at least, things are close enough that they might as well be). Another student follows that up by asking what bigamy is--“is that a sexual perversion?” In the original Japanese, these lines were a pun (as so many conversations in this series are). The joke is that the word for bigamy in Japanese is “juukon,” and the person responding wondered if it was like “lolicon,” which is Japanese shorthand for “Lolita Complex.” The “con” in both words is different, meaning “marriage” in the first one and “complex” in the second.

Bearing the Unbearable. During the inquisition in the Tomobiki High School Clock Tower, when Megane says to Ataru, “Ataru, do you know why... we have borne the unbearable...?” he is making a reference to the famous radio speech by the late Emperor Shoowa, on Aug. 15, 1945, when he announced Japan's surrender to the Allies, ending World War II. Specifically, he is quoting the oft-quoted phrase (Megane quotes it again in Movie #2, “Beautiful Dreamer”) “taegataki o tae, shinobigataki o shinobi,” which is usually translated as “[Japan] must bear the unbearable...” meaning, in the original, surrender. In the case of Lum's Stormtroopers, however, “the unbearable” is seeing Lum hopelessly in love with Ataru.

Puns in character names. Many of the character names in “Urusei Yatsura” have Japanese meanings that are very appropriate.

“Moroboshi Ataru,” for example, means “to get hit by a star.” And since “star” is at least partially synonymous with “alien” in this series, it means that he attracts aliens and other weirdos, like it or not. “Shinobu” is another good example, for a different reason: the word means “patient,” but in actuality, she is anything but.

As for the Stormtroopers, their nicknames come from their looks: “Megane” means “glasses,” “Chibi” means “runt,” and “Perm” and “Kakugari” get their nicknames from their hairstyles. The normal writing of “Mendou” means “trouble,” but in the case of the Mendou family, the name is written with a different set of characters, giving a different official meaning (“face” + “temple,” which in itself is somewhat descriptive), but nonetheless, the Mendou family lives up to the traditional reading of the word that is a homonym of their family name: they are lots of trouble. Benten is actually one of the seven Chinese gods of luck, Oyuki is a takeoff on the classic snow princess of Japanese myth, and Princess Kurama and the Karasutengu (“Crow Goblins”) are also based on the mythical “crow people” that are their namesakes.

A Rose, by any other name, would be as funny. There are also numerous references to roses in this film, starting with the rose-shaped starship from Planet Elle, showering rose petals everywhere in its first appearance. The name of the visitor this ship brings, Babara, is also a rose pun in Japanese, being a hybrid of the words “Baba” (a derogatory term roughly equivalent to “Old Bag” in English) and “Bara,” which means “rose.” The name of the spy who trails Lum and eventually abducts Ataru and the gang from Lum's Father's ship is named Nanabake Rose, and “nanabake” means “shapechanger” (though she proves amazingly inept). Then there is “Baran,” the capital city of Planet Elle (another “Bara” pun), and last is “Baragumi Elle,” which is written on the tag which the little Elle wears in the flashback sequence. The joke here is that Japanese kindergarten classes in the same school are often distinguished by names such as “Baragumi (Rose Class),” “Sakuragumi (Cherry Class),” “Momogumi (Peach Class),” etc., and Elle would naturally be in the “Rose Class.”

Vacuum Cleaners from Hell. “Uzushio” means “an eddying current,” and as such, is the sort of name that might be used as the brand name of a washing machine made in Japan. For this reason, it is funny to Japanese audiences when used as the name of the suction device which Lum uses to gather up Ataru and his family (and Cherry, too), especially because that name includes the word “zenjidoo” (fully automatic) which is the sort of descriptive word that would also tend to be used as part of the name of such an appliance.

Maitta, maitta, tonari no jinja. “Maitta” is a word one says when one is having trouble. It also means “to visit,” as in “visiting a shrine.” The word for shrine is “jinja.” So when Ataru says to Babara, “Maitta, maitta, tonari no jinja,” he is having fun by confusing the two meanings of the word “mairu (maitta),” which are both written the same way, adding to the fun.

Children Who Know War. “Sensoo o Shiranai Kodomotachi” (Children Who Don't Know War) was a popular folk/protest song in Japan in the late 1960's-early 1970's. It was about the generation gap between the pre- and post-World War II generations. The latter says that even though they do not know war, having been born and raised after its end, they nonetheless love peace, and want to live in a peaceful world. The song ends with a plea by the younger generation

to call them “Children Who Don't Know War.” The joke here is that, during the “space dogfight scene,” Megane is happy to tell Shinobu that they are now, instead, “Children Who Know War,” at last.

