

ACT ONE

Scene One

Giorgio and Clara's room.

Drums. Lights slowly illuminate a bed with two figures who are making love on it. The man (Giorgio) is astride the woman (Clara).

Drums crescendo to a climax as Giorgio emits a soundless cry of orgasm, the orchestra substituting for his voice as the drums cease.

Music continues, murmuring underneath as Giorgio shudders a couple of times and falls into Clara's arms. A moment, as he lies back.

Happiness

Clara *(quietly)* I'm so happy,
I'm afraid I'll die
Here in your arms
What would you do if I died like
this –
(She languishes across him)
Right now, here in your arms?
That we ever should have met
Is a miracle

Giorgio No, inevitable -

Clara Then inevitable, yes,
But I confess it was the look

Giorgio The look?

Clara The sadness in your eyes
That day when we glanced at
each other
In the park.

Giorgio We were both unhappy.

Clara Unhappiness can be seductive.

Giorgio You pitied me ...

Both How quickly pity leads to love.

Clara All this happiness
Merely from a glance in the park
So much happiness, so much love
...

Giorgio I thought I knew what love was.

Clara I wish we might have met so
much sooner
I could have given you -

Giorgio I thought I knew what love was.

Clara - my youth.

Giorgio I thought I knew how much I
could feel.

Clara All the time we lost ...

Giorgio I didn't know what love was.

Clara I've never known what love was.

Giorgio But now -

Clara And now -

Both - I do.
It's what I feel with you,
The happiness I feel with you.

Clara So much happiness -

Giorgio You are so beautiful ...

Clara - happening by chance in a park.

Giorgio Not by chance, by necessity -

Clara Surely, this is happiness -

Giorgio - by the sadness that we saw in
each other.

Clara - no one else has ever felt before!

Both Just another love story,
that's what they would claim.
Another simple love story - aren't
all of them the same?

Clara No, but this is more, we feel
more!

Both This is so much more!
(Smiling at each other)
Like every other love story.
Some say happiness comes and
goes.
Then this happiness is a kind of
happiness
No one really knows.

Giorgio I thought I knew what love was.

Clara I'd only heard what love was.

Giorgio I thought it was no more than a
name for yearning.

Clara I thought it was what kindness
became.

Giorgio I'm learning -

Clara I thought where there was love
there was shame.

Giorgio - that with you -

Clara But with you -

Both - there's just happiness.

Clara Endless happiness ...

*(Music continues underneath as they lie silently
next to each other for a long moment)*
What?

Giorgio Not now ...

Clara Tell me ... please.

Giorgio I received my orders from
headquarters. I've been transferred
to the Fourth Brigade.

Clara *(sad)* When?

Giorgio I leave in five days.
*(Clara takes this news in, then slowly reaches
for her chemise)*
Clara, don't look so sad.

Clara You're the one that makes me happy.
Giorgio We'll make the most of the next four days. I'll steal as much time as I can. Then after I leave, we'll write to each other ever day. We'll make love with our words. You'll be with me ever day, Clara.
(She starts to dress while Giorgio watches her)
Clara I must go. I'm expected.
Giorgio **God, you are so beautiful. I love to see you in the light, Clear and beautiful, memorize Every inch, every part of you to take with me.**
Clara Giorgio ...
Giorgio **Your feet so soft, As if they'd never touched the ground.**
Clara I must go ...
Giorgio **Your skin so white, so pure, so delicate. Your smell so sweet, your breathe so warm. I will summon you in my mind, I'm painting you indelibly on my mind.**
Clara Let me go ...

Scene Two

The dining quarters of the post's commanding officer, Colonel Ricci.
At center is a large dining table. At the back of the stage is a long staircase which leads to the living quarters.
Around the table sit: Colonel Ricci, a rather taut gentleman, who carries the weight of his position with authority and ease; Lieutenant Torasso, a man often given to laughter and opera singing; Major Rizzoli, a sober, straight-arrow type; Lieutenant Barri, a veterinarian with a love of gambling and not much else; and Doctor Tambourri, a somewhat aloof and distinguished older officer.
As the lights bump up, a Cook (Sergeant Lombardi) is overseeing the serving of the meal. Torasso breaks into an aria from "Rigoletto" while the others talk amongst themselves, ignoring him. After a beat:

Colonel *(having had enough)* Thank you Lieutenant.
(Torasso stops singing)

Giorgio **We must fill every moment.**
Clara **All this happiness ended by a word in the dark.**
Giorgio **Oh my love, oh my darling ...**
Clara **So much happiness wasn't meant to last.**
Giorgio **I am here, I am with you I am yours.**
Clara **I never knew what love was.**
Giorgio **Your skin, your silken hair ...**
Clara **I always thought I didn't deserve it.**
Giorgio **Your breasts, your lips ...**
Clara **I didn't know what love was.**
Giorgio **I want you every minute of my life ...**
Clara **I don't know how I'll live when you're gone!**
Giorgio **I will always be here.**
Clara **I don't know how I'll live ...**
Giorgio ...
Don't leave me ...

