



# The Artists



**Anna MACCIANTI** (*Rigoletto*)

The moving personality of Gilda demands of the performer as high a degree of sensitivity and understanding as of vocal qualities. We are happy, therefore, to have been able to entrust this difficult role to the great lyric soprano Anna Maccianti whose voice, passionate and yet clear, is able to convey without the least theatrical 'effect' the feelings of a young girl who discovers love for the first time and chooses to die in its cause.



**Nedda CASEI** (*Rigoletto* and *Il Trovatore*)

The vast repertoire of Nedda Casei embraces most of the great operatic roles, whether Italian, French or German. Her magnificent mezzo-soprano voice and her admirable presentation have given her an enthusiastic welcome by the public both in Europe and the United States.



**Licinio MONTEFUSCO** (*Rigoletto*)

Since 1960, when he was highly successful in two international competitions, Licinio Montefusco's career has progressed rapidly. Immediately engaged by the Teatro Nuovo in Milan, this outstanding baritone was soon receiving invitations from all the major opera houses in Europe. The volume and richness of his voice and the dramatic quality of his interpretation make him an unforgettable *Rigoletto*.



**Michele MOLESE** (*Rigoletto* and *Il Trovatore*)

The tenor Michele Molese made his debut at the Teatro Nuovo in Milan and was immediately in demand in the major opera houses. He was invited to the Paris Opera, where his interpretation of the Duke of Mantua was highly acclaimed. This pupil of Emilio Piccoli (who trained Tito Schipa) is one of the most brilliant Italian tenors of the present day.



**Federico DAVIA** (*Rigoletto*)

The wily Sparafucile is not an easy character to bring to life; his cynicism and cunning outlook demand much flexibility and understanding from the singer. We find exactly these qualities in Federico Davia whose subtle interpretation re-creates the ruffian, one of Verdi's most realistic creations, with an impressive presence.



**Gianfranco RIVOLI** (*Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*)

Gianfranco Rivoli typifies the great Italian conductor: lively, sensitive, precise, effective, he enthuses his musicians with the intense dramatic life that he is able to draw from the scores, whatever their complexity. Critics of many countries concur in their recognition of the outstanding qualities of this intelligent and enthusiastic Milanese artist, an inspired and stimulating leader.



**Concert Hall Record Club presents**  
**three operas by**  
**VERDI**



**RIGOLETTO**

OPERA IN THREE ACTS

*Libretto by*  
FRANCESCO MARIA PIAVE

Vienna Opera Chorus and Orchestra

*Conductor:*  
GIANFRANCO RIVOLI

*Cast:*

Gilda . . . . . Anna Maccianti  
Rigoletto . . . . . Licinio Montefusco  
The Duke . . . . . Michele Molese  
Maddalena . . . . . Nedda Casei  
Sparafucile . . . . . Federico Davia

SMS 2371 A/B

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**IL TROVATORE**

OPERA IN FOUR ACTS

*Libretto by:*  
SALVATORE CAMMARANO

Vienna Opera Chorus and Orchestra

*Conductor:*  
NELLO SANTI

*Cast:*

Leonora . . . . . Virginia Gordoni  
Azucena . . . . . Nedda Casei  
Manrico . . . . . Michele Molese  
Count of Luna . . . . . Lino Puglisi  
Inez . . . . . Lydia Maria  
Ferrando . . . . . Tugomir Franc  
Ruiz . . . . . Adolfo Dallapozza  
A Gypsy . . . . . Rudolf Zimmer

SMS 2416 A/B

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**LA TRAVIATA**

OPERA IN THREE ACTS

*Libretto by:*  
FRANCESCO MARIA PIAVE

Vienna Opera Chorus and Orchestra

*Conductor:*  
GIANFRANCO RIVOLI

*Cast:*

Violetta Valery . . . . . Elena Todeschi  
Alfredo Germont . . . . . Augusto Vicentini  
Giorgio Germont . . . . . Renato Cesari  
Flora Bervoix . . . . . Luciana Pio-Fumagalli  
Gastone de Letorières . . . . . Paride Venturi  
Annina . . . . . Anna Galli

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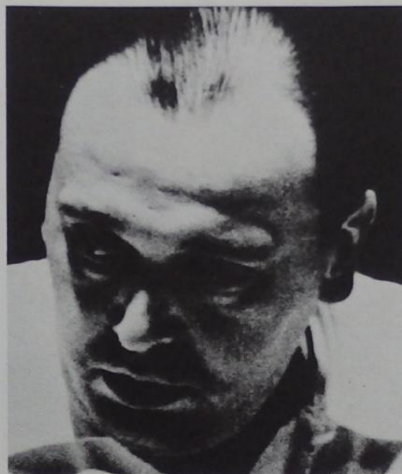
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# The Artists



**Virginia GORDONI** (*Il Trovatore*)

The difficult role of Leonora demands an exceptional vocal range and quality of dramatic interpretation. The American soprano Virginia Gordoni, who appears regularly in the principal opera houses of the United States and Italy (notably La Scala in Milan), gives us here a subtle and refined interpretation, enhanced by the magnificence of her passionate and pure voice.



**Nello SANTI** (*Il Trovatore*)

The soloists, choruses and orchestra of the Vienna Opera are under the baton of the maestro Nello Santi. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Staatstheater in Vienna and Covent Garden in London, he has shown himself to be an outstanding upholder of the 'grand Italian style'. His interpretation of *Il Trovatore* distinguishes itself, amongst other qualities, for its clarity, power and enthusiasm.



**Elena TODESCHI** (*La Traviata*)

Elena Todeschi is one of the rare singers capable of firmly combining pure musical expression with the psychological demands of the character she is interpreting, the beauty of the voice intensifying the dramatic reality. She was acclaimed in Paris after an outstanding appearance in Puccini's *Suor Angelica*. The same enthusiastic reception greets her throughout Europe, whenever she appears on stage or in concert.



**Augusto VICENTINI** (*La Traviata*)

Augusto Vicentini began his career at La Scala in Milan, and one could say that despite the extent of his repertoire and the great successes he has achieved in many and varied works, it is in the role of Alfredo that he shows most particularly the full measure of his art: an art whose warm spontaneity communicates itself immediately and completely to the listener.



# VERDI (10 october 1813-27 january 1901)

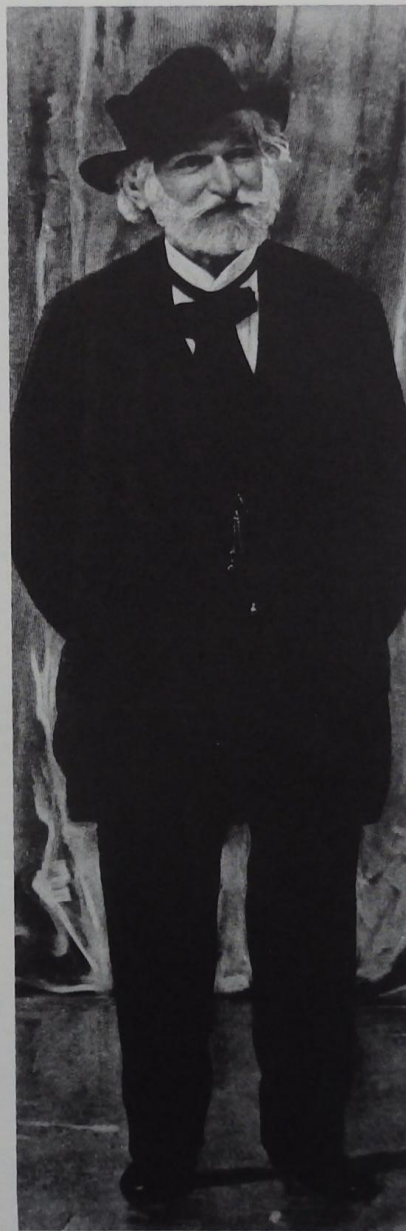
Giuseppe Verdi was born in the same year as Wagner—that other giant of nineteenth century opera—on the tenth of October 1813 at Le Roncole, a small village in the province of Piacenza in northern Italy, about 30 km. from Cremona, 60 km. from Parma and 100 km. from Milan. His parents, who kept an inn which also served as a shop for drinks and provisions, entrusted his education to the village priest.

From his earliest days, Verdi was fascinated by music—there were the popular musicians, and there was the church organ which he used to pump. His father bought him an old spinet which he played constantly, but one day when he could not recapture a chord that had enchanted him, he avenged himself by attacking the spinet with a hammer! The church organist, Pietro Baistrocchi, took him under his wing and taught him to play the organ, with such success that from the age of eleven young Verdi himself became organist at Le Roncole and at the nearby town of Busseto.

He played so well that the parish gave him a grant to enable him to attend the Milan Conservatory. Unfortunately he was not admitted, on the grounds that he was too weak a pianist! As a result, he had no choice but to be a self-taught composer. Is this not why, working as he did for the rest of his life on musical technique, he never ceased to improve?

Verdi made his theatre début with *Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio*, which was received at La Scala, Milan, in 1839 as a success 'not very great, but fairly good', according to the composer. The following year, *Un Giorno di Regno* was a resounding failure, and coincided with a terrible period in his life. He was ill, and so penniless that his wife pawned her jewels to pay the rent. 'Here begin grave misfortunes,' wrote Verdi. 'At the beginning of April my little boy fell sick: the doctors could not understand his illness and the poor little soul faded away and died in the arms of his despairing mother! That was not enough: a few days later, the little girl fell ill in her turn, and the sickness had a fatal end yet again! This was still insufficient! In the first days of June, my poor companion (five years earlier he had married Margherita Barezzi, daughter of the grocer Antonio Barezzi, president of the Busseto Philharmonic Society) was struck down by violent encephalitis and on the nineteenth of June a third coffin left my house! I was alone, alone, alone! In scarcely two months, three beloved people had gone away for ever! My family was destroyed! In the midst of these terrible agonies, I had to write and complete a comic opera!!! *Un Giorno di Regno* was not liked: no doubt part of the fault lay in the music, but the performance was also to blame. Tortured in my soul by domestic misfortunes and grieved by the failure of my work, I felt certain that I waited in vain for any consolation from art, and I decided never to compose again . . .'

However, nature took its course and he returned to the theatre two years later with *Nabucco*, which was an enormous triumph, not only musically but also . . . politically. In effect, the principal part in this opera was that of the Jewish people exiled in Babylon, who sang of their lost



homeland in terms which were applicable to the plight of the Milanese, subjected to Austrian domination. The chorus, *Va, pensiero sull'ali dorate* was soon sung all over Italy, and the name of Verdi, active militant of independence, 'musician wearing a helmet' in the words of Rossini, became a kind of symbol that was chalked on walls of houses and public monuments, V.E.R.D.I. standing for 'Vittorio-Emmanuele, Re D'Italia'.

The success of *I Lombardi* (1843) confirmed that of *Nabucco*. The following year, Venice acclaimed *Ernani*, after which *Attila*, *I Due Foscari*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, *Alzira* and *Macbeth* were successfully performed in Milan, Venice and Rome, *I Masnadieri* in London, and in Paris *Jérusalem*, which was a revised version of *Nabucco*.

In 1848 Verdi was in Paris, of which he wrote: 'In the midst of this noise I feel as though I am in a desert.' He was there at the downfall of Louis-Philippe. In April he returned to Milan, where he shared the enthusiasm and subsequent disappointment of the Italian patriots, and wrote a patriotic hymn, *Suona la Tromba*, which he sent to his friend the poet Mazzini, with these words: 'May this hymn soon be sung, to the sound of the cannon, on the plains of Lombardy!' On this theme he composed *La Battaglia di Legnano*, which was received with wild enthusiasm, followed by *Luisa Miller*, which was the first of his operas in the later style. As Pierre Petit writes in his excellent *Verdi* (Editions du Seuil), 'the loving serenity and idyllic tranquility of *Luisa Miller* are a departure from the violent passions to which the young master had accustomed us. In addition, one sees in this work a much closer unity than before between word and note, between text and music. This perfect harnessing of the music to the text was previously a characteristic of light works, where the vivacity of the Italian people appeared quite spontaneously. It was Verdi's talent to extend this close unity into the field of "serious" music. By doing so, he gave greater importance to the text.'

*Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata* were to be the three most representative and perhaps most beautiful expressions of this new art.

Following these three masterpieces came *I Vespri Siciliani* (1855) in Paris; *Simone Boccanegra* (1857), *Aroldo* and *Un Ballo in Maschera* (1859) in Italy; *La Forza del Destino* (1862) in St. Petersburg; *Don Carlo* (1867) in Paris . . .

Verdi was now constantly broadening his style. Without subscribing in the least to the theories and aesthetics of Wagner, he noted his contributions in the fields of dramatisation, orchestration and harmony, and gradually enlarged his own scores. This can be seen in *Aida* (1871), the *Requiem* (1874) and more particularly in *Otello* and *Falstaff* (composed in Milan in 1893, Verdi being seventy nine years old!) which, apart from their density of sound owe little to Wagner but which, without becoming philosophical, are of much the same depth . . .

Last picture of Verdi (Copyright Roger-Viollet)





Giuseppina Strepponi, second wife of Verdi (Museo Teatrale Alla Scala).

Verdi's life ended sadly. In 1898 he lost his second wife, the singer Giuseppina Strepponi, and wrote his *Pezzi Sacri* in her memory. 'Now I am alone. Sad! Sad! Sad! Although the doctors tell me I am not ill, I feel that everything tires me; I can no longer read nor write; I see badly; I hear even less and my legs in particular no longer



Margherita Verdi-Barezzi, first wife of Verdi (Museo Teatrale Alla Scala).

obey me. I am not living, I am vegetating. What have I left to do in this world?' He was struck by an attack of hemiplegia on the twenty first of January 1901 and on the twenty seventh he died.

#### A Portrait of Verdi

'His stature, his body, which remained upright even in his very old age, and his agile and vigorous limbs, exuded good health. His lion's head was framed by thick hair and a flowing beard, which were a most beautiful black in his youth and pure white in his old age. His eyes were deep-set and sparkling . . . A certain simple, rustic quality which was visible in his face, was echoed in his soul and in his art: he preserved the mark of his peasant origin in the simplicity and rigidity of his life, in the force and vigour of his music . . . He was upright in physical stature, and upright in moral stature. In fact, his life was a model of rectitude and integrity, of austerity and goodness. His serious, reserved nature, which hated compliments and adulation and loved, on the other hand, solitude and contemplation, made him sometimes appear hard, severe and morose and earned him the nickname of Bear. He was, on the contrary, a good and sensitive person. His temperament, however, was strong and austere, he liked to be left in peace and quiet and he detested intruders. This is why he liked to live at Genoa, some distance apart from the musical world, in a town which was serious and hard-working like himself . . .' (A. Bonaventura)

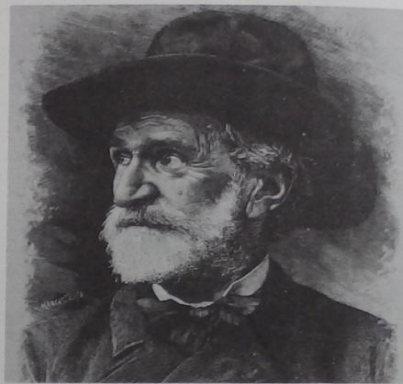
#### The Musician

As we have said, Verdi must be considered, together with Wagner, as the central figure, the 'pillar' of nineteenth century opera. And this in spite of himself, for he was neither a theoretician nor an intellectual: 'Io sono un paesano (I am a peasant)!' he replied to King Vittorio-Emmanuele, who wanted to bestow letters of nobility on him. And Verdi, in fact, proud of his humble origins, claimed that he addressed himself to the greater public, to the people, and not to an intellectual élite: 'The theatre, yesterday evening, was full to bursting; there is the one and only thermometer of success!' he declared.

Or again: 'I too know that there is a "music of the future", but I think now and I will think the same next year, that to make shoes one needs leather and skin. What do you think this stupid comparison means except that to put an opera into music, one must above all have music in the belly? I declare that I will be a keen admirer of the musicians of the future, on condition that they do make music, of whatever style or school, etc, but music . . .'

Bizet spoke eloquently on the subject of Verdi: 'When a person such as Verdi endows art with a vital and powerful work moulded from gold, mud, hatred and blood, let us not coldly remark: "My dear sir, that is not distinguished! . . ." Are Michelangelo, Dante, Shakespeare, Beethoven, Cervantes and Rabelais distinguished?'

Like most of his contemporaries, Verdi loved romantic climaxes; he was inspired by Shakespeare (*Macbeth*, *Otello*, *Falstaff*), Schiller (*Giovanna d'Arco*, *Luisa Miller*, *Don Carlos*) and Victor Hugo (*Ernani*, *Rigoletto* from *Le Roi s'amuse*; an opera that he had planned on the theme of *Les Burgraves*). He loved the theatre passionately and saw it in its total aspect—grand theatre, open to the entire crowd of spectators, and his music is adapted to this



Verdi (Copyright Musica)

concept in a spontaneous and almost instinctive way: instead of working 'word by word' (in the manner of Wagner, for example), he takes the movement and lyrical feeling of a whole phrase or moment of dramatic action.

His methods were simple, direct, a little rough at first perhaps, but always incisive. He had a fighting spirit, and the taste for combat (where passion is rarely absent) inspired in him his most splendid passages.

His music is direct: it is not weighed down by prejudice or psychoanalysis; it fears neither the excesses nor the conventions of the theatre; it even manages to transcend and uplift such conventions, making them necessary and beautiful in themselves, manifestations and instruments of art. And above all, his music flows broadly and freely, without shame, one is tempted to say.

These rich lines, created to express the deepest stirrings of the human soul, demand of the performers a vocal range comparable to that of Wagner. However Verdi—by instinct and because he is Italian—is singularly more vocal: as vocal as, but less economical than Bellini, who managed to obtain sparkling examples of *bel canto* at relatively little cost.

Does this imply that Verdi is a precursor of the *Verismo* school? Certainly the Verists took inspiration from his vocal drama and tension which they used to excess, but Verdi dissociated himself sharply from them when writing about his immediate successors: 'If the artists of the North and South have varying tendencies, then it is good that they are different. Everyone should maintain the particular characteristics of his nation, as Wagner has so rightly said. Happy are you, who are still sons of Bach! We too, the sons of Palestrina, have at one time had a great school; now it has become a bastard child and threatens ruin . . .'

Verdi himself seems to us a realist in the best sense of the word; a genius who, through theatrical convention and at times even through the improbable, reaches to the heart of universal human truth.

Michel-R. Hofmann.



# RIGOLETTO

On 23 November 1832, the performances at the Comédie Française of Victor Hugo's new drama in verse *Le Roi s'amuse* were suspended by order of the government of Louis-Philippe. The 'citizen king' was much criticised, at the time and subsequently, for this act of absolutism which was disagreeably reminiscent of his cousin and predecessor Charles X. In fact, the royal decision did the poet a service in disguising the failure of a work which was too newly staged for its future to be assessed. *Le Roi s'amuse* was not advertised again until half a century later, on 25 November 1882. But this revival of the fifty-year-old play—which was intended as a homage to the great writer, now eighty years old and revered like a prophet by republican France—was a disaster.

This outcome was foreseeable, and a reminder of the plot will illustrate why: Triboulet, court jester to King François I, whose job is to entertain a court as corrupt as its sovereign, cruelly mocks at an old nobleman, Saint-Vallier, whose daughter, the famous Diane de Poitiers, has been dishonoured by the king. Saint-Vallier makes a public protest. And, as the guards lead him away, he curses the jester who has just insulted him. Triboulet is very disturbed, as he too has a daughter, Blanche, whom he keeps carefully hidden in his house in the town. The jester, generally considered to be as disfigured morally as he is physically, lives only for his child and intends to protect her from the dangers that he knows only too well. But his precautions are in vain. After some dubious machination by the courtiers, he takes part in the abduction of his own daughter, who is dishonoured in the bed of François I. From then on, Triboulet has only one thought: to avenge Blanche's honour by having the king assassinated. The king, under a disguise, is currently frequenting a house of ill repute run by a certain Maguelonne. She has a brother, Saltabadil, who is a professional killer. Nothing is simpler for Triboulet, in these circumstances, than to demonstrate to Blanche the unworthiness of her lover, and to make the villain die at the hands of Saltabadil. The assassin, suitably rewarded, is to deliver to him at midnight the corpse of the offender. Triboulet has not suspected for a moment that Maguelonne, infatuated by her handsome cavalier, will beg her brother to spare him. Nor that Blanche herself, in desperation of love, will throw herself under the assassin's dagger. When the jester, relishing his vengeance, opens up the morbid bundle, it is the body of his dead daughter that he finds, whilst François I departs humming his famous song:

Souvent femme varie,  
Bien fol est qui s'y fie . . .  
(Woman is fickle; he is a fool who puts his trust in her.)

For this story to have seemed incredible in 1832, when the period of romantic fervour was at its height, it must really have been so. Towards the end of the century when literary romanticism was practically defunct, it was inevitable that *Le Roi s'amuse* (The King amuses himself—'He is the only one who does,' said Aurélien Scholl) should receive an even more unfavourable welcome. The truth is that even the magic of Hugo's poetry was powerless to make such extravagant material credible. Only an even more eloquent language—that of music—could save the subject.

This salvation was masterfully achieved by Giuseppe Verdi. Out of a bad play he made an operatic masterpiece.



The Quartet from Rigoletto (drawing published in *l'Illustration*).

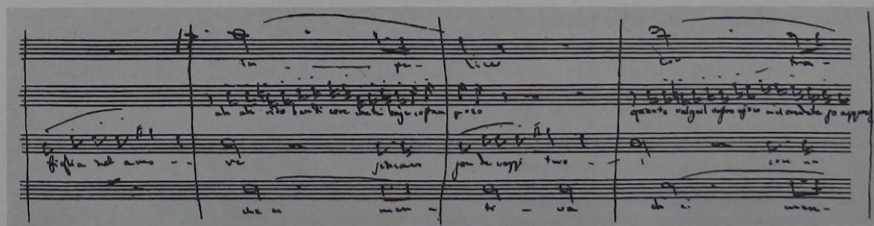
The improbabilities and excesses that condemned the dramatic work became positive qualities in the lyrical one. In fact, musical expression can combine quite happily with stereotyped situations, however indefensible they may be logically. Music, even more than poetry, takes us into a world where cold reason loses much of its hold. And if one considers Verdi's work as a whole, one would feel that he had rarely had at his disposal a libretto so well constructed or so perfectly theatrical.

After the Austrian censors had disapproved of the unexemplary role that Victor Hugo had given to a French king, it was agreed that *Le Roi s'amuse* would be discarded as a title. François I would be reduced to an obscure 'Duke of Mantua'; the jester Triboulet (an equally historical character) would be called Rigoletto and his daughter Gilda. Saint-Vallier would become the Count of Monterone, and one could easily recognise Saltabadil and Maguelonne under the names of Sparafucile and Maddalena. Speedily composed and rehearsed, *Rigoletto* was triumphantly launched at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice on 11 March 1851, having almost been named *La Maledizione* (The Curse).

## ACT I

Francesco Maria Piave, Verdi's librettist, whilst condensing the five acts of Victor Hugo's play into a prologue and three acts, changed hardly anything of the essential situations.

After a short orchestral introduction, sombre and threatening in nature, some bright music is heard from on stage, and the curtain rises immediately on a ceremonial room in the ducal palace. While the festivities are at their height, the duke tells one of his familiars, Borsa, of a meeting he has had in church with a charming young girl. The prospect of this good fortune does not prevent him from taking an interest in the Countess of Ceprano. After celebrating the charms of inconstancy (*Questa o quella . . .* This one or that one, it matters little!) he leaves with the Countess, letting the courtiers chatter amongst themselves. The jester Rigoletto leaves in his turn, after mocking at the Count of Ceprano who barely disguises his rage. But here is comfort for the outraged husband: another courtier, Marullo, has discovered that Rigoletto is hiding an extremely pretty mistress in town. Would this not pro-



Manuscript of the famous Rigoletto quartet.



vide an opportunity for revenge? All these ideas are exchanged in whispers, to the sound of the Minuet and the *Périgourdine*. But somebody completely dressed in black arrives to interrupt the ball. Contemptuous of the resulting scandal, the old Count of Monterone accuses the Duke of having seduced his daughter. Immediately arrested, he seizes a moment to curse Rigoletto who is insulting him in his misfortune, and then allows himself to be led away whilst the ball resumes.

## ACT II

In the second act, which is strictly speaking the first, the scene is divided into two by a wall containing a door. In spite of the darkness, one can distinguish the street on one side and a house with a small garden on the other. Rigoletto returns to his home, obsessed by the old man's curse. Just as he is about to open the garden gate, a demonic figure armed with a long rapier presents himself and offers his services. Sparafucile, a professional assassin, has seen a possible client in this old man who is hiding a beautiful woman in his house, with an admirer prowling around. Rigoletto, who is not so well informed, notes the address of the obliging killer at once, not without some reflection on this meeting: *Pari siamo*—we are alike; what he does with the sword, I do with my tongue . . .

Rigoletto goes into his house and is warmly welcomed by Gilda, who is neither his wife nor his mistress, but his daughter. Still disturbed by Monterone's curse, he advises Gilda and his housekeeper Giovanna to be doubly vigilant. But he has scarcely turned his back when the student Gualtier Maldé, in other words the Duke himself, appears in the house and throws himself at Gilda's feet, declaring his love for her: *È il sol dell'anima*. When her suitor leaves her, the poor girl repeats his beloved name (*Caro nome*) to herself in a state of ecstasy, and retires to her room.

Meanwhile Rigoletto has rejoined the courtiers, who need his help in the abduction of the Countess of Ceprano. He allows himself to be blindfolded and sets a ladder against a wall, not suspecting that it is the wall of his own house. Gilda, surprised in her sleep, is gagged and carried off. Left alone, Rigoletto removes his blindfold and realises with horror the trick that has been played on him. Monterone's curse is beginning to take effect.

In the second scene, we are in an anteroom in the ducal palace. The Duke has heard of Gilda's capture and is disappointed, because he does not yet know he is to benefit from it: (*Ella mi fu rapita*—She has been stolen from me). But the courtiers arrive and, in one of those unison choruses that Verdi particularly liked, tell the story in their own words: the object of his desires is near at hand, in a room in the palace. The Duke goes at once to find Gilda.

Rigoletto then enters, overwhelmed but disguising his anguish and fury beneath his professional comic mask. Pretending at first to jest, he reproaches the courtiers, alternately threatening and beseeching. Ceprano, Marullo and the others, finally realising that Gilda is the jester's daughter, are much less proud of having deceived him. Their shamed faces convince Rigoletto of what has become of Gilda, and he bursts into curses: *Cortigiani, vil razza dannata*—Courtiers, vile and damned race . . .

Gilda arrives in tears and throws herself into her father's arms. A moving duet follows: *Piangi, fanciulla*—Weep, my child, the jester says to his daughter, who declares her love for the man who has unworthily deceived her. Rigoletto's tenderness turns to fury when Monterone passes between the halberdiers who are leading him to the dungeon. 'You will be avenged!' the jester calls to him. All his rage pours out in the aria which ends the second act: *Sì vendetta, tremenda vendetta!*—Yes, vengeance, terrible vengeance!

## ACT III

In the third act, as in the first, the scene is divided into two. The spectator can see at the same time the dubious inn run by Maddalena and Sparafucile, and the forbidding countryside which surrounds it. The shack is so dilapidated that Rigoletto and his daughter can see what is going on inside: Sparafucile sharpening his sword, then the Duke singing the famous air *La donna è mobile qual piuma al vento*—A woman is inconstant like a feather in the wind. Maddalena comes to cajole the elegant cavalier, and the unfortunate Gilda, on the other side of the wall, cannot help but declare the extent of her misfortune. An excellent quartet follows in which the contradictory feelings of the Duke, Maddalena, Rigoletto and Gilda are most eloquently expressed: *Bella figlia dell'amore* . . .

Rigoletto negotiates with Sparafucile the murder of the Duke, then sends Gilda away to put on men's clothing ready to leave Mantua as soon as the murder is accomplished. Maddalena, meanwhile, pleads her suitor's cause with her brother: surely he can find someone else to kill to satisfy his client. The assassin allows himself to be persuaded. Now this dialogue, punctuated by rumblings of thunder, has been overheard by Gilda who, dressed as a man as her father told her, has returned to the scene of the crime. Not wishing to survive either her dishonour or her love, she decides to sacrifice herself and knocks at the door as the storm increases in intensity. A clap of thunder hides her cry as she receives the mortal blow.

The twelve strokes of midnight are heard a little later; Rigoletto returns and receives from Sparafucile the sack which, he thinks, contains the body of the Duke. For a long time he soliloquises before this ill-defined form that is lit up intermittently by the moon; he decides to drag the morbid bundle to the Mincio which flows nearby. But suddenly a voice is heard, that of the Duke returning to his palace and singing his favourite air. Rigoletto hastily cuts the cord securing the sack and recognises his dying daughter . . .

Victor Hugo, who was not particularly fond of music, had reacted unfavourably to a musician taking over his play.



Victor Hugo

He was unable to prevent performances of *Rigoletto* abroad, but he could oppose them in France and this he did. No doubt he thought that the operatic version would be prejudicial to the eventual revival of his drama. *Rigoletto* was not performed in Paris, in Italian, until 19 January 1857 at the Théâtre des Italiens, and that at the cost of a lawsuit. The French version by Edouard Duprez, performed at the Monnaie in Brussels in November 1858, did not reach Paris (Théâtre Lyrique, now Théâtre de la Cité) until Christmas Eve 1863. As for the Paris Opera House, it was received there in February 1885, three months before the death of Victor Hugo, who agreed to attend a performance of *Rigoletto* and paid homage to its composer.

Maurice Tassart.





GIUSEPPE VERDI

# RIGOLETTO

OPERA IN THREE ACTS

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

VIENNA STATE OPERA CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA  
GIANFRANCO RIVOLI, conductor

## CHARACTERS

THE DUKE OF MANTUA	. . .	MICHELE MOLESE tenor
RIGOLETTO the Duke's jester		LICINIO MONTEFUSCO baritone
GILDA Rigoletto's daughter	. . .	ANNA MACCIANTI soprano
SPARAFUCILE a hired murderer	. . .	FEDERICO DAVIA bass
MADDALENA Sparafucile's sister	. . .	NEDDA CASEI contralto
GIOVANNA Gilda's maid	. . .	SUSANNE STEFFAN mezzo-soprano
THE COUNT OF MONTERONE		KARL NEUGEBAUER baritone
MARULLO a courtier	. . .	FRIEDRICH STRACK baritone
BORSA a courtier	. . .	KARL SETZER tenor
THE COUNT OF CEPRANO	. . .	NIKOLAUS SIMKOVSKY bass
THE COUNTESS OF CEPRANO		ANNA VAJDA mezzo-soprano

## Side 1

## ACT I

## ORCHESTRAL PRELUDE

## SCENE 1

*A ball in the Ducal Palace at Mantua. The Duke and Borsa enter from one of the rooms at the back.*

DUKE: Della mia bella incognita borghese toccare il fin dell'avventura io voglio

BORSA: Di quella giovin che vedete al tempio?

DUKE: Da tre lune ogni festa.  
BORSA: La sua dimora?  
DUKE: In un remoto calle; misterioso un uom v'entra ogni notte.  
BORSA: E sa colei chi sia l'amante suo?

DUKE: Lo ignora.  
BORSA: Quante beltà! ... Mirate.  
DUKE: Le vince tutte di Ceprano la sposa.

BORSA: Non v'oda il Conte, o Duca ...  
DUKE: A me che importa?  
BORSA: Dirlo ad altra ei potria ...  
DUKE: Né sventura per me certo saria ...  
Questa o quella per me pari sono a quant'altre d'intorno mi vedo; del mio core l'impero non cedo meglio ad una che ad altra beltà. La costoro avvenenza è qual dono di che il fato ne infiora la vita, s'oggi questa mi torna gradita forse un'altra doman lo sarà. La costanza tiranna del core, detestiamo qual morbo crudele. Sol chi vuole sì serbi fidele; non v'ha amor se non v'è libertà. De' mariti il geloso furore, degli amanti le smanie derido; anco d'Argo i cent'occhi disido se mi punge una qualche beltà.

*The Minuet is danced in the room at the back.*

DUKE: Partite? ... Crudele!  
COUNTRESS: Seguire lo sposo m'è forza a Ceprano.

DUKE: Ma dee luminoso in corte tal astro qual sole brillare. Per voi qui ciascuno dovrà palpitare. Per voi già possente la fiamma d'amore inebria, conquide, distrugge il mio core.

COUNTRESS: Calmatevi ...  
RIGOLETTO: In testa che avete. Signor di Ceprano?

RIGOLETTO: Ei sbuffa, vedete?  
BORSA AND CHORUS: Che festa!  
RIGOLETTO: Oh si ...  
BORSA AND CHORUS: Il Duca qui pur si diverte! ...

RIGOLETTO: Così non è sempre? Che nuove scoperte! Il gioco ed il vino, le feste, la danza, Battaglie, conviti, ben tutto gli sta. Or della Contessa l'assedio egli avanza. E intanto il marito fremendo ne va.