“Say something Fatherly.” Ataru's Father telling Ataru not to take out a loan for his wedding to, or honeymoon with, Elle, is a reflection on the expense and payment schemes typical of Japanese weddings. These tend to be more expensive than American weddings, and whereas, in the U.S., the bride's family typically pays all the wedding expenses, things aren't nearly so cut and dried in Japan. Either or both families may pay the expenses, or the bride and groom may pay their own way. Taking out a loan to pay for a wedding is at best uncommon, but it is the sort of thing that this family would do (In “Beautiful Dreamer”, Ataru's father takes out a 500 year loan in Ataru's name!).

Home Cooking. Megane mentions a lot of foods in his first tirade on Planet Elle: Takoyaki is a pancake-like batter, rolled into balls containing octopus and vegetables, and baked. Gyuu-don (short for “Gyuuniku-Domburi”), which we refer to as “Beef-bowl,” is beef boiled in sauce (usually soy sauce) with onions, on top of rice, in a bowl. The flavor of the sauce seeps down into the rice, which is what Megane is so excited about. Just about everybody knows what ramen is. The point is that these foods are “everyday foods,” equivalent to hot dogs, hamburgers, and pizza in the U.S.; to wit, the foods you grew up with and miss the most. As for the gyuu-don restaurant Ataru points out on Planet Elle, the joke here is that these places are like McDonald's: i.e., they're EVERYWHERE.

What will become of me? About Ataru's Mother crying about what will become of her in her old age: typically, in Japan, children take care of their parents when they get too old to take care of themselves, and those children will live with their parents more often than in Western countries. Certainly, Ataru's Mother and Father are the kind of people who expect that treatment from their son. His mother in particular is concerned with her own well-being. Given how badly her husband and son are taking care of her now, she's got good reason!

The Matchmaking Incident. The matchmaking “incident” that Lum's father refers to is recounted in Episode 22, stories 43-44, “The Great Space Matchmaking Operation,” which is available in subtitled form in AnimEigo's UY TV series DVD #6.

Notes about Names. The Japanese, like most Asians, put their family name first; all of the credits in these liner notes and the videos follow this convention. They also often refer to people by their family names; this is considered to be more polite. Use of a given name implies a certain level of familiarity and intimacy. In addition, the Japanese often use “terms of reference” such as “big-brother,” “little-sister,” “Aunt,” and so on, both alone, as a suffix, and even in a friendly way to refer to people they are not related to, but who, if they were, would fit into that category.

For example, children will often call young women “Onee-san,” which means “Big Sister.” These same young women dread the day the children start calling them “Oba-san,” or “Auntie.”

On top of all this, suffixes are tacked on to names to add inflections of politeness, and to specify

the position the person holds. Thus, if Mr. Suzuki were a company president, he would often be referred to as “Sukuzi Shachoo,” “Mr. Company President Suzuki.”

How to appropriately deal with all of these terms in a natural manner is the recurring nightmare of Japanese translators. We also had to deal with the problem that many of the characters call each other by their last names. English speakers would not do this, but if we changed the subtitle to read “what the person would say if they were speaking in English,” you would read one name and hear another. Since some people find this dissonant, we have decided to subtitle what they say, except that we translate terms of reference to the appropriate name where it would be awkward to use them in English.

Since many of these terms of reference and suffix combinations are either rarely used or nonexistent in English, it is inevitable that some of the flavor of the original Japanese dialogue is lost when it is translated into English. The following brief guide to the most common terms should help you notice some of the nuances and increase your appreciation of the film.

Suffixes: suffixes are added to names to denote different levels of politeness or intimacy between the speaker and the person being mentioned. There are 4 basic suffixes.

-san is the basic neutral polite suffix, equivalent to “Mr.,” “Mrs.,” “Miss” or “Ms.” in English.

-sama denotes someone in a higher social position than the speaker, or whom the speaker holds in great esteem.

-kun is the standard suffix added to the names of boys and young men. It is also used by older men in reference to younger men, especially subordinates in a business situation. “kun” is also more intimate than “san.”