(As they move away from each other, military drums join the orchestra, quietly at first, then building in intensity to a climax. This time the drums drown the orchestra, and we segue into a military formation, which takes us into the Officers' mess hall)

Doctor: How was "Rigoletto"?
Torasso Terrible. These touring companies get no better.
Lombardi Nor do you.
Torasso I sing to lighten the weight of your cookings.
Barri *(examining his plate)* Sergeant, what is this?
Lombardi It's veal.
Barri Again? We had veal four days ago. And from the looks of it, it was *this* veal.
Lombardi Lieutenant Barri, if I hear –

(They are suddenly interrupted by a woman's distant scream upstairs. They pause momentarily before resuming their conversation, as if nothing unusual had occurred)

Rizzoli Colonel, I've heard a rumor that the King is about to sign a treaty with the French.
Doctor Really?
Colonel I've heard no such rumor, Major.

Doctor Where did you come by this information?
Rizzolli (*uncomfortable*) In town.
Colonel You can't believe everything you hear in a whorehouse.
Rizzolli (*serious*) That is where Garibaldi got much of his information, sir.
Doctor Ah, so that's why you go there!
(*Giorgio enters*)
Colonel Ah, Captain Bachetti. Welcome. We wondered when you were going to arrive. May I introduce Doctor Tambourri, Major Rizzolli ...
Torasso Lieutenant Torasso.
Barri Lieutenant Barri.
Lombardi Sergeant Lombardi
Barri Our cook.
Colonel Come. Come and join us.
(*Giorgio hands a letter to Augenti.*)
Giorgio Could you post this one for me?
(*Giorgio sits; to his right remains an unoccupied chair and place setting*)
Lombardi You'll have to excuse our rather limited menu, Captain. It's difficult to grow vegetables in this mountain soil.
Doctor We're a bit isolated here, Captain. Not only from anything green and edible, but also from life and ideas.
Rizzolli I just add vinegar to everything
Torasso Captain Bachetti, the Colonel has been telling us of your triumphs pinning down the Russian infantry.
Giorgio I'm not sure that my actions worried your attention.
Torasso Come, come. Didn't you rescue a wounded man in the midst of fire and then carry him on your horse to camp?
Giorgio Only to our battalion.
Barri Say you brought him back to camp! Why settle for being half a hero when full-fledged is just a white lie away?
(*The lights suddenly bump up; music under, agitated. Clara enters to the side of the stage, singing from a letter she holds.*)

First Letter

Giorgio **Clara ...**
Clara **Clara ...**
Giorgio **I cried.**
Clara **I cried.**
Both **Imagine that, a soldier who cries.**

Clara **I had to hide my eyes, so the others on the train That carried me away from you would think I was asleep.**
(*a piano sounds offstage*)
Giorgio Music?
Doctor That's Signora Fosca playing.
Colonel My cousin. I have no family and neither does she. She is in such poor health, it's a continual worry.
Doctor That's her place setting, but she stays in her room most days. Perhaps soon she'll be well enough to join us for a meal.
Rizzolli She eats like a sparrow.
(*Torasso lets out an involuntary laugh, which is immediately stopped by a cold stare from the Colonel*)
Torasso (*sober*) My apologies, sir. The comparison has struck me as funny. A sparrow seems to eat more than Signora Fosca. A pity it is ...
Colonel (*to Giorgio*) My cousin loves to read - it's her only passion, really. I can't find enough books for her.
Giorgio I also love reading. I've brought a few of my favorite books down. Perhaps I could lend them to Signora Fosca, though I can't promise they will appeal to her.
Colonel Young man, she's been driven to reading military handbooks. I've no doubt she will welcome anything in print.
(*Private Augenti enters and delivers a few letters, one of which goes to Giorgio*)
Augenti Post arrived!
Rizzolli Hand it round Augenti. (*surprised*) Nothing for me again? It's been two weeks.
Augenti It smells to me as if Captain Bachetti has a letter from an admirer.
(*Music under; the lights bump up. Clara reappears*)

Second Letter

Clara **Giorgio ... I, too, have cried inside.**
Both **You must not be ashamed of your tears.**
Clara **I love you for your tears.**
Both **Your absence only makes my love grow stronger.**

And when I cannot bear it any longer -

(We hear another scream come from upstairs. Music stops as Giorgio rises, concerned; the others continue to eat, unfazed.)

Colonel Don't be alarmed. It's my cousin. I am so accustomed to her outbursts that I forget how unsettling they must be to a newcomer. My apologies for not warning you.

Doctor She's not been having a good day. And a doctor is always expected to help hurt, even when there is nothing one can possibly do.