*(enter Marullo hurriedly)*

MARULLO: Gran nuova! Gran nuova!  
CHORUS: Che avvenne? Parlate!  
MARULLO: Stupir ne dovreste ...  
CHORUS: Narrate, narrate ...  
MARULLO: Ah! Ah! ... Rigoletto ...  
CHORUS: Ebben?  
MARULLO: Caso enorme! ...  
CHORUS: Perduto ha la gobba? Non è più diffame?  
MARULLO: Più strana è la cosa! ... Il pazzo possiede ...

DUKE: I'll wait no longer, I must indeed possess her, that fair unknown whom I have been pursuing.

BORSA: That little wench you spied at her devotions?

DUKE: Months I've watch'd her every Sunday.

BORSA: And track'd her homewards?

DUKE: To home obscure and humble; each night there a man is seen to enter.

BORSA: And does the fair one know who is her lover?

DUKE: I know not.

BORSA: Here's beauty too, behold them!

DUKE: None can compare with the lady of Ceprano.

BORSA: Take care her husband hear not.

DUKE: What if he did, pray?

BORSA: He might tell some other lady.

DUKE: He may tell all the world, as far as I care. Shall I bind me in promises tender to but one of the beauties? Or the empire to any surrender of my heart that beats for one and for all? In the pleasure of love I have drown'd me, every joy with new ardour pursuing; If today one shall find her undoing, then tomorrow another will fall. Why be faithful? The heart will not suffer to be chain'd to a tyrant enslaver. Where I will, I distribute my favour, and my freedom I ever will claim. Jealous husbands may rage, what do I care? I can laugh at their anger and railing; let them watch me! It is all unavailing, once a woman shall have kindled my flame.

DUKE: You leave us? How cruel!  
COUNTRESS: My husband desires me return to Ceprano.  
DUKE: Nay rather, I implore you, remain here and honour the court, where all men adore you; 'tis surely your duty. No more will I hide it—with love you inspire me.

COUNTRESS: I beg your Highness, calm yourself.  
RIGOLETTO: Pray why so distracted, my lord of Ceprano?

RIGOLETTO: He's boiling! Observe him!

BORSA AND CHORUS: No wonder!

RIGOLETTO: Indeed!

BORSA AND CHORUS: His Highness will now take his pleasure.

RIGOLETTO: And why should he not, sirs? For fighting, drinking, gaming and dancing, his Highness of Mantua's always the man. He's now to the siege of Ceprano advancing; the husband must bear it as well as he can. *(exit)*

MARULLO: A new tale I bring you!  
CHORUS: What is it? Oh tell us!  
MARULLO: A secret surprising.  
CHORUS: Reveal it, and quickly.  
MARULLO: Haha! Rigoletto—  
CHORUS: The clown?  
MARULLO: Lo! A portent!  
CHORUS: Has he lost his humpback?

MARULLO: The truth is yet stranger.

CHORUS: Infine?

MARULLO: Un'amante.

CHORUS: Amante! Chi il crede?

MARULLO: Il gobbo in Cupido or s'è trasformato.

CHORUS: Quel mostro Cupido ... Cupido beato! ...

DUKE: Ah, più di Ceprano importuno non v'è! ... La cara sua sposa è un angiol per me!

RIGOLETTO: Rapietela.

DUKE: E detto; ma il farlo?

RIGOLETTO: Stasera.

DUKE: Né pensi tu al Conte?

RIGOLETTO: Non c'è la prigione?

DUKE: Ah no.

RIGOLETTO: Ebben ... s'esilia ...

DUKE: Nemmeno, buffone.

RIGOLETTO: Allora la testa ...

CEPRANO: Oh l'anima nera!

DUKE: Che di', questa testa?

RIGOLETTO: E ben naturale. Che far di tal testa? A che cosa ella vale?

CEPRANO *(brandishing his sword)*: Marrano!

DUKE *(to Ceprano)*: Fermate ...

RIGOLETTO: Da rider mi fa.

CHORUS: In furia è montato!

DUKE: Buffone, vien qua. Ah, sempre tu spingi lo scherzo all'estremo. Quell'ira che s'odi colpir ti potrà.

RIGOLETTO: Che coglier mi puote? Di loro non temo; del Duca il protetto nessun toccherà.

CEPRANO: Vendetta del pazzo! ...

CHORUS: Contr'esso un rancore pei tristi suoi modi di noi chi non ha?

CEPRANO: Vendetta.

CHORUS: Ma come?

CEPRANO: Stanotte, chi ha core sia in armi da me.

ALL: Sì.

BORSA AND CHORUS: A notte.

ALL: Sarà!

ALL: Tutto è gioia, tutto è festa, tutto invitaci a goder! Oh, guardate, non par questa or la reggia del piacer?

MONTERONE *(within)*: Ch'io gli parli.

DUKE: No.

MONTERONE *(entering)*: Il voglio.

ALL: Monterone!

MONTERONE: Sì Monterone ... la voce mia qual tuono vi scuoterà dovunque ...

*(coming forward with grotesque pomposity)*

RIGOLETTO: Ch'io gli parli,  
Voi congiuraste contro noi, signore, e noi, clementi invero, perdonammo ... Qual vi piglia or delirio a tutte l'ore di vostra figlia a reclamar l'onore?  
MONTERONE: Novello insulto! ... Ah si, a turbare sarò vostro orgie ... verrò a gridare fino a che vegga restarsi inulto di mia famiglia l'atroce insulto; e se al carnefice pur mi darete, spettro terribile mi rivedrete, portante in mano il teschio mio, vendetta chiedere al mondo e a Dio.

DUKE: Non più, arrestatelo.

RIGOLETTO: È matto.

CHORUS: Quai detti!

MONTERONE: Oh, siate entrambi voi maledetti.

Slanciare il cane a leon morente è vile, o Duca ...

et tu, serpente, tu che d'un padre ridi al dolore, sii maledetto

RIGOLETTO: Che sento! Orrore!

ALL *(to Monterone)*: O tu che la festa audace hai turbato, da un genio d'inferno qui fosti guidato; e vano ogni detto, di qua t'allontana, va, trema, o vegliardo, dell'ira sovrana ... Tu

CHORUS: What is it?  
MARULLO: He has a mistress!  
CHORUS: What, a mistress?  
MARULLO: Our good friend the hunchback's a lover!  
CHORUS: The hunchback? A lover? A charming adventure!  
DUKE: I would that Ceprano were out of the way, for I would possess his lady today.  
RIGOLETTO: Then ravish her.  
DUKE: You say so; but how then?  
RIGOLETTO: This evening.  
DUKE: And what of her husband?  
RIGOLETTO: Let him be imprison'd.  
DUKE: No, no.  
RIGOLETTO: Well then, be exil'd.  
DUKE: You fool, 'tis impossible.  
RIGOLETTO: Remains then to call in the headsmen.

CEPRANO: Oh foulest of villains!  
DUKE: Your head, sir, 's in question.  
RIGOLETTO: You fear, sir, to lose it? 'Tis not worth the taking; we all know 'tis empty!  
CEPRANO *(brandishing his sword)*: How dare you?

DUKE *(to Ceprano)*: Refrain, sir.

RIGOLETTO: Your head you should cool.

CHORUS: Ceprano is furious.

DUKE: Be silent, you fool! Have done with your jesting, the wrath you arouse on your own head may fall.

RIGOLETTO: What harm can befall me? Your Highness, I know, will protect me from all.

CEPRANO: To vengeance!

CHORUS: Who is there among us has not been insulted by this vile buffoon?

CEPRANO: To vengeance!

CHORUS: But how?

CEPRANO: United I call you, tomorrow with me!

ALL: Yes!

BORSA AND CHORUS: At midnight!

ALL: We will.

ALL: Gaily, gaily tread the measure, and with beauty feast the eyes! Life was only made for pleasure, seize the moment ere it flies!

MONTERONE *(within)*: I will have audience.

DUKE: No.

MONTERONE *(entering)*: Make way there!

ALL: Monterone!

MONTERONE: Yes, Monterone, whose voice like roar of thunder once more shall make you tremble.

RIGOLETTO: I'll receive him.

You did conspire one day, my lord, against us, and pardon we in clemency did grant you. Are you victim of madness, for ever whining about your daughter and her besmirched honour?

MONTERONE: Thus you insult me! I come to seek you, I find you feasting, and 'midst your orgies I'll make you hear me. You long have owed me a reparation for that dishonour you brought upon me. I know you have the power to slay me; that shall not stay my purpose. For vengeance yet I'll cry before the world, before the throne of God Almighty.

DUKE: No more! Make him prisoner!

RIGOLETTO: The madman!

CHORUS: How dared he?

MONTERONE: Now may you both by Heav'n be accurs'd!

Your mongrel cur you'd set upon the lion when he is dying!

Thou loathsome creature, thou that wouldst mock at a father, my curse upon thee!

RIGOLETTO: He curs'd me, oh horror!

ALL *(to Monterone)*: Begone, make an end of your cursing and railing, your rage and your anger are all unavailing. But now will a terrible lesson be taught you. For he that would hinder



L'hai provocata, più speme non v'è. Un'ora fatale fu questa per te.

(Monterone is led off by two halberdiers)

#### SCENE 2

*The deserted end of a blind alley. On the left is a modest-looking house with a little courtyard surrounded by a wall. In the courtyard there is a large tree and a marble seat.*

*(It is night. Enter Rigoletto, wrapped in a cloak. Sparafucile follows him at a distance)*

RIGOLETTO: Quel vecchio maledivami!  
SPARAFUCILE: Signor? ...  
RIGOLETTO: Va', non ho niente.  
SPARAFUCILE: Né, il chiesi... a voi presente un uom di spada sta.  
RIGOLETTO: Un ladro?  
SPARAFUCILE: Un uom che libera per poco da un rivale. E voi ne avete...  
RIGOLETTO: Quale?  
SPARAFUCILE: La vostra donna è là.  
RIGOLETTO: Che sento! E quanto spendere per un signor dovrei?  
SPARAFUCILE: Prezzo maggior vorrei...  
RIGOLETTO: Com'usasi pagar?  
SPARAFUCILE: Una metà s'anticipa, il resto si dà poi...  
RIGOLETTO: Demonio! E come puoi tanto sicuro opar?  
SPARAFUCILE: Soglio in cittade uccidere, oppure nel mio tetto. L'uomo di sera aspetto; una stoccata e muor.  
RIGOLETTO: E come in casa?  
SPARAFUCILE: È facile... M'aiuta mia sorella... Per le vie danza... è bella... Chi voglio attira... e allor...  
RIGOLETTO: Comprendo.  
SPARAFUCILE: Senza strepito... E queto il mio strumento, vi serve?  
RIGOLETTO: No... al momento.  
SPARAFUCILE: Peggio per voi...  
RIGOLETTO: Chi sa?...  
SPARAFUCILE: Sparafucile mi nomino...  
RIGOLETTO: Stanciro?  
SPARAFUCILE: Borgognone...  
RIGOLETTO: E dove all'occasione?...  
SPARAFUCILE: Qui sempre a sera.  
RIGOLETTO: Va.  
RIGOLETTO: Pari siamo! Io la lingua, egli ha il pugnale; l'uomo no che ride, e quel che spagne! Quel vecchio maledivami... O uomini! O natura!... Vil scellerato mi faceste voi!... O rabbia!... Esser difforme!... Esser buffone non dover, non poter altro che ridere!... Il retaggio d'ogni uom m'è tolto... il pianto questo padrone mio, giovin, giocondo, sì possente, bello, sonnecchiando mi dice: Fa' ch'io rida, buffone!... Forzarmi deggio e farlo!... Oh dannazione! Odio a voi, cortigiani schernitori! Quanta in mordervi ho gioia! Se iniquo son, per cagion vostra è solo... Ma in altr'uom qui mi cangio!... Quel vecchio maledivami!... Tal pensiero perché contrubra ognor la mente mia? Mi coglierà sventura?... Ah no, è follia...  
RIGOLETTO: Figlia!...  
GILDA: Mio padre!  
RIGOLETTO: A te d'apresso. Trova sol gioia il core oppresso.  
GILDA: Oh, quanto amore!  
RIGOLETTO: Mia vita sei! Senza te in terra qual bene avrei?  
GILDA: Voi sospirate!... Che v'ange tanto? Lo dite a questa povera figlia... Se v'ha mistero per lei sia franto... Ch'ella conosca la sua famiglia.  
RIGOLETTO: Tu non ne hai...  
GILDA: Qual nome avete?  
RIGOLETTO: A te che importa?  
GILDA: Se non volete di voi parlarmi...  
RIGOLETTO (interrupting): Non uscir mai.

a prince in his pleasure will soon have the chance of repenting at leisure. You'll pay for your insolent words with your blood.

RIGOLETTO: That old man laid his curse on me!  
SPARAFUCILE: Good sir—  
RIGOLETTO: I have no money.  
SPARAFUCILE: I ask it not; I do not beg. I am one that wears a sword.  
RIGOLETTO: A robber?  
SPARAFUCILE: An honest wage I earn; I set folk free of rivals. Have you no enemies?  
RIGOLETTO: I, sir?  
SPARAFUCILE: Your wife or mistress lies there.  
RIGOLETTO: Who sent him? How much to lay a nobleman?  
SPARAFUCILE: That would cost more.  
RIGOLETTO: And how are you paid?  
SPARAFUCILE: Half in advance I always ask, The rest after...  
RIGOLETTO: A demon! Are you so certain you can perform the deed?  
SPARAFUCILE: Yes, in the street I kill my man, or sometimes in my own house; I lie in wait at evening, one thrust—he's dead!  
RIGOLETTO: What, in your own house?  
SPARAFUCILE: Oh easily! You see, I have a sister; By the roadside she sings and dances, so she decoys them—and then—  
RIGOLETTO: I take you.  
SPARAFUCILE: Not a sound is heard. This sword's at your disposal. Can I serve you?  
RIGOLETTO: 'Tis not the moment.  
SPARAFUCILE: Lose not the chance.  
RIGOLETTO: Who knows?  
SPARAFUCILE: Sparafucile—remember me.  
RIGOLETTO: Whence are you?  
SPARAFUCILE: Burgundy.  
RIGOLETTO: How shall I find you?  
SPARAFUCILE: Here every evening.  
RIGOLETTO: Go.  
RIGOLETTO: We are equals! I have sharp words, and he his dagger! That old man laid his curse on me! How vile am I! Nature made me; mankind has follow'd, and made me viler. Misshapen, born to be a jester! All my life I'm condemn'd only to jest; Heaven denies me the consolation of weeping. Look at my noble master! Fortune has giv'n him great possessions, so 'tis his to command me—"Make me laugh now, my jester!" and I must needs amuse him. Oh, this is Hell to me! How I loathe you, all you vile disdainful courtiers! Vile I am, I know; you taught me villainy. Yet here do I become another—that old man laid his curse on me! I am haunted by those appalling words; Ah no, why believe it?

RIGOLETTO: Gilda!  
GILDA: My father!  
RIGOLETTO: Father dear! Thou art my only consolation.  
GILDA: Father, dear father!  
RIGOLETTO: My only comfort! How could I bear it without thee?  
GILDA: Why did you sigh then? Will you not tell me, dear father? What grieves you? May I not share it? Why may I never know about our family?  
RIGOLETTO: You must not know.  
GILDA: What is your name?  
RIGOLETTO: Why need I tell you?  
GILDA: Then may I never know who is my father?  
RIGOLETTO (interrupting): Have you gone out?

GILDA: Non vo che al tempio.  
RIGOLETTO: Oh, ben tu fai.  
GILDA: Se non di voi, almen chi sia fate ch'io sappia la madre mia.  
RIGOLETTO: Deh, non parlare al misero del suo perduto bene... Ella sentia, quell'angelo, Pietà delle mie pene... Solo, difforme, povero, per compassion mi amò. Moria... le zolle coprono lievi quel capo amato. Solo or tu resti al misero... O Dio, sii ringraziato!...  
GILDA: Quanto dolor!... Che spremere si amaro pianto può? Padre, non più, calmatevi... Mi laceri tal vista... Il nome vostro ditemi il duol che si v'attrista...  
RIGOLETTO: A che nomarmi? È inutile!... Padre ti sono, e basti... Me forse al mondo temono d'alcuno ho forse gli asti... Altri mi maledicono...  
GILDA: Patria, parenti, amici voi dunque non avete?  
RIGOLETTO: Patria!... parenti!... amici? Culto, famiglia, patria, il mio universo è in te!

GILDA: Ah, se può lieto rendervi, gioia è la vita a me!

GILDA: Già da tre lune son qui venuta né la cittade ho ancor veduta; se il concedete, farlo o potrei...  
RIGOLETTO: Mail!... mail!... Uscita, dimmi, unqua sei?  
GILDA: No.  
RIGOLETTO: Guai!  
GILDA: Che dissi!  
RIGOLETTO: Ben te ne guarda! Potrien seguirli, rapirla ancora! Qui d'un buffone si disonora la figlia, e ridesi... Orror!  
Ola?  
GIOVANNA: Signor?  
RIGOLETTO: Venendo me vede alcuno? Bada di' il vero...  
GIOVANNA: Ah, no, nessuno.  
RIGOLETTO: Sta ben... la porta che dà al bastione è sempre chiusa?  
GIOVANNA: Ognor si sta.  
RIGOLETTO: Veglia o donna, questo fiore che a te puro confidai veglia attenta, en non sia mai che s'offuschi il suo candor. Tu dei venti dal furore, ch'altri fiori hanno piegato, lo difendi, e immacolato lo ridona al genitor.

GILDA: Quanto affetto!... quali cure! Che temete, padre mio? Lassu in cielo presso Dio, veglia un angiol protettor. Da noi togliete le sventure di mia madre il priego santo; non fia mai disvelto o franto questo a voi diletto fior.

RIGOLETTO: Alcun v'è fuori...

*(Rigoletto opens the door and goes into the street: while he is looking about, the Duke slips into the courtyard, throws a purse to Giovanna to ensure her silence, and hides behind the tree)*

GILDA: Cielo! Sempre novel sospetto...  
RIGOLETTO: Alla chiesa vi seguiva mai nessuno?  
GILDA: Mai!  
DUKE (aside): Rigoletto!  
RIGOLETTO: Se talor qui picchian, guardatevi d'aprire...  
GIOVANNA (jestingly): Nemmeno al Duca?

RIGOLETTO: Non che ad altri a lui... Mia figlia, addio.  
DUKE (aside): Sua figlia!  
GILDA: Addio, mio padre.

*(Rigoletto goes out, locking the door behind him)*

GILDA: Giovanna, ho dei rimorsi...  
GIOVANNA: E perché mai?  
GILDA: Tacqui che un giovin me seguiva al tempio.

GILDA: Only to church.  
RIGOLETTO: Then all is well.  
GILDA: If you'll not answer me, tell me about my mother; I never knew her.  
RIGOLETTO: Why would you recall to mind, her long ago departed, who for me compassion had, and lov'd me, tender-hearted? Lonely, misshapen, poor I was; pity and love she gave. She died—oh, do not ask of me where is her lonely grave! But yet she left to me that pledge of love, Gilda, for whom I thank the Lord.  
GILDA: Belov'd father, say no more; when I behold thy emotion, I cannot bear it, my heart is torn by the thought of your misfortune. Your name at least reveal to me; may I not share our burden?  
RIGOLETTO: What use to tell you? I have no name for you but father. To all but you a man am I despis'd and fear'd and hated; yes, and a man accurst I am.  
GILDA: Kindred, or country, or friends—have you no such ties to bind you?  
RIGOLETTO: Kindred, or country, or friends indeed! Kindred and country, the whole of my world art thou.  
GILDA: Ah, would I could make that world a happier world for thee!

#### Side 2

GILDA: 'Tis full three months now since I came hither; yet like a nun am I imprison'd. Will you not give me leave to walk abroad?  
RIGOLETTO: No! Have you dar'd to leave the house?  
GILDA: No.  
RIGOLETTO: Never?  
GILDA: To church alone.  
RIGOLETTO: Heav'n protect you! I know the Duke's men: if they saw her, they'd think it sport to ravish the child of a jester.  
Who's there?  
GIOVANNA: Good sir?  
RIGOLETTO: Come tell me, have I been follow'd when I came in here?  
GIOVANNA: No one could see you.  
RIGOLETTO: 'Tis well. The door to the terrace, is it always bolted?  
GIOVANNA: 'Tis always lock'd.  
RIGOLETTO: Take, I pray, this tender flower, I to your good care confide it; oh, from danger safely hide it, pure in heart for evermore. And though cruel tempest lower, frailer flowers in ruin spoiling, this my daughter, free from soiling, to my arms you will restore.  
GILDA: Father mine, why thus afflicted? Why is care thy heart oppressing? While from Heav'n a mother's blessing falls upon the child she bore. By her prayers our wrong is righted, at the throne of mercy pleading, she for us is interceding, peace for us she will implore.  
RIGOLETTO: Who's that outside there?

GILDA: Heavens! What can he be suspecting?  
RIGOLETTO: After church were you followed?  
GILDA: No!  
DUKE (aside): Rigoletto!  
RIGOLETTO: If any one should knock, be sure you do not open.  
GIOVANNA (jestingly): Not even to his Highness?  
RIGOLETTO: Least of all to his Highness. Farewell, my daughter.  
DUKE (aside): His daughter!  
GILDA: Farewell, dearest father!

GILDA: Giovanna, I do repent me—  
GIOVANNA: What have you done?  
GILDA: I should have told him of that young man who follow'd me—



GIOVANNA: Perché cio dirgli? L'odiare dunque cotesco giovin voi?  
GILDA: No, no, ché troppo è bello e spira amore...  
GIOVANNA: E magnanimo sembra e gran signore.  
GILDA: Signor né principe io lo vorrei sento che povero più l'amerei. Sognando o vigile sempre lo chiamo, e l'alma in estasi gli dice: t'a...  
(the Duke comes out from behind the tree, signals to Giovanna to go away, kneels before Gilda and finishes her sentence)

DUKE: T'amo! T'amo; ripetilo sì caro accento; un puro schiudimi ciel di contento!  
GILDA: Giovanna? ... Ah, misera! Non v'è più alcuno che qui rispondami! Oh Dio! ... nessuno?  
DUKE: Son io coll'anima che ti rispondo... Ah, due che s'amano, son tutto un mondo!  
GILDA: Chi mai, chi giungere vi fece a me?  
DUKE: S'angelo o demone, che importa a te? Io t'amo...  
GILDA: Uscitene.  
DUKE: Uscire! ... Adesso! ... Ora che accedono un fuoco istesso! Ah, inseparabile d'amore il Dio stringeva, o vergine, tuo fato al mio! E il sol dell'anima, la vita è amore, sua voce è il palpito del nostro core... E fama e gloria, potenza e trono, terrene, fragole cose qui sono. Una pur avviene sola divina: E amor che agli angeli più ne avvicina! Adunque amiamoci, donna celeste; d'invidia agli uomini sarò per te.

GILDA: Ah, de'miei vergini sogni son queste le voci tenere sì care a me!

DUKE: Che m'ami, deh, ripetimi.  
GILDA: L'udiste.  
DUKE: Oh, me felice!  
GILDA: Il nome vostro ditemi... Saperlo non mi lice?  
CEPRANO: Il loco è qui...  
DUKE: Mi nomino...  
BORSA: Sta ben...  
DUKE: Gualtier Maldé... Studente sono... e povero...  
GIOVANNA: Rumor di passi è fuore...  
GILDA: Forse mio padre...  
DUKE: Ah, cogliere potessi il traditore che si mi sturba!  
GILDA: Adducilo di qua al bastione... or ite...  
DUKE: Di', m'amerai tu?  
GILDA: E voi?  
DUKE: L'intera vita... poi...  
GILDA: Non più... non più... partite.  
BOTH: Addio... speranza ed anima sol tu sarai per me addio... vivrà immutabile L'affetto mio per te.

(Giovanna takes the Duke out by the terrace)

GILDA: Gualtier Maldé... nome di lui si amato, ti scolpisci nel core innamorato! Caro nome che il mio cor festi primo palpitare, le delizie dell'amor mi dei sempre rammentar! Col pensiero il mio desir a te sempre volerà e fin l'ultimo sospiro, caro nome, tuo sarà.

(Borsa, Ceprano, Marullo and courtiers, all armed and masked, enter by the street)

BORSA: E là...  
CEPRANO: Miratela.  
CHORUS: Oh, quanto è bella!  
MARULLO: Par fatta od angiol.  
CHORUS: L'amante è quella di Rigoletto.

RIGOLETTO: Riedo!... perché?  
BORSA: Silenzio... all'opra... Badate a me

GIOVANNA: Why tell your father? Do you so hate that youth you saw at church-time?  
GILDA: No—I believe he loves me.

GIOVANNA: He is noble, as he is generous.

GILDA: No man of lofty birth shall woo me. But one that humble is may speak to me. I will not raise my eyes to one above me; all I would ask of him would be to love—

(Giovanna to go away, kneels before Gilda and finishes her sentence)

DUKE: Love me! Ah, say that word again, and fill my heart with rapture!  
GILDA: Giovanna! Giovanna! Is no one here? Where can she be? Oh, Heaven protect me!

DUKE: Fear nothing, beloved maid! Two hearts that love make earth a heaven.  
GILDA: How did you enter here?  
DUKE: Witchcraft or miracle, whiche'er you will, I love you.

GILDA: You cannot stay.  
DUKE: You bid me to leave you? Now when the torch of love is lighted? I heard you say the word, and we by destiny are now united. Love to the heart is the light of morning, the soul awakening and life adorning; what is a throne or the laurel of glory? But foolish vanity, an empty story. All else may pass away, one thing abideth; 'tis love, that us to joys of heaven guideth. Oh take the happiness that I now bring thee! All men should envy me if thou wert mine.

GILDA: I dreamt by night and day of thy embraces, I heard thy tender words and I was thine.

DUKE: You love me? Tell me once again.  
GILDA: I love you.  
DUKE: You make me happy.  
GILDA: But yet I know not who you are; your name—may I not know it?  
CEPRANO: 'Tis here she lives.

DUKE: My name you ask?  
BORSA: 'Tis well.  
DUKE: Gualtier Maldé, a poor young scholar. There, now you know.

GIOVANNA: I hear a sound of footsteps.  
GILDA: Perhaps my father!

DUKE: A plague upon the villain and the traitor who dares disturb me!

GILDA: Giovanna, take him out by the terrace, and quickly.

DUKE: Shall you love me tomorrow?  
GILDA: Will you?

DUKE: For life, for ever, yes!  
GILDA: No more, oh leave me!

BOTH: Farewell then, farewell then, my hope, my happiness! My life, my love, my joy! No pow'r on earth our love can e'er destroy.

GILDA: Gualtier Maldé! grav'd on my heart for ever shall be the name of him whose love I cherish. Ah how dear to me that name, name of him whom I adore! He my heart did first inflame, and is mine for evermore. He awoke my first desire, he in every thought may claim, and when I in death expire, fondly I shall breathe his name.

(Borsa, Ceprano, Marullo and courtiers, all armed and masked, enter by the street)

BORSA: Look there!  
CEPRANO: Yes, that's the wench.  
CHORUS: Indeed a beauty!  
MARULLO: A fairy vision!  
CHORUS: So that's the mistress of Rigoletto! How could he find her?  
RIGOLETTO: What brings me back?  
BORSA: Now's the moment; be silent. I'll lead the way.

RIGOLETTO: Ah, da quel vecchio fui maledetto! Chi è là?  
BORSA (to the others): Tacete... c'è Rigoletto.  
CEPRANO: Vittoria doppia! L'uccideremo.

BORSA: No, ché domani più rideremo.

MARULLO: Or tutto aggiusto...

RIGOLETTO: Chi parla qua?  
MARULLO: Ehi, Rigoletto?... Di?  
RIGOLETTO (in a terrible voice): Chi va là?

MARULLO: Eh, non mangiarci... Son...  
RIGOLETTO: Chi?  
MARULLO: Marullo.  
RIGOLETTO: In tanto buio lo sguardo è nullo.

MARULLO: Qui ne condusse ridevol cosa...  
Törre a Ceprano vogliam la sposa...

RIGOLETTO: Ahimè! respiro!... Ma come entrare?

MARULLO (to Ceprano): La vostra chiave?  
(to Rigoletto): Non dubitare non dee mancarci lo stratagemma... Ecco la chiave...

RIGOLETTO: Sento il suo stemma.  
(aside): Ah, terror vano fu dunque il mio!  
(to Marullo): N'è là il palazzo... con voi son io.

MARULLO: Siam mascherati...  
RIGOLETTO: Ch'io pur mi mascheri! A me una larva.

MARULLO: Sì, pronta è già. Terrai la scala...

(Marullo puts a mask on Rigoletto's face and at the same time blindfolds him with a handkerchief; he then sets Rigoletto to hold a ladder leading up to the terrace)

RIGOLETTO: Fitta è la tenebra.  
MARULLO (softly to the others): La benda cieco e sordo il fa.

ALL: Zitti, zitti, moviamo a vendetta; ne sia colto or che meno l'aspetta. Derisore si audace, costante, a sua volta schermato sarà!... Cheti, cheti, rubiamgli l'amante e le Corte doman riderà.

(the courtiers enter the house and take out Gilda, who has been gagged with a handkerchief; they carry her out to the street and take her away; she drops a scarf)

GILDA: Soccorso, padre mio!  
CHORUS: Vittoria!  
GILDA: Aita!  
RIGOLETTO (still holding the ladder): Non han finito ancor!... Qual derisione!... Sono bendato!...

(he tears off the handkerchief and the mask; he recognises the scarf, sees the door wide open)

Ah! La maledizione!

RIGOLETTO: Old Monterone curs'd me! Who goes there?  
BORSA (to the others): Be silent! 'Tis Rigoletto.  
CEPRANO: A double triumph! Now we can kill him.

BORSA: No, let him find out who laughs tomorrow!

MARULLO: I'll fix the matter.  
RIGOLETTO: Who's that who spoke?

MARULLO: Hey, Rigoletto!  
RIGOLETTO (in a terrible voice): Say, who are you?

MARULLO: Be not so angry! I'm—  
RIGOLETTO: Who?

MARULLO: Marullo.  
RIGOLETTO: The darkness blinds me. I cannot see you.

MARULLO: We on an errand are here—you'll guess it; we from Ceprano his Countess will ravish.

RIGOLETTO: I breathe again then. How can you enter?

MARULLO (to Ceprano): My lord, your key!  
(to Rigoletto): Come, you shall help us. We have the Count's key; his crest is on it.

RIGOLETTO: 'Tis his, I know it.  
(aside): Then for my terror I had no reason.

(to Marullo): Here lives Ceprano—I am with you.

MARULLO: Then put this mask on.

RIGOLETTO: Have you a mask for me? Then I will wear one.

MARULLO: I'll bind it on. You'll hold the ladder.

RIGOLETTO: How thick the darkness is!

MARULLO (softly to the others): The mask will make him both deaf and blind.

ALL: Seize the moment for vengeance propitious, while friend Rigoletto's unsuspecting; He fool'd us, let us fool him in turn! His fair mistress to court we will carry; there tomorrow the laugh will be loud. Turn the tables on this jester so proud.

(the courtiers enter the house and take out Gilda, who has been gagged with a handkerchief; they carry her out to the street and take her away; she drops a scarf)

GILDA: Oh father, father, help me!  
CHORUS: We triumph!

GILDA: Oh help me!  
RIGOLETTO (still holding the ladder): Have you not finish'd yet? This jest grows tedious.

This mask's a bandage!

Ah! 'Tis the curse, the curse on me!

## Side 3

### ACT II

An antechamber in the Duke's Palace.

DUKE: Ella mi fu rapita! E quando, o ciel?... Ne brevi istanti pria che il mio presagio interno sull'orma corsa ancora mi spingesse! Schiuso era l'uscio! La magion deserta! E dove ora sarà quell'angiol caro? Colei che potè prima in questo core destar la fiamma di costanti affetti? Colei sì pura, al cui modesto sguardo quasi spinto a virtù talor mi credo! Ella mi fu rapita! E chi l'ardiva? Ma ne avro vendetta... Lo chiede il pianto della mia diletta. Parmi veder le lagrime scorrenti da quel ciglio, quando fra il dubbio e l'ansia del subito pericolo, dell'amor nostro memore il suo Gualtier chiamò. Ned ei potea soccorrerli, cara fanciulla amata; ei che vorria coll'anima farti, quaggiù beata; ei che le sfere agli angeli per te non invidiò.

DUKE: She whom I lov'd is lost to me! Where can she be? I scarce had left her, than by a strange foreboding haunted, I felt constrain'd to retrace my hasty footsteps. The door stood open, the house was all deserted! And whither is she gone? Where can I find her? She had inspir'd me with new and strange emotion, my too inconstant heart in bondage holding; her pure and modest glance had fill'd me with devotion, my wild and wayward life to virtue moulding. Ah me, could I but wipe away thy sad tears ever flowing, tears born of doubt and agony, in danger, when, unknowing what fate might be in store for thee, thou didst recall despairingly thy lover's parting kiss! Oh, in that hour of dire alarm would I had but been near thee! Why could not my protecting arm shelter thee then and cheer thee? Oh, could I only meet with thee, angels above might envy me such all-surpassing bliss!