-chan is the equivalent of “kun” for babies and girls, but it is also used when an intimate friendship or other relationship exists between the speaker and the person being referred to. While “chan” is rarely applied to adult men, in situations where two men have had a long and close relationship, they will often be “chan” to each other. “Chan” also pops up in the mass media a lot, because of its intimations of intimacy; perhaps the strangest example of this is that in Japan, Arnold Schwarzenegger is often called “Shuuwaa-chan.”

In Urusei Yatsura, Lum is almost always referred to as “Lum-chan,” although Mendou uses the more polite “-san.”

In addition to the top 4, there are many suffixes that denote job relationships, such as the above-mentioned “Shachoo.” Of these, the most commonly heard is “sensei,” or “teacher,” which is applied not only to teachers, but also to doctors, masters of particular art-forms and business mentors. Recently, due to all the people sucking up to other people by calling them “sensei,” real sensei’s have been complaining about “sensei-inflation” reducing the prestige of the term.

Terms of Reference: The most common terms of reference are:

otoo-san someone's father.

chichi my father (very polite).

okaa-san someone's mother.

haha my mother (very polite).

onii-san older brother.

onee-san older sister.

otooto my younger brother.

otooto-san someone else's younger brother.

imooto younger sister.

imooto-san someone else's younger sister.

oji-san uncle.

oba-san aunt.

ojii-san grandfather.

obaa-san grandmother.

anata "you." "Anata" is particularly used by Japanese women to refer to their husbands or lovers when talking to them. Depending on the tone, it can range in inference from sweet to caustic, though the usual meaning translates to "dear."

omae lit. "in front of me." A less polite of saying "you."

kimi a very sweet way of saying "you." More polite than "omae," but less polite than "anata."

sempai "someone above me in a heirarchy."

kohai "someone below me in a heirarchy."

Ending Theme: "I, I, You & Ai" (I, I, You & Love)

Lyrics by Endoo Yoshihiko

Music and Arrangement

by Kobayashi Izumi

Performed by Kobayashi Izumi

I, I, I, I, Aishiteite mo naze ka
You, You, You, You,
Yuutsu itsumo anata.

Even though I, I, I, I love you,
why are you, you, you, you
always gloomy?

I, I, I, I, Aitai kimochi
totemo.
You, You, You, You,
Yuuwaku shichau kitto.

I, I, I, I, have strong feelings
of missing you.
You, You, You, You,
I will seduce, for sure.

Watashi to anata de
sekai ga hajimaru.
Machikutabireteru onna ja
dame na no.

The world begins
with you and I.
A woman is no good
if she's tired of waiting.

Love me uwakina Darling.
Hold me uchikina Darling.
Kiss me sutekina Darling.

Itsudemo koi wa
junbi OK yo.

I, I, I, I, Aishiteite mo naze ka
You, You, You, You,
Yuutsu itsumo anata.

I, I, I, I, Aimai na no wa
dame yo.
You, You, You, You,
Yuuki ga iru no koi wa.

Watashi to anata de
subete ga umareru.
Tsuyogari bakari no otoko wa
iranai.

Love me tsuyokina Darling.
Hold me yowakina Darling.
Kiss me sutekina Darling.

Itsudemo koi wa
junbi OK yo.

I, I, I, I, Aisaretaino watashi.
I, I, I, I, Aishiteiru wa anata.

I, I, I, I, Aisaretaino watashi.
I, I, I, I, Aishiteiru wa anata.

Love me, flirtatious Darling.
Hold me, bashful Darling.
Kiss me, wonderful Darling.

I'll always be ready to be
in love with you.

Even though I, I, I, I love you,
why are you, you, you, you
always gloomy?

I, I, I, I won't put up
with wishy-washiness.
You, You, You, You,
need courage for love.

Everything is born
from you and I.
I don't want a man who
just puts on a tough act.

Love me, strong-willed Darling.
Hold me, weak-willed Darling.
Kiss me, wonderful Darling.

I'll always be ready to be
in love with you.

I, I, I, I, want to be loved.
I, I, I, I, love you.

I, I, I, I, want to be loved.
I, I, I, I, love you.

Hoshizora Cycling
(Cycling in the Starry Sky)
Music, Lyrics and Arrangement by Virgin VS
Performed by Virgin VS

Sora no nai heya kara
hoshi no furu yoru e
Nukedashita mado kara

From a room with no sky,
we go to a night of stars falling,
slipping out through the window,

jitensha ni notte.

riding a bicycle.