Torasso More lamb please.

Doctor *(to Lombardi)* I've noticed you finally managed to track down some tarragon.

Lombardi Yes, I'm glad you approved ...
(Another scream; the Colonel looks to the Doctor)

Colonel Doctor.

Doctor Excuse me.

(He wearily rises and crosses to the stairs, which he climbs.)

Barri Sergeant, are there any more carrots?

Lombardi Seconds for you, Lieutenant? Can I take that as a compliment?

Barri No, Sergeant, they're for my horses.
(Laughter. Torasso gives Giorgio a slap on the back. Giorgio is not amused.)

Colonel In time, Captain Bacchetti, you too will get used to life amongst us.
(Snare drums; everyone gets up. Clara enters while the soldiers formate to a march. Clara sings from another letter, accompanied chiefly by drums and sporadic bugle calls)

Third Letter

Clara **Clara, I'm in hell,**

Giorgio **This is hell,**

Soldiers **Living hell.**

Clara **Living hell.**

This godforsaken place -

Soldiers **This godforsaken place -**

Clara **This sterile little town, these**

pompous little men,

Giorgio **This military madness ...**

Soldiers **This military madness ...**

This military ...

All **Uniforms, uniforms ...**

Giorgio **Military madness ...**

Soldiers **Military madness ...**

Clara, Giorgio

My days are spent in maneuvers

Soldiers **Uniforms, uniforms**

Clara, Giorgio

My evenings in discussing the day

Soldiers **This is hell -**

Clara **My nights are spent in thinking of you.**

Giorgio **Don't forget me, Clara ...**

(Clara exits as the Soldiers march off and the Doctor enters)

Doctor Good afternoon, Captain.

Giorgio Doctor.

Doctor Your troops seem to be responding well to your command.

Giorgio Thank you, sir.

Doctor How are you enjoying your new post?

Giorgio *(polite)* I find everyone most hospitable.

Doctor Good. Your company at meals has certainly been a welcome change for me.

Giorgio Thank you.

Doctor I trust the occasional outburst from Colonel Ricci's cousin hasn't unsettled you today.

Giorgio No. What exactly is wrong with her?

Doctor She is a kind of medical phenomenon, a walking collection of all possible illnesses. Her diseases are beyond science ...

Giorgio The screams?

Doctor Hysterical convulsions. One might say that her nerve endings are exposed, where ours are protected by a firm layer of skin.

Giorgio Is she in danger of succumbing to this illness?

Doctor I don't believe so. Her body is so weak, it doesn't have the strength to produce a mortal disease.

Giorgio I don't understand

Doctor The weak protect themselves. The defensive soldier often lives longer than the brave one.

Giorgio Is she young?

Doctor Late twenties, I would venture.

Giorgio Pretty?

Doctor That you must decide for yourself.

Giorgio You don't suppose that she's the Colonel's lover, do you?

Doctor Captain Bachetti, it's good to see you enjoy an occasional bit of gossip.
(*Giorgio is immediately embarrassed*)
No need for discomfort, Captain. We're all human. Your curiosity is understandable. No, I'm afraid Signora Fosca's physical state prevents her from being anyone's lover. Good day.
(*He moves off; bugle calls*)
Giorgio **Clara, don't forget me. Keep me close to you, Clara ...**
(*We segue back to the Colonel's dining room; it is morning. Rizzolli and Barri are finishing their breakfast as Giorgio joins them and sits.*)
Rizzolli Late for breakfast, Captain.
Giorgio I decided to accompany my troupes at their morning drill. Before their weekly maneuvers.
Barri You're a better officer than I am. I let my sergeant oversee the morning drill.
Lombardi (*Clearing Fosca's place setting*)
Well, it looks as if Signora Fosca has disappointed us once again.
Rizzolli Why keep setting her place?
(*Bugle call*)
Barri (*rises*) Captain Bachetti, I'm afraid you'll have to take breakfast alone.
Giorgio We still have dinner to share, gentlemen.
Rizzolli Indeed.
Barri Any chance we might interest you in a game of cards tonight?
Giorgio No. I'm not a gambling man.
Rizzolli The boredom of this place will make a gambler of you yet.
Barri Good day, Captain.
Giorgio Gentlemen ...
(*Rizzolli and Barri exit. Giorgio takes out a letter, which he begins to read. Clara enters.*)

Fourth Letter

Clara, Giorgio **How could I forget you?**
(*A shadowy figure - Fosca - appears at the top of the stairs and begins slowly descending*)
Clara **Yesterday I walked through the park To the place where we met. Afterwards I sat on the bench Where we sat all that sultry afternoon.**