(Borsa, Ceprano, Marullo and courtiers enter)

ALL: Duca, duca?  
DUKE: Ebben?  
ALL: L'amante fu rapita a Rigoletto.  
DUKE: Come! E d'onde?  
ALL: Dal suo tetto.  
DUKE: Ah! ah! Dite, come fu?  
ALL: Scorrendo uniti remota via, brev'ora dopo caduto il di, come previsto ben s'era in pria, rara belatede ci si scopri. Era l'amante di Rigoletto che vista appena si dileguò. Già di rapirla s'avea il progetto, quando il buffone v'er noi spuntò; che di Ceprano noi la contessa rapir volessimo stolto, credè; la scala quindi, all'uopo messa, bendato ci stesso ferma tenè. Salimmo e rapidi la giovinetta ci venne fatto quindi asportar. Quand'ei s'accorse della vendetta resto scornato ad imprecar.

DUKE (aside): O cielo! . . . E dessa! la mia diletta! . . . Ah, tutto il cielo non mi rapi!

(exit Duke hastily by centre door)

MARULLO: Povero Rigoletto.

CHORUS: Ei vien . . . Silenzio . . .  
ALL: Buon giorno, Rigoletto  
RIGOLETTO (aside): Han tutti fatto il colpo!  
CEPRANO: Ch'hai di nuovo buffon?  
RIGOLETTO (caricaturing Ceprano): Che dell'usato più noioso voi siete.  
ALL: Ah! ah! ah! ah!

(Rigoletto moves about the stage, singing to himself and looking about in every direction)

RIGOLETTO: Ove l'avran nascosta?

ALL: Guardate com'è inquieto!  
RIGOLETTO (to Marullo): Son felice . . . Che nulla a voi nuocesse l'aria di questa notte . . .

MARULLO: Questa notte! . . .  
RIGOLETTO: Sì . . . Ah, fu il bel colpo! . . .  
MARULLO: S'ho dormito sempre!  
RIGOLETTO: Ah, voi dormiste! . . . Avro dunque sognato!

(he moves away, singing to himself, sees a handkerchief on the floor and snatches it up)

ALL: Ve' come tutto osserva!  
RIGOLETTO (aside, throwing away the handkerchief): Non è il suo. Dorme il Duca tuttor?  
ALL: Sì, dorme ancora.  
PAGE: Al suo sposo parlar vuol la duchessa.

CEPRANO: Dorme.  
PAGE: Qui or con voi non era?  
BORSA: E a caccia.  
PAGE: Senza paggi! . . . senz'armi! . . .  
ALL: E non capisci che per ora vedere non può alcuno?  
RIGOLETTO: Ah, ell'è qui dunque! . . . Ell'è col Duca! . . .  
ALL: Chi?

RIGOLETTO: La giovin che stanotte al mio tetto rapiste. Ma la sapro riprender . . . Ella è là . . .

ALL: Se l'amante perdesti, la ricerca altrove.

RIGOLETTO: Io vo' mia figlia! . . .  
ALL: La sua figlia?  
RIGOLETTO: Sì, la mia figlia . . . d'una tal vittoria che? . . . Adesso non ridete?

(he rushes towards the door, but the courtiers bar his way)

Ella è là . . . la vogli'io la renderete. Cortigiani, vil razza dannata, per qual prezzo vendeste il mio bene? A voi nulla per l'oro sconviene, ma mia figlia è impagabil tesòr. La rendete . . . o, se pur disarmata, questa man per voi fora

ALL: Save your Highness!  
DUKE: What news?  
ALL: The jester's lovely lady has been captiv'd.  
DUKE: Captiv'd? where is she?  
ALL: Here in safety.  
DUKE: Tell me quickly all the tale.  
ALL: Last night a lonely street by chance exploring, when all was dark and no one else was nigh, Ceprano led the way, 'twas near his own house; a beauty rare did we espy. She was the lady-love of Rigoletto, no sooner seen than lost again to view; and while we laid our plan, behold, the jester appear'd himself to join us too. And that the mad jest might be the madder, we said Ceprano's wife should be our prey; his eyes were bandag'd, he held the ladder, and into his house we made our way. We scal'd the wall, we found the wench and seiz'd her, and back to court with her in haste we sped; perhaps the clown by now will have discover'd how he himself had brought our vengeance on his head.  
DUKE (aside): Heavens! it must be my love, my lost one!

MARULLO: Poor Rigoletto.

(Rigoletto is heard singing)

CHORUS: He's here, be silent!  
ALL: Good morrow, Rigoletto!  
RIGOLETTO (aside): I see they all were in it.  
CEPRANO: Master hunchback, what news?  
RIGOLETTO (caricaturing Ceprano): Master hunchback, what news?  
ALL: Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

RIGOLETTO: Where can they have conceal'd her?

ALL: Observe him, he is restless.  
RIGOLETTO (to Marullo): I rejoice that I see you in good health, sir; Last night the air was . . .

MARULLO: Last night!  
RIGOLETTO: Yes . . . Ah, what a lucky stroke!  
MARULLO: My slumbers were unbroken.  
RIGOLETTO: Slumber unbroken? Then t'was I who was dreaming.

ALL: See how narrowly he watches.  
RIGOLETTO (aside, throwing away the handkerchief): 'Tis not hers. Is the Duke still asleep?  
ALL: Yes, he is sleeping.  
PAGE: My gracious lady desires to see his Highness.

CEPRANO: He sleeps yet.  
PAGE: Nay, just now he was with you.  
BORSA: He's gone hunting.  
PAGE: Unattended? unarm'd too?  
ALL: Are you too dull to understand that his Highness will see no one?  
RIGOLETTO: Ha! she must be here then—she's with his Highness!

ALL: Who?  
RIGOLETTO: The maid that you last night from my own house did ravish. No, you shall not prevent me—she is there.

ALL: Well, if you've lost your mistress, some one else has found her.

RIGOLETTO: I'll have my daughter!

ALL: What, his daughter?

RIGOLETTO: Yes, she's my daughter. Ha! And now you laugh no longer?

She is there. I'm her father. Oh ye courtiers, vile rabble accus'd! Say, for how much have you sold my daughter? Your own honour you'd barter for money. Where's my daughter? You shall restore her, or this hand, though

cruenta; nulla in terra più l'uomo paventa, se dei figlia difende l'onor. Quella porta, assassini, m'aprite ah! Voi tutti a me contro venite! Ebben, piango, Marullo . . . signore, tu ch'hai l'alma gentil come il core, dimmi tu dove l'hanno nascosta? È là? . . . E vero? . . . tu taci! . . . perché? . . . Miei signori . . . perdono, pietate . . . Al vegliardo la figlia ridate . . . Ridonarla a voi nulla ora costa, tutto il mondo è tal figlia per me.

(Gilda comes out of the room on the left and throws herself into her father's arms)

GILDA: Mio padre!  
RIGOLETTO: Dio! Mia Gilda! Signori, in essa è tutta la mia famiglia . . . Non temer più nulla, angelo mio . . . fu scherzo, non è vero? . . . Io, che pur piansi, or ridò. E tu a che piangi?  
GILDA: Ah, l'onta, padre mio!  
RIGOLETTO: Cielo! Che dici?  
GILDA: Arrossir voglio innanzi a voi soltanto . . .

RIGOLETTO (turning to the courtiers): Ite di qua voi tutti . . . Se il duca vostro d'appressarsi ossasse, che non entri, gli dite, e ch'io ci sono.  
ALL: Co' fanciulli e coi dementi spesso giova il simular; partiam pur, ma quel ch'ei tenti non lasciamo d'osservar. (exit)  
RIGOLETTO: Parla . . . siam soli.

GILDA: Ciel! dammi coraggio! Tutte le feste al tempio mentre pregava Iddio, bello e fatale un giovane s'offerse al guardo mio . . . Se i labbri nostri tacquero dagli occhi il cor parlo. Furtivo fra le tenebre sol ieri a me giungeva . . . Sono studente, povero, commosso, mi diceva, e con ardente palpito amor mi protestò parti . . . il mio core aprivasi a speme più gradita, quando improvvisi apparvero color che m'han rapita. E a forza qui m'addussero nell'ansia più crudel.

RIGOLETTO: Solo per me l'infamia a te chiedeva, o Dio . . . Ch'ella potesse ascendere quanto caduto er'io . . . Ah, presso del patibolo bisogna ben l'altare! Ma tutto ora scompare, l'altar si rovesciò! Piangi, fanciulla, e scorrere fa il pianto sul mio cor.

GILDA: Padre, in voi parla un angelo per me consolator.

RIGOLETTO: Compiuto pur quanto a fare mi resta lasciare potremo quest'aura funesta.

GILDA: Sì.  
RIGOLETTO: E tutto un sol giorno cangiare potè!

USHER (enters): Schiudete . . . ire al carcere Monterone de'.

MONTERONE (stands and addresses the portrait of the Duke): Poiché fosti invano da me maledetto, né un fulmine o un ferro colpiva il tuo petto felice pur anco, o duca vivrai. (Monterone is led out)

RIGOLETTO: No, vecchio, t'inganni . . . un vindice avrai.

Sì, vendetta, tremenda vendetta di quest'anima è solo desio . . . Di punirti già l'ora s'affretta, che fatale per te suonerà. Come fulmin scagliato da Dio il buffone colpiti saprà.

GILDA: O mio padre, qual gioia feroce balenarai negli occhi vegg'io! Perdonate . . . a noi pure una voce di perdono dal cielo verrà. Mi tradiva, pur l'amo; gran Dio, per l'ingrato ti chiedo pietà!

unarm'd, shall compel you. Let me enter, filthy rabble, let me enter! I must find my daughter, I must find my daughter! Ah, 'tis hopeless—all against me! No one takes my part. I beseech thee, Marullo, have mercy, well I know thou art gentle-hearted; tell me thou where my child has been hidden. Is it there they have hidden my daughter? Oh, say, where's my daughter? Oh, my lords, can you be so hard-hearted to a father who from his child is parted? Oh, restore me my daughter, she is all that is left me to love.

GILDA: My father!  
RIGOLETTO: Gilda, my daughter! Behold her, my daughter, the one source of all my happiness! Fear no more, beloved, thou art in safety. I who was weeping can laugh now. But thou—why in sorrow?  
GILDA: Oh father, my dishonour!  
RIGOLETTO: Horror! Dishonour'd?  
GILDA: Oh father, hide me from every eye but thine!

RIGOLETTO (turning to the courtiers): Hence, I command you, leave us! And if your lord the Duke dares come near, I forbid him to enter. All: As with children, so with madmen it is useless to protest; let us watch him from a distance; that will surely be the best. (exit)  
RIGOLETTO: Speak, child, they've left us.

GILDA: Oh, how shall I tell thee? Every Sunday morning, as I at prayer was kneeling, I observ'd a youth eye me with looks appealing; though not a word our lips did say, our glances the tale of love did tell. Only last night he came to me, darkness his face concealing, told me his name reluctantly, poverty sore revealing, press'd me to him with fond embrace and vow'd he lov'd me well. Left alone I wove my dream of him who had so pleas'd me; then on a sudden burst on me those men who roughly seiz'd me, and bore me, ah! I know not where, To serve their purpose fell.

RIGOLETTO: I bore the life of infamy, asking no more of Heaven, so the reward of righteousness might unto thee be given. That altar I worship'd now has been shatter'd, to ruin brought at one blow; all hopes are scatter'd, thy joy turn'd into woe. Daughter, cast on my bosom thy burden of sorrow, comfort find in a father's tender love. Rest thee, rest in the hope of a happier morrow!

GILDA: Father, in thee there speaks my guardian angel, an angel from above.

RIGOLETTO: But one thing remains for me to accomplish, and then we can leave this abode of disaster.

GILDA: Yes.  
RIGOLETTO: How destiny changes our lives in one day!

USHER (enters): Make way there! Monterone goes to his death.

MONTERONE (stands and addresses the portrait of the Duke): In vain I adjur'd Heav'n to curse thee; no vengeance of Heav'n came to worst thee. So live in happiness. (Monterone is led out)

RIGOLETTO: Nay, nay, Monterone, aveng'd thou shalt be!

I pronounce thy fatal sentence, vengeance dire thy crime shall follow; thou in vain shalt make repentance in thine hour of mortal need. As thy jester thou didst despise me, now 'tis I who shall chastise thee.

GILDA: In thine angry eyes are burning fury, rage and vengeance awful; in my heart a heav'nly warning makes me now for pardon plead. Thou betray'd, I kneel before thee, and for him would intercede.



Side 4  
ACT III

*On the bank of the river Mincio. On the left is a dilapidated house of two stories. The side towards the audience has a wide arch on the ground floor, through which is seen the interior of a tavern. A rough staircase leads to the upper floor, on which there is a garret with a bed. On the side towards the street there is a door. The wall is so full of cracks that it is easy to see from outside all that takes place within. Beyond the river is the city of Mantua. It is night.*

*(Gilda and Rigoletto are restlessly pacing the street. Within the tavern Sparafucile sits at a table)*

RIGOLETTO: E l'ami?

GILDA: Sempre.

RIGOLETTO: Pure tempo a guarire t'ho lasciato.

GILDA: Io l'amo.

RIGOLETTO: Povero cor di donna! Ah, il vile infame! . . . Ma avrai vendetta, o Gilda . . .

GILDA: Pietà mio padre . . .

RIGOLETTO: E se tu certa fossi ch'ei ti tradisse, l'ameresti ancora?

GILDA: Non so, ma pur m'adora.

RIGOLETTO: Egli?

GILDA: Sì.

RIGOLETTO: Ebbene, osserva dunque.

GILDA: Un uomo vedo.

RIGOLETTO: Per poco attendi.

*(the Duke, disguised as a cavalry officer, enters the tavern)*

GILDA: Ah, padre mio!

DUKE *(to Sparafucile)*: Due cose e tosto . . .

SPARAFUCILE: Quali?

DUKE: Una stanza a del vino . . .

RIGOLETTO: Son questi i suoi costumi!

SPARAFUCILE: Oh, il bel zerbino! *(exit)*

DUKE: La donna è mobile qual piuma al vento, muta d'accento e di pensiero. Sempre un amabile leggiardo viso, in pianto o in riso, È menzognero. È sempre misero chi a lei s'affida, chi le confida, mal cauto il core! Pur mai non sentesi felice appieno chi sul quel seno, non liba amore!

*(Sparafucile re-enters with a bottle of wine and two glasses which he puts down on the table. He knocks twice on the ceiling with his sword. Maddalena, dressed as a gipsy, runs down the stairs. The Duke tries to embrace her, but she eludes him)*

*(Meanwhile Sparafucile goes out into the street and speaks to Rigoletto)*

SPARAFUCILE: E là vostr'uomo . . . Viver d'eo morire?

RIGOLETTO: Più tardi tornerò l'opra a compire.

*(Sparafucile goes off behind the house along the river)*

DUKE: Un di, se ben rammentomi, o bella, t'incontrai . . . Mi piacque di te chiedere e intesi che qui stai. Or sappi che d'allora sol te quest'alma adora.

MADDALENA: Ah! . . . ah! . . . e vent'altre appresso le scorda forse adesso? Ha un'aria il signorino da vero libertino . . .

DUKE: Sì . . . un mostro son . . .

MADDALENA: Lasciatemi, stordito.

DUKE: Ih, che fracasso!

MADDALENA: Stia saggio.

DUKE: E tu sii docile, non farmi tanto chiasso ogni saggezza chiudesi nel gaudio e nell'amore. La bella mano candida!

MADDALENA: Scherzate, voi signore.

DUKE: No, no.

MADDALENA: Son brutta.

DUKE: Abbracciami.

MADDALENA: Ebbro! . . .

DUKE: D'amore ardente.

MADDALENA: Signor, l'indifferente vi piace canzonar?

DUKE: No, no, ti vo' sposar . . .

MADDALENA: Ne voglio la parola . . .

DUKE: Amabile figliuola!

RIGOLETTO: E non ti basta ancor? . . .

GILDA: Inique traditor!

RIGOLETTO: You love him?

GILDA: Always.

RIGOLETTO: I had hop'd time would cure you of that folly.

GILDA: I love him.

RIGOLETTO: Oh foolish heart of woman! Oh vile seducer! Yes, thou shalt on him have vengeance.

GILDA: Nay, mercy show him.

RIGOLETTO: And if you knew that he's now faithless, would you still love him?

GILDA: Perhaps. I know he loves me.

RIGOLETTO: That man?

GILDA: Yes.

RIGOLETTO: Come here, and you shall see him.

GILDA: I see a man there.

RIGOLETTO: The play's beginning.

GILDA: Father, oh father!

DUKE *(to Sparafucile)*: Good evening. Come, serve me.

SPARAFUCILE: Sir?

DUKE: Bring some wine first; I am thirsty.

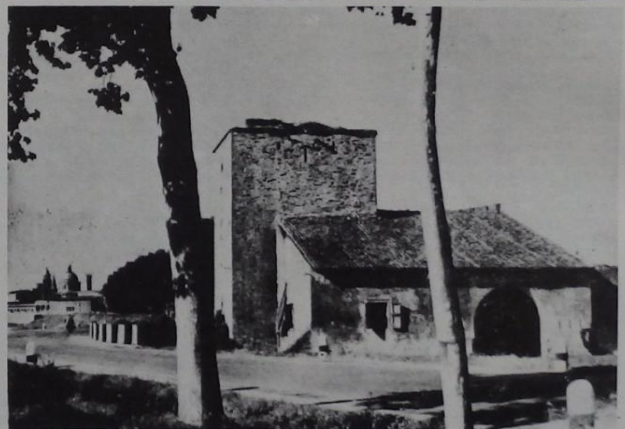
RIGOLETTO: You see what life he's leading.

SPARAFUCILE: A Pretty gallant! *(exit)*

DUKE: Wayward as thistledown toss'd on the summer wind is heart of womankind, aimlessly swaying; hither and thither blown, ever capricious, for no man staying; laughing or crying, granting, denying, ever defying, who'd hold her fast. Ah! none hold her fast. Yet what felicity that sad fool misses whom woman's kisses ne'er have enraptur'd!



*Caruso in the role of the Duke of Mantua (cover of Musica of 1904—Collection C. Chuteau).*



*The house considered by popular legend to have been Rigoletto's.*



DUKE: Bella figlia dell'amore, schiavo son de' vezzi tuoi; con un detto sol tu puoi le mie pene consolar vieni e senti del mio core il frequente palpitar.

MADDALENA: Ah, ah! Rido ben di core, ché tai baie costan poco. Quanto valga il vostro gioco, mel credete, so apprezzar. Sono avvezza, bel signore, ad un simile scherzar.

GILDA: Ah, così parlar d'amore a me pur l'infame ho udito! Infelice cor tradito, per angoscia non scoppiar. Perché, o credulo mio core, un tal uom dovevi amar?

RIGOLETTO: Taci, il piangere non vale; ch'ei mentiva or sei sicura . . . Taci, e mia sarà la cura la vendetta d'affrettar. Pronta fia, sarà fatale; io saprò fulminar.

M'odi ritorna a casa . . . Oro prendi, un destriero, una veste viril che t'apprestai, e per Verona parti . . . Sarovvi io pur domani . . .

GILDA: Or venite . . .  
RIGOLETTO: Impossibil.  
GILDA: Tremo.  
RIGOLETTO: Va.

*(the Duke and Maddalena go on talking, laughing, and drinking. Rigoletto goes behind the house, returning at once with Sparafucile, to whom he counts out money)*

RIGOLETTO: Venti scudi hai tu detto? . . . Eccone dieci, e dopo l'opra il resto. Ei qui rimane?

SPARAFUCILE: Sì.  
RIGOLETTO: Alla mezzanotte ritornerò.

SPARAFUCILE: Non cale; a gettarlo nel fiume basto io solo.

RIGOLETTO: No, no; il vo' far io stesso . . .

SPARAFUCILE: Sia . . . il suo nome?

RIGOLETTO: Vuoi saper anco il mio? Egli è Delitto, Punizion son io.

*(distant lightning)*

SPARAFUCILE *(coming into the house)*: La tempesta è vicina! . . . Più scura fia notte.

*(leads the Duke up to the garret)*

MADDALENA: Povero giovin! . . . grazioso tanto! Dio! . . . qual notte è mai questa!  
DUKE: Si dorme all'aria aperta? bene, bene . . . Buona notte.

SPARAFUCILE *(going downstairs)*: Signor, vi guardi Iddio . . .

*(the Duke takes off his hat and sword and lies down on the bed)*

DUKE: Breve sonno dormiam; stanco son io. La donna è mobile, etc.

*(gradually going to sleep)*

*(Maddalena goes up to the garret; Gilda, dressed as a man appears at the back and slowly advances towards the tavern, while Sparafucile goes on drinking)*

GILDA: Ah, più non ragiono! . . . Amor mi trascina! . . . Mio padre, perdono . . . Qual notte d'orrore! Gran Dio, che accadrà?

*(Maddalena has come down with the Duke's sword, which she lays on the table)*

MADDALENA: Fratello?  
GILDA *(looking through the crack in the wall)*: Chi parla?

SPARAFUCILE *(searching in a cupboard)*: Al diavol ten va.

MADDALENA: Somiglia un Apollo quel giovine . . . io l'amo e m'ama . . . riposì . . . né più l'uccidiamo . . .

GILDA: Oh cielo! . . .  
SPARAFUCILE *(throwing a sack to Maddalena)*: Rattoppa quel sacco!

MADDALENA: Perché?  
SPARAFUCILE: Entr'esso il tuo Apollo, sgozzato da me, gettar dovevo al fiume . . .

GILDA: L'inferno qui vedo!

MADDALENA: Eppure il danaro salvarti scommetto serbandolo in vita.

DUKE: Lovely daughter thou of pleasure, see me humbly kneel before thee; tell me fairest, I implore thee, grant thy favour, oh my treasure, and with joy beyond all measure, oh, relieve the anguish of my soul!

MADDALENA: Keep your pretty airs and graces for the ladies of the city; I shall never waste my pity on a lover so unsure; I have known too many cases of the love that won't endure.

GILDA: All those words of love and passion once to me were lightly spoken; He is false, my heart is broken; how can I such pain endure?

RIGOLETTO: Silence, thy tears are unavailing; of his baseness now thou'rt certain. Weep no more, for now I hasten vengeance for thee to secure.

Gilda, go home, and quickly. A man's dress you'll see ready; Put it on, find what money you may need. Take horse then for Verona; tomorrow I'll be there.

GILDA: Nay, come with me.

RIGOLETTO: No, I cannot.

GILDA: Father!

RIGOLETTO: Go!

*(Rigoletto goes behind the house, returning at once with Sparafucile, to whom he counts out money)*

RIGOLETTO: Twenty ducats, did you tell me? Here are the first ten—the rest upon delivery. He stays the night here?

SPARAFUCILE: Yes.  
RIGOLETTO: When the clock strikes twelve I will come again.

SPARAFUCILE: No need, sir; By myself I can throw him in the river.

RIGOLETTO: No, no; I myself will do that.

SPARAFUCILE: As you will. Who is he?

RIGOLETTO: Shall I tell you who I am? His name is Crime, and mine is Punishment.

SPARAFUCILE *(coming into the house)*: There's a storm coming on now; the night will be the darker.

MADDALENA: Poor boy! . . . So nice and friendly! Heavens! . . . What a devilish storm!  
DUKE: We sleep with open windows? Good . . . Well, good night.

SPARAFUCILE *(going downstairs)*: May Heaven protect your worship!

*(the Duke takes off his hat and sword and lies down on the bed)*

DUKE: Let me sleep for an hour. Oh, I am weary! Wayward as thistledown, etc.

*(gradually going to sleep)*

*(Maddalena goes up to the garret; Gilda, dressed as a man appears at the back and slowly advances towards the tavern, while Sparafucile goes on drinking)*

GILDA: Love only controls me; I cannot resist it. Oh father, forgive me! In this night of horror what now is to come?

*(Maddalena has come down with the Duke's sword, which she lays on the table)*

MADDALENA: Looking for something?  
GILDA *(looking through the crack in the wall)*: Who spoke then?

SPARAFUCILE *(searching in a cupboard)*: Get out of my way.

MADDALENA: That youth is the fairest I ever saw; what need can there be then to slay him?

GILDA: Oh Heaven!  
SPARAFUCILE *(throwing a sack to Maddalena)*: Come, mend me this sack here.

MADDALENA: And why?

SPARAFUCILE: To hold your young man. I shall kill him and throw him into the river.

GILDA: A foul nest of cut-throats!

MADDALENA: To lose so much money is not to be thought of; but yet I would save him.

SPARAFUCILE: Difficile il credo.

MADDALENA: M'ascolta . . . anzi facil ti svelo un progetto. De' scudi già dieci dal gobbo ne avesti; venire cogli altri più tardi il vedrai . . . Uccidilo, e venti allora ne avrai: Così tutto il prezzo goder si potrà.

SPARAFUCILE: Uccider quel gobbo! . . . Che diavol dicesti! Un ladro son forse? Son forse un bandito? Qual altro cliente da me fu tradito! . . . Mi paga quest'uomo . . . fedele m'avrà.

GILDA: Che sento! . . . mio padre! . . .

MADDALENA: Ah, grazia per esso!

SPARAFUCILE: E d'uopo ch'ei muoia . . .

MADDALENA: Fuggire il fo adesso.

*(she moves towards the staircase; Sparafucile holds her back)*

GILDA: Oh buona figliuola!

SPARAFUCILE: Gli scudi perdiamo.

MADDALENA: E ver! . . .

SPARAFUCILE: Lascia fare . . .

MADDALENA: Salvato dobbiamo.

SPARAFUCILE: Se pria ch'abbia il mezzo la notte toccato alcuno qui giunga, per esso morrà.

MADDALENA: E buia la notte, il ciel troppo irato, nessuno a quest'ora di qui passerà.

GILDA: Oh, qual tentazione! . . . Morir per l'ingrato? Morire! . . . E mio padre! . . . O cielo, pietà!

*(continuous lightning and rain, leading to a violent clap of thunder; Gilda knocks at the door)*

SPARAFUCILE: Apri!

*(Maddalena opens the door, then runs across to close the shutters of the wide arch in front)*

MADDALENA: Entrate!

GILDA: Dio! loro perdonate.

*(Gilda enters; Sparafucile shuts the door behind her, and all becomes completely dark; the storm gradually dies down; Rigoletto enters at the back)*

RIGOLETTO: Della vendetta alfin giunge l'istante! Da trenta di l'aspetto di vivo sangue a lagrime piangendo, sotto la larva del buffon . . . Quest'uomo . . . E chiuso! . . . Ah, non è tempo ancor! S'attenda! Qual notte di mistero! Una tempesta in cielo! . . . In terra un omicidio! Oh, come invero qui grande mi sento! . . . Mezzanotte . . .

*(he knocks at the door)*

SPARAFUCILE: Chi è là?

RIGOLETTO: Son io.

SPARAFUCILE: Sostate.

*(he goes in and comes out again dragging a sack)*

E qua spento il vostro uomo . . .

RIGOLETTO: Oh gioia! . . . Un lume!

SPARAFUCILE: Un lume? . . . no, il danaro.

*(Rigoletto gives him a purse)*

Lesti all'onda il gettiam . . .

RIGOLETTO: No, basto io solo.

SPARAFUCILE: Come vi piace . . . Qui men atto è il sito. Più avanti è più profondo il gorgo. Presto, che alcun non vi sorprenda. Buono notte.

RIGOLETTO: Egli è là! . . . Morto! . . . Oh sì! . . . Vorrei vederlo! . . . Ma che importa? . . . E ben desso! . . . Ecco i suoi sproni. Ora mi guarda, o mondo . . . Quest'è un buffone, ed un potente è questo! Ei sta sotto i miei piedi! . . . E desso! Oh gioia! E giunta al fine la tua vendetta, o duolo! . . . Sia l'onda a lui sepolcro, un sacco il suo lenzuolo . . . All'onda! All'onda!

*(Rigoletto starts to drag the sack towards the river, when he is startled by the distant voice of the Duke singing)*

DUKE: La donna è mobile, etc.

RIGOLETTO: Qual voce! . . . Illusion notturna è questa! No! . . . No! Egli è desso . . . è desso! . . . Maledizione! Ohi . . . Dimon bandito? . . . Chi è mai, chi è qui in sua vece?

SPARAFUCILE: And how will you do so?

MADDALENA: Spare the youth and I'll save you the money. Ten ducats the hunchback has paid you already; at midnight he'll bring you the rest that he owes you. Kill him and the twenty are safe in your pocket.

SPARAFUCILE: I murder the hunchback? Am I just a robber, a thief, and an outlaw? My good name I value, as honest workman; if this man has paid me, his work shall be done.

GILDA: Oh horror! my father!

MADDALENA: I pray you now, spare him!

SPARAFUCILE: I've bargain'd to slay him.

MADDALENA: I'll wake him and warn him.

*(Sparafucile holds her back)*

GILDA: Oh true-hearted woman!

SPARAFUCILE: We can't spare the money.

MADDALENA: I know—

SPARAFUCILE: I must kill him.

MADDALENA: Some way there must be to save him.

SPARAFUCILE: One corpse in a sack is as good as another; if any one comes, I will slay him instead.

MADDALENA: In darkness of night, 'mid the storm, what wand'rer to our door will be led?

GILDA: My destiny calls me to die for my lover; forgive those who slay me.

SPARAFUCILE: Open!

*(Maddalena opens the door, then runs across to close the shutters of the wide arch in front)*

MADDALENA: Come in!

GILDA: Heav'n, grant to them thy pardon!

*(Gilda enters; Sparafucile shuts the door behind her, and all becomes completely dark; the storm gradually dies down; Rigoletto enters at the back)*

RIGOLETTO: Now comes the moment for my vengeance. Only too long in anguish beneath the mask of the jester have I suffer'd, wept tears of blood within my soul. The doorway is bolted; I'm come before my time. I'll wait here. A night of dreadful omen! I in this moment am grown more than mortal. Midnight!

*(he knocks at the door)*

SPARAFUCILE: Who's there?

RIGOLETTO: You know me.

SPARAFUCILE: One moment.

*(he goes in and comes out again dragging a sack)*

There you are—take your body.

RIGOLETTO: Now bring me a lantern.

SPARAFUCILE: A lantern? No, where's the money?

*(Rigoletto gives him a purse)*

Thank you. We'll throw him in at once.

RIGOLETTO: No, that's for me to do.

SPARAFUCILE: Well, as you please, sir; here 'tis far too shallow; the deeper part is lower down. Be quick, lest anybody see you—so good night.

RIGOLETTO: He is there, lifeless, a corpse! Let me make certain. Ha! No matter; he it must be, I feel his spurs here. Look on me now, proud world, on me the jester, and on this fallen tyrant! Under my foot he's prostrate, and I am his master! Now thus dishonour'd, a wa'r'y grave awaits thee, with all thy sins upon thee, in winding-sheet of sackcloth shrouded, the waters shall hide thee!

DUKE: Wayward as thistledown, etc.

RIGOLETTO: Who's singing? Can it be? am I deluded? No—he's alive then! And I'm accurs'd! Ho there! thou thief, thou robber! Then whom have I in place of him?

*(he opens the sack)*

Io tremo . . . E umano corpo!

RIGOLETTO: Mia figlia! . . . Dio . . . mia figlia! . . . Ah no è impossibil! . . . per Verona è in via! Fu vision . . . E dessa! . . . O mia Gilda: Fanciulla, a me rispondi! . . .

*(he knocks at the door of the house)*

L'assassino me svela . . . Olà? . . . Nessuno? Nessun! . . . Mia figlia? . . . Gilda . . .

GILDA: Chi mi chiama?

RIGOLETTO: Ella parla! . . . Si move! . . . E viva! . . . Oh Dio! Ah mio ben solo in terra . . . Mi guarda . . . mi conosci.

GILDA: Ah . . . padre mio!

RIGOLETTO: Qual mistero! . . . che fu? . . . Sei tu ferita? . . .

GILDA: L'acciar qui mi piagò . . .

RIGOLETTO: Chi t'ha colpito?

GILDA: V'ho ingannato . . . colpevole fui . . . L'amai troppo . . . ora muoi per lui . . .

I tremble—a human body—

RIGOLETTO: My daughter, oh God, my daughter! No, no, 'tis impossible—she's on the road to Verona. 'Twas a dream. It is she—oh my daughter!

Ho there! No answer—in vain! My daughter, dear Gilda.

GILDA: Ah, who calls me?

RIGOLETTO: She is living—she heard me—she lives yet! Oh Heaven! Ah, my child, my beloved! Thy father am I—dost thou know me?

GILDA: Belovèd father!

RIGOLETTO: Who has done this? and why?

GILDA: The sword struck deep to the heart.

RIGOLETTO: Who sought to slay thee?

GILDA: 'Twas my own fault, for I have deceiv'd thee, for I lov'd him, and to save him I'm dying.

RIGOLETTO: Dio tremendo! . . . ella stessa fu còlta dallo stral di mia giusta vendetta! . . . Angiol caro . . . Mi guarda, m'ascolta . . . Parla . . . parlami, figlia diletta.