#1:

Cosmic Cyclor
Hoshizora Cycling
Run Run Run Run
Runaway Home.
Cosmic Cyclor
Hoshizora Wheeling
Run Run Run Run
Runaway Home.

Cosmic Cyclor,
cycling in the starry sky,
Run Run Run Run
Runaway Home.
Cosmic Cyclor,
wheeling in the starry sky,
Run Run Run Run
Runaway Home.

Yozora no Freeway
futari de faraway.
Konya koso hitorijime
nemuranaide yo
my Darling

The two of us, faraway,
on the freeway of the night sky.
Don't sleep,
you're mine tonight,
my Darling.

Yumemiru ginga o kakenukete
rendezvous.
Nagareboshi oikake
hashiritsuzukete asa made.

Dashing through the dreaming galaxy
to our rendezvous.
Chase a shooting star,
and keep running until morning.

KURIKAESHI #1

REPEAT REFRAIN #1

Yozora no Freeway
futari de faraway.
Konya koso hitorijime
yakusokushitene
my Darling.

The two of us, faraway,
on the freeway of the night sky.
Promise that tonight,
you'll be mine,
my Darling.

KURIKAESHI #1
KURIKAESHI #1

REPEAT REFRAIN #1
REPEAT REFRAIN #1

Cosmic Cyclor...
Cosmic Cyclor...
Cosmic Cyclor...

Cosmic Cyclor...
Cosmic Cyclor...
Cosmic Cyclor...

Kagefumi no Waltz (Shadow Tag Waltz)

Lyrics by Fujita Shiori

Music and Arrangement
by Nishimura Kooji

Performed by Shiori

Akaneiro shita
yuuyake no naka de
kagefumishiyoo to
sasowareta no.

Under a crimson
glowing sunset
I was invited to play
shadow tag.

Nagai kage ou
mishiranu anata.
Hashaide yoketara
namida kieta.

You, a stranger,
chased my long shadow.
Happily dodging you,
my tears disappeared.

Ukiuki to hazumu mune
tanoshii no wa naze.
Futari de hashireba
koboreru hohoemi
samishikunai wa moo.

Why is my heart so happy,
cheerfully pounding?
If the two of us run,
smiles everywhere,
I won't be lonely anymore.

Hitoribotchi de
buranko yurashite
tanoshii furi o suru koto
mo nai no.

All alone,
swinging on a swing,
I don't even pretend
to be happy.

Ehon no naka no
page no yoo ni
soyokaze no naka de
yume o miteru.

Like a page
from a picture book
I dream, in the midst
of a light breeze.

Itsumademo asobitai
yoru yo konaide ne.
Futari de hashireba
koboreru hohoemi
hitoribotchi ja nai.

I want to play always;
Night, don't you come.
If the two of us run,
smiles everywhere,
I won't be all alone.

Ukiuki to hazumu mune
tanoshii no wa naze.
Futari de hashireba
koboreru hohoemi
hitoribotchi ja nai.

Why is my heart so happy,
cheerfully pounding?
If the two of us run,
smiles everywhere,
I won't be all alone.

Lum no Ballad

(Lum's Ballad)

Lyrics by Jitsukawa Shoo

Music and Arrangement by Nishimura Kooji

Performed by Hirano Fumi

Darling yubiwa hikatteru.
Hora kaze ni furueteru.
Yasashii sasayaki kikoetekuru yoo
watashi o yondeiru no.
Hoshi no kazu yori ai ga ookutemo
anata to futari ai wa hitotsu dake.
Togireru koto wa nai no;
sore wa
anata e no "ai."

Darling yubiwa tsuketeru no.
Ima hoshi o mitsumeteru.
Omoide utsushita screen mitai
anata ga hohoenderu.
Tatoe watashi no soba ni inakutemo
futari no ai wa eien ni hitotsu.
Togireru koto wa nai no;
sore wa
anata e no "ai."

Darling

Darling, the ring is shining.
Look, I'm trembling in the wind.
I seem to hear a gentle whisper
calling to me.
Though there is more love than there are stars
there is only one love for you and I.
An unbroken thing;
that is
my "love" for you.

Darling, are you wearing the ring?
Now, I'm looking at the stars.
Like a screen projecting our memory,
you're smiling.
Even though you're not beside me
our love will be one forever.
An unbroken thing;
that is
my "love" for you.

Darling