I thought about our room, our secret room Where we were happy And where we shall be happy again Some day. I see us in our room, our secret room, And I don't feel so alone any more ...
(*Against her song, the Chopinesque piano music which we heard before begins to play*)
I close my eyes, imagining that you are there, Imagining your fingers touching mine, Imagining our room, The bed, the secrecy, the world outside, Your mouth on mine ...
(*Fosca descends the last step. She carries some books and approaches her empty place setting with an uncertain gait. As she turns from the shadows, revealing herself, we discover that she is an ugly, sickly woman: incredibly thin and sallow, her face all bones and nose, her hair pulled tightly back. Music holds*)
Fosca **Captain ...**
(*Giorgio sees her and is momentarily stunned. Clara exits. Fosca gives a nervous, grotesque smile as the orchestra resumes, playing the piano music. Giorgio quickly rises. Fosca speaks, in rhythm to the music; her voice is lovely and elegant, but melancholy*)
Fosca I hope I didn't startle you.
Giorgio Not at all. Signora Ricci, I'm Captain Bachetti -
Fosca (*simultaneously*) - Bachetti. I know. My cousin has told me all about you.
I came to thank you for the books. I would have sooner, but I've been so ill.
Giorgio Well, now you seem to be feeling more normal.
Fosca Normal? I hardly think so. Sickness is normal to me as health is to you. Forgive me. I shouldn't speak of my troubles. I've been going through a period of deep melancholy.
(*There is an awkward moment of silence as Adriana enters and pours Fosca a cup of coffee. As she leaves, the music becomes low and intense.*)

I Read

Fosca I so enjoyed the novel by Rousseau.
Giorgio Yes, it's wonderful. It's my favorite, really.
Fosca The character of Julie is a great mystery.
Giorgio You should have kept the book longer to meditate over.

Fosca **I do not read to think. I do not read to learn.**
I do not read to search for truth
I know the truth, the truth is hardly what I need.
I read to dream.
I read to live. In other people's lives.
I read about the joys, the world Dispenses to the fortunate,
And listen for the echoes.
(Fiercly)
I read to live,
To get away from life!
(Calmer)
No, captain, I have no illusions.
I recognize the limits of my dreams.
I know how painful dreams can be
Unless you know they're merely dreams.
(Smiling aridly)
There is a flower which offers nectar at the top,
Delicious nectar at the top and bitter poison underneath.
The butterfly that stays too long and drinks too deep
Is doomed to die.
I read to fly, to skim -
I do not read to swim.
(Bitterly)
I do not dwell on dreams.
I know how soon a dream becomes an expectation
How can I have expectations?
Look at me.
No, captain, look at me -
Look at me!
(Exalted)
I do not hope for what I cannot have!

I do not cling to things I cannot keep!

(Tightly)

The more you cling to things, the more you love them,

The more the pain you suffer when they're taken from you ...

(Calming down again)

Ah, but if you have no expectations,

You can never have a disappointment.

(Gives a short laugh; music continues under)

Forgive me. I must be mad to chatter on about myself like this to you.

Giorgio I assure you -

Fosca No, forgive me, please ...

Giorgio But truly, there is nothing to forgive

Fosca **Have you explored the town?**

It is remote, isn't it?

And provincial, don't you think?

Giorgio Yes.

Fosca **And everything so brown:**

The streets, the fields, the river even,

Though there are some lovely gardens.

You do like gardens, I hope?

Giorgio Yes.

Fosca **Good, I can show you gardens.**

And then of course there is the castle.

The ruined castle.

Giorgio Ah.

Fosca I find it lovely. Probably because it's ruined, I suppose.

Giorgio I didn't know there was a castle.

Fosca **I like to take excursions there -**

When I'm in better health.

Perhaps you join me and my cousin

One day ...

Giorgio That would be delightful. I don't believe I've seen a flower or a garden since the day I arrived.

(Fosca suddenly gets up and slowly leaves the room. Confused, Giorgio rises and, after she has gone, takes his books and begins to leave. We hear the distant sound of field drums, muffled, funereal. Fosca, just as unexpectedly, returns,

carrying a small bunch of flowers, which she offers to Giorgio without a word)

Giorgio Thank you. How delightful.

Fosca (*Crossing to the window*)

I'm surprised you haven't seen our wonderful greenhouse.

Giorgio Greenhouse?

Fosca Yes, we haven't had much luck with the vegetables this year. But the gardenias and petunias are magnificent.

(*Giorgio joins her at the window, as the drums become louder.*)

Giorgio Oh look. There's a funeral procession. I suppose they come here for flowers to adorn the casket.

(*Fosca stiffens and steps back, drawing her hand to her mouth, her eyes staring*)

It's good to know that the dead here

(*Fosca begins to tremble*)

Signora?

(*Fosca lets out a terrible cry and collapses on the floor. Giorgio bends over her.*)

Doctor! Doctor !Help!

Scene Three

The castle garden.

The Colonel, the Doctor and Fosca enter and stroll through the garden down to Giorgio; music continues underneath.