GILDA: Ah, ch'io taccia! ah me . . . a lui perdonate . . . Benedite alla figlia, o mio padre . . . Lassù . . . in cielo, vicina alla madre . . . In eterno per voi . . . preghero.

RIGOLETTO: Non morir . . . mio tesoro . . . pietate . . . Mia colomba . . . lasciarmi non deli se t'involi . . . qui sol rimarrei . . . Non morire . . . o ch'io teco morro!

GILDA: Non più . . . a lui . . . perdo . . . nate . . . Mia padre . . . Addio! . . .

*(dies)*

RIGOLETTO: Gilda! Mia Gilda! . . . E morta! . . . Ah, la maledizione!

*(Rigoletto falls senseless on the body of his daughter)*

RIGOLETTO: 'Tis Heav'n's judgement appalling, my revenge on my own head is falling! Oh belovèd, look on me and hear me, speak, oh speak to me, my only daughter!

GILDA: Forgive him who lov'd me! Grant thy blessing to thy daughter, then far above with my mother united, I for thee will eternally pray.

RIGOLETTO: Oh go not hence, do not leave me benighted! Why from thy father should death take thee away? Wilt thou leave me to mourn in loneliness and woe? Live, else I to the grave with thee must go!

GILDA: In Heaven . . . for thee . . . I'll pray . . . My father . . . Farewell! . . .

RIGOLETTO: Gilda, my Gilda! Dead! The curse is fulfilled!

THE END



# IL TROVATORE

Opera is above all a musical form which speaks to the feelings rather than the intellect and aims to touch the emotions rather than to convince by reason. The librettist's task therefore is to provide the composer with material which lends itself to musical development and words that will form an easy vocal line. This was achieved by Salvatore Cammarano, author of the 'worst' libretto that Verdi honoured with his music: *Il Trovatore*—The Troubadour. He took his plot from a Spanish melodrama by Antonio García Gutiérrez.

Let us see how the story unfolds.

## ACT I

In the guard room of Aljaferia Castle, in Spain, the soldiers are gossiping about the affairs of their master, the Count of Luna. We learn from this that the Count passes his nights beneath the balcony of his beloved, who seems to prefer the serenades of a certain troubadour . . . The soldiers, who are fighting off sleep, persuade Ferrando, one of their number, to tell the story of García, the younger brother of the Count of Luna: García was still in the cradle when an evil sorceress cast a spell on him. He began to decline, and his father thought he could save him by putting the old gypsy to death at the stake. But the witch had a daughter who carried off the child to avenge her mother. The child was never found, nor his captress. Only the charred remains of a baby his age, on the site of the witch's torture, made it appear that he had been the victim of terrible reprisals. Nobody knew what had become of the supposed murderess.

The second tableau of the first act takes place similarly at night, but in the palace gardens. Leonora confides in her servant Inés that she is in love with an unknown knight whom she crowned after his victory in a tournament, and whom she has seen again in the form of a young troubadour. The two women have just returned to their apartments when Luna and the troubadour Manrico, who is hidden behind a tree, appear one after the other. Hearing Manrico's voice, Luna is consumed with jealousy. He is reassured when Leonora comes to throw herself in his arms. But she has mistaken him for Manrico. A ray of moonlight piercing the clouds dispels the misunderstanding, and Leonora's expressions of tenderness are directed elsewhere. The enraged Luna and the ecstatic Manrico have a violent confrontation. Luna threatens Manrico, who is not only his happy rival but also a political outlaw. They take up their swords and go off to fight a duel, whilst the young girl falls in a swoon.

## ACT II

In the second act, we are in a gypsy camp at the foot of a mountain. The nomads sing gaily as they work, but are soon interrupted by the gloomy lament of a woman sitting by the fire: Azucena. She speaks of a distant event that has already been referred to in the first act—the killing of an alleged sorceress condemned to be burned alive . . . Day breaks and the Bohemians disperse. Only Azucena remains, and a young man who is none other than Manrico, and who begs her to tell more of this dreadful vision that seems to obsess her. She then describes what we already know, but with haunting detail and a vital revelation: it was not the Count's son that she threw in

the flames, but her own, so beside herself was she and so indifferent to everything except the vengeance demanded by her mother. Manrico, who thought he was her son, questions her more keenly and asks, with some *naïveté*, 'But who am I, then?' Azucena retracts her words immediately, pretending that she becomes confused when remembering the dreadful tragedy, and she assures Manrico that he really is her son. Have her maternal cares not just saved his life? We then learn that after his duel with the Count, whom he inexplicably spared when he had him at his mercy, Manrico was defeated in battle and left for dead by his less generous adversary. Azucena makes him swear that he will not hesitate to kill Luna if the opportunity should present itself again.

Their conversation is interrupted by the arrival of a messenger, who brings the news that Leonora, believing Manrico killed, is going to enter a convent that very evening. Despite the efforts of Azucena, who wants to hold him back, the troubadour leaps on his horse and disappears.

The Count has had the same idea as Manrico, and with the same motive. He wants to prevent Leonora from taking the veil. We find him in a courtyard next to the convent with some of his men, including Ferrando, who is trying to deter him from such an ungodly plan. But he is too enamoured to listen to the voice of reason and reaffirms his willingness to confront God Himself whilst, from inside the convent, the choir of nuns can be heard. Leonora, accompanied by several weeping attendants, prepares to cross the threshold of the convent; Luna emerges from his hiding place and goes to seize her, when a man bars his way: Manrico! Everyone exclaims in amazement, and with varying feelings, at the sight of the resurrected troubadour, who has no trouble in persuading Leonora to follow him. The Count refuses to give up his prey, but Manrico's partisans overcome him.

## ACT III

The second act begins with a chorus of gypsies. The third opens to the sound of a military chorus no less spirited. We are, in fact, in the Count of Luna's camp, and he is preparing to attack Castellor, the stronghold defended by Manrico. Ferrando announces the capture of a gypsy suspected of spying. It is Azucena, who is brought in chains before the Count. She replies evasively to the interrogation until the moment when the aged Ferrando, who has recognised her, denounces her. She betrays herself by calling Manrico to her rescue, and Luna is overjoyed: by torturing Azucena, he will strike at the same time the mother of his worst enemy and his brother's murderess.

Inside the castle of Castellor, near the chapel where the marriage of Manrico and Leonora is to be celebrated, the leader gives his orders concerning the battle, then seeks to reassure his betrothed. But the love scene is short-lived. From the castle windows, Azucena is seen being led to the stake by Luna's soldiers. Manrico, overwhelmed, reveals to Leonora that the gypsy is his mother, and rushes to her rescue.





#### ACT IV

In the fourth act we are again in the Castle of Aljaferia. One can distinguish against the dark night, a sinister-looking tower with narrow barred windows. Ruiz, Manrico's lieutenant, arrives with Leonora and then discreetly withdraws. The young girl meditates on the fate of her beloved, now a prisoner in the tower. At first only a funeral chorus is heard in reply: the *Miserere*. But soon Manrico's voice is raised in a cry of love and resignation. Leonora reaffirms her determination to save him, even at the cost of her own life.

Luna enters, giving his orders: at dawn, the son is to die by the axe and the mother by fire. However, his triumph is incomplete as Leonora still cannot be found. He is greatly surprised when she presents herself to him, and his resentment is even greater when she beseeches him, in pathetic terms, to spare the troubadour. Mad with jealousy, he refuses. Leonora, as a desperate measure, offers to give herself to the Count in exchange for Manrico's freedom. Unbelieving, then overcome with joy, Luna hastens to modify his first instructions, whilst Leonora quickly takes the poison contained in her ring . . .

Second tableau: a squalid dungeon inside the tower. Manrico is trying to calm Azucena, who is driven almost insane at the thought of being burned alive. Finally she goes to sleep. Leonora appears and, cutting short the

explanations, begs Manrico to flee at once. But the prisoner cannot accept her refusal to go with him, and thinks he understands the price she has paid for this unexpected mercy. The scene of jealousy becomes one of love when Leonora, dying, reveals her heroic deception. The Count, who has just entered, discovers that he has been tricked. In the space of a few seconds, Leonora breathes her last breath. Luna orders his guards to lead Manrico out. Azucena wakes and, from the window, sees the head of her adopted son fall. 'It was your brother!' she tells the Count. 'You are avenged, mother!' She falls in her turn, apparently dead, and Luna despairs that he is still alive.

★

It would be vain to seek to deny or disguise the fact that this entire story is extravagant. But several Shakespearian plots (*Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*) are hardly less so. It is no more obscure than Goethe's *Faust*, nor more puerile than *Fidelio*. The psychology of the characters is certainly extremely summary, but this is the case with almost all the romantic dramas, beginning with Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*. As for the improbability, we are at a sufficient distance from the naturalistic illusion to know that it has no importance in artistic material. The romantic spirit, much despised nowadays, was too new for Verdi himself and his contemporaries to be tired of it. On the

other hand, the sad examples of Voltaire and his successors was still too close for any sane man of the theatre to consider restoring the classical school, whose Cartesian precision had turned to dryness and its clarity to insignificance. The romantic reaction, although excessive, was a healthy one at the time.

In *Il Trovatore*, Verdi's inexhaustible source of melody confines itself in the main to the vocal parts, the importance of the orchestra being even more reduced than in *La Traviata*, for example. Is this because by its subject *Il Trovatore* belongs to the composer's youth, which was dominated by his liberal patriotic fervour? Verdi sides with Manrico who, as if by chance, combines artistic talents with his warrior's vocation, against the brutal absolutism of the Count of Luna, witch-hunter and narrow aristocrat. This was doubtless not the only thing in Gutierrez's work which appealed to him, but also the rugged and colourful atmosphere of a still semi-barbaric medieval Spain, the violence of passion, the clarity of the situations (only the plot is obscure), the mystery (today we would call it 'suspense') which persists right to the final outcome. It is neither distinguished, refined nor cultured. It is epic poetry, worthy of the Victor Hugo of the *Légende des Siècles*, illustrated by the Delacroix of *La Mort de Sardanapale*.

Maurice Tassart

Verdi attending a rehearsal (caricature by D. Melchior —Collection Carrara Verdi).





GIUSEPPE VERDI

# IL TROVATORE

OPERA IN FOUR ACTS

Libretto by Salvatore Cammarano

VIENNA STATE OPERA CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

NELLO SANTI, conductor

## CHARACTERS

LEONORA a lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Aragon	VIRGINIA GORDONI soprano
INEZ another lady-in-waiting	LYDIA MARIA soprano
AZUCENA an old gypsy woman	NEDDA CASEI mezzo-soprano
MANRICO a troubadour, supposed son of Azucena	MICHELE MOLESE tenor
COUNT OF LUNA commander of the royal army	LINO PUGLISI baritone
FERRANDO an old retainer of the Count of Luna	TUGOMIR FRANC bass
RUIZ a retainer of Manrico	ADOLFO DALLAPOZZA tenor
A GYPSY	RUDOLF ZIMMER bass

## Side 1

## ACT I

## SCENE 1

*Saragossa: a hall in the royal palace of the Aljaferia.*

FERRANDO: All'erta, all'erta! Il Conte n'è d'uopo attender vigilando; ed egli talor presso i veroni della sua cara, intente passa le notti.

SERVANTS: Gelosia le fiere serpi gli avventa in petto!

FERRANDO: Nel Trovatore, che dai giardini move notturno il canto, d'un rivale a dritto ei teme.

SERVANTS: Dalle gravi palpebre il sonno a discacciare, la vera storia ci narra di Garzia, germano al nostro Conte.

FERRANDO: La dirò: venite intorno a me.

SOLDIERS: Noi pure...

SERVANTS: Udite, udite.

FERRANDO: Di due figli vivea padre beato il buon Conte di Luna: fida nutrice del secondo nato dormia presso la cuna. Sul romper dell'aurora un bel mattino ella dischiude i rai; e chi trova d'accanto a quel bambino?

SERVANTS AND SOLDIERS: Chi? ... Favella ... Chi mai?

FERRANDO: Abietta zingara, fosca vegliarda! Cingevo i simboli di maliarda! E sul fanciullo, con viso arcano, l'occhio affiggeva torvo, sanguigno! ... D'orror compresa è la nutrice ... Acuto un grido all'aura scioglie; ed ecco, in meno che il labbro il dice, i servi accorrono in quelle soglie; fra minacce, urli e percosse

FERRANDO: Bestir ye! bestir ye! Your orders are to attend my lord of Luna; keep watch till he come. He every night stands guard by the window of his fair lady Leonora.

SERVANTS: Jealous rage, like a poisonous worm, at his heart ever gnawing!

FERRANDO: Yes, well it may, when every evening sings a mysterious minstrel there in the garden, his unknown rival.

SERVANTS: If you'd have us be wakeful, nor ever close an eye, let's hear a story, the tale that once you promis'd, the dreadful tale of Luna.

FERRANDO: You shall hear; I'll tell you now the tale.

SOLDIERS: Yes, tell us!

SERVANTS: Let's hear it, let's hear it!

FERRANDO: You must know that the former Count of Luna with a couple of sons was blest: Our noble master and his younger brother, yet a babe at the nurse's breast. One morning, just at dawn, she was awaken'd, all a-tremble with fear, and beheld, standing by the infant's cradle—

SERVANTS AND SOLDIERS: Ah! who was it? who stood there?

FERRANDO: There stood a gypsy crone, balefully glaring, symbols of sorcery about her wearing, and while that loathsome hag foul curses mutter'd, straightway the faithful nurse curs'd terror utter'd. The servants at once to a cry of terror utter'd. They seiz'd on the wretched sorceress, whom they without a

la rea discacciano ch'entrarvi osò.

SERVANTS AND SOLDIERS: Giusto quel petti sdegno commosse; l'insana vecchia lo provocò.

FERRANDO: Asseri che tirar del fanciullino l'oroscopo volea ... Bugiarda! Lenta febbre del meschino la salute struggea! Coperto di pallor, languido, affranto ei tremava la sera, il di traeva in lamentevol pianto ... Ammalato egli era! La fattucchiera perseguitata fu presa, e al rogo fu condannata; ma rimaneva la maledetta figlia, ministra di ria vendetta! ... Compi quest'empia nefando eccesso! ... Sparve il fanciullo ... e si rinvenne mal spenta brace nel sito istesso ov'arsa un giorno la strega venne! ... E d'un bambino ... ahimè! ... l'ossame bruciato a mezzo, fumante ancor!

SERVANTS AND SOLDIERS: Ah scellerata! ... oh donna infame! ... Del par m'investe odio ed orror! E il padre?

FERRANDO: Brevi e tristi giorni visse: Pure ignoto del cor presentimento gli diceva che spento non era il figlio; ed, a morir vicino, bramò che il signor nostro a lui giurasse di non cessar le indagini ... ah! fùr vane! ...

SOLDIERS: E di colei non s'ebbe? Contezza mai?

FERRANDO: Nulla contezza ... Oh! dato mi fosse rintracciarla un dì! ...

SERVANTS: Ma ravvisarla protesti?

FERRANDO: Calcolando gli anni trascorsi ... lo potrei.

SOLDIERS: Sarebbe tempo presso la madre all'inferno spedirla.

FERRANDO: All'inferno? È credenza che dimori ancor nel mondo l'anima perduta dell'empia strega, e quando il cielo è nero in varie forme altrui si mostri.

SERVANTS AND SOLDIERS: È vero! Su l'orlo dei tetti alcun l'ha veduta! In upupa o strige talora si muta! In corvo tal'altra; più spesso in civetta! Sull'alba fuggente al par di saetta.

FERRANDO: Mori di paura un servo del conte, che avea della zingara percossa la fronte! Apparve a costui d'un gufo in sembianza nell'alta quiete di tacita stanza! ... Con l'occhio lucente guardava ... guardava, il cielo attristando d'un urlo feral! Allor mezzanotte appunto suonava ...

ALL: Ah! sia maledetta la strega infernal!

## SCENE 2

*The garden of the palace, at night.*

INEZ: Che più t'arresti? ... l'ora è tarda: vieni. Di te la regal donna chiese, l'udisti.

LEONORA: Un'altra notte ancora senza vederlo!

INEZ: Perigliosa fiamma tu nutri! ... Oh come, dove la primiera favilla in te s'apprese?

LEONORA: Ne' tornei. V'apparve bruno le vesti ed il cimier, lo scrudo bruno e di stemma ignudo, sconosciuto guerrier, che dell'agone gli onori ottenne ... Al vincitor sul crine il serto io posi ... Civil guerra intanto arse ... Noi vidi più! come d'aurato sogno fuggente

shred of mercy chasten'd. Such was their fury, they would have slain her. She threaten'd vengeance, she threaten'd vengeance, as from the castle gate they made her flee.

SERVANTS AND SOLDIERS: They serv'd her rightly, they serv'd her rightly; we may not suffer a witch to be.

FERRANDO: She maintain'd that she came to tell the fortune of the babe, as the stars might show. So she said. But a slowly creeping fever fell upon him and laid him low. That woman had bewitch'd him! Fled was the sorceress; Luna's men found her. Burnt at the stake she was, flames blazing round her. But, though the witch died, she left a daughter, vow'd to seek vengeance for that grim slaughter. Dreadful the crime was, plann'd by that atrocious woman; she stole the child away; we long sought it vainly, till on that unhallow'd spot where stood the stake we saw it plainly—oh sight of horror! we found the embers that yet were smould'ring; my eye remembers those half-charr'd bones!

SERVANTS AND SOLDIERS: Could ever woman be so inhuman? Your tale would melt the very stones. And the father?

FERRANDO: Short his days were, full of sorrow. Yet he felt in his heart a firm conviction that his child was not dead after all, but living. And as he lay a-dying, he made our present master swear on the Book he would never cease to search for him.

SOLDIERS: What of the witch? was she never seen again?

FERRANDO: No one has seen her. Would Heaven only grant me one day to track her down!

SERVANTS: But are you sure you would know her?

FERRANDO: Many years have gone by since I saw her, yet, I'd know her.

SOLDIERS: Then you could send her down to join her mother in the company of the Devil!

FERRANDO: To the Devil? Know you not that that old witch is still about us? Her disembodied soul still has power to haunt us, and when the skies are darken'd she can appear in what form she pleases.

SERVANTS AND SOLDIERS: 'Tis true! Some say, they have seen her gro creeping; she flies like an owl while folks are sleeping. The form of a cat or a raven she'll borrow, but when the cock crows she'll be off like an arrow.

FERRANDO: A man died of terror, with palsy all shaken, who lifted his hand to her when first she was taken. In form of a black owl she approach'd him, in silence of night, when asleep he was lying; with fierce eye she drew near and reproach'd him, and startled his ear with a blood-curdling yell!

ALL: Hell's curses fall upon the witch and her daughter!



imago! ed era volta lunga stagion... ma poi...

INEZ: Che avvenne?

LEONORA: Ascolta. Tacea la notte placida e bella in quel sereno la luna il viso argenteo mostrava lieto e pieno... Quando suonar per l'aere, infino allor sì muto, dolci s'udirò e flebili gli accordi d'un liuto, e versi melanconici un Trovator cantò. Versi di prece ed umile qual d'uom che prega Iddio in quella ripetesi un nome... il nome mio!... Corsi al veron sollecita... Egli era! egli era desso!... Gioia prova che agli angeli solo è provar concesso!... Al core, al guardo estatico la terra un ciel sembrò.

INEZ: Quanto narrasti di turbamento m'ha piena l'anima!... Io temo...

LEONORA: Invano!

INEZ: Dubbio, ma triste presentimento in me risveglia quest'uomo arcano! tenta obliarlo...

LEONORA: Che dici!... oh basti!...

INEZ: Cedi al consiglio dell'amistà... Cedi...

LEONORA: Obliarlo! Ah, tu parlasti detto, che intendere l'anima non sa. Di tale amor che dirsi mal può dalla parola, d'amor che intendo io sola, il cor s'inebriò! Il mio destino compiersi non può che a lui dappresso... S'io non vivrò per esso, per esso io morirò!

INEZ: Non debba mai pentirsi chi tanto un giorno amò!

LUNA: Tace la notte! immersa nel sonno è, certo, la regal Signora; ma veglia la sua dama... Oh! Leonora, tu desta sei; mel dice, da quel verone, tremolante un raggio della notturna lampada... Ah!... l'amorosa fiamma m'arde ogni fibra!... Ch'io ti vegga è d'uopo, che tu m'intenda... Vengo... A noi supremo è tal momento... Il Trovator! Io fremo!

MANRICO (unseen): Deserto sulla terra, col rio destino in guerra, è sola speme un cor al Trovator! Ma s'ei quel cor possiede, bello di casta fede, è d'ogni re maggior il Trovator!

LUNA (wraps herself in his cloak; Leonora, coming down the stairs, mistakes him for Manrico): Oh detti!... Oh gelosia!... Non m'inganno... Ella scende!

LEONORA: Anima mia!

LUNA: Che far?

LEONORA: Più dell'usato è tarda l'ora; io ne conto gl'istanti co' palpiti del core!... Affin ti guida pietoso amor tra queste braccia...

MANRICO (among the trees): Infida!...

LEONORA: Qual voce!... Ah, dalle tenebre tratta in errore io fui! A te crederi rivolgere l'accento e non a lui... A te, che l'anima mia sol chiede, sol desia... Io t'amò, il giuro, io t'amò d'immenso, eterno amò!

LUNA (to Manrico): Ed osi?

MANRICO (raising Leonora): Ah, più non bramo!

LUNA: Avvampo di furor!

LEONORA (to Manrico): Ohimè!

LUNA: Palesa il nome...

LEONORA: Del, per pietà!...

MANRICO (raising his visor): Ravvisami, Manrico io son.

LUNA: Tu!... Come! Insano temerario!

met no more. I could but only cherish the fond remembrance; my loveless days crept sadly by, until—

INEZ: What happen'd?

LEONORA: Listen. In silence and in calm serene the world one night was lying; a full moon in the heav'n was bright, no cloud o'erhead was flying. Suddenly through the trembling air that for the sound had waited, Touch'd by an unseen hand, a harp with sweet sad note vibrated. And then a voice uplifted sang, as through my heart the music rang, a song of faithful love. 'Twas like a prayer, a humble prayer to Heav'n, devoutly worded; and one name was repeated there—I heard it—my own! I heard it. Swiftly I gain'd the balcony, my champion stood there before me; my heart was wild with ecstasy that, lifting me to bliss on high, made earth like Heav'n above.

INEZ: All that you tell me fills me with anguish. I fear some danger, I tremble—

LEONORA: Why need you?

INEZ: I cannot tell, yet I know I must warn you. This unknown lover will bring you ruin. Seek to forget him.

LEONORA: Forget him? Be silent!

INEZ: Let me entreat you—send him away. Hear me.

LEONORA: Dare you thwart me? How could I forget him? You know not what you say. Within my heart a flame is raging, a flame that ne'er can find assuaging; no soul but mine has known that passion, no heart but mine has felt that fiery glow. With him alone can I my fate fulfil, with him to share my life for good or ill; and if with him I may not be united, to die, to die for him I'll gladly go.

INEZ: Regret for love thus plighted you ne'er will know.

LUNA: All here is silence! At this hour of night the Queen, methinks, is surely sleeping. But her attendant watches. Oh Leonora! Thou sleepest not; the flame of the lamp betrays thee, that behind thy window trembles against the darkness. Oh! 'tis a flame that kindles passion in every vein of me. I can wait no longer; she must admit me! Ah! Be this the hour of rapture! That sound again? The minstrel!

MANRICO (unseen): Lonely and unbefriended, I have with fate contended; one hope my heart sustains, one thought inspires my song: May she now hear my strains whom I have lov'd so long!

LUNA (wraps herself in his cloak; Leonora, coming down the stairs, mistakes him for Manrico): She loves him? How can I bear it? She is coming! she will meet him!

LEONORA: Oh my beloved!

LUNA: How now?

LEONORA: The hour is late, and long I've waited; each moment my beating heart has reckon'd, but now at last Love in mercy has led you to my faithful arms!

MANRICO (among the trees): Thou traitress!

LEONORA: Oh horror! Ah! darkness blinded me, else nought could thus deceive me! To thee I thought I spoke that word! To thee, for whom my bosom is fill'd with wild desire; no other love, I swear it, could e'er my heart inspire.

LUNA (to Manrico): Who art thou?

MANRICO (raising Leonora): No more I doubt thee.

LUNA: Who dares my wrath to brave?

LEONORA (to Manrico): I love thee!

LUNA: If thou'rt a man, reveal thyself!

LEONORA: Oh heavens!

MANRICO (raising his visor): You know me well: My name's Manrico!

LUNA: Thou, fellow! How dar'st thou? Thou,

D'Urgel seguace, a morte proscriotto, ardisci volgerli a queste regie porte?

MANRICO: Che tardi? ... o via, le guardie appella, ed il rivale al ferro del carnefice consegna.

LUNA: Il tuo fatale istante assai più prossimo è, dissennato... Vieni...

LEONORA: Conte!

LUNA: Al mio sdegno vittima è d'uopo ch'io ti sveni...

LEONORA: Oh ciel! t'arresta...

LUNA: Seguimi...

MANRICO: Andiam...

LEONORA: Che mai farò? Un sol mio grido perdere lo poteo... M'odi...

LUNA: No! Di geloso amor sprezzato arde in me tremendo il foco! Il tuo sangue, o sciagurato, ad estinguerlo fia poco! Dirgli, o folle,—Io t'amo—ardisti! Ei più vivere non può... Un accento proferisti che a morir lo condannò!

LEONORA: Un istante almen dia loco il tuo sdegno alla ragione... Io, sol io, di tanto foco son, pur troppo, la cagione! Piombi, ah! piombi il tuo furore sulla rea che t'oltraggiò... Vibra il ferro in questo core, che te amar non vuol, né può.

MANRICO: Del superbo vana è l'ira; ei cadrà da me trafitto, il mortal che amor t'ispira, dall'amor fu reso invito. La tua sorte è già compita... L'ora omai per te suonò! Il suo core e la tua vita il destino a me serbò!

## ACT II, SCENE 1: On the slopes of a mountain in Biscay.

GYPSIES: Vedi! le fosche notturne spoglie d'ei celi sveste l'immensa volta; sembra una vedova che alfin si toglie i bruni panni ond'era involta. All'opra! all'opra! Dàgli, martella. Chi del gitano i giorni abbella? La zingarella. Versami un tratto; lena e coraggio il corpo e l'anima traggono dal bere. Oh guarda, guarda! del sole un raggio brilla più vivido nel mio bicchiere! All'opra, all'opra... Dàgli, martella... Chi del gitano i giorni abbella? La zingarella.

AZUCENA: Stride la vampa!—la folla indomita corre a quel fuoco—lieta in sembianza; urli di gioia—intorno echeggiano: cinto di sgheri—donna s'avanza! Sinistra splende—sui volti orribili la tetra fiamma—che s'alza al ciel! Stride la vampa!—giunge la vittima nerosvestita, discinta e scalza! Grido feroce—di morte levati; l'eco il ripete—di balza in balza! Sinistra splende—sui volti orribili la tetra fiamma—che s'alza al ciel!

GYPSIES: Mesta è la tua canzone!

AZUCENA: Del pari mesta che la storia funesta da cui tragge argomento! Mi vendica... Mi vendica!

MANRICO: L'arcana parola ognor!

AN OLD GYPSY: Compagni, avanza il giorno: a procacciarsi un pan, su, su!... scendiamo per le propinque velle.

GYPSIES: Andiamo! Andiamo! Chi del gitano i giorni abbella? La zingarella!

MANRICO: Soli o siamo; deh, narra quella storia funesta.

AZUCENA: E tu la ignori, tu pur!... Ma, giovinetto, i passi tuoi d'ambizion lo sprone lungi traea!... Dell'ava il fine acerbo è

an outlaw, allied with rebels, at war with thy sov'reign, the King of Aragon, thou dar'st invade his palace?

MANRICO: Why wait you? Call up your guards, arrest me, bind fast your rival, and safely bid the headman's axe remove him!

LUNA: Thou wilt not have to wait so long to meet the fatal hour of thy destruction. Madman!

LEONORA: Spare him!

LUNA: I will slay thee now myself; no longer can I bear to see thee living.

LEONORA: Oh stay, have mercy! What can I do?

LUNA: Follow me.

MANRICO: I will.

LEONORA: What can I do? 'Twould be his ruin if I call'd for help now. Hear me!

LUNA: No! Rage and jealousy my veins are filling, burns within me an insatiate fire! I, to slake the flame of fierce desire, thy foul blood must now be spilling! Thou, fond woman, thy lover thus naming, by that rash and fatal breath, thy mad passion thus proclaiming, hast condemn'd him now to death!

LEONORA: Stay one moment, now let me implore you! Him whom I love I must be shielding. Oh, let me anger to reason be yielding! My life I now lay down before you. Yes, on me let your anger be falling! I defy your high rank and your name! Wreak your vengeance, however appalling—you my heart shall never claim.

MANRICO: Fear him not in his pride, in his anger; shall he not by my sword be falling? I need only thy love be recalling; love will keep me safe in danger.

GYPSIES: See how the first ray of daylight returning clothes with its radiance the vault of heaven! Nature puts off like a sad garb of mourning shades of the night far away now driven. Our labours call us, anvil and hammer. Who makes the gypsy's life of toil a life of pleasure? She whom he takes to wife and loves beyond all measure. She makes each day more lovely seem. Work makes us thirsty; renew'd endurance soul and body too obtain from drinking. We shall return to our task with assurance after the wine-cup has clear'd our thinking.

## Side 2

AZUCENA: Harsh roars the greedy flame! Surging from far and near crowds run to gaze on it, wild and inhuman. Shouts of delight they raise, echoes awaking; See! the executioners drag by the hair a woman. Harsh roars the greedy flame! Slowly the victim nears, 'Death to the evil witch!'—from e'ry cliff repeated. I saw those people there, I felt the scorching glare shed by the flame rising to heav'n above, the cruel flame, the flame, the cruel flame!

GYPSIES: Why sing you that sad song?

AZUCENA: Sad is my song, for sad and dreadful is the story, and the story is a true one. Avenge my wrong! Avenge my wrong!

MANRICO: Again those mysterious words!

AN OLD GYPSY: Now, comrades, wait no longer, or else 'twill be too late. To find our bread we must seek the nearest village.

GYPSIES: We follow! What does a gypsy like best? A gypsy girl!

MANRICO: They have left us. Come, tell me all the tale you were singing.

AZUCENA: To think that you know it not! How could you know, when youthful ardour your footsteps guided far from this country? I sang



quest'istoria... La incolpò superbo Conte di malefizio, onde asseria colto un bambin suo figlio... Essa bruciata venne ov'arde quel foco!

MANRICO: Ah! sciagurata!  
AZUCENA: Condotta ell'era in ceppi al suo destin tremendo! Col figlio sulle braccia, io la seguì piangendo. Infino ad essa un varco tentai, ma invano, aprirmi... Invan tentò la misera fermarsi e benedirmi! Ché, fra bestemnie oscure, pungendola coi ferri, al rogo la cacciavano gli scellerati sgherri! Allor, con tonco accento: Mi vendica! Esclamò. Quel detto un'eco eterna in questo cor lasciò.

MANRICO: La vendicasti?  
AZUCENA: Il figlio giunsi a rapir del Conte: Lo trascinai qui meco... Le fiamme ardean già pronte.

MANRICO: Le fiamme!... oh ciel!... tu forse?

AZUCENA: Ei distruggeasi in pianto. Io mi sentiva il core dilaniato, infranto!... Quando' ecco agli egri spiriti, come in un sogno, apparve la vision feroce di spaventose larve! Gli sgherri ed il supplizio!... La madre smorta in volto... Scalzò, discinta!... Il Grido il noto grido ascolto... Mi vendica!... La mano convulsa tendo... stringo la vittima... nel foco la traggio, la sospiro... Cessa il fatal delirio... L'orrida scena fugge... La fiamma sol divampa, e la sua preda strugge! Pur volgo intorno il guardo e innanzi a me veggio l'empio Conte il figlio...

MANRICO: Ah! come?

AZUCENA: Il figlio mio, mio figlio avea bruciato!

MANRICO: Che dici! quale orrore!

AZUCENA: Sul capo mio le chiome sento rizzarsi ancor!

MANRICO: Non son tuo figlio? E chi son io, chi dunque?

AZUCENA: Tu sei mio figlio!

MANRICO: Eppur dicesti...

AZUCENA: Ah!... forse... Che vuoi! quando al pensier s'affaccia il truce caso, lo spirito intenebrato pone stolte parole sul mio labbro...

MANRICO: Potrei negarlo?

AZUCENA: A me se vivi ancora, nol dèi? Notturna, nel pugnati campi di Pelilla, ove spento fama ti dissì, a darti sepoltura non mossi? La fuggente aura vital non iscovrì, nel seno non l'arrestò materno affetto?... E quante cure non spesi a risanar le tante ferite!...

MANRICO: Che portai nei di fatale... Ma tutte qui, nel petto!... Io sol, fra mille già sbandati, al nemico volgendo ancor la faccia!... Il rio De Luna su me piombò col suo drappello; io caddi, però da forte io caddi!  
AZUCENA: Ecco mercede ai giorni, che l'infame nel singular certame ebbe salvi da te!... Qual l'acciecava strana pietà per esso?

MANRICO: O madre!... Non saprei dirlo a me stesso! Mal reggendo all'aspro assalto, ei già tocco il suolo avea: balenava il colpo in alto che trafiggerlo dovea... Quando arresta un moto arcano, nel discender, questa mano... Le mie fibre acute gelo fa repente abbreviar! Mentre un grido vien dal cielo, che mi dice: Non ferir!

AZUCENA: Ma nell'alma dell'ingrato non parlò del cielo un detto! Oh! se ancor ti spinge il fato a pugnare col maledetto, compi, o figlio, qual d'un Dio, compi allora il cenno mio! Sino all'elsa questa lama vibra, immergi all'empio

the gruesome death of her who bore me. A noble lord had her arrested on charge of witchcraft, that she had put spells on his child and had bewitched him.

MANRICO: Oh tale of horror!

AZUCENA: To meet that death appalling in fetters hither they brought her; I follow'd her procession, I, her unhappy daughter. In vain I tried to reach her, towards her madly pressing; in vain would she in her misery have giv'n me a mother's blessing. Curses and horrid blasphemies were shouted all around her; the cruel executioners, fast to the stake they bound her. And when with failing accents 'Avenge my wrong!' she wailed.

MANRICO: Didst thou avenge her?

AZUCENA: I stole the child of that wicked noble; I brought it hither with me; the cruel flame was burning ready—

MANRICO: The fire! No more! Oh horror!

AZUCENA: I heard the infant crying, I felt my own heart replying, rent asunder in torture! Then sudden before me rising, as in a dream I saw them, saw that grim procession slow to the stake advancing. The torturers! Cruel flames rising! And then I saw my mother, shrouded and barefoot—in anguish I caught it, the very last word she utter'd—'Avenge my wrong!' I put forth my hand in agony, I seize the victim there, and quick to the fire I consign it. My fatal fever left me; that horrid vision vanish'd. And there before me lying I saw the child I had stolen!

MANRICO: Ah! what say'st thou?

AZUCENA: It was my own child—my own, that I had burned!

MANRICO: 'Twas thine own!

AZUCENA: Ah, my own child, my own child! With mine own hand I had destroy'd it!

MANRICO: I am not thy son? Then say, whose am I? Who am I?

AZUCENA: Thou art mine own son.

MANRICO: Just now you told me—

AZUCENA: I told you? Forget it! When there comes back to me that dreadful vision the words that I speak are often foolish. Tell me, whom but myself hast thou ever known as mother?

MANRICO: Could I deny thee?

AZUCENA: Thank me if at this moment thou livest! When I heard that in the struggles for Pelilla thou hadst lost thy life in the battle, did I not come by night to give thee burial? And when I found thee, found thee living still, did I not give a mother's love to save thee? Was it not my skill in leechcraft that heal'd the wounds from which thou wast bleeding?

MANRICO: Wounds receiv'd on field of glory! Here only was I wounded. For I alone, when all the rest were routed, stood my ground firm! The Count of Luna with all his men set on me; I fell, but fell then like a hero!

AZUCENA: Thus by that infamous man wert thou rewarded, who ow'd his life to thee when beneath thy sword he fell. Why didst thou spare him? Why then did mercy bind thee?

MANRICO: Oh mother, myself I know not the reason. Yes, I can see him, defeated and chasten'd, and in the moonlight my blade flashing o'er me, ere to please his heart it hasten'd. Yet some secret force my slaughter hand arrested, and a shudder through all my fibres ran, I felt myself unmann'd; came a mysterious voice from Heaven, crying to me, 'Stay thy hand!'

AZUCENA: Heav'n to thee may thus have spoken, but in that black-hearted traitor I can find no heav'nly token. If thy fate should ever lead thee to do battle with him later, then of my wise warning heed thee! Strike and spare

in cor.

MANRICO: Sì, lo giuro, questa lama scenderà dell'empio in cor.

L'usato messo Ruiz invia! Forse...

AZUCENA: Mi vendica!

MANRICO: Inoltra il piè. Guerresco evento, dimmi, seguita?

MESSANGER: Risponda il foglio che reco a te. MANRICO: In nostra possa è Castellor; ne dèi tu, per cenno del prence, vigilar le difese. Ove ti è dato, affrettati a venir... Giunta la sera, tratta in inganno di tua morte al grido, nel vicin Chiostro della croce il velo cingerà Leonora.' Oh giusto cielo!

AZUCENA: Che fia!

MANRICO (to the Messenger): Veloce scendi la balza, e d'un cavallo a me provvedi...

MESSANGER: Corro...

AZUCENA: Manrico!

MANRICO (to the Messenger): Il tempo incalza... Vola, m'aspetta del colle a' piedi.

AZUCENA: E spero, e vuoi?

MANRICO (to himself): Perderla... Oh ambascia!... Perder quell'angelo?...

AZUCENA: È fuor di sé!

MANRICO: Addio...

AZUCENA: No... ferma... odi...

MANRICO: Mi lascia...

AZUCENA: Ferma... Son io che parlo a te! Perigliarti ancor languente per cammin selvaggio ed ermo! La ferite vuoi, demente, riaprir del petto inferno? No, soffrirlo non poss'io... Il tuo sangue è sangue mio!...

Ogni stilla che ne versi tu la spremi dal mio cor!

MANRICO: Un momento può involarmi il mio ben, la mia speranza!... No, che basti ad arrestarmi terra e ciel non han possanza... Ah!... mi sgombra, o madre, i passi... Guai per te s'io qui restassi!... Tu vedresti ai piedi tuoi spento il figlio di dolor!

not him that would slay me! Plunge thy sword in to the hilt!

MANRICO: Yes, I swear it, I'll not spare him; I'll make him expiate his guilt.

I know that signal, it brings a message. What news?

AZUCENA: 'Avenge my wrong!'

MANRICO: What is your tale? another battle? What was the outcome?

MESSANGER: This letter here will tell you all. MANRICO: 'Our men have taken Castellor. The Prince's order is that you should now defend it. Make haste and come as quickly as you can. This very evening Leonora, believing you to be dead, will take the veil in the Jerusalem Convent.' O cruel fortune!

AZUCENA: What is it?

MANRICO (to the Messenger): Go quickly down to the valley and have a horse for me made ready.

MESSANGER: Straightway.

AZUCENA: Manrico!

MANRICO (to the Messenger): The time is pressing; Hasten, await me at foot of the mountain.

AZUCENA: What would you? oh, tell me.

MANRICO (to himself): Lose Leonora? lose Leonora? Lose that angel?

AZUCENA: He must be mad!

MANRICO: I must leave thee.

AZUCENA: No, stay, hear me!

MANRICO: Release me!

AZUCENA: Stay—thy mother bids thee stay! Do not leave me, I implore thee, such a danger rashly seeking; dost thou know what lies before thee, with thine open wounds yet reeking? No, I cannot, will not bear it; this thy blood, do I not share it? Ev'ry drop that thou art losing from this heart of mine was press'd.

MANRICO: Let me go, I can wait no longer, or I lose ev'ry hope that I cherish; love than Heav'n or Hell is stronger; I must and her, or I perish. Let me go, do not hope to delay me, woe to thee, woe to thee, should I stay me! For of grief thou'lt see me dying if by her I am not blest.

## SCENE 2

*The inner court of the Jerusalem Convent.*

*(the Count of Luna, Ferrando, and retainers enter cautiously, wrapped in their cloaks.)*

LUNA: Tutto è deserto, né per l'aura ancora suona l'usato carne... In tempo io giungo!

FERRANDO: Ardita opra, o Signore, imprendi.

LUNA: Ardita, e qual furente amore ed irritato orgoglio chiesero a me. Spento il rival, caduto ogni ostacol sembrava a' miei desiri; novello e più possente ella ne appresta l'altare! Ah no, non fia d'altri Leonora!... Leonora è mia! Il balen del suo sorriso d'una stella vince il raggio! Il fulgor del suo bel viso novo infonde in me coraggio!... Ah! l'amor, l'amore ond'ardo le favelli in mio favor! Sperda il sole d'un suo sguardo la tempesta del mio cor. Qual suono!... oh ciel!...

FERRANDO: La squilla vicino il rito annunzia!

LUNA: Ah! pria che giunga all'altar... si rapisca!...

FERRANDO: Ah bada!

LUNA: Tacì!... Non odo... andate... di quei faggi all'ombra celatevi... Ah! fra poco mia diverrà... Tutto m'investe un foco!

FERRANDO AND RETAINERS: Ardire!... Andiam... celiamoci fra l'ombra... nel mister! Ardire!... Andiam... silenzio! Si compia il suo voler.

LUNA: No soul is stirring. Not yet do I hear the nuns sing their wonted office. I am in good time.

FERRANDO: A bold adventure you, my lord, are risking.

LUNA: I risk it, I dare it, for nothing else can assuage my fierce desire and injur'd pride. My rival dead, what hindrance could yet be remaining to bar my passion? But now she calls the Church to help her resist me. The altar! Ah no! Not God Himself shall claim her! Mine alone she shall be. Her sweet voice in my heart ringing fills my soul with ardent rapture. Oh might love, that love with which I'm burning, plead my cause to her with kindly art! Might her smile, towards me turning, calm the storm within my heart! The bell rings! Oh heavens!

FERRANDO: The hour of the solemn rite approaches.

LUNA: Before the rite can begin we must seize her.

FERRANDO: Be wary!

LUNA: Silence! What care I? Disperse ye! Stand behind those trees and conceal yourselves. In a moment she shall be mine, yes, I shall now possess her!

FERRANDO AND RETAINERS: Prepare to act with no delay, be swift to do whatever my lord command; in shade of night the ambush lay, be bold, be brave, the moment is at hand.



LUNA (*hides with the rest among the trees*): Per me, ora fatale, i tuoi momenti affretta: La gioia che m'aspetta gioia mortal non è! . . . Invano un Dio rivale s'opponne all'amor mio; non può nemmeno un Dio, donna, rapirti a me!

NUNS: Ah! . . . se l'error t'ingombra, o figlia d'Eva, i rai, presso a morir, vedrai che un'ombra, un sogno fu, anzi del sogno un'ombra la speme di quaggiù! Vieni e t'asconda il velo ad ogni sguardo umano! Aura o pensier mondano qui vivo più non è. Al ciel ti volgi e il cielo si schiuderà per te.

### Side 3

LEONORA (*enters*): Perché piangete?

INEZ: Ah! . . . dunque tu per sempre ne lasci!  
LEONORA: O dolci amiche, un riso, una speranza, un fior la terra non ha per me! Degg'io volgermi a Quei che degli afflitti è solo sostegno e dopo i penitenti giorni più fra gli eletti al mio perduto bene ricongiungermi un dì! . . . Tergete i rai e guidatemi all'ara!

LUNA: No, giammai! . . .  
INEZ AND NUNS: Il Conte!  
LEONORA: Giusto ciel!  
LUNA: Per te non havvi che l'ara d'imeneo.

INEZ AND NUNS: Cotanto ardia! . . .  
LEONORA: Insano! . . . E qui venisti? . . .  
LUNA: A farli mia.  
LEONORA: E deggio . . . e posso crederlo? Ti veggio a me d'accanto! È questo un sogno, un'estasi, un sovrumano incanto! Non regge a tanto giubilo rapito, il cor sorpreso! Sei tu dal ciel disceso, o in ciel son io con te?

LUNA: Dunque gli estinti lasciano di morte il regno eterno! A danno mio rinunzia le prede sue l'inferno! Ma se non mai si fransero de' giorni tuoi gli stami, se vivi e viver brami, fuggi da lei, da me.

MANRICO (*enters*): Nè m'ebbe il ciel, nè l'orrido varco infernal sentiero . . . Infami sgherri vibrano mortali colpi, è vero! Potenza irresistibile hanno de' fiumi l'onde! Ma gli empì un Dio confonde! Quel Dio soccorre a me.

INEZ AND NUNS: Il cielo in cui fidasti pietade avea di te.

RETAINERS: Tu col destin contrasti: Suo difensore egli è.  
RUIZ AND MEN (*enter*): Urgel viva!  
MANRICO: Miei prodi guerrieri!  
RUIZ: Vieni . . .  
MANRICO: Donna, mi segui.  
LUNA: E tu sperì?  
LEONORA: Ah!  
MANRICO: T'arresta . . .  
LUNA: Involarmi costei? No!

RUIZ AND MEN: Vaneggi!  
FERRANDO AND RETAINERS: Che tenti, Signor?

LUNA: Di ragione ogni lume perdei!  
LEONORA: M'atterrisce . . .  
LUNA: Ho le furie nel cor!

RUIZ AND MEN: Vien: la sorte sorride per te.

FERRANDO AND RETAINERS: Cedi; or ceder viltade non è.

(*Manrico takes Leonora away. Luna is driven back.*)

LUNA (*hides with the rest among the trees*): Shall I before the altar behold my lov'd one prostrate lying, all earthly love denying, all passion overthrown? No more my hand shall falter, no vow to Heav'n shall hold her, when once my arms enfold her and make her mine alone!  
NUNS: Oh, if the shades of error e'er have obscur'd thine eyes know, in thine hour of terror, life's but a dream that flies. Cast off all thoughts of earth now. Wouldst thou to Heaven rise. Far from the world's temptation live as the Lord's pure bride, by holy contemplation here to be sanctified, till at the last thy Bridegroom summon thee to His side.

LEONORA (*enters*): Why are you weeping?

INEZ: Ah! Leonora, will you leave us for ever?  
LEONORA: Yes, I must leave you. There's nothing that can restrain me, no hope or happiness in all this world. And so I turn me to God, my only hope in all my affliction. Here let me pray that one day in Heaven I may be united to him whom once I lost in an eternal love. So weep no more; lead me now to the altar.

LUNA: No! Not there!  
INEZ AND NUNS: 'Tis Luna!  
LEONORA: Heav'n's above!  
LUNA: No vow shall bind thee when I am here to claim thee.

INEZ AND NUNS: His words are impious!  
LEONORA: What right have you to come here?  
LUNA: Thou shalt be mine!  
LEONORA: Can I indeed believe my eyes? Dost thou stand here beside me? I thought that thou hadst long been dead, and sought this place to hide me. Oh how can this my trembling heart such sudden joy be bearing? Hast thou from heav'n come down to me? Am I in heav'n with thee?

LUNA: So have the dead come back again as if to life eternal? Has Hell renounc'd its claim on thee, that thou shouldst thus molest me? Thou with thy life hast once escap'd, but now thy days are number'd. Yes, now thy days are number'd; I bid thee now begone.

MANRICO (*enters*): Neither from heav'n return I now nor yet from fire infernal. Thy hateful ruffians fell on me and nigh to death had press'd me. Thou shalt thy just reward obtain; Think not that God has slumber'd! I trust in Him alone.  
INEZ AND NUNS: Thy hope in Heav'n thy soul did place; give thanks to Heav'n that shows thee grace.

RETAINERS: Resist no more, our cause is lost; the minstrel knight has men at hand.  
RUIZ AND MEN (*enter*): Down with tyrants!  
MANRICO: My brave band of warriors!  
RUIZ: Come!  
MANRICO: Come, Leonora!  
LUNA: Dar'st thou venture?  
LEONORA: Ah!  
MANRICO: Unhand her!  
LUNA: Dar'st thou take her from me? No!

(*Luna is disarmed by Ruiz and his men.*)

RUIZ AND MEN: Thou madman!  
FERRANDO AND RETAINERS: 'Tis hopeless, my lord!  
LUNA: Am I left all alone?  
LEONORA: How I tremble!  
LUNA: Rage and madness have seiz'd on my soul!  
RUIZ AND MEN: Come now, the fortune of war is with us.  
FERRANDO AND RETAINERS: Come now, for we can resist them no more.

### ACT III, SCENE 1: A military encampment of the Count of Luna. Soldiers are grouped about the stage.

SOLDIERS (1st group): Or co' dadi, ma fra poco giocherem ben altro gioco.  
SOLDIERS (2nd group): Quest'acciar, dal sangue or terso, fia di sangue in breve asperso!

SOLDIERS (1st group): Il soccorso dimandato!

SOLDIERS (2nd group): Han l'aspetto del valor!

ALL SOLDIERS: Più l'assalto ritardato or non fia di Castellor.  
FERRANDO: Sì, prodi amici; al di novello è mente del capitan la ròcca investir d'ogni parte. Colà pingue bottino certezza è rinvenir più che speranza. Si vinca; è nostro.

SOLDIERS: Tu c'inviti a danza! Squilli, echeggi la tromba guerriera, chiami all'armi, alla pugna, all'assalto; fia domani la nostra bandiera di quei merli piantata sull'alto. No, giammai non sorrise vittoria di più liete speranze finor! . . . Ivi l'util ci aspetta e la gloria, ivi opimi la preda e l'onor.

LUNA: In braccio al mio rival! Questo pensiero come persecutor ovunque m'insegue! . . . In braccio al mio rival! . . . Ma corro, surta appena l'aurora, io corro a separarvi . . . Oh! Leonora!

LUNA: Che fu?  
FERRANDO: Dappresso il campo s'aggravava una zingara: sorpresa da' nostri esploratori, si volse in fuga; essi, a ragion temendo una spia nella trista, l'inseguir . . .

LUNA: Fu raggiunta?  
FERRANDO: È presa.  
LUNA: Vista l'hai tu?  
FERRANDO: No; della scorta il condottier m'apprese l'evento.  
LUNA: Eccola.  
SOLDIERS: Innanzi, o strega, innanzi . . .

AZUCENA (*hands tied, is dragged on by soldiers*): Aita! . . . Mi lasciate . . . O furibondi, che mal fec'io?  
LUNA: S'appressi. A me rispondi, e trema dal mentir!  
AZUCENA: Chiedi.  
LUNA: Ove vai?  
AZUCENA: Nol so.  
LUNA: Che? . . .

AZUCENA: D'una zingara è costume mover senza disegno il passo vagabondo, ed il suo tetto il ciel, sua patria il mondo.  
LUNA: E vieni?  
AZUCENA: Da Biscaglia, ove finora le sterili montagne ebbi a ricetto!  
LUNA: Da Biscaglia!  
FERRANDO: Che intesi! . . . O qual sospetto!  
AZUCENA: Giorni povera vivea, pur contenta del mio stato; sola sempre un figlio avea . . . Mi lascio! . . . m'obblia, l'ingrato! Io, deserta, vado errando di quel figlio ricercando, di quel figlio che al mio core pene orribili costò! . . . Qual per esso provo amore madre in terra non provò!

FERRANDO: Il suo volto!  
LUNA: Di' traesti lunga etade fra quei monti?

AZUCENA: Luna, sì.  
LUNA: Rammenteresti un fanciul, prole di conti, involato al tuo castello, son tre lustri, e tratto quivi?  
AZUCENA: E tu, parla . . . sei? . . .  
LUNA: Fratello del rapito.  
AZUCENA: Ah!

SOLDIERS (1st group): Play to-day, to-morrow fighting! That's a game we all delight in!  
SOLDIERS (2nd group): Clean the steel of stains encrusted; into some fresh heart then thrust it!  
SOLDIERS (1st group): Here they come, the reinforcements!  
SOLDIERS (2nd group): Gallant warriors, here they are!

ALL SOLDIERS: Soon we march with them to battle and to capture Castellor.  
FERRANDO: Brave hearts and gallant! Our noble captain commands that at break of day assault shall be made on the fortress. And when the place is captur'd, I promise you shall find some glorious plunder. To battle! To conquest!

SOLDIERS: Victory and plunder! March we along to the noise of drums, the trumpet sounds to victory and victory's reward! On the rampart high we shall see our banner fly; a nobler prize there could not be than Castellor! Sing we a song of a capture and a plundering, for fighting-men are not content with glory!

LUNA: My rival holds her there! Oh hateful vision! Will it never cease to torture me and drive me to madness? To-morrow, when the first dawn is breaking, their dreams of love are ended! Oh Leonora!  
LUNA: What news?

FERRANDO: About our camp a gypsy woman has been wandering; as soon as she saw that she was notic'd she tried to make away, so some of our men follow'd her, suspecting her of spying. Off she ran—

LUNA: Did they catch her?  
FERRANDO: They took her.  
LUNA: Saw you the woman?  
FERRANDO: No; I was told of it by one who saw her made prisoner.  
LUNA: Here she is.

SOLDIERS: We've caught a witch here, a sorceress!  
AZUCENA (*hands tied, is dragged on by soldiers*): Unhand me! Would you kill me? Have you no mercy? What harm have I done?

LUNA: Bring her before me. So give me answer, nor dare to tell me lies.  
AZUCENA: Ask me.  
LUNA: Whither go you?  
AZUCENA: I know not.  
LUNA: What?

AZUCENA: I am of the race of gypsies; over many lands we wander; our only roof the sky, the whole earth our country.  
LUNA: Whence come you?  
AZUCENA: I come from Biscay. There until now I made my dwelling.  
LUNA: She is from Biscay!

FERRANDO: From Biscay! Ah, do I know her?  
AZUCENA: Poor and lowly I was living, yet contented with my station, to my son my whole care giving, till he left me to desolation! Lone and helpless must I wander, seeking him hither and yonder. Oh my son! Long have I pin'd him, long my tears for him did flow. He in all the earth no fonder love than mine could ever know.

FERRANDO: Do I know her?  
LUNA: Say, how long have you been living in the mountains?  
AZUCENA: Years and years.

LUNA: Do you remember how a child, son of a noble, was abducted from his castle long ago and never seen again living?

AZUCENA: And you—tell me—who are you?  
LUNA: The stolen child's own brother.  
AZUCENA: Ah!



FERRANDO: Sì!  
LUNA: Ne udivi mai novella?  
AZUCENA: Io? . . . No . . . Concedi che del figlio l'orme io scoprà.  
FERRANDO: Resta, iniqua . . .  
AZUCENA: Ohimè! . . .  
FERRANDO: Tu vedi ch' l'infame orribil opra commetta . . .  
LUNA: Finisci.  
FERRANDO: È dessa.  
AZUCENA: Taci.  
FERRANDO: È dessa che il bambino arse!

LUNA: Ah! perfida!  
SOLDIERS: Ella stessa!  
AZUCENA: Ei mentisce . . .  
LUNA: Al tuo destino o non fuggi.

AZUCENA: Deh! . . .  
LUNA: Quei nodi più stringete.  
AZUCENA: Oh! Dio! . . . Oh Dio! . . .  
SOLDIERS: Ura pure.  
AZUCENA: E tu non m'odi, o Manrico, o figlio mio? . . . Non soccorri all'infelice madre tua?

LUNA: Sarebbe ver? Di Manrico genitrice!  
FERRANDO: Trema! . . .  
LUNA: Oh sorte! . . . in mio poter!

AZUCENA: Deh, rallentate, o barbari, le acerbe mie ritorte . . . Questo crudel supplizio è prolungata morte . . . D'iniquo genitore empio figliuol peggiore, tréma . . . V'è Dio pe' miseri, e Dio ti punirà!

(at a sign from Luna the soldiers drag Azucena away.)

SCENE 2: A room in Castellar, opening into a chapel.

LEONORA: Quale d'armi fragor poc'anzi intesi?

MANRICO: Alto è il periglio! vano dissimularlo fora! Alla novella aurora assaliti saremo! . . .

LEONORA: Ahimè! . . . che dici! . . .  
MANRICO: Ma de' nostri nemici avrem vittoria . . . Pari abbiam al loro ardir, brando e coraggio!

Tu va'; le belliche opre, nell'assenza mia breve, a te commetto che nulla manchi! . . .

LEONORA: Di qual tetra luce il nostro imen risplende!

MANRICO: Il presagio funesto, deh, sperdi, o cara! . . .

LEONORA: E il posso?

MANRICO: Amor . . . sublime amore, in tale istante ti favelli al core. Ah! sì, ben mio, coll'essere io tuo, tu mia consorte, avrò più l'alma intrepida, il braccio avrò più forte; ma pur se nella pagina de' miei destini è scritto ch'io resti fra le vittime dal ferro ostil trafitto, fra quegli estremi aneliti a te il pensier verrà e solo in ciel precederti la morte a me parrà!

RUİZ (enters): Manrico?

MANRICO: Che?  
RUİZ: La zingara, vieni, tra ceppi mira . . .

MANRICO: Oh Dio!  
RUİZ: Per man de' barbari accesa è già la pira . . .

MANRICO: Oh ciel! mie membra oscillano . . . Nube mi copre il ciglio!

LEONORA: Tu fremi!  
MANRICO: E il deggio! . . . Sappilo. Io son . . .

LEONORA: Chi mai?  
MANRICO: Suo figlio! . . . Ah! villi! . . . il rio spettacolo quasi il respir m'involva . . . Raduna

FERRANDO: Yes!  
LUNA: And you never heard that story?  
AZUCENA: I? No. Good sir, let me depart upon my journey.  
FERRANDO: Do not release her!  
AZUCENA: Alas!  
FERRANDO: My Lord, you see before you here her who that horrid crime committed!  
LUNA: Who is she?  
FERRANDO: I know her.  
AZUCENA: Be silent!  
FERRANDO: The murderess who burn'd your brother!

LUNA: Vile sorceress!  
SOLDIERS: 'Tis the gypsy!  
AZUCENA: He's a liar!

LUNA: Your crime shall now at last be punish'd.  
AZUCENA: Oh!

LUNA: Let her be bound securely.  
AZUCENA: Oh Heaven! oh Heaven!  
SOLDIERS: Yes, cry aloud!

AZUCENA: Oh come to save me, oh Manrico! Why art thou not here to help me? Help in her distress thy mother!

LUNA: Of Manrico she the mother?  
FERRANDO: Vengeance!

LUNA: Their fates are in my power! Oh vengeance!

AZUCENA: I pray you, let me go my way, from chain and fetter loose me! What cause have you to torture me, so basely to abuse me? Thou evil man, whose father long ago did so ill-use me, tremble! for God protects the poor, and God will punish thee.

i nostri, affrettati . . . Ruiz . . . va . . . torna . . . vola . . .  
Di quella pira l'orrendo foco tutte le fibre m'arse, avvampò! . . . Empi, spegnetela, o ch'io fra poco col sangue vostro la spegnerò . . . Era già figlio prima d'amarti, non può frenarmi il tuo martir. Madre infelice, corro a salvarti, o teco almeno corra a morir!  
LEONORA: Non reggo a colpi tanto funesti . . . Oh, quanto meglio saria morir!  
RUİZ AND SOLDIERS: All'armi, all'armi! eccone presti a pugnare teco, teco a morir.

ACT IV

SCENE 1

A wing of the palace of Aljaferia.

RUİZ: Siam giunti; ecco la torre, ove di Stato germono i prigionieri . . . ah, l'infelice ivi fu tratto!

LEONORA: Vanne, lasciami, né timor di me ti prenda . . . Salvarlo io potrò forse. Timor di me? . . . sicura, presta è la mia difesa. In quest'oscura notte ravvolta, presso a te son io. E tu nol sai . . . Gemente aura che intorno spiri, deh, pietosa gli arrega i miei sospiri . . . D'amor sull'ali rosee vanne, sospir dolente; del prigioniero misero conforta l'egra mente . . . Com'aura di speranza aleggia in quella stanza: Lo desta alle memorie, ai sogni dell'amor! Ma deh! non dirgli, improvvido, le pene del mio cor!

Ruiz, go quickly, and summon me my men! That foul flame yonder, raging so cruel, in mine own entrails finds now its food. Ruffians, put out the flame! Or I will drown it all in your vile blood. I lov'd thee, mother, or e'er I knew it; what thou art suffering how can I see? Unhappy mother, I come to save thee, or else be sharing thy death with thee.  
LEONORA: On one misfortune another follows; or better far were it now to die!  
RUİZ AND SOLDIERS: To battle! to battle! we follow to the fight! To fight or share thy death with thee.

RUİZ: We are there now. Here stands the tower in which the prisoners of state are guarded; here Don Manrico must be a captive.

LEONORA: Leave me, leave me now. Be concerned for me no longer. Perchance I yet may save him.

This poison'd ring will at need defend me. Envelop'd in the darkness, thou knowest not that I am near thee, that I am watching. Ye ghostly breezes around me flying, oh bear the ardent message of my sighing! Borne on the wings of love so bright, go, mournful sigh, and find him, comfort my captive minstrel knight, of my true heart remind him. May hope once more with heav'nly ray illumine his dark chamber, and make his heart remember the rapture of a happier day. But oh! what pains my own sad heart has had to bear thou shalt not ever say.

Side 4

MONKS: Miserere d'un'alma già vicina alla partenza che non ha ritorno! Miserere di lei, bontà divina, preda non sia dell'infernal soggiorno!

LEONORA: Quel suon, quelle preci solenni, funeste, empiron quest'aere di cupo terror! . . . Contende l'ambascia, che tutta m'investe al labbro il respiro, i palpiti al cor!

MANRICO: Ah, che la morte ognora è tarda nel venir a chi desia morir! . . . Addio, Leonora!

LEONORA: Oh ciel! . . . sento mancarmi!  
MONKS: Miserere, etc.

LEONORA: Sull'orrida torre, ah! par che la morte con ali di tenebre librando si va! Ah! forse dischiuse gli fian queste porte sol quando cadaver già freddo sarà!

MANRICO: Sconto col sangue mio l'amor che posi in te! . . . Non ti scordar di me! Leonora, addio!

LUNA: Udite? Come albeggi, la scure al figlio ed alla madre il rogo.

Abuso io forse del poter che pieno in me trasmise il prence! A tal mi traggi, donna per me funesta! . . . O'vella è mai? Ripreso Castellor, di lei coetanza non ebbi, e furo indarne tante ricchezze e tante! Ah! dove sei, crudele?

LEONORA: A te davanti.  
LUNA: Qual voce! . . . come! . . . tu donna?

LEONORA: Il vedi.  
LUNA: A che venisti?

LEONORA: Egli è già presso all'ora estrema; e tu lo chiedi?

LUNA: Osar potresti? . . .  
LEONORA: Ah sì, per esso pietà domando . . .

LUNA: Che! tu deliri! Io del rival sentir pietà?

LEONORA: Clemente Nume a te l'ispiri . . .

MONKS: Lord, have mercy on one who now approaches that journey's end from which is no returning; nor let him know the place of endless burning!

LEONORA: The prayer for the dying, in solemn devotion! I hear it around me, it fills me with dread! It renders me breathless with nameless emotion, as if ev'ry pulse in my bosom were dead.

MANRICO: Oh, from this life of torment why is there no release? I leave thee, oh Leonora, I leave thee!

LEONORA: His voice! How can I bear it?  
MONKS: Lord, have mercy, etc.

LEONORA: I hear in darkness the wings that are beating of God's dreaded messenger, the angel of death! The gates of the prison will not be retreating until my beloved has ceased to draw breath.

MANRICO: Now all the love I gave thee paid with my blood must be! Oh, in thy heart ever remember me! Dear love, farewell! oh Leonora!

LUNA: You hear me? He shall die by the axe at sunrise, and his mother at the stake.

Do I abuse that power of execution the King conferr'd upon me? Thou fatal woman, thou art thyself the reason. And where can she be? We captur'd Castellor, but where she was none could tell me, although we left no stone unturn'd to find her. Where art thou, Leonora?

LEONORA: She stands before you.  
LUNA: Leonora! living! before me!

LEONORA: You see me.  
LUNA: But wherefore came you?

LEONORA: Manrico's doom'd to execution—why need you ask me?

LUNA: You dare defend him?

LEONORA: I do entreat you in mercy now to spare him.

LUNA: Oh, you are senseless, you are senseless! Ah! You would have me my rival spare?

LEONORA: May God incline your heart to



LUNA: È sol vendetta mio Nume . . . Va.  
LEONORA (*in despair*): Mira, di acerbe lagrime  
spargo al tuo piede un rio: Non basta il pianto?  
svenami, ti bevi il sangue mio . . . Calpesta il  
mio cadavere, ma salva il Trovatore!

LUNA: Ah! dell'indegno rendere vorrei  
peggiore la sorte: Fra mille atroci spasimi  
centuplicar sua morte . . . Più l'ami, e più  
terribile divampa il mio furor! Né cessi?

LEONORA: Grazia! . . .  
LUNA: Prezzo non avvi alcuno ad ottenerla . . .  
scostati . . .  
LEONORA: Uno ve n'ha . . . sol uno! . . . Ed io  
te l'offro.  
LUNA: Spiegati, qual prezzo, di'.  
LEONORA: Me stessa!  
LUNA: Ciel! . . . tu dicesti? . . .  
LEONORA: E compiere saprò la mia promessa.

LUNA: È sogno il mio?  
LEONORA: Dischiudimi la via fra quelle  
mura . . . Ch'ei m'oda . . . Che la vittima fugga,  
e son tua.  
LUNA: Lo giura.  
LEONORA: Lo giuro a Dio che l'anima tutta  
mi vede!  
LUNA (*calling to retainers*): Ohi!

(*a warder appears; Luna whispers to him*)

LEONORA: M'avrai, ma fredda esanime spoglia.