Garden Sequence

Doctor Ah, look at how they've let this garden go.

Colonel This is not Milan, Doctor.

Doctor I'm all too well aware of that.

Fosca I think it's rather beautiful.

Doctor For these parts, maybe ...

Colonel Doctor, may I have a word with you?

Doctor Certainly.

Colonel Captain Bachetti, would you lend my cousin your arm? I wish to have a word with the Doctor.

Giorgio Of course.

Fosca I do know how to walk. My cousin treats me like I'm a child.

Giorgio **All the while as we strolled,**

Clara -

Fosca I hope I didn't frighten you the other day.

Giorgio No, not at all.

(*Two female attendants and the Doctor rush in and reach her. Giorgio steps back, staring helplessly as they carry her off*)

Transition

Giorgio **How can I describe her?**

The wretchedness, God, the wretchedness

And the suffering, the desperation

Of that poor unhappy creature -

The embarrassment, Clara.

Looking at that loneliness,

Listening to all that self-pity ...

(*Another formation of Soldiers takes us to the Garden*)

Soldiers **The town -**

It is remote, isn't it?

And provincial, don't you think?

And everything so brown:

The streets, the fields, the river even.

Of course there is the castle,

The ruined castle ...

I could see you reading my letter.

All the while as we strolled -

Fosca I'm not afraid of death. I rather

think I'd welcome dying. It's everything that follows that I dread: being shut up in a coffin, smothered in the earth, turning into dust.

These images send me into a state of terror.

Giorgio **All I saw, all I knew.**

All that I could think of was you.

(*Clara enters, reading a letter*)

Fosca Even talking of this makes me ...

(*Momentarily, Giorgio fears she will suffer another attack*)

Giorgio Surely if you are ill, there is every hope you will get better.

Clara **All that I could think of was you**

Fosca Hope in my case is in rather short supply.

Clara **How ridiculous -**

Giorgio Well, then one must look to life for whatever pleasures it can offer.

Fosca And what might they be?

Clara **To be looking at her**

Giorgio Helping others, for example.

Fosca Helping others!

Clara **And be thinking of you.**

Fosca I have worked in poorhouses,
Captain.
Clara **How could anyone**
Fosca I felt no different.
Clara **So unbeautiful**
Fosca Pity is nothing but passive love.
Clara **Stir my memory of you?**
Fosca Dead love.

Clara **To feel a woman's touch**
Giorgio **To touch a woman's hand,**
Clara **Reminded me how much I long to**
be with you,
How long I've been without you
near
Giorgio **And then to hear a woman's voice**
Clara **To hold a woman's arm**
To feel a woman's touch ...
Giorgio These thoughts are bad for you.
You must concentrate on
everything around you that suggests
life. These trees, these flowers, the
warm smell of the air -
Fosca You make it sound so simple
Captain. As if a flower or a tree
could somehow make one happy.
Clara **Perhaps it was the dress, the**
fragrance of her dress,
Giorgio **The light perfume of silk**
That's warm from being in the
sun
That mingles with a woman's
own perfume
Clara **The fragrance of a woman ...**
Giorgio There is no absolute happiness in
anyone's life, Signora. The only
happiness we can be certain of is
love.
Clara **The garden filled with you -**
Fosca Are you speaking of friendship?
That kind -
Giorgio I'm speaking of a superial kind of
love -
Clara **And all that I could do, because**
of you,
Giorgio The kind between two people.
Clara **Was talk of love -**
Fosca Two people ...
Giorgio Yes.

*(Giorgio sings to Fosca as Clara continues to
sing the letter)*
Clara, Giorgio
Love that fills every waking
moment,
Love that grows every single day,

Love that thinks everything is
pure,
Everything is beautiful
Everything is possible
Clara **Love that fuses two into one,**
Where we think the same
thoughts,
Giorgio **Love the same things**
Clara, Giorgio
Live as one.
Giorgio **Feel as one.**
Clara, Giorgio
Breathe as one
Clara **Love that shuts away the world**
Giorgio **Love that shuts away the world**
Clara **That envelops my soul,**
Giorgio **That envelops your soul,**
Clara **That ennobles my life**
Giorgio **Your life**
Both **Love that floods**
Every living moment,
Love like -
Clara **- ours**
Fosca Love like -?
Giorgio **- like wine.**
An intoxication.
A great blindness, if you will.
Fosca Yes, I have read about that kind of
love. But you speak as one who
lives it.

*(Music stops. She stumbles slightly; Giorgio
goes to aid her, but she pulls herself away)*
I don't feel well. I must go home.
Giorgio I'm sorry
Fosca You can be incredibly cruel,
Captain.
Giorgio Cruel?
Fosca **To speak to me of love -**
To dangle words like
"Happiness"
"Beautiful"
"Superior" -
You can't be that naive.
Giorgio Forgive me. I have not taken -
Fosca **You with all your books**
Your taste, your sensivity
I thought you'd understand.
The others - well, they're all
alike.
Stupidity is their excuse,
As ugliness is mine,
But what is yours?
I've watched you from my
window.