LUNA: Colui vivrà.  
LEONORA (*aside, with jubilation*): Vivrà! . . .  
contende il giubilo i detti a me, Signore . . .  
Ma coi frequenti palpiti mercé ti rende il core!  
Ora il mio fine impavida, piena di gioia  
attendo . . . Potrò dirgli morendo: Salvo tu sei  
per me!  
LUNA: Fra te che parli? . . . volgimi, volgimi  
il detto ancora, o mi parrà delirio quanto  
ascoltai finora . . . Tu mia! . . . tu mia! . . .  
ripetilo. Il dubbio cor serena . . . Ah! . . . ch'io  
lo credo appena udendolo da te!

LEONORA: Andiam . . .  
LUNA: Giurasti . . . pensaci!  
LEONORA: È sacra la mia fe'!

(*they go to the tower*)

## SCENE 2

*A dungeon. Azucena is lying on a rough bed, Manrico sitting beside her.*

MANRICO: Madre? . . . non dormi?  
AZUCENA: L'invocai più volte, ma fugge il  
sonno a queste luci . . . Prego.  
MANRICO: L'aura fredda è molesta alle tue  
membra forse?  
AZUCENA: No; da questa tomba di vivi sol  
fuggir vorrei, perché sento il respiro soffo-  
carmi! . . .  
MANRICO: Fuggir!  
AZUCENA: Non attristarti: Far di me strazio  
non potranno i crudi!  
MANRICO: Ah! come?  
AZUCENA: Vedi? . . . le sue fosche impronte  
m'ha già stampato in fronte il dito della morte!

MANRICO: Ah!  
AZUCENA: Troveranno un cadavere muto,  
gelido! . . . anzi uno scheletro!

MANRICO: Cessa!  
AZUCENA: Non odi? . . . gente appressa . . . I  
carnefici son . . . vogliono al rogo trarmi! . . .  
Difendi la tua madre!  
MANRICO: Alcuno, ti rassicura, qui non  
volge . . .  
AZUCENA: Il rogo! Parola orrenda!

mercy!

LUNA: No god but vengeance inspires me, Go!  
LEONORA (*in despair*): Oh see the bitter tears I  
shed, fast at thy feet now falling! Or wilt thou  
rather see me dead and slake with blood thy  
lust appalling? Tread my poor body in the  
dust, but spare the man whom I adore!

LUNA: Nay, rather would I find for him torture  
that ne'er relented, such as the foulest fiend of  
Hell could never have invented! In vain  
pleadest thou thy love for him, my wrath  
wouldst thou assuage.

LEONORA: Mercy!  
LUNA: No price on earth avails to buy him  
respite. Leave me now!  
LEONORA: One price there is, I know it, and  
that price I offer.

LUNA: What's the price you bid me now?  
LEONORA: Myself!

LUNA: What! would you yield me—?  
LEONORA: Indeed I shall fulfil whate'er I  
promise.

LUNA: Can I be dreaming?

LEONORA: That gate unbar, show me Man-  
rico's prison, release him, let him fly now to  
safety—I am yours.

LUNA: So swear it!  
LEONORA: I swear to God, who the secrets of  
all men's hearts knoweth.

LUNA (*calling to retainers*): Ho there!

(*Leonora sucks the poison from her ring*)

LEONORA: A cold and lifeless corpse he shall  
find me.

LUNA: The man shall live.  
LEONORA (*aside, with jubilation*): He lives! Oh  
God I thank thee now, my joy in tears  
expressing; and wildly beats my grateful heart,  
as I receive Thy blessing. In hope serene I  
wait my death, my task at last accomplish'd, to  
him I love confessing, his life he owes to me.  
LUNA: What words are these I hear thee say?  
Oh turn thy face toward me! Was it no more  
than fever'd dream, thy promise with love to  
reward me? Oh say once more that mine thou  
art, set all my doubts at rest now, tell me that  
I am blest now, relieve my anxious heart!

LEONORA: Lead on, lead on.  
LUNA: Remember, sworn thou hast!  
LEONORA: And I shall keep my oath!

(*they go to the tower*)

MANRICO: Sleep you not mother?  
AZUCENA: 'Tis no time for slumber; this fatal  
hour must be spent in praying.  
MANRICO: How you tremble! Is it the cold that  
makes you shiver?

AZUCENA: No; but from this tomb of the  
living fain would I now escape, for these walls  
seem to suffocate my breathing.

MANRICO: Escape?  
AZUCENA: Be not dishearten'd. These execu-  
tioners cannot put me to the torture.

MANRICO: What mean you?  
AZUCENA: See you not on my face imprinted  
the sign there's no mistaking, the mark of  
death's grim finger?

MANRICO: Ah!  
AZUCENA: They will find me, when they come  
for me, rigid, cold in death nought but my  
rotting bones!

MANRICO: Mother!

AZUCENA: I hear them—drawing nearer—they  
are coming for me—my son, protect thy  
mother!

MANRICO: Take comfort, be not affrighted,  
there's no one comes here to harm thee.  
AZUCENA: The stake—the faggots—I see it—  
the fire! Too well I know it.

MANRICO: Oh madre! . . . oh madre!  
AZUCENA: Un giorno, turba feroce l'ava tua  
condusse al rogo . . . Mira la terribil vampa!  
Ella n'è tocca già l'arso crine al ciel manda  
faville! . . . Osserva le pupille fuor dell'orbita  
lor! . . . ah! . . . chi mi toglie a spettacolo sì  
atroce?

MANRICO: Se m'ami ancor, se voce di figlio ha  
possa d'una madre in seno, ai terrori dell'alma  
oblio cerca nel sonno, e posa e calma.

AZUCENA: Sì, la stanchezza m'opprime, o  
figlio . . . Alla quiete io chiudo il ciglio . . . Ma  
se del rogo arder si veda l'orrida fiamma,  
destami allor.

MANRICO: Riposa, o madre: Iddio conceda  
men tristi immagini al tuo sopor.

AZUCENA: Ai nostri monti . . . ritorneremo . . .  
L'antica pace . . . ivi godremo . . . Tu can-  
terai . . . sul tuo liuto . . . In sonno placido . . .  
io dormirò!

MANRICO: Riposa, o madre: io pronò e muto  
la mente al cielo rivolgerò.  
Ciel! . . . non m'inganna quel fioco lume?

LEONORA (*enters*): Son io, Manrico . . .

MANRICO: Oh, mia Leonora! Ah, mi concedi,  
pietoso Nume, gioia sì grande, anzi ch'io mora?

LEONORA: Tu non morrai . . . vengo a sal-  
varti . . .

MANRICO: Come! . . . a salvarmi? . . . fia vero!  
LEONORA: Addio . . . Tronca ogni indugio . . .  
t'affretta . . . parti.

MANRICO: E tu non vieni?  
LEONORA: Restar degg'io! . . .

MANRICO: Restar! . . .  
LEONORA: Deh! fuggi . . .

MANRICO: No.  
LEONORA: Guai se tardi!

MANRICO: No . . .  
LEONORA: La tua vita! . . .

MANRICO: Io la disprezzo . . . Pur figgi, o  
donna, in me gli sguardi! . . . Da chi l'avesti . . .  
ed a qual prezzo? . . . Parlar non vuoi? . . .  
Balen tremendo! . . . Dal mio rivale! . . .  
intendo . . . intendo! . . . Ha quest'infame  
l'amor venduto . . . Venduto un core che mio  
giurò!

LEONORA: Oh, come l'ira ti rende cieco! Oh  
quanto ingiusto, crudel sei meco! T'arrendi . . .  
fuggi, o sei perduto! Nemmeno il cielo salvar ti  
può!

AZUCENA: Ai nostri monti . . . ritorneremo . . .  
L'antica pace . . . ivi godremo . . . Tu canterai  
. . . sul tuo liuto . . . In sonno placido . . . io  
dormirò . . .

MANRICO: Ti scosta . . .  
LEONORA: Non respingermi . . . Vedi? . . .  
languente, oppressa, io manco . . .

MANRICO: Va' . . . ti abbomino . . . Ti male-  
dico . . .

LEONORA: Ah, cessa! Non d'imprecar, di  
volgere per me la prece a Dio è questa l'ora!

MANRICO: Un brivido corse nel petto mio!

LEONORA: Manrico!  
MANRICO: Donna, svelami . . . Narra.

LEONORA: Ho la morte in seno . . .  
MANRICO: La morte! . . .

LEONORA: Ah, fu più rapida la forza del veleno  
ch'io non pensava! . . .

MANRICO: Oh fulmine!  
LEONORA: Sentì! la mano è gelo . . . Ma qui . . .  
qui foco orribile arde . . .

MANRICO: Che festi! . . . o cielo!  
LEONORA: Prima che d'altri vivere . . . Io volli

MANRICO: Oh mother, dear mother!  
AZUCENA: Remember! One day my mother,  
my own mother was taken to the burning!  
Flames into the sky go roaring, she in the  
midst is bound, her hair is burning, I see  
sparks flying around her, in agony her eyeballs  
are starting from the sockets—Oh God, shut  
out from my eyes that awful sight!

(*she falls into the arms of Manrico*)

MANRICO: Dear mother mine, if thine own  
son's voice can bear its word of love into thy  
bosom, think no more of these terrors, and  
find in sleep consolation.

AZUCENA: Yes, let me rest, let me find in  
sleeping respite a moment from tears and  
weeping; yet if thou seest it, horribly flaring,  
flame of the faggots, wake me again.

MANRICO: Rest thee and sleep, and may angels  
be bearing visions of peace to thy fever'd brain.

AZUCENA: Home to our mountains one day  
returning, all our old happiness we shall re-  
cover; there thou shalt sing the old songs to  
thy mother!

MANRICO: Mother, sleep on, while I kneel  
beside thee, praying that Heav'n thy protector  
may be.

All! is it she, or am I deluded? My Leonora!  
LEONORA (*enters*): 'Tis I, Manrico, oh Manrico!

MANRICO: Heaven, I thank thee that thou in  
thy mercy this, the joy of my heart, ere I die,  
to me hast granted!

LEONORA: Talk not of dying! I come to save  
thee.

MANRICO: Save me? Leonora, how canst thou?  
LEONORA: Delay not! the gate is open—fare-  
well then—hasten!

MANRICO: Com'st thou not with me?  
LEONORA: To stay I've promis'd.

MANRICO: To stay?  
LEONORA: Go! Quickly!

MANRICO: No!  
LEONORA: Go, delay not!

MANRICO: No!  
LEONORA: Save thy life now!

MANRICO: My life is worthless. Come! Fix  
thine eyes on mine and tell me, who made the  
bargain? What was the price paid? Thou wilt  
not say? I need no answer. I know my rival;  
your honour has paid him! Vilest of women,  
thy love hast thou sold him! Sold him the  
heart that was sworn to be mine!

LEONORA: Canst thou accuse me? Fill not thy  
heart with rage, nor let thy passion blind thee!  
I never thought that so unjust or yet so cruel  
I could find thee!

AZUCENA: Home to our mountains one day  
returning, all our old happiness we shall re-  
cover; There thou shalt sing the old songs to  
thy mother!

MANRICO: Release me!  
LEONORA: Oh, repulse me not! See how I'm  
sinking, oppress'd with anguish!

MANRICO: Hence, away with thee! I do abhor  
thee!

LEONORA: Be not so cruel! Curse thou me not,  
for in this awful hour I need thy prayers for  
Heav'n's forgiveness.

MANRICO: Thou fill'st me with horror! Thy  
words appal me.

LEONORA: Manrico!  
MANRICO: Woman! what is this! Tell me!

LEONORA: This is death—behold it!  
MANRICO: Thou'rt dying?

LEONORA: Yes, I already feel the working of  
the poison; death is upon me.

MANRICO: Oh dreadful deed!  
LEONORA: Feel it—my hand is frozen, but  
here, within me, a fire is raging!

MANRICO: What hast thou ventur'd?  
LEONORA: Rather than live another's bride, I



tua morir!  
MANRICO: Insano! . . . ed io quest'angelo  
osava maledir!  
LEONORA: Più non resisto!  
MANRICO: Ah! misera! . . .

*(Luna enters and pauses on the threshold)*

LEONORA: Ecco l'istante . . . io moro . . .  
Manrico! Or la tua grazia . . . Padre del cielo  
. . . imploro . . . prima . . . che . . . d'altri  
vivere . . . io velli . . . tua morir! (*dies*)  
LUNA: Ah! volle me deludere, e per costui  
morir! Sia tratto al ceppo!  
MANRICO (*as the soldiers lead him off*): Madre  
. . . oh madre, addio!

would have died as thine.  
MANRICO: Oh madness! that I this angel soul  
should e'er have made repine!  
LEONORA: My strength is failing—  
MANRICO: Oh woeful sight!

LEONORA: My life is ending—I'm dying,  
Manrico! Oh Lord, have mercy, mercy on me,  
a sinner! Rather than live another's bride, I  
would have died as thine. (*dies*)  
LUNA: So was I thus deceiv'd by her, that she  
for him might die! To execution!  
MANRICO (*as the soldiers lead him off*): Mother,  
farewell for ever!

AZUCENA (*awakening*): Manrico! . . . Ov'è mio  
figlio?  
LUNA: A morte corre! . . .  
AZUCENA: Ah ferma! . . . m'odi . . .  
LUNA: Vedi? . . .

*(Luna drags her to the window)*

AZUCENA: Cielo!  
LUNA: È spento!  
AZUCENA: Egli era tuo fratello! . . .  
LUNA: Ei! . . . quale orror! . . .  
AZUCENA: Sei vendicata, o madre!  
LUNA: E vivo ancor!

AZUCENA (*awakening*): Manrico! My son,  
where is he?  
LUNA: To death they take him.  
AZUCENA: One moment! hear me!  
LUNA: Behold him!  
AZUCENA: Heavens!  
LUNA: The axe falls.  
AZUCENA: That man was your own brother.  
LUNA: Ha! what have I done?  
AZUCENA: Mother, behold thy vengeance!  
LUNA: Oh fatal hour!

THE END



# LA TRAVIATA

From 1851, Giuseppe Verdi was writing to Salvatore Cammarano: 'I have a simple, sentimental theme that is ready made, so to speak, to be used at once . . .' He was referring to *La Dame aux Camélias* by Alexandre Dumas the younger, which had not yet been performed in the theatre. Instinctively, merely through reading the novel, the composer could see that he 'had his theme'.

Besides, Verdi always showed an amazingly clear and unerring judgment with regard to himself. For him to compose, he had to like the libretto, for the emotional or dramatic potential it could provide: 'A libretto, a libretto, and the opera is made!' If he had 'his' libretto, his creative power was unbelievable. When he fell in love with *La Dame aux Camélias*, he had just finished *Rigoletto* and was working furiously on *Il Trovatore*. He dedicated himself joyfully to Marguerite Gautier, who was now Violetta: 'I want nothing so much as to find a good libretto, and then a good poet (we need them so much), but I do not hide from you the fact that I am unwilling to read the librettos I am sent: it is impossible or almost impossible for another person to guess what I want; I want new subjects that are great, beautiful, varied, bold and bold to the extreme, with forms that are new and at the same time suitable for music. In Venice, I am working on *La Dame aux Camélias* which will perhaps have as its title *Traviata*. A subject of our time. Another person would not perhaps have done it on account of the costumes, the period, or a thousand other idiotic scruples. I am doing it with enormous pleasure. Everybody made a great fuss when I proposed to put a hunchback on the stage. Well! I am happy to have written *Rigoletto*!'.

Besides, let us be clear, Verdi never intended simply to set *La Dame aux Camélias* to music. He seized the pretext of the drama of this woman of the world (traviata—gone astray), a drama not exclusively Parisian, in order to make an Italian opera. It is possible that Violetta sounds better than Marguerite Gautier and that Alfredo is more singable than Armand; nevertheless, this was the naturalisation into Italian of Dumas' heroine.

To understand properly this freedom with which the composer viewed his theme, one must realise that Verdi was always sure of himself: 'I am what I am, and I write as I please; I know what I want.' Or again: 'I find that my hand is strong enough to arrange the notes as I wish, and sure enough to obtain habitually the effects that I have in mind.' On another occasion, the composer clearly expressed his concern for a national art: 'Art owes it to itself to have a national character, whereas science does not. But Italians are Italian and music for Italians must be Italian. We are different from the Germans and even more so from the French and the Russians, and we feel in a different way.'

This self-assurance was accompanied by an equally great freedom of spirit. This rare gift allowed Verdi to view a 'fiasco' quite calmly, because he himself was aware of having created a work of value: 'I am concerned only with what is mine and as for my artistic reputation, let us not think of it. It matters little!' We will see that this serenity was a great help to him when *Traviata* was a failure in Venice.

Finally, and this point is not perhaps irrelevant to an understanding of Verdi's state of mind at the time of composition of *La Traviata*, his extra-marital situation was not easy in a prudish and intolerant Italy. After he had lost his children and his wife in 1840, Giuseppina Strepponi, one of his first soloists and patrons at La Scala in Milan for the performances of *Oberto* in 1839, entered into an intimate relationship with him; it was too intimate and too close to his bereavement, in the eyes of the formidable, moralistic Italian society.

The person most dear to Verdi was therefore separated from him by the will of a too rigid society, and he suffered because of it. The daily letters from beloved Peppina stirred up the tenderness which the composer felt for the poor 'traviata': 'I am so happy that you feel lost without me, and I hope you will have many cares to make you give up your barbaric idea of leaving me isolated, like a saint

in solitude.' Finally, this theme of 'La Traviata', which was so significant, gave the composer great scope for 'inventing the truth', a phrase which stands as a definition of an aesthetic ideal: 'To copy the truth can be a good thing, but to invent the truth is better, much better. To copy the truth is a beautiful thing, but it is a photograph, not a painting.'

This is therefore the state of mind in which—not without difficulties—Verdi arrived at the first night of *La Traviata* at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice on 6 March 1853. Difficulties, like Dumas, with careful moral censorship: if the century was changed, morality would not be offended. Thus Violetta was to wear heavy seventeenth century dress. Difficulties of interpretation followed: the original creator of the rôle, Salvini Donatelli, was very plump, and far from the slender and moving form of Marguerite Gautier. Verdi later described this himself, speaking of the dreadful fiasco of 6 March 1853: 'As for the rest, the public was right: Violetta weighed 130 kilos. When, in the fourth act, the doctor says in a grave tone that death is fast approaching, everybody burst out laughing. If I had not been the composer, I would have done just the same. Are such jokes allowed, even to a doctor?' For this evening in Venice was well and truly a fiasco, in every sense of the term.

To honour a courtesan with a leading rôle in Italy at that time and to have the misfortune, on the first night, to surround her with a tenor who had lost his voice and an offhand baritone, that was really tempting fate! Verdi was not greatly concerned: 'A fiasco,' he wrote on the evening of 6 March, 'is it my fault, or that of the singers? The future will tell.' But, sure of his work, he was faithful in his love for Violetta, 'this poor sinner who did not deserve at all to be abused as she was,' and this faithfulness developed into determination: 'La Traviata, this poor sinner, so unfortunate in Venice! I will restore her to honour in the world!' And in fact, one year later, Gallo's Teatro San Benedetto in Venice gave it a fair trial. It was a triumph, and Verdi was overjoyed: 'It was a fiasco, now it is all the rage! Draw your own conclusion. And not a thing has changed, not a thing has been added or deleted, not a musical idea has been modified.' Violetta took three years to cross the Alps and was performed for the first time in Paris, at the Théâtre Italien de la Salle Ventadour, on 16 December 1856. An amusing detail is that Verdi had been involved for a long time in a lawsuit against the Théâtre Italien which persisted in not paying him his royalties; his claim was rejected, in the long-awaited judgment, exactly one week before the triumph of his *Traviata* at the Salle Ventadour. The leading lady, Maria Piccolomini, was in fact more famous for launching the sensuous waltz *Il Baccio* which was all the rage in the capital, than for her creation in Paris of the rôle of *La Traviata*. From 1862, Verdi had an ideal Violetta in the celebrated Adelina Patti. After a superb performance of *La Traviata* by the great artist, someone asked Verdi: 'Maestro, what do you think when you hear your music performed like that?'—'I think that I wrote it in exactly that way!'

It was not until 1864 that *La Traviata* was heard in French in Paris. Réty, director of the Théâtre Lyrique, which stood on the present-day site of the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, was not afraid of presenting in French the works which were successful at the Théâtre Italien. This policy having proved excellent with *Rigoletto*, Réty was not afraid to repeat it with *La Traviata*, entitled on this occasion *Violetta*. Thanks in particular to its exceptional leading lady, Mlle Nilsson, *Violetta* was a triumph which saved the courageous director of the Théâtre Lyrique for a while from his incessant money problems.

To speak of *La Traviata*'s world-wide fame is impossible: she is over a hundred years old and she still captivates. She dies and leaves grief-stricken spectators all over the world. Once again Verdi saw accurately, when replying to someone who asked which of his works he preferred: 'If I was a professional, *Rigoletto*, but if I was an amateur, I would love *La Traviata* best of all.'



Sarah Bernhardt in the rôle of Marguerite Gautier in *La Dame aux Camélias* (Copyright Roger-Viollet)

Opposite: Postcard showing a scene from *La Dame aux Camélias* (Illustrations by Combe—Copyright Roger-Viollet).



LA DAME  
AUX CAMÉLIAS





## ANALYSIS OF THE WORK

The Overture is not—as was frequent at the time—a sample piece of all the tunes in the score. With its lyrical phrasing and forceful rhythms, it forms a moving symphonic passage that sets the mood of the drama.

## ACT I

The curtain rises, on one of the violent contrasts dear to Verdi, on a richly upholstered *salon*, ornately decorated: if Violetta is Italian, the setting is very much of the Parisian empire style. The heroine is receiving her many rich friends. The atmosphere is wildly gay, with abandoned rhythms, and the pretty mistress of the house declares that she lives only for pleasures, joy and love. A friend presents Alfredo Germont, who had asked each day for news of Violetta when she was ill. No morose sentimentality: the hostess' health must be drunk and it falls to Alfredo to sing a drinking song. He performs this with good grace, and it is the famous 'waltz' toast. Suddenly there is a cry amidst the happy tumult: already weakened by tuberculosis, Violetta feels faint. The guests move off towards the ballroom, and Alfredo remains with her alone. At first Violetta laughs that a young man should speak to her of love that is pure but then, moved, she gives him a flower, telling him to return it to her. 'When?'—'When it is faded . . . tomorrow!'

Dawn breaks, the pretty courtesan's guests take their leave of her and, meditative, Violetta reflects on this pure love which could transform her life. But it is a dream, 'a folly,' she prefers pleasure to love. Here the first act comes to an end. Verdi uses Violetta's reflections realistically, combining a dedication to the life of pleasure with a display, fashionable at the time, of vocal brilliance.

## ACT II

It was not a dream: Violetta and Alfredo are together, far from the whirlwind of Paris. Through love, Violetta has forgotten her past; but Alfredo learns that his mistress has ordered her faithful servant to sell all her goods. He himself will go to Paris to bring back some money. But a solemn man enters the drawing-room where Violetta is sitting after Alfredo's departure. Insulting at first, Germont, the young man's father, becomes more courteous and is amazed when the young woman, with great dignity, shows him that it is she who is ruining herself for her lover, and not the young man for her. Germont then becomes a suppliant. His daughter's future is in Violetta's hands: Alfredo's conduct is in fact an object of scandal, and the disgrace is reflecting on his pure young sister. Violetta understands: should she go away? She will depart. But even more is required: she must leave Alfredo. The young woman, hearing this, does not conceal her passion: he is her life, she adores him; let her keep her lover, for her days are numbered! She beseeches Germont to have pity on her tears, to leave her with Alfredo, for she is intoxicated with love. The melody and the orchestra emphasise the heroine's breathlessness. Germont is inflexible but human towards the poor unfortunate girl

whose genuine grief moves him. Then Violetta is resolved: for him, she will do all that is asked of her. Go away? He would follow her. So? There is only one solution: to go back to the life of pleasure. She will do it. Grief-stricken, she writes the fatal letter to her lover, and hides her tears with great difficulty when Alfredo returns joyfully home. She throws herself passionately into the arms of her beloved bidding him heartrending farewells, without arousing his suspicions. Verdi's theatrical genius is powerfully displayed here. The theme of these farewells of Violetta's is the famous phrase that is found in the overture and which, in the course of the opera, is only heard in this overwhelming scene. Violetta goes out, hiding her grief. Alfredo, left alone, is given his letter of farewell. She has gone! Alfredo is surprised to find himself face to face with his father. The latter, appealing to discretion, advises him to return to his native home where, near to his mother, he will find refuge. In spite of its apparent facility, this famous aria was composed with care by Verdi who, in this connection, showed his customary tyranny towards the librettists. Alfredo wants none of this; mad with rage and despair, he swears to avenge himself.

## ACT III

We return to the imperial décor in the midst of a sumptuous carnival ball which is taking place at the house of Flora, courtesan and friend of our heroine. Everyone is gossiping: the separation of Violetta and Alfredo arouses much comment. Some gypsies are dancing and singing. A palmist reads the lines of the guests' hands. Matadors sing and dance their native songs; it is Verdi's contribution to the Spanish style so much in vogue at the time. Alfredo, who is no longer the topic of conversation, arrives; he is gaily welcomed, and led straight away to a gaming table, when Violetta enters, accompanied by the baron who was escorting her at the time of her departure with Alfredo. The young woman fears the worst, and her fears are justified when she hears the baron challenge Alfredo to a game. The latter wins, and the baron invites him to a different sort of game the next day. Violetta, terrified by the prospect of this duel, does not go into supper with the other guests. She waits for Alfredo, sure that he will come. He arrives. She begs him to go away, but the young man first pours scorn on her, then can contain himself no longer: he still loves her, she must go away with him. Violetta refuses, saying she is bound by a promise. Thinking that she is bound to the baron, Alfredo becomes enraged; he calls the guests. If he formerly allowed this woman to ruin herself for him, 'you are all witnesses that I no longer owe her anything,' he cries, throwing a wad of bank notes at the unfortunate girl's feet.

This dramatic scene is interrupted by the appearance of Germont who has seen everything, hidden by his cloak. He rebukes his son for his base behaviour, and Alfredo, recovering from his frenzy, kneels at the fainting Violetta's feet and begs her forgiveness. The young woman declares that she has only one hope of happiness—to die loving him. The baron, for his part, resolves to take vengeance on Alfredo. This very beautiful ensemble ends the act, in which the listener has been held breathless by the dramatic oppositions dear to Verdi.

## ACT IV

This last act begins with a prelude that is one of Verdi's most moving passages. It starts like the overture but a semitone higher and then, more tenderly and sadly, it resumes the drama of Violetta's life. When the curtain rises on the bedroom where the unfortunate girl is dying, we are already full of emotion. Violetta wakes and wants to get up to receive the doctor, a faithful friend who visits her every day. After a few words which are intended to reassure but which do not deceive Violetta, the doctor, taking the servant on one side, warns her that the end is near. Violetta gives what is left of the money to her servant to go and distribute amongst the poor and then, left alone, she takes from her bosom a letter that she re-reads seemingly for the hundredth time (this is the only spoken part in the whole opera). Alfredo's father tells her that the duel took place, that the young man was able to cross the frontier but that the baron was only wounded. Germont himself has revealed to his son the sacrifice made by the one he loves. He will soon come to ask her forgiveness. Violetta knows in her mind that death is near. Will Alfredo arrive in time?

In an aria, *dolento*, she says goodbye to the things she has loved, to the memories of past happiness. This aria is interrupted by echoes of the joyful procession of the carnival ball, that can be heard passing along the street in the distance. The contrast of the merry-making of the crowd and the grief of this room where death is approaching makes a striking theatrical effect. Is it a dream? The one she despaired of seeing again is there. Alfredo clasps her in his arms, he has come back, happiness will return. They must go away, go away together, recover the peace and happiness of their country house of former times . . . The dying woman becomes faint. The doctor must be called, he must know that she wants to live, that she adores Alfredo. 'To die so young, when happiness has returned, when happiness is here! . . .'

The doctor runs in, accompanied by Germont. The latter blames himself for the unhappiness of the poor 'traviata': he little knew her heart and the fidelity of her love. Violetta gives Alfredo a locket containing her picture; he must give it, one day, to the girl who will share his life. The staccato rhythms of the orchestra are reminiscent here of those of the *Miserere* of *Il Trovatore*: the last beats of a heart that is about to stop. She stands up, wild-eyed, she feels new life, she is going to live. Alas! Calling to Alfredo, she falls. The sinner is dead with joy!

By way of conclusion, now that we have listened to the opera, let us note the passages that Verdi preferred. He made the list himself between the failure of the work and its restoration in 1854: 'For the last year I have closely examined, with a calm mind, this poor *Traviata*; I persist in believing that she is neither as bad nor as diabolical as people have liked to make out. The last act is far superior to all the rest of the opera, the first is weaker, but the final duet of the second should produce the best effect. We shall see when it is performed again!'

Emmanuel BONDEVILLE, of the Institut



RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

DEPARTEMENT  
DE L'ORNE

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MAIRIE DE NONANT-LE-PIN

Nonant-le-Pin, le 19

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ACTE n° 1

NAISSANCE

Alphoncine  
PLESSIS

le 16 /1/ 1824

décédée à PARIS  
en 1847

inhumée au cimetière  
de MONTMARTRE avenue St Charles

SIGNE : Marin PLESSIS  
CORNET  
PIGNEL  
POSSEY

délivré le vingt quatre avril mil neuf cent soixante  
huit.

Pour copie conforme, Le Maire,

Extract from the birth certificate of Alphonsine Plessis.



Nonant-le-Pin, birthplace of Alphonsine Plessis who, once in Paris, called herself Marie Duplessis. She was the inspiration for Alexandre Dumas' novel *La Dame aux Camélias*, in which he gave her the name of Marguerite Gautier.

GIUSEPPE VERDI

# LA TRAVIATA

OPERA IN THREE ACTS

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

VIENNA STATE OPERA CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

GIANFRANCO RIVOLI, conductor

## CHARACTERS

VIOLETTA VALERY . . . ELENA TODESCHI soprano  
FLORA BEROVOX . . . LUCIANA PIO-FUMAGALLI mezzo-soprano  
ALFREDO GERMONT . . . AUGUSTO VICENTINI tenor  
GIORGIO GERMONT his father . . . RENATO CESARI baritone  
GASTONE Visconte de Letorières . . . PARIDE VENTURI tenor  
ANNINA Violetta's servant . . . ANNA GALLI soprano

Scene: Paris and its surroundings

Time: Middle of the 19th Century

## Side 1—ACT I

*Drawing-room in Violetta's house in Paris. She is giving a party, which has been going on for some time.*

GUESTS: Dell'invito trascorsa è già l'ora . . .  
Voi tardaste . . . ?  
GUESTS: Giocammo da Flora, e giocando  
quell'ore volar.  
VIOLETTA: Flora, amici, la notte che resta  
d'altre gioie qui fate brillar . . . Fra le tazze è  
più viva la festa . . .

FLORA AND MARCHESI: E goder voi potrete?  
VIOLETTA: Lo voglio; Al piacere m'affido, ed  
io soglio con tal farmaco i mali sopir.

ALL: Sì, la vita s'addoppia al gioir.  
GASTONE (enters with Alfredo): In Alfredo  
Germont, o signora, ecco un altro che molto  
vi onora; pochi amici a lui simili sono.

VIOLETTA: Mio Visconte, mercede di tal dono.

MARCHESI: Caro Alfredo . . .  
ALFREDO: Marchese . . .  
GASTONE: T'ho detto: L'amistà qui s'intreccia  
al diletto.  
VIOLETTA: Pronto è il tutto?  
VIOLETTA: Mieci cari, sedete: È al convito che  
s'apre ogni cor.  
ALL: Ben diceste . . . le cure segrete fuga  
sempre l'amico licor. È al convito che s'apre  
ogni cor.  
GASTONE (to Violetta): Sempre Alfredo a voi  
pensa.  
VIOLETTA: Scherzate?  
GASTONE: Egra foste, e ogni di con affanno  
qui volò, di voi chiese.  
VIOLETTA: Cessate. Nulla son io per lui.

GUESTS: Why so late, why so late for the party?  
Where have you been?  
GUESTS: We've all been at Flora's; after dinner  
we sat down to cards.  
VIOLETTA: Flora! How charming! I fear'd you  
would fail us. How could a party be complete  
without you? Well, at least you're in good time  
for supper.

FLORA AND MARCHESI: How are you, Violetta?  
VIOLETTA: Don't ask me! Who has time to be  
ill in the world of to-day? Yes, pleasure's the  
best cure of all.

ALL: Yes, I'm sure it's the best cure of all.  
GASTONE (enters with Alfredo): This is Alfredo  
Germont: I have told you about him, and how  
he admires you. He's the best friend I have in  
the world too.

VIOLETTA: Then I hope he will soon be one of  
my friends.

MARCHESI: How are you, sir?  
ALFREDO: And you too?  
GASTONE: I told you you would find all your  
friends here to meet you.  
VIOLETTA: Is supper ready?  
VIOLETTA: You all must be hungry! I am  
delighted to welcome you here.  
ALL: We're delighted to come, for we know  
that with you there is always the best of good  
cheer.  
GASTONE (to Violetta): So devoted is Alfredo.

VIOLETTA: Devoted!  
GASTONE: When he heard you were ill he came  
here to ask after you daily.  
VIOLETTA: What nonsense! What can I mean  
to him?



GASTONE: Non v'inganno.  
VIOLETTA (to Alfredo): Vero è dunque? ...  
onde è ciò? ... nol comprendo.  
ALFREDO: Sì, egli è ver.  
VIOLETTA: Le mie grazie vi rendo.  
VIOLETTA: Voi, barone, non feste altrettanto ...

BARONE: Vi conosco da un anno soltanto.

VIOLETTA: Ed ei solo da qualche minuto.

FLORA: Meglio fora se aveste taciuto.

BARONE: M'è increscioso quel giovin ...  
FLORA: Perché? A me invece simpatico egli è.

GASTONE: E tu dunque non apri più bocca?

MARCHESE: È a madama che scuoterlo tocca ...

VIOLETTA: Sarò l'Ebe che versa.  
ALFREDO: E ch'io bramo immortale come quella.  
ALL: Beviamo.

GASTONE: O barone, nè un verso, nè un viva  
Troverete in quest'ora giuliva?  
GASTONE (to Alfredo): Dunque a te ...  
ALL: Sì, sì, un brindisi.  
ALFREDO: L'estro non m'arride ...  
GASTONE: E non se' tu maestro?  
ALFREDO: Vi fia grato?  
VIOLETTA: Sì.  
ALFREDO: Sì? ... L'ho già in cor.  
MARCHESE: Dunque attenti ...  
ALL: Sì, attenti al cantor.  
ALFREDO: Libiam ne' lieti calici che la bellezza  
infiora, e la fuggivol ora s'inebria a volontà.  
Libiam ne' dolci fremiti che suscita l'amore,  
poichè quell'occhio al core onnipotente va.

ALFREDO AND ALL: Libiamo, amor fra i calici  
più caldi bacì avrà.  
VIOLETTA: Tra voi saprò dividere il tempo mio  
giocando; tutto è follia nel mondo ciò che non  
è piacer. Godiam, fuggace e rapido è il gaudìo  
dell'amore; è un fior che nasce e muore, nè  
più si può godiam. Godiam ... c'invita un  
fervido accento lusinghier.

ALL: Godiam ... la tazza e il canticò la notte  
abbella e il riso; in questo paradiso ne scopra  
il nuovo dì.

VIOLETTA: La vita è nel tripudio.  
ALFREDO: Quando non s'ami ancora.  
VIOLETTA: Nol dite a chi l'ignora.  
ALFREDO: È il mio destin così ...  
ALL: Godiam ... la tazza e il canticò la notte  
abbella e il riso; in questo paradiso ne scopra  
il nuovo dì.  
Che è ciò?

VIOLETTA: Non gradireste ora le danze?

ALL: Oh, il gentile pensier! ... tutti accetta-  
tiam.

VIOLETTA: Usciamo dunque ... Ohimè! ...  
ALL: Che avete? ...  
VIOLETTA: Nulla, nulla.  
ALL: Che mai v'arresta? ...  
VIOLETTA: Usciamo ... Oh Dio! ...  
ALL: Ancora! ...  
ALFREDO: Voi soffrite?  
ALL: O ciel! ... ch'è questo?  
VIOLETTA: Un tremito che provo ... Or là  
passate ... Tra poco anch'io sarò ...  
ALL: Come bramate.

GASTONE: I assure you—  
VIOLETTA (to Alfredo): Did you really? Every  
day? I can't believe it.  
ALFREDO: Yes, every day!  
VIOLETTA: Then I thank you sincerely.  
VIOLETTA: And how often did you make  
inquiries?

BARONE: Why, it's barely a year I have known  
you.

VIOLETTA: And in his case it's barely two  
minutes.  
FLORA: Your remark, sir, I fear, was hardly  
tactful.

BARONE: That young man's past endurance.  
FLORA: Indeed? I should say he'd a great deal  
of charm.

GASTONE: But have you made a vow to be  
silent?

MARCHESE: You are the one to command him  
to break it.

VIOLETTA: With this wine I release you.  
ALFREDO: No, your captive you make me for  
ever.

ALL: Our hostess! Our hostess! We all drink  
to you.

GASTONE: Won't you rise to the festive occa-  
sion with a song, or at least an oration?

GASTONE (to Alfredo): Well then, you!  
ALL: Yes, yes, come sing to us!

ALFREDO: Don't call me a singer!  
GASTONE: We shall take no refusal.

ALFREDO: Do you command me?  
VIOLETTA: Yes.

ALFREDO: Then I obey.  
MARCHESE: Now be silent!

ALL: Silence, all, for a song.  
ALFREDO: The glass let us fill to the brim and  
then raise to the lady whose loveliness claims  
our praise! The hours of our pleasure fly all  
too fast; Let's enjoy them while they last! For  
love with every thrill it brings the heart of  
youth rejoices; why heed the dismal voices  
that grief and woe forecast?

ALFREDO AND ALL: 'Tis wiser to seize on the  
moment of rapture ere 'tis past.

VIOLETTA: What life could be happier, when-  
ever it ends, than one surrounded by joyous  
friends? Short it may be, with no time to  
waste; Pleasure's all we need to taste. For love  
is but a fleeting joy, Where'er we may bestow  
it; 'tis fled before we know it and lost in care-  
less haste. Then seize we the moment of  
rapture! 'Tis all we ask to taste.

ALL: When music and wine and laughter fill  
all our nights with pleasure, who cares what  
we may have to pay for it after? We have not  
liv'd in vain.

VIOLETTA: For love we have no leisure—  
ALFREDO: Till one heart you can treasure.

VIOLETTA: My own has yet to measure—  
ALFREDO: The depths of joy and pain.

ALL: When music and wine and laughter fill  
all our nights with pleasure, who cares what  
we may have to pay for it after? We have not  
liv'd in vain!

Oh hark!  
VIOLETTA: Addio.

ALFREDO: May I invite you to join in the  
dancing?

ALL: Yes, with all our hearts!

VIOLETTA: Then let us go ... Alas!  
ALL: What is it?

VIOLETTA: Nothing, nothing.  
ALL: What makes you tremble?

VIOLETTA: Come follow! Oh heaven!  
ALL: She's fainting!

ALFREDO: You are suff'ring?  
ALL: What is the matter?

VIOLETTA: I thought that I was falling. Leave  
me a moment, give me a moment to rest.

ALL: Then we will leave you.

The company go into the farther room. Alfredo hangs back, watching Violetta half concealed.

VIOLETTA: Oh qual pallor! ... Voi qui! ...

ALFREDO: Cessate l'ansia che vi turbò?  
VIOLETTA: Sto meglio.

ALFREDO: Ah, in cotai guisa v'ucciderete ...  
aver v'è duopo cura dell'esser vostro ...

VIOLETTA: E lo potrei?

ALFREDO: Se mia foste, custode io veglierei pe'  
vostri soavi dì.

VIOLETTA: Che dite? ... ha forse alcuno cura  
di me?

ALFREDO: Perchè nessuno al mondo v'ama ...

VIOLETTA: Nessun?

ALFREDO: Tranne sol io.

VIOLETTA: Gli è vero! ... Sì grande amor  
dimenticato avea ...

ALFREDO: Ridete? ... e in voi v'ha un  
core? ...

VIOLETTA: Un cor? ... sì ... forse ... e a che  
lo richiedete?

ALFREDO: Ah, se ciò fosse, non potreste allora  
celiar.

VIOLETTA: Dite davvero? ...  
ALFREDO: Io non v'inganno.

VIOLETTA: Da molto è che mi amate?

ALFREDO: Ah sì, da un anno. Un dì, felice,  
eterea, mi balenaste innante, e da quel dì  
tremante vissi d'ignoto amor. Di quell'amor  
ch'è palpito. Dell'universo intero, misterioso,  
altero, croce e delizia al cor.

VIOLETTA: Ah, se ciò è ver, fuggitemi ... Solo  
amistade io v'offro: Amar non so, nè soffro un  
così eroico amor. Io sono franca, ingenua; altra  
cerca dovete; non arduo troverete dimenti-  
carmi allor.

GASTONE (looks in at the door): Ebben? ...  
che diavol fate?

VIOLETTA: Sì folleggiava ...

GASTONE: Ah! ah! ... sta ben ... restate.

VIOLETTA: Amor dunque non più ... Vi garba  
il patto?

ALFREDO: Io v'obbedisco ... Parto ...

VIOLETTA: A tal giungeste? Prendete questo  
fiore.

ALFREDO: Perchè?

VIOLETTA: Per riportarlo ...

ALFREDO: Quando?

VIOLETTA: Quando sarà appassito.

ALFREDO: Oh ciel! domani ...

VIOLETTA: Ebbene; domani.

ALFREDO: Io son felice!

VIOLETTA: D'amarmi dite ancora?

ALFREDO: Oh, quanto v'amo! ...

VIOLETTA: Partite?

ALFREDO: Parto.

VIOLETTA: Addio.

ALFREDO: Di più non bramo. (exit)

ALL: Si ridesta in ciel l'aurora, e n'è forza di  
partir; mercede a voi, gentil signora, di sì  
splendidi gioir. La città di feste è piena, volge  
il tempo dei piacer; nel riposo ancor la lena  
si ritemprer per goder.

(the guests take leave of Violetta and depart)

VIOLETTA: È strano! ... è strano! ... in core  
scoplii ho quegli accenti! Saria per me  
sventura un serio amore? Che risolvì, o  
turbata anima mia? Null'uomo ancora t'accen-  
deva ... O gioia ch'io non conobbi, essere  
amata amando! ... E sdegnarla poss'io per

VIOLETTA: How pale I look! (Sees Alfredo)  
You here?

ALFREDO: You are yourself again, I hope.

VIOLETTA: I'm better.

ALFREDO: This life of Paris some day will kill  
you. Let me beseech you, consider your health  
and leave it.

VIOLETTA: How can I do so?

ALFREDO: If you were mine, how I should love  
to be the guardian of your health and life.

VIOLETTA: My guardian? There's not a soul  
who cares aught for me.

ALFREDO: Can you suppose that no one loves  
you?

VIOLETTA: I do.

ALFREDO: I love you, I do.

VIOLETTA: How charming! I am afraid I had  
forgotten you, sir!

ALFREDO: You mock me? Are you so heartless?

VIOLETTA: Perhaps—yes—heartless—but why  
do you ask me?

ALFREDO: Heartless must be, if you make  
love only a jest.

VIOLETTA: Are you so serious?

ALFREDO: Could I deceive you?

VIOLETTA: How long then is it you've lov'd  
me?

ALFREDO: A year and longer. Could I forget it,  
that hour of joy, when first your beauty won  
me? And though you seem'd to shun me, love  
came to birth that night! Oh, could I tell you  
how all was transform'd for me! Love fill'd the  
world and my heart from that very hour, love  
universal, holy, mysterious power, torture,  
torment and madness, vision of rapture, joy and  
delight!

VIOLETTA: Let us be friends, no more than  
that; offer me no devotion. My heart as yet is  
hard and whole; I cannot feign such deep  
emotion. Pleasure is all I ask of life; never shall  
love come nigh me. And I must bid you fly  
me; some other love you soon will find.

GASTONE (looks in at the door): Aha! still here  
together?

VIOLETTA: Just talking nonsense.

GASTONE: So I should guess. Continue.

VIOLETTA: Of love you'll say no more—have I  
your promise?

ALFREDO: I must obey you. Good-bye.

VIOLETTA: So soon you're going?

Have a flower—just for remembrance—  
ALFREDO: Of what?

VIOLETTA: You must return it.

ALFREDO: But when?

VIOLETTA: When you are sure it's faded.

ALFREDO: I will. To-morrow.

VIOLETTA: You may. To-morrow.

ALFREDO: Ah, now I know you love me!

VIOLETTA: Remember what you promis'd! No  
talk of love!

ALFREDO: I love you, ah, I love you!

VIOLETTA: You're going?

ALFREDO: You bade me.

VIOLETTA: Good-bye.

ALFREDO: I am contented. (exit)

ALL: See, the early rays of morning tell us we  
ought now to leave you; we will not neglect the  
warning, and will wish you sweet repose. All  
our thanks to you we proffer for these moments  
of delight; gladly would we make the offer thus  
to revel every night!

VIOLETTA: He loves me! He loves me! Those  
words in my heart are grav'd for ever. And  
could it bring misfortune to love sincerely?  
Yet my heart feels a strange and sad fore-  
boding. No man has mov'd me yet to love him.  
Oh, rapture I never knew of, to love and be



l'aride follie del viver mio? Ah, fors'è lui che l'anima solinga ne' tumulti godea sovente pingere de'suoi colori occultati... Lui che modesto e vigile all'egre soglie ascese, e nuova febbre accese, destandomi all'amor. A quell'amor ch'è palpito dell'universo intero, misterioso, altero, croce e delizia al cor. Follie... follie!... delirio vano è questo!... Povera donna, sola, abbandonata in questo popoloso deserto che appellano Parigi, che spero o più?... Che far degg'io!... Gioire, di voluttà nei vortici perire. Sempre libera degg'io folleggiar di gioia in gioia, vo' che scorra il viver mio pei sentieri del piacer. Nasca il giorno, o il giorno muoia, sempre lieta ne' ritrovi a diletto sempre nuovi dee volare il mio pensier.

(Alfredo is heard singing outside)

ALFREDO: A quell'amor ch'è palpito dell'universo intero, misterioso, altero, croce e delizia al cor.

Side 2  
ACT II  
SCENE 1

*A room on the ground floor of a country house at Auteuil, near Paris. It is afternoon.*

ALFREDO (*enters from the garden*): Lunge da lei per me non v'ha diletto! Volaron già tre lune dacché la mia Violetta agì per me lasciò, dovizie, onori, e le pompose feste ove, agli omaggi avvezza, vedea schiavo ciascun di sua bellezza... Ed ora contenta in questi ameni luoghi tutto scorda per me. Qui presso a lei io rinasci mi sento, e dal soffio d'amor rigenerato scordo ne' gaudi suoi tutto il passato. De' miei bollenti spiriti il giovanile ardore ella temprò col placido sorriso dell'amore! Dal di che disse: vivere io voglio a te fedel, dell'universo immemore io vivo quasi in ciel. Annina, donde vieni?

ANNINA: Da Parigi.

ALFREDO: Chi tel commise?

ANNINA: Fu la mia signora.

ALFREDO: Perché?

ANNINA: Per alienar cavalli, cocchi, e quanto ancor possiede.

ALFREDO: Che mai sento!

ANNINA: Lo spendio è grande a viver qui solinghi...

ALFREDO: E tacevi?

ANNINA: Mi fu il silenzio imposto.

ALFREDO: Imposito!... o v'abbisogna?...

ANNINA: Mille luigi.

ALFREDO: Or vane... andrò a Parigi. Questo colloquio ignori la signora. Il tutto valgo a riparare ancora.

VIOLETTA (*enters*): Alfredo?

ANNINA: Per Parigi o partiva.

VIOLETTA: E tornerà?

ANNINA: Pria che tramonti il giorno... Dirvel m'impose...

VIOLETTA: È Strano!

GIUSEPPE: Per voi...

VIOLETTA: Sta ben. In breve giungerà un uom d'affari... Entri all'istante.

belovéd! And can I dare disdain it, prefer the life of madness I now am living? Ah, years ago when I was young into my maiden fancies came there a secret longing. Something that once a poet sung told me there must be one heart only to mine belonging. And of that heavenly lover I was for ever dreaming, seeking that vision gleaming, star of my life's dark night! Yes, it was love that I needed to waken me, love was for me as the sun to an opening flower; love universal, holy, mysterious power, torture, and madness, vision of rapture joy and delight! What madness! What madness! Such dreams are vain delusions. My fate is hopeless—a woman, by all abandon'd to live alone and friendless in this cruel desert we call Paris! What can I do? What is my future? Enjoy life! Yes, drain the cup of pleasure, and of its poison die! I'll enjoy the round of pleasure free from every care and sorrow, heedless what may dawn to-morrow, plunge in every joy to-night! Thus alone my hours I'll measure, by the rapture they invite; no remembrance ever treasure, rather grasp at new delight!

ALFREDO: Oh, could I tell you how all is transform'd for me! Love fills the world and my heart from this very hour; love universal, holy, mysterious power, torture, and madness, vision of rapture, joy and delight!

ALFREDO (*enters from the garden*): I care for nothing, if she's not there to share it. Three months we've liv'd together; three months ago Violetta left the gay world for me, left Paris in secret, deserting all the others who offer'd her their homage, enchanted by her spell, her charm and beauty! Here in the country she knows herself contented to forget all for me. Yes, and through her what a change has come upon me! I forget all the past and its delusions, I live for her alone—her love has transform'd me! After a wild unruly life by reckless passions guided, she brought me back to peace and calm, she made me understand how to love. When she her promise freely gave to live for me alone, I from that moment knew that I had reach'd the height of heaven above. Where have you been, Annina?

ANNINA: Sir, in Paris.

ALFREDO: What were you doing?

ANNINA: I went by Madam's order.

ALFREDO: But why?

ANNINA: To arrange the sale of every single thing that she possesses.

ALFREDO: What can this mean?

ANNINA: It means that life in the country is expensive.

ALFREDO: And you said nothing?

ANNINA: She told me not to tell you.

ALFREDO: She told you? How much is owing?

ANNINA: One thousand louis.

ALFREDO: I'll go then myself to Paris and fetch the money; say nothing to your mistress. I must myself make sure of reparation. (*exit*)

VIOLETTA (*enters*): Where's the master?

ANNINA: He has just gone off to Paris.

VIOLETTA: And for how long?

ANNINA: He will be back this evening, he bade me tell you.

VIOLETTA: How curious!

GIUSEPPE: Madam.

VIOLETTA: Thank you. My lawyer will be coming very shortly; don't keep him waiting.

VIOLETTA (*opens the letter*): Ah ah! scopriva Flora il mio ritiro!... E m'invita a danzar per questa sera! Invan m'aspetterà...

GIUSEPPE (*enters*): È qui un signore...

VIOLETTA: Ah! sarà lui che attendo.

(*Giuseppe shows in Mr. Germont*)

GERMONT: Madamigella Valéry?...

VIOLETTA: Son io.

GERMONT: D'Alfredo il padre in me vedete!

VIOLETTA: Voi!

GERMONT: Sì, dell'incauto, che a ruina corre, ammalato da voi.

VIOLETTA: Donna son io, signore, ed in mia casa; ch'io vi lasci assentite, più per voi che per me.

GERMONT: (Quai modi!) Pure...

VIOLETTA: Tratto in error voi foste.

GERMONT: De' suoi beni dono vuol farvi...

VIOLETTA: Non l'osò finora... Rifiuterei.

GERMONT: Pur tanto lusso...

VIOLETTA: A tutti è mistero quest'atto... A voi nol sia.

GERMONT (*reading with great astonishment*): Ciel! che discopro! D'ogni vostro avere o volete spogliarvi? Ah, il passato perché, perché v'accusa?

VIOLETTA: Più non esiste... o amo Alfredo, e Dio lo cancellò col pentimento mio.

GERMONT: Nobili sensi invero!

VIOLETTA: Oh, come dolce mi suona il vostro accento!

GERMONT: Ed a tai sensi un sacrificio chieggo...

VIOLETTA: Ah no, tacete... Terribil cosa chiedereste certo... Il previdi... v'attesi... era felice... Troppo...

GERMONT: D'Alfredo il padre la sorte, l'avvenir domanda o qui de' suoi due figli.

VIOLETTA: Di due figli!

GERMONT: Sì. Pura siccome un angelo iddio mi die' una figlia; se Alfredo nega riedere in seno alla famiglia, l'amato e amante giovane, cui sposa andar dovea, o si ricusa al vincolo che lieti ne rendea... Deh, non mutate in triboli le rose dell'amor. Ai prieghi miei resistere non voglia il vostro cor.

VIOLETTA: Ah, comprendo... dovrò per alcun tempo da Alfredo allontanarmi... doloroso fora per me... pur...

GERMONT: Non è ciò che chiedo.

VIOLETTA: Cielo, che più cercate?... offersi assai!

GERMONT: Pur non basta...

VIOLETTA: Volete che per sempre a lui rinunzi?

GERMONT: È d'uopo!...

VIOLETTA: Ah, no... giammai! Non sapete quale affetto vivo, immenso m'arda in petto? Che né amici, né parenti io non conto tra i viventi? E che Alfredo m'ha giurato che in lui tutto io troverò? Non sapete che colpita d'atro morbo è la mia vita? Che già presso il fin ne vedo? Ch'io mi separi da Alfredo? Ah, il supplizio è sì spietato, che morir preferirò.

GERMONT: È grave il sacrificio, ma pur tranquilla udite... Bella voi siete e giovane... Col tempo...

VIOLETTA: Ah, più non dite... V'intendo... m'è impossibile... Lui solo amar vogli'io.

VIOLETTA (*opens the letter*): Haha! So Flora knows where I am hiding and invites me to a dance this very evening. She will not see me there.

GIUSEPPE (*enters*): The gentleman is here, ma'am.

VIOLETTA: Show him in at once, please.

(*Giuseppe shows in Mr. Germont*)

GERMONT: Miss Valéry?

VIOLETTA: I am, sir.

GERMONT: I am the father of Alfredo.

VIOLETTA: Yes?

GERMONT: Yes, of that foolish boy whom your fascinations have been luring to ruin.

VIOLETTA: Sir, pray remember I'm a woman, and in my own house. You'll allow me to leave you, more for your sake than mine.

GERMONT: What dignity! (*to Violetta*)

Madam—

VIOLETTA: Sir, you are quite mistaken.

GERMONT: He would settle upon you his inheritance!

VIOLETTA: If he dar'd to suggest that, I should refuse.

GERMONT: Who pays for this, then?

VIOLETTA: That is no affair of yours, sir; but this will tell you.

GERMONT (*reading with great astonishment*): Heavens! What are you doing? Do you mean to sacrifice every thing you're possess'd of? Yet for all that your past will still reproach you.

VIOLETTA: My past is done with. I have repented; I love your son alone, and hope for God's forgiveness.

GERMONT: You have a noble nature.

VIOLETTA: Oh, let me thank you for all your words of kindness!

GERMONT: Yes, now I know you, I ask for something further.

VIOLETTA: Ah, no! What is it? Do you demand the last extreme sacrifice? I foresaw it—I knew it; such bliss was bound to vanish!

GERMONT: A father speaks to you. In your hands, yes, in your hands lies the fate of both my children.

VIOLETTA: You have two then?

GERMONT: Yes. I have a son, a daughter too; hers is the fate impending. For while my son lives here with you, her hopes of joy are ending. She is in the holy bond of love soon was to be united; why does the bridegroom suddenly renounce the troth he plighted? I know that my benighted son has but himself to blame; But I can only beg of you and pray: Have pity on a father's shame!

VIOLETTA: Ah, you ask me to separate from Alfredo until the wedding's over? He must leave me, just for the time—yes—

GERMONT: That is not sufficient.

VIOLETTA: Heavens! What more then would you?

GERMONT: Something more.

VIOLETTA: You cannot mean that we should part for ever?

GERMONT: Indeed I do.

VIOLETTA: Ah, no! ah, no! not that! Oh, consider how I love him with a passion all-transcending! I have no one to be near me, none to counsel or to cheer me; he alone, he has promis'd to be all in all to me. I must tell you, I am stricken by a malady that's relentless; round me daily I see death hover. Must I lose my one true lover? No, the sacrifice you ask of me is more than heart can suffer; rather than part from him I would sooner die.

GERMONT: The sacrifice is heavy. But I have more to say to you. Youthful as you are and beautiful, the future—

VIOLETTA: I understand you. But never shall this heart be chang'd; I love him, and love for ever.



GERMONT: Sia pure . . . ma volubile sovente è l'uom . . .

VIOLETTA: Gran Dio!

GERMONT: Un dì, quando le veneri il tempo avrà fugate fia presto il tedio a sorgere . . . Che sarà allora? . . . pensate . . . Per voi non avran balsamo i più soavi affetti! Poiché dal ciel non furono tai nodi benedetti . . .

VIOLETTA: È vero!

GERMONT: Ah, dunque sperdasi tal sogno seduttore . . . Siate di mia famiglia l'angiol consolatore . . . Violetta, deh, pensateli, ne siete in tempo ancor. È Dio che ispira, o giovine, tai detti a un genitor.

VIOLETTA: Così alla misera—ch'è un dì caduta di più risorgere—speranza è muta! Se pur benefico—le indulga Iddio, l'uomo implacabile—per lei sarà. Dite alla giovine—sì bella e pura ch'avvi una vittima—della sventura, cui resta un unico—raggio di bene . . . Che a lei il sacrificio—che morrà!

GERMONT: Sì, piangi, o misera . . . —supremo, il veggio, è il sacrificio—ch'ora ti chieggo. Sento nell'anima—già le tue pene; coraggio . . . e il nobile—cor vincerà.

VIOLETTA: Or imponete.

GERMONT: Non amarlo ditegli.

VIOLETTA: Nol crederà.

GERMONT: Partite.

VIOLETTA: Seguirammi.

GERMONT: Allor . . .

VIOLETTA: Qual figlia m'abbracciate . . . forte così sarò. Tra breve ei vi fia reso, ma afflitto oltre ogni dire. A suo conforto di colà volete.

GERMONT: Che pensate?

VIOLETTA: Sapendol, v'opporreste al pensier mio.

GERMONT: Generosa! . . . e per voi che far poss'io?

VIOLETTA: Morrò! . . . la mia memoria non fia ch'ei maledica, se le mie pene orribili vi sia chi almen gli dica. Conosca il sacrificio ch'io consumai d'amor . . . Che sarà suo fin l'ultimo sospiro del mio cor.

GERMONT: No, generosa, vivere, e lieta voi dovreste, merce' di queste lagrime dal cielo un giorno avrete; premiato il sacrificio sarà del vostro amor; d'un'opra così nobile sarete fiera allor.

VIOLETTA: Qui giunge alcun! partite! . . .

GERMONT: Ah, grato v'è il cor mio! . . .

VIOLETTA: Non ci vedrem più forse . . .

VIOLETTA, GERMONT: Siate felice . . . Addio!

VIOLETTA: Dammi tu forza, o cielo!

(she sits down, writes a letter and rings the bell)

ANNINA (enters): Mi richiedeste?

VIOLETTA: Sì, reca tu stessa questo foglio . . .

ANNINA: O!

VIOLETTA: Silenzio . . . va all'istante. Ed ora si scriva a lui . . . Che gli dirò? Chi men darà il coraggio?

ALFREDO (enters): Che fia?

VIOLETTA: Nulla.

ALFREDO: Scrivemi?

VIOLETTA: Sì . . . no . . .

ALFREDO: Qual turbamento! . . . a chi scrivete?

VIOLETTA: A te . . .

ALFREDO: Dammi quel foglio.

VIOLETTA: No, per ora . . .

ALFREDO: Mi perdona . . . son io preoccupato.

VIOLETTA: Che fu?

GERMONT: You may do. But the hearts of men can't often change.

VIOLETTA: Oh heaven!

GERMONT: The day will come, you know it will, when youth and beauty moulder; and pleasure turns to dreariness as you and he grow older. A life like yours is sure to end in sorrow and affliction, for sin can never hope to gain a holy benediction.

VIOLETTA: I know it! I know it!

GERMONT: Oh, make my daughter's happiness secure by your renunciation! Take your decision now at once, before it is too late; believe me, Heaven itself inspires these words of mine, that you may save my daughter from a dreadful fate.

VIOLETTA: Thus of the last hope of all you bereave me; no, not a chance of redemption you leave me. Tell her, your daughter dear, so pure and blameless, one who was led astray, one who is nameless, one who a single hope nurtured and cherished, that hope in sacrifice offers for her and for her sake will die.

GERMONT: Courage, courage! Seek relief in tears. If to this last extreme I press you, I know how deeply 'twill distress you; yet for your sacrifice Heaven will bless you.

VIOLETTA: What am I to do?

GERMONT: Say you have no more love for him.

VIOLETTA: He'll not believe that.

GERMONT: Then leave him.

VIOLETTA: He will follow.

GERMONT: If so—

VIOLETTA: Qual figlia m'abbracciate; you thus will give me strength. He soon shall be restored to you. Wait there, (pointing to garden) be ready, he'll need a father's comfort.

GERMONT: What are you planning?

VIOLETTA: 'Tis better not to tell you.

GERMONT: From my heart I can only thank you!

VIOLETTA: I die, but this I beg of you: When my wretched life is over, make known to him my sacrifice, my fate to him discover. This one request I make you, that you'll one day assure him I never changed in love for him nor can for evermore.

GERMONT: Nay, think no more, no more of death! Your sacrifice in Heaven recorded, may bring you yet a happier life, by God's own grace rewarded. Be sure that now in Heaven your sins are all forgiven; the memory of your noble act you never will deplore.

VIOLETTA: Someone is coming; pray leave me.

GERMONT: With all my heart I thank you.

VIOLETTA: Pray leave me. We meet no more in this world.

VIOLETTA, GERMONT: I wish you happiness.

Farewell.

VIOLETTA: Heaven grant me strength to bear it!

(she sits down, writes a letter and rings the bell)

ANNINA (enters): Did you ring for me, ma'am?

VIOLETTA: Yes. Please go yourself and take this letter.

ANNINA: Oh!

VIOLETTA: Say nothing; this is urgent. (exit Annina) Now I must write to Alfredo. What can I say? How can I find the courage?

ALFREDO (enters): What's that?

VIOLETTA: Nothing.

ALFREDO: A letter?

VIOLETTA: Yes—no—

ALFREDO: What is the matter? To whom were you writing?

VIOLETTA: To you.

ALFREDO: Then let me read it.

VIOLETTA: Not this moment.

ALFREDO: Oh, forgive me! My thoughts are all distracted.

VIOLETTA: But why?

ALFREDO: Giunse mio padre . . .

VIOLETTA: Lo vedesti?

ALFREDO: Ah, no: severo scritto mi lasciava . . . Però l'attendo, t'amerà in vederti.

VIOLETTA: Ch'ei qui non mi sorprenda . . . Lascia che m'allontani . . . tu lo calma . . . Ai piedi suoi mi getterò . . . divisi ci più non ne vorrà . . . saremo felici . . . Perché tu m'ami, Alfredo, non è vero?

ALFREDO: Oh, quanto . . . Perché piangi?

VIOLETTA: D lagrime avea d'uopo . . . or son tranquilla . . . Lo vedi? . . . ti sorrido . . . Sarò là, tra quei fior presso a te sempre. Amami, Alfredo, quant'io t'amo . . . Addio.

ALFREDO: Ah, vive sol quel core all'amor mio! . . . È tardi: ed oggi forse più non verrà mio padre.

GIUSEPPE (enters): La signora è partita . . . L'attendevo un calesse, e sulla via già corre di Parigi . . . Annina pure prima di lei spariva.

ALFREDO: Il so, ti calma.

GIUSEPPE: (Che vuol dir ciò?) (exit)

ALFREDO: Va forse d'ogni avere ad affrettar la perdita . . . Ma Annina lo impedirà. Qualcuno è nel giardino! Chi è là? . . .

(enter a Commissionaire)

Il signor Germont?

ALFREDO: Son io.

COMMISSIONAIRE: Una dama da un cocchio, per voi, di qua non lunge, mi diede questo scritto . . .

ALFREDO: Di Violetta! Perché son io commosso! . . . A raggiungerla forse ella m'invita . . . Io tremo! . . . Oh ciel . . . Coraggio! . . . 'Alfredo, al giungervi di questo foglio . . . Ah! . . .

(he turns and finds himself facing his father)

Padre mio! . . .

GERMONT: Mio figlio! . . . Oh, quanto soffri! . . . tergi, ah, tergi il pianto . . . Ritorna di tuo padre orgoglio e vanto. Di Provenza il mar, il suol—chi dal cor ti cancellò? Al natio fulgente sol—qual destino ti furò? Oh, rammenta pur nel duol—ch'ivi gioia a te brillò; e che pace colà sol—su te splendere ancor può. Dio mi guidò! Ah! il tuo vecchio genitor—tu non sai quanto soffri . . . Te lontano, di squallor—il suo tetto si coprì . . . Ma se alfin ti trovo ancor,—se in me speme non falli, se la voce dell'onor—in te appien non ammuti, Dio m'esaudi!

ALFREDO (suddenly sees Flora's letter on the table, reads it): Ah! . . . ell'è alla festa! volisi l'offesa a vendicar.

GERMONT: Che dici? Ah, ferma!

ALFREDO: My father has call'd here.

VIOLETTA: Did you see him?

ALFREDO: I was out. He left a letter, an angry letter. He'll call again soon. But when he sees you he'll adore you!

VIOLETTA: No, no, he must not find me. I think I'd better leave you. You will calm him, and I will kneel before his feet; he will consent to all we ask, and ever after we shall be happy, because you love me—oh, Alfredo, say you love me!