I saw you on the day that you arrived.
Perhaps it was the way you walked
The way you spoke to your men.
I saw that you were different then.
I saw that you were kind and good.
I thought you'd understood.
(Intensely)
They hear drums
You hear music
As do I
Don't you see?
We're the same
We are different,
You and I are different.
They hear only drums.
All the time I watched from my room
I would think of coming downstairs
Thinking we'd meet, thinking you'd look at me
Thinking you'd be repelled by what you saw.

Don't reject me, don't deny me,
Captain
Understand me, be my friend.
They hear drums, we hear music.
Be my friend ...

(Music under, fading)

Giorgio *(stunned)* Yes. Of course. You have my friendship

(Fosca grabs Giorgio's hand)

Fosca Thank you, Captain.

Giorgio Your hand is on fire.

Fosca It's nothing. I have a fever. I always have fever.

(The Colonel and Doctor approach)

Colonel Shall we make our way towards the castle?

Giorgio Signora Fosca is not feeling well.

(The Colonel goes to her and takes her arm)

Colonel I'm terribly sorry, my dear.

Fosca *(looking at Giorgio)* I'll be fine now.

Colonel Of course, but we should head back nonetheless.

(Music resumes as the Colonel, the Doctor and Fosca head off with Giorgio trailing behind)

Scene Four

The dining quarters.

Clara stands at one side of the stage with a letter in hand, Giorgio similarly opposite her.

Clara My darling, you did as you should.
You had no choice.

Giorgio After all, her cousin is my superior.

Clara You must think of your career.

Giorgio But how could I turn from such a desperate soul?

Clara You showed pity

Giorgio And yet I have a sinking feeling.

Clara It is difficult for a man and a woman to be friends.

Giorgio I sense she wants more from me.

Clara You must take care to make your intentions clear.

Giorgio I've opened the door

Clara Desperation can take its toll

(Fosca is revealed on the stairs, descending; she also carries a letter)

Fosca **Three days ...**

Giorgio Should I be cruel to set myself free?

Clara There is nothing wrong with thinking of oneself.

Fosca **Three days ...**

Giorgio All I think of is you.

Clara Keep your distance.

Giorgio Keep my distance.

Clara Be unavailable to her.

Giorgio Unavailable.

Clara Yes, aloof.

Fosca **Three days ...**

Giorgio I love you so much.

Clara I love you more.

Fosca **Three ...**

Giorgio Forever yours.

Fosca **... days**

Clara As always.

Giorgio Giorgio.

Clara Clara.

(Clara and Giorgio exit in opposite directions. Fosca reads from her letter as she crosses to the table. The dining hall, with its usual habitués, slowly comes into place behind her)

Fosca Giorgio, These past three days have been perhaps the most painful of my life. I have looked for you everywhere. No matter how poor

my health, I have made my way to the dining room, praying you would be there. You promised me your friendship, Giorgio. But it is clear to me that your promise was a hollow one. I wish I could strike you from my mind and my heart. But I cannot. You may disappear, Giorgio, but I will not.

(She folds the letter and slips it under the napkin at Giorgio's place setting, then sits. Everyone follows and the scene comes to life.)

Barri ... so I applied for a new pair of horses, but they only had bays or piebals.

Lombardi Piebalds!

Torasso You certainly don't want piebals.

Rizzolli Perhaps you should go to Turin. There's a wonderful stable there -

Barri No. That stable is no longer reputable

(Giorgio enters)

Torasso Ah, Bachetti ...

Colonel We haven't seen you for three days.

Giorgio Yes, sir. I decided to accompany my troops on maneuvers.

Barri Your hard work will show us all up.

Giorgio Nonsense.

(He sits and as he takes his napkin, the lights elsewhere darken. He discovers the letter and is about to open it when he looks to Fosca, who returns the look. He immediately sticks the letter into his pocket. The lights restore as he begins to help himself to food.)

Excuse me, Doctor. Why do you always place that gold coin on the table at mealtime?

Doctor For thirty years, I've done that whenever I dine with other officers. The first meal where no one talks about horses or women,

(As some of the other officers chime in)

I'll surrender my golden coin.

(Laughter)

Barri Some risk! You'll never lose it!

Rizzolli I remember a wager that Lieutenant Barri made once -

(The lights suddenly change. Fosca grabs Giorgio's hand as he reaches for the salt; she draws his hand by her side and out of view under the table)

Fosca *(to Giorgio, whispering)* I've missed you so much.

Giorgio Please.

Fosca You must read my letter.