ALFREDO: I love you! Why are you weeping?

VIOLETTA: I wept because I could not help it. But now it's over—you see me? I am smiling. I shall wait there in the garden. Love me, beloved, no less than I love you! Farewell.

### Side 3

ALFREDO: She only lives and loves me because I love her! I hardly can think my father will come so late to see me.

GIUSEPPE (enters): Please sir, Madam has departed. She has order'd a carriage; she told the coachman to take the road for Paris. Annina too went away, before her mistress.

ALFREDO: I know, she told me.

GIUSEPPE (aside): 'Tis very strange. (exit)

ALFREDO: She must have gone to see about the disposal of her property. But Annina will prevent the sale. There's someone in the garden. Who's there?

Are you Mr. Germont?

ALFREDO: I am.

COMMISSIONAIRE: A lady in a carriage, not very far from here, sir, gave me this letter for you.

ALFREDO: From Violetta! Why do my fingers tremble? Does she want me to join her in Paris? I hesitate—but why? I'll read it. 'Dear Alfredo, I write to say that all is over—' Ah!

Father, father!

GERMONT: Come back to me! I am your father! My son, take comfort, return to those who love you, return to your father! By what fatal error led did your foolish footsteps roam? Why has every memory fled of your old ancestral home? Has no single fleeting thought e'er recall'd that peaceful place? Could your mind be so distraught? Could you come so near disgrace? If I now may bring you back to your loving father's side, God was my guide! Could you never call to mind how we waited all in vain, how your sister sadly pin'd, how your father groan'd in pain? If I find you once again, willing now my life to share, God heard my prayer!

ALFREDO (suddenly sees Flora's letter on the table, reads it): Ah! She's gone to Flora's! I'll go too, and there my wrongs avenge!

GERMONT: Oh madness! Oh, madness!

### SCENE 2

Saloon in Flora's house, luxuriously furnished. She is entertaining a large party.

FLORA: Avrem lieta di maschere la notte: N'è d'uce il viscontino . . . Violetta ed Alfredo anco invitati.

MARCHESE: La novità ignorate? Violetta e Germont sono disgiunti.

FLORA: Fia vero? . . .

MARCHESE: Ella verrà qui col barone.

DOCTOR: Li vidi ieri ancor . . . parean felici.

FLORA: Silenzio . . . udite? . . .

ALL: Giungono gli amici.

FLORA: To-night we're to have a Spanish ballet, got up of course by Gastone. Violetta and Alfredo are both coming too.

MARCHESE: Have you not heard the news, then? They say she has left Alfredo for ever. FLORA: You don't say so!

MARCHESE: She'll be here to-night with the Barone.

DOCTOR: 'Twas only yesterday I saw them so happy.

FLORA: Stop talking!

ALL: Here they come, the dancers!



GYPSIES: Noi siamo zingarelle venute da lontano; d'ognuno sulla mano leggiamo l'avvenir. Se consultiamo le stelle null'avvi a noi d'oscuro, e i casi del futuro possiamo altrui predire.

(A single gypsy advances to Flora)

Vediamo! Voi, signora, rivali alquanto avete.

(another gypsy approaches the Marchese)

Marchese, voi non siete model di fedeltà.

FLORA (teasing Marchese): Fate il galante ancora? ... Ben, vo' me la paghiate ... MARCHESE: Che diancin vi pensate? ... L'accusa è falsità.

FLORA: La volpe lascia il pelo, non abbandona il vizio ... Marchese mio, giudizio ... O vi farò pentir.

ALL: Su via, si stenda un velo sui fatti del passato; gli quel ch'è stato è stato, badate all'avvenir.

GUESTS: Di Madride noi siamo mattadori, siamo i prodi del circo de' tori, testé giunti a godere del chiasso che a Parigi si fa pel bue grasso; e una storia, se udire vorrete, quali amanti noi siamo saprete.

FLORA AND OTHERS: Sì, sì, bravi; narrate, narrate: Con piacere l'udremo ...

GUESTS: Ascoltate. È Piquillo un bel gagliardo biscaglino mattador: Forte il braccio, fiero il guardo, delle giostré egli è signor. D'andalusa giovinetta follemente innamorò; ma la bella ritrossetta così al giovine parlò: Cinque tori in un sol giorno vo' vederti ad atterrare; e, se vinci, al tuo ritorno mano e cor ti vo' donar. Sì, gli disse, e il mattadore, alle giostré mosse il piè; cinque tori, vincitore, sull'arena egli stende.

FLORA AND OTHERS: Bravo, bravo il mattadore, ben gagliardo si mostrò, se alla giovane l'amore in tal guisa egli provò.

GUESTS: Poi, tra plausi, ritornato alla bella del suo cor, colse il premio desiato tra le braccia dell'amor.

FLORA AND OTHERS: Con tai prove i mattadori san le belle conquistar!

GUESTS: Ma qui son più miti i cori; a noi basta folleggiar ...

ALL: Sì, sì, allegri ... O pria tentiamo della sorte il vario umor; la palestra dischiudiamo agli audaci giuocatori. Alfredo! ... Voi! ...

ALFREDO: Sì, amici ...

FLORA: Violetta?

ALFREDO: Non ne so.

ALL: Ben disinvolto! ... Bravo! ... Or via giuocar si può.

(enter Violetta on the arm of the Barone.)

FLORA: Qui desiata giungi.

VIOLETTA: Cessi al cortese invito.

FLORA: Grata vi son, barone, d'averlo pur gradito.

BARONE (aside to Violetta): Germont è qui! il vedete!

VIOLETTA: Cielo! ... gli è vero. Il vedo.

BARONE: Da voi non un sol detto si volga a questo Alfredo.

VIOLETTA: Ah, perchè venni, incauta! Pietà di me, gran Dio!

FLORA: Meco t'assidi; narrami ... quai novità vegg'io?

ALFREDO: Un quattro!

GASTONE: Ancora hai vinto!

GYPSIES: We come from lands afar; over all the earth we wander. Our home is always yonder; an ancient race are we. For centuries the stars above have been our only guide; from them we learn the mysteries to other folk denied.

My lady, I must warn you that you have many rivals.

My lord, you're not remarkable for faithfulness in love.

FLORA (teasing Marchese): You still pursue adventures? I'll punish you for that, sir!

MARCHESE: I never heard such nonsense! It's perfectly untrue.

FLORA: I need no gypsy's warning; I know what you've been at, sir, and if you are not careful 'twill be the worse for you.

ALL: You'd better draw a veil over all that's past and done with; for human nature's frail and is all too oft ensnar'd.

GUESTS: From the arena we come in glory, heroes all of the bullfight so gory! We have come from Madrid and from Seville, here in Paris to feast and revel. Spanish lovers are all in the fashion; hear our stories of blood and of passion!

FLORA AND OTHERS: Yes, you bullfighters bear all before you; Spanish ladies, we know, all adore you.

GUESTS: Hear a story! Brave and strong was young Piquillo, pride of all the northern shore; stalwart, handsome, fine young fellow, he became a matador. Him a fair young maid of Seville by her beauty did enslave; she'd the temper of the devil, and to him this answer gave. 'When five bulls I've seen your slaughter in the course of one day's fight, Andalusia's haughty daughter then may grant you love's delight.' 'That will I,' said young Piquillo; in the arena sought renown; five great bulls he slew in combat all before the sun went down.

FLORA AND OTHERS: Bravo! that's a tale of prowess such as we have seldom heard; but what you must tell us now is how the lady kept her word.

GUESTS: He when all the fight was over sought the maid whom he ador'd; she with rapture hail'd her lover, he enjoy'd his due reward.

FLORA AND OTHERS: Only those who brave all dangers can the heart of woman fire.

GUESTS: We to bullfights all are strangers; pleasure's all that we desire.

ALL: Then sit down and take your chances, show your courage now in play; fortune waits on your advances, tempt her, win her, while you may!

What, Alfredo. You?

ALFREDO: Yes. Good evening!

FLORA: Where's Violetta?

ALFREDO: How should I know?

ALL: How independent! Bravo! Come, sit down and play.

FLORA: How nice to see you here again!

VIOLETTA: So kind of you to ask me!

FLORA: Barone, I'm really grateful that you have brought her here.

BARONE (aside to Violetta): Germont is here; do you see him?

VIOLETTA: Oh, this is dreadful! I see him.

BARONE: You understand, I forbid you to speak a single word with him.

VIOLETTA: Why, oh, why did I ever come here?

I can but pray, Heaven have mercy on me!

FLORA: Now you must tell me everything.

ALFREDO: A four!

GASTONE: You've won again, sir.

ALFREDO: Sfortunata nell'amore vale fortuna al giuoco! ...

ALL: È sempre vincitore! ...

VIOLETTA: Oh, vincerò stasera; e l'oro guadagnato poscia a goder tra' campi ritornerò beato.

FLORA: Solo?

ALFREDO: No, no, con tale che vi fu meco ancor, poi mi sfuggia ...

VIOLETTA: Mio Dio! ...

GASTONE: Pietà di lei!

BARONE (to Alfredo): Signor!

VIOLETTA: Frenatevi, o vi lascio.

ALFREDO: Barone, m'appellaste?

BARONE: Siete in sì gran fortuna, che al gioco mi tentate.

ALFREDO: Sì? ... la disdita accetto ...

VIOLETTA: Che fia? morir mi sento!

BARONE: Cento luigi a destra.

ALFREDO: Ed alla manca cento.

GASTONE: Un asse ... un fante ... hai vinto!

BARONE: Il doppio?

ALFREDO: Il doppio sia.

GASTONE: Un quattro, un sette.

ALL: Ancora!

ALFREDO: Pur la vittoria è mia!

GUESTS: Bravo davvero! ... la sorte è tutta per Alfredo! ...

FLORA: Del villeggiar la spesa farà il baron, già il vedo.

ALFREDO (to the Barone): Seguite pur.

SERVANT (to Flora): La cena è pronta.

FLORA (mockingly, to the Barone): Andiamo.

GUESTS (mockingly, to the Barone): Andiamo.

ALFREDO: Se continuar v'aggrada ...

BARONE: Per ora noi possiamo: Più tardi la rivincita.

ALFREDO: Al gioco che vorrete.

BARONE: Seguiam gli amici; poscia ...

ALFREDO: Sarò qual bramerete.

VIOLETTA (re-enters): Invitato a qui seguirmi, verrà desso? ... vorrà udirmi? ... Ei verrà, che l'odio atroce puote in lui più di mia voce ...

ALFREDO: Mi chiamaste? che bramate?

VIOLETTA: Questi luoghi abbandonate ... Un pericolo vi sovrasta ...

ALFREDO: Ah, comprendo! ... Basta, basta ... E si velle mi credete? ...

VIOLETTA: Ah, no mai ...

ALFREDO: Ma che temete? ...

VIOLETTA: Temo sempre del Barone ...

ALFREDO: È tra noi mortal quistione ... S'ei cadrà per mano mia un sol colpo vi torria coll'amante il protettore ... V'atterrisce tal sciagura?

VIOLETTA: Me s'ei fosse l'uccisore? Ecco l'unica sventura ... Ch'io pavento a me fatale!

ALFREDO: La mia morte! ... Che ven cale? ...

VIOLETTA: Deh, partite, e sull'istante.

VIOLETTA: Partirò, ma giura innante che dovunque seguirai i miei passi ...

ALFREDO: E chi potea? ...

VIOLETTA: Ah, no, I cannot—

ALFREDO: No! giammai! ...

VIOLETTA: Va, sciagurato. Sconda un nome ch'è infamato. Va ... mi lascia sul momento ... Di fuggirti un giuramento ... Sacro io feci ...

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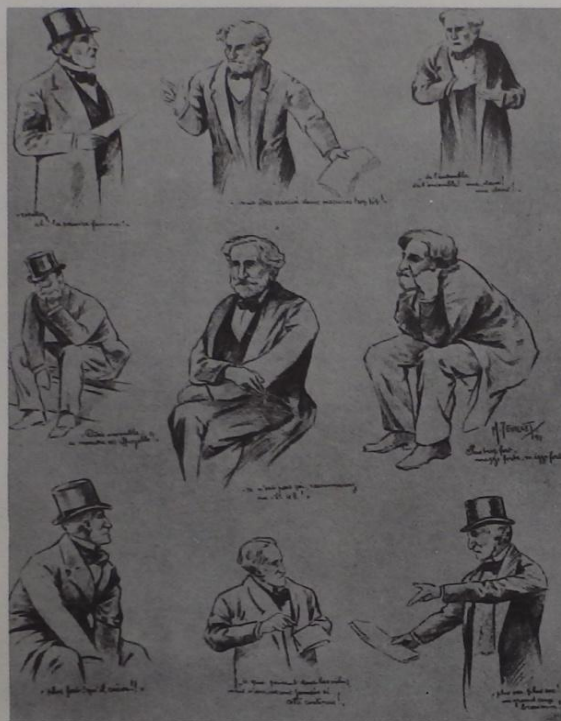
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ALFREDO: No! giammai!





Verdi during a rehearsal (Collection Musica).

ALFREDO: Or tutti a me.  
ALL: Ne appellaste? ... Che volete?

ALFREDO (pointing to Violetta): Questa donna conoscete?  
ALL: Chi? ... Violetta?  
ALFREDO: Che facesse? Non sapete?

VIOLETTA: Ah, taci ...  
ALL: No!

ALFREDO: Ogni suo aver tal femmina per amor mio sperda ... Io cieco, vile, misero, tutto accettar potea. Ma è tempo ancora! ... tergermi da tanta macchia bramo ... Qui testimon vi chiamo che qui pagata io l'ho.

(with furious contempt he throws his winnings at the feet of Violetta.)

ALL: Oh, infamia orribile tu commettesti! ... Un cor sensibile così uccidesti! ... Di donne ignobile insultator, di qui allontanati, ne desti orror.

GERMONT (who has overheard all): Di sprezzo degno sè stesso rende chi pur nell'ira la donna offende. Dov'è mio figlio? ... più non lo vedo: In te più Alfredo—trovar non so. (Io sol fra tanti so qual virtute di quella misera il sen racchiude ... Io so che l'ama, che gli è fedele, Eppure, crudele—tacer dovrò!)

ALFREDO: Ah sì ... che feci! ... ne sento orrore. Gelosa smania, deluso amore mi strazian l'anima ... più non ragiono. Da lei perdono—più non avrò. Volea fuggirla ... non ho potuto! Dall'ira spinto son qui venuto! Or

ALFREDO: Come here, come here!  
ALL: What has happen'd? Why have you call'd us?

ALFREDO (pointing to Violetta): Do you know who is this woman?  
ALL: Who? Violetta?  
ALFREDO: Do you know how she has treated me?

VIOLETTA: Say nothing!  
ALL: No.

ALFREDO: All that she had she spent on me, I let her thus enthrall me. Heartless, she now abandons me; yes, must I now discover, she takes another lover. And so to-night I call you, call you to witness here and now that I have paid her off.

ALL: Shame on you! How can you be so inhuman as thus to shatter the heart of a woman? Shame on you, shame on you! Leave us for ever! Your conduct fills us with loathing and scorn. Hence and away with you, hence and away with you! Outrage like this is too vile to be borne.

GERMONT (who has overheard all): Must I despise you and call you coward? Do I behold you insult a woman? No man of honour, no man of feeling, could fall, not ev'n in anger, to such disgrace and shame.

Ah, none but I know what lies hidden in that pure heart, to speak forbidden. I know she loves him, know how she suffers, yet must I harden this heart of mine.

ALFREDO: What act of madness have I committed! To jealous fury my will submitted. And now with torture my soul is riven; to be forgiven, all hope is lost. I would have fled her; alas! I could not. Blind anger led me whither

che lo sdegno ho disfogato, me sciagurato! ... rimorso n'ho.

VIOLETTA: Alfredo, Alfredo, di questo core non puoi comprendere tutto l'amore; tu non conosci che fino a prezzo del tuo disprezzo—provato io l'ho! Ma verrà giorno in che il saprai ... Com'io t'amassi confesserai ... Dio dai rimorsi ti salvi allora, io spenta ancora—pur t'amerò.

BARONE: A questa donna l'atroce insulto qui tutti offese, ma non inulto fia tanto oltraggio ... provar vi voglio che tanto orgoglio—fiaccar saprò.

ALL: Oh, quanto peni! ... Ma pur far core ... Qui soffre ognuno del tuo dolore; fra cari amici qui sei soltanto; Rasciuga il pianto—che t'inondò.

I would not. The words of hatred I rashly utter'd, I now repent them and pay the cost. VIOLETTA: One moment hear me, my best beloved! You cannot ever know how I have lov'd you. How can I tell you, how I make it clear to you, I had to prove my love through your disdain? But oh, believe me, the day will surely come when all my sacrifice will dawn upon you, and on your conscience may God have mercy, spare you from grief, remorse and pain!

BARONE: For this outrageous insult, I give you warning, I shall demand the proper satisfaction both for the lady and for us all. You have insulted all those here present.

ALL: How you must suffer! But yet take heart; all here in sympathy take your part. Friends all around you comfort are lending, cease from lamenting and weep no more!

#### Side 4

#### ACT III

Violetta's bedroom.

(Violetta is asleep in bed; Annina is also asleep on a chair by the fireplace)

VIOLETTA (waking): Annina?  
ANNINA: Comandate?  
VIOLETTA: Dormivi, poveretta?  
ANNINA: Sì, perdonate.  
VIOLETTA: Dammi d'acqua un sorso. Osserva, è pieno il giorno?  
ANNINA: Son sett'ore.  
VIOLETTA: Dà accesso a un po' di luce ...  
ANNINA: Il signor di Grenville! ...  
VIOLETTA: Oh, il vero amico! ... Alzar mi vo' ... m'aita.

Quanta bontà! ... pensaste a me per tempo! ...  
DOCTOR: Sì, come vi sentite?  
VIOLETTA: Soffre il mio corpo, ma tranquilla ho l'anima. Mi confortò iersera un pio ministro. Religione è sollievo a' sofferenti.

DOCTOR: E questa notte?  
VIOLETTA: Ebbi tranquillo il sonno.  
DOCTOR: Coraggio adunque ... la convalescenza non è lontana ...  
VIOLETTA: Oh la bugia pietosa a' medici è concessa ...  
DOCTOR: Addio ... a più tardi.  
VIOLETTA: Non mi scordate.  
ANNINA (to the Doctor): Come va, signore?

DOCTOR: La tisi non le accorda che poche ore. (exit)  
ANNINA: Or fate cor.  
VIOLETTA: Giorno di festa è questo?  
ANNINA: Tutta Parigi impazza ... è carnevale ...  
VIOLETTA: Ah, nel comun tripudio, sallo il cielo ... Quanti infelici soffron! ... Quale somma v'ha in quello stipo?  
ANNINA: Venti luigi.  
VIOLETTA: Dieci ne reca ai poveri tu stessa.

ANNINA: Poco rimanvi allora ...  
VIOLETTA: Oh, mi sarà bastante; cerca poscia mie lettere.  
ANNINA: Ma voi? ...  
VIOLETTA: Nulla occorrà ... sollecita, se puoi ... (exit)

(Violetta opens a letter)

"Tenete la promessa ... la disfida ebbe luogo! il barone fu ferito, però migliora ... Alfredo è in strano suolo; il vostro sacrificio io stesso gli ho svelato; egli a voi tornerà pel suo perdono; io pur verrò ... Curatevi ... meritate un avvenir migliore. Giorgio Germont." È tardi! ... Attendo, attendo ... né a me giungon mai! ...

VIOLETTA (waking): Annina?  
ANNINA: Did you call me?  
VIOLETTA: I'm sorry, did I wake you?  
ANNINA: Yes, I was sleeping.  
VIOLETTA: Give me a drink of water. Draw the curtains; it must be daylight.  
ANNINA: Seven o'clock, ma'am.

VIOLETTA: Let me have the window open.  
ANNINA: There's the Doctor below.  
VIOLETTA: I'm glad to see him. I must get up. Please help me.  
How kind you are to come to see me so early!

DOCTOR: Well, how are you this morning?  
VIOLETTA: Failing in body, but in soul much strengthen'd. A priest was here last evening and gave me comfort. Oh! How glad I am that I at last have found religion!

DOCTOR: I hope you slept well.  
VIOLETTA: Yes, with a quiet conscience.  
DOCTOR: I'm glad to hear it. Now you can feel sure you will soon recover.

VIOLETTA: No doctor is expected to tell the truth to patients.  
DOCTOR: Good-bye then till this evening.  
VIOLETTA: You won't forget me?

ANNINA (to the Doctor): Tell the truth to me, sir.

DOCTOR: A few more hours to live; then 'twill all be over. (exit)  
ANNINA: You hear the noise?

VIOLETTA: Yes, I can hear them shouting.  
ANNINA: Carnival's at its height now; everyone's crazy.

VIOLETTA: Everyone is rejoicing; but how many suffer the pangs of hunger! How much money have I remaining?

ANNINA: Just twenty louis.  
VIOLETTA: Give the priest ten to help the sick and needy.

ANNINA: That will leave you too little.  
VIOLETTA: I shall not need much more now. Go and ask if a letter's come.

ANNINA: But you?

VIOLETTA: I shall be safe; you need not fear to leave me. (exit)  
'You have kept your promise—the duel took place—the Barone was wounded, but he is recovering. Alfredo has gone abroad. I myself have revealed your sacrifice to him; he will return to implore your forgiveness. I shall come too. Take care of your health—you deserve a happier future. Giorgio Germont.' It is late! I've waited and waited, but they



Oh, come son mutata! Ma il dottore a sperar pure m'esorta! . . . Ah, con tal morbo ogni speranza è morta. Addio, del passato bei sogni ridenti, le rose del volto già sono pallenti; l'amore d'Alfredo pur esso mi manca, conforto, sostegno dell'anima stanco . . . Ah, della travagliata sorridi al desio; a lei, deh, perdona; tu accoglia, o Dio. Or tutto fini!

CHORUS: Largo al quadrupede sir della festa, di fiori e pampini cinto la testa . . . Largo al più docile d'ogni cornuto, di corni e pifferi abbia il saluto. Parigini, date passo al trionfo del Bue grasso. L'Asia, nè l'Africa vide il più bello, vanto ed orgoglio d'ogni macello . . . Allegre maschere, pazzi garzoni, tutti plaudite con canti e suoni! . . . Parigini, date passo al trionfo del Bue grasso.

ANNINA: Signora!  
VIOLETTA: Che t'accade?  
ANNINA: Quest'oggi, è vero? vi sentite meglio? . . .  
VIOLETTA: Sì, perchè?  
ANNINA: D'esser calma promettete?  
VIOLETTA: Sì, che vuoi dirmi?  
ANNINA: Prevenir vi volli . . . Una gioia improvvisa . . .  
VIOLETTA: Una gioia! . . . dicesti? . . .  
ANNINA: Sì, o signora . . .  
VIOLETTA: Alfredo! . . . Ah, tu il vedesti? . . .  
Ei vien! . . . l'affretta.  
VIOLETTA: Alfredo! Amato Alfredo!

ALFREDO: Mia Violetta! . . . Colpevol sono . . . so tutto, o cara.  
VIOLETTA: Io so che alfine reso mi sei! . . .  
ALFREDO: Da questo palpito s'io t'ami imparo, senza te esistere più non potrei.

VIOLETTA: Ah, s'anco in vita m'hai ritrovata, credi che uccidere non può il dolor.  
ALFREDO: Scorda l'affanno, donna adorata, a me perdona e al genitor.  
VIOLETTA: Ch'io ti perdoni? la rea son io; ma solo amore tal mi rende . . .  
VIOLETTA—ALFREDO: Null'uomo o demone, angelo mio, mai più staccarti potrà da me. Parigi, o cara, noi lasceremo, la vita uniti trascorreremo: De' corsi affanni compenso avrai, la tua salute rifierai. Sospiro e luce tu mi sarai, tutto il futuro ne arriderà.

VIOLETTA: Ah, non più, a un tempio . . .  
Alfredo, andiamo, del tuo ritorno grazie rendiamo . . .  
ALFREDO: Tu impallidisci . . .  
VIOLETTA: È nulla, sai! Gioia improvvisa non entra mai senza turbarlo in mesto core . . .

(she sinks exhausted on the sofa)

ALFREDO: Gran Dio! . . . Violetta!  
VIOLETTA: È il mio malore . . . Fu debolezza! ora son forte . . . Vedi? . . . sorrido . . .  
ALFREDO: Ah, cruda sorte!  
VIOLETTA: Fu nulla . . . Annina, dammi a vestire.  
ALFREDO: Adesso? . . . Attendi . . .  
VIOLETTA: No . . . voglio uscire.

(Annina hands her a dress, but she is too weak to put it on)

never come to me. How alter'd he will find me! Yet the Doctor said that soon I should recover. Ah, I know better; I know my case is hopeless. For ever has faded that dream so beguiling, and so have the roses on my cheek once smiling. The love and the hope that so fondly I cherish'd, my heart's consolation, for ever have perish'd. I can but pray that my sin be forgiven, and hope for compassion and mercy from Heaven. Ah! must I die without a friend? I only know this is the end.

CHORUS: Here comes the great fatted ox in procession! King of the carnival, beast of tradition; symbol of jollity, see, he advances, hail him with minstrelsy, hail him with dances! To the fatted ox come out and pay your duty! Yes, and isn't he a beauty? Lord of creation the carnival makes him, till to the butcher it finally takes him. Come, merry maskers all, join the procession, sound all your instruments in ancient fashion! To the fatted ox come out and pay your duty! Yes, and isn't he a beauty?

(re-enter Annina hurriedly)

ANNINA: Oh madam—  
VIOLETTA: What has happened?  
ANNINA: This morning you told me you felt really stronger—  
VIOLETTA: Yes, I do.  
ANNINA: I have something good to tell you.  
VIOLETTA: Speak, tell me quickly!  
ANNINA: You must take it calmly; It's an unexpected pleasure.  
VIOLETTA: Unexpected? a pleasure?  
ANNINA: Someone to see you—  
VIOLETTA: 'Tis Alfredo! and have you seen him? He's here—this moment?  
VIOLETTA: My dearest love! What joy to see you once again!

ALFREDO: Can you forgive me the wrong I wrought you?  
VIOLETTA: 'Tis all forgotten in your returning.  
ALFREDO: Let this my beating heart tell how I sought you, and how my soul for you was ever yearning.

VIOLETTA: If now you find me amongst the living, then grief is powerless to make one die.  
ALFREDO: Despair no longer, and be forgiving, my father pleads and so do I.

VIOLETTA: I was to blame, I must ask for pardon, the fault was mine through love alone.  
VIOLETTA—ALFREDO: No pow'r on earth, in Hell or Heaven, can e'er divide us now; you are my own. Let us take flight from this hard cruel city, where on the sufferer no one has pity, live for each other alone and united, new life and rapture you shall know then. We to each other ever are pledged, no one can ever part us again.

VIOLETTA: Ah, no more! but hasten with me at once now that Heaven may grant us its holy blessing.

ALFREDO: How pale you're turning!  
VIOLETTA: Oh, take no notice! The unexpected joy of seeing you here has put my heart in agitation.

ALFREDO: Oh heavens! Violetta!

VIOLETTA: A passing weakness that soon is over. I am myself again, you see me smiling.  
ALFREDO: But how you suffer!

VIOLETTA: 'Twas nothing. Annina, help me to dress now.

ALFREDO: You cannot; be patient.

VIOLETTA: No, no, I must go out.

Gran Dio! non posso!

ALFREDO: Cielo! . . . che vedo! . . . Va pel dottore . . .

VIOLETTA: Digli che Alfredo è ritornato all'amor mio . . . Digli che vivere ancor vogli'io . . .

Ma se tornando non m'hai salvato, a niuno in terra salvarmi è dato gran Dio! morir sì giovane, io che più mi lungo pianto! Ah, dunque fu delirio la credula speranza; invano di costanza armato avrà il mio cor! Alfredo! . . . oh, il crudo termine serbato al nostro amor!

ALFREDO: Oh mio sospiro e palpito, diletto del cor mio! . . . Le mie colie tue lagrime confondere deggio . . . Ma più che mai, deh, credilo, m'è duopo di costanza. Ah! tutto alla speranza non chiudere il tuo cor. Violetta mia, deh, calmati, m'uccide il tuo dolor.

(enter Annina, Mr. Germont and the Doctor)

GERMONT: Ah, Violetta! . . .

VIOLETTA: Voi, Signor! . . .

ALFREDO: Mio padre!

VIOLETTA: Non mi scordaste?

GERMONT: La promessa adempio . . . A stringervi qual figlia vengo al seno, o generosa . . .

VIOLETTA: Ahimè, tardi giungeste! Pure, grata ven sono . . . Grenvil, vedete? tra braccia io spiro di quanti ho cari al mondo . . .

GERMONT: Che mai dite! Oh cielo . . . è ver

ALFREDO: La vedi, padre mio?

GERMONT: Di più non lacerarmi . . . Troppo rimorso l'alma mi divora . . . Quasi fulmin m'attera ogni suo detto . . . Oh, malcauto vegliardo!

Ah, tutto il mal ch'io feci ora sol vedo!

VIOLETTA: Più a me t'appressa . . . Ascolta, amato Alfredo. Prendi: quest è l'immagine de' miei passati giorni; a rammentar ti torni colei che si t'amò. Se una pudica vergine degli anni suoi nel fiore a te donasse il core . . . Sposa ti sia . . . lo vo'. Le porgi questa effigie: Dille che dono ell'è di chi nel ciel tra gli angeli prega per lei, per te.

ALFREDO: No, non morrai, non dirmelo . . . Dei viver, amor mio . . . A strazio sì terribile qui non mi trasse Iddio . . . Sì presto, ah no, dividerti morte non può da me. Ah, vivi, o un solo feretro m'accoglierà con te.

GERMONT: Cara, sublime vittima, d'un disperato amore, perdonami lo strazio recato al tuo bel core.

ANNINA, GERMONT, DOCTOR: Finchè avrà il cigno lacrime io piangerò per te. Vola a' beati spiriti; Iddio ti chiama a sé.

VIOLETTA: È strano! . . .

ALL: Che!

VIOLETTA: Cessarono gli spasmi del dolore. In me rinasce . . . m'agita insolito vigore! Ah! io ritorno a vivere . . . Oh gio . . . ia.

Oh heavens! I cannot!

ALFREDO: Dearest, be patient! Go, fetch the doctor.

VIOLETTA: Yes, tell him that Alfredo has now come back to me and will not leave me. Yes, Alfredo loves me, and say for his sake I must live—Ah, yes, to live I am determined. (exit Annina) One hope upheld me, your love might heal me; if you cannot there is none to save me. My God! I am too young to die; my life was pain and sorrow. Must I renounce with weary sigh all hope of happier morrow? The dream that fill'd my heart with faith was but a fever'd vision; in vain I thought to vanquish death, and now I'm doomed to die!

ALFREDO: Oh, never let your heart give way to fear and sad despairing! Think only of the brighter day that we may yet be sharing! With steadfast hope look forward yet, and trust in my devotion! The past and all its woes forget, let hope stand firm and high!

GERMONT: Violetta!

VIOLETTA: You have come?

ALFREDO: My father!

VIOLETTA: So you remembered.

GERMONT: I fulfil my promise. And now I come to welcome you, to claim you as a daughter.

VIOLETTA: Alas! Too late to save me! But believe me, I'm grateful. You see, dear Doctor, how I die surrounded by all that are my dearest.

GERMONT: Is she dying? Good heavens, 'tis true!

ALFREDO: Oh father, is she dying?

GERMONT: My heart is rent with anguish, and with remorse my soul is torn asunder. 'Tis a judgment on me from Heaven to hear her sweet reproaches. All to late I repent it, the wrong I did her.

VIOLETTA: Come close, come closer and hear me, beloved Alfredo! Take this, let it recall to you the face of one who lov'd you, to be a sad reminder of one who's dead and gone. Some day to you a pure young girl, faithful and true and tender, will all her heart surrender; make her, I beg you, with Heaven's blessing, your own. This likeness of me give her, tell who I was and say that I, a soul in penitence, ever for her will pray.

ALFREDO: You shall not die! Unsay that word, I cannot bear to hear it; has Heaven brought me hither only to see you leave me? It cannot be that all too soon death should reclaim his prey! I cannot bear to live alone, if you are call'd away.

GERMONT: Oh noble woman, how can I thank you for the sacrifice you offer'd? And how can you forgive me the agony I caus'd?

ANNINA, GERMONT, DOCTOR: In vain the bitter tear we shed, in vain would bid her stay; the end is here, all hope is fled, Heav'n summons her away.

VIOLETTA: How wonderful!

ALL: Ah!

VIOLETTA: No more I feel the agony—all my weakness is gone—my strength seems reviving once again—I feel myself alive—yes, I know, to life, to life I'm returning! Oh rapture!

(she falls back on the sofa)

End of Opera





CONCERT HALL RECORD CLUB  
(a division of Leisure Arts Ltd.)  
Concert Hall House, London, S.W.18.

In Australia;  
CONCERT HALL RECORD CLUB,  
130 Parramatta Road, Ashfield, New South Wales, 2131

Printed in England

OAS/VEI