Giorgio Let go of my hand. Let go.
(Giorgio tries to free his hand with no success; the lights restore)

Rizzolli Well, of course there was no chance for anyone but him to win.

Barri No one was forced to bet, Major.

Doctor Would you please pass the salt?
(Giorgio is extremely embarrassed, because he still can't free his hand. Fosca passes the salt.)

Not hungry, Captain?

Giorgio Yes, yes.
(He helps himself to some veal with his left hand)

Colonel, I've received a letter this morning. I'm urgently required in Milan. I therefore request a leave of at least five days.

Doctor What?
(The table noise suddenly quiets)

Colonel If you had asked me this in my office, I might have refused. You've been here only a month ...

Giorgio I realised that, sir. It's of some importance.

Colonel When do you want to leave?

Giorgio As soon as possible.

Colonel Very well. After all, how can I refuse a guest at my table?

Torasso By this time tomorrow, Bachetti, you'll probably be in the arms of some young beauty.

(The table fills once more with conversation as Fosca lets go of Giorgio's hand and dissolves into herself. Giorgio quickly turns from her and continues with his meal as the lights slowly fade to black.)

In a ghostly fashion, the Soldiers perform their drill.)

Transition

Augenti, Soldiers

All the time I watched from my room ...

Augenti **Thinking we'd meet ...**

Soldier 1 **Thinking you'd look at me ...**

Soldier 2 **Thinking you'd -**

Augenti, Soldiers

- be repelled by what you saw.

Soldier 1&2 **Don't reject me ...**

Others **Don't deny me ...**

Augenti, Soldiers

Understand me, be my friend.

All **They hear drums, we hear music**

Be my friend ...

Scene Five

The courtyard.

Morning fog covers the stage as military exercises take place. Giorgio enters with a suitcase in hand, salutes the Soldiers, then begins to cross the stage. The formation marches off as Fosca surprises him out of the shadow.

Fosca When will you be back?

Giorgio What are you doing up and out at this hour?

Fosca When will you be back?

Giorgio You know I have a five-day leave.

Fosca Will you think about me when you're gone?

Giorgio I'll think about my work, my superiours, your cousin. That is why I will think of you.

(He begins to walk away but Fosca steps in his path)

Signora, please. Don't make this difficult.

(He walks further, but she continues to block his path. He raises his hand to impede her; Fosca grabs it and presses it to her breast, then throws herself around him. Giorgio pushes her away)

Let go of me. You don't want someone to see you.

Fosca What does it matter if they see me? What do I care if the whole world knows how I feel? I adore you. Is that something I should be ashamed of? Is that something I should hide?

(He tries once more to escape, but she drops to the ground and wraps herself around his legs)

I'm not a fool. I know you don't feel the same way as I do. But one loves a dog, an animal. What can I do to get you to love me - a human being like yourself?

(She begins to weep)

Giorgio Get up Signora, please.

(he helps her up)

Calm down. Calm down, please. I have to leave straight away. I am touched by your affection. It flatters me greatly. My mind is racing with so many thoughts ...

Fosca Tell me your thoughts.

Giorgio I have to leave straight away.

Fosca Write me.

Giorgio Fine. I will write you.

Fosca Promise.

Giorgio Yes, I promise.

Fosca Tomorrow.

Giorgio Tomorrow. Now, please go. I really don't want anyone to see you here.

Fosca Bless you.

(She lets go and he races out. Music. Fosca crosses to her drawing room on one side of the stage while on the other side Giorgio and Clara's meeting place appears. Clara is in bed. Silently, Giorgio comes to her and embraces her passionately as she begins to strip off his clothes. Augenti enters Fosca's drawing room with a letter. He hands her the letter, then exits. Fosca tears open the letter)

Trio

Fosca I am writing to you, Signora
Just as soon as I've arrived
With a most unhappy heart.

Giorgio God, you are so beautiful -

Fosca I do not wish to cause you pain -

Giorgio As I remember every night -

Fosca So please consider what I say -

Giorgio Clear and beautiful -

Fosca With calm.

Giorgio Every night, every day,
Every part of you -

Fosca My heart -

Clara You feel so good -

Fosca My heart belongs -

Clara As if you'd never been away -

Fosca My heart belongs to someone else.

Clara Your breath so warm
Your touch so sure -

Giorgio Your skin so delicate ...

Clara Your arms so strong ...

Fosca I am in love, hopelessly in love -

Hopelessly in love, and I am loved
Hopelessly in turn, Signora.

Giorgio, Clara

All this happiness -

Fosca You and I -

Giorgio, Clara

Being here with you in the dark.

Fosca We're not meant for each other.

Giorgio, Clara

So much happiness -

Fosca If I seemed to imply

Something more -

Giorgio, Clara

Even more than what I felt before!
Fosca **I apologize.**
Giorgio, Clara
To feel your touch again -
Fosca **But since we're forced to be together -**
Giorgio, Clara
When so much time has passed -
Fosca **Let us try to face the fact.**
Giorgio, Clara
To dream of you and then to be with you again
And have some time at last ...
Fosca **Let us both behave with tact.**
Giorgio, Clara
How long were we apart -
Fosca **If this letter seems cold- hearted -**
Giorgio, Clara
A month, a week, a day?
Fosca **It conceals my own distress.**
Nonetheless -
Giorgio, Clara
To feel your touch again -
Fosca **We must end what never started.**
Giorgio, Clara
You've never been away.
Fosca **You must recognize -**
Clara **Still, I've missed you -**

Scene Six

Fosca's drawing room.

Fosca sits doing needlepoint. She appears even sicker than usual. An attendant goes off and returns with Giorgio. Fosca greets Giorgio with a cold smile and signals the attendant to leave.

Giorgio You sent for me.
Fosca I received your letter and I thank you. I hope we can still shake hands.
(She extends her hand to him)
Giorgio Yes, of course. We can certainly be friends.
Fosca You have no idea how mortified I am.
Giorgio Mortified?
Fosca About everything that has happened. My emotions sometimes overpower my judgement.
Giorgio I found your affection very flattering.

Fosca **There is nothing -**
Giorgio **Hush.**
Fosca **Between us.**
Clara **- so much.**
Fosca **Nothing ...**
Giorgio **Shhh. I'm here now.**
Fosca **Nothing, nothing ...**
Clara **Welcome home ...**
(Clara and Giorgio embrace passionately as Fosca, sone-faced remains alone in her drawing room; her Attendants ever with a shawl, which they wrap about her, and a needlepoint frame, which she takes and begins feverishly working at.
Fosca's Attendants set the stage for Giorgio's entrance)

Transition

Attendants **I've watched you from my window**
I saw you on the day that you arrived.
Perhaps it was the way you walked.
The way you spoke to your men.
You were different then,
You were kind and good.
I thought you understood ...

Fosca How indulgent you are with me. Did you amuse yourself in Milan?
Giorgio Very much.
Fosca Admit that you only took leave to visit my rival.
Giorgio Your rival? Yes, of course that was the purpose of my visit.
Fosca Excuse me. I can be very naive sometimes. I should have understood what you meant by your "urgent need to leave". Will you be going back soon?
Giorgio Whenever I can. As soon as possible.
Fosca If you get another leave.
Giorgio Naturally.
Fosca Perhaps I should put in a word to my cousin. My help might serve you well. On the other hand, a negative word ...
Giorgio Place more value on your dignity. Don't offend your pride, Signora.

Fosca We each deal with our pride as best we can. Do you love this woman very much?
Giorgio I wrote to you.
Fosca Is she beautiful?
Giorgio As an angel.
Fosca Then why don't you marry her?
Giorgio She is already married.
Fosca And you respect her.
Giorgio You can't love someone without respecting.
Fosca That's not true, but it hardly matters. And is your angel also a mother?
Giorgio Let's stop torturing each other like this. It's humiliating and degrading. I find your sarcasm most distasteful.
Fosca I have many flaws, Captain.
Giorgio Our situation is well-defined. Let's not discuss this subject again.
Fosca That is what I would like.
Giorgio Good. Perhaps we should have no further occasion to speak of ourselves.
Fosca You may also hope that we do not see each other again.
Giorgio Yes, that might be very well the best course of action.
Fosca You may go now, Captain. I have more important things to do.
(Giorgio clicks his heels and exits. As Clara walks through, reading a letter. We segue to the Doctor's office)

Three Weeks

Clara **Three weeks ...**
Three weeks ...
Soldiers **This is hell,**
Living hell ...
Clara My darling Clara. The last three weeks have been a blessing. Signora Fosca has all but disappeared from my life here.
Soldiers **Living hell ...**
This godforsaken place
Clara She no longer has her meals with us. Even in her absence I find myself hating her more and more.
Soldiers **This sterile little town**
This military madness ...
Clara I've realized how I've had to temper my feelings towards her. But now that I'm free, I can feel as I please.

Soldiers **Uniforms, uniforms ...**
Clara But you, my Clara -
Soldiers **Our days are spent in maneuvers**
Our evenings in discussing the day
Clara You remain in my thoughts
Soldiers **Uniforms, uniforms**
Clara - as strong as ever
Soldiers *(growing louder)*
Military madness ...
Military madness ...
(Giorgio approaches the Doctor, who is at his desk)
Giorgio Doctor
Doctor Thank you for coming so late, Captain. Signora Fosca has taken a turn for the worse. She is mortally ill.
Giorgio I'm sorry to hear that.
Doctor Don't you understand, my boy? It's because of you.
Giorgio Because of me?
Doctor She told me everything. You rejected her love - which doesn't actually surprise me - and that has increased the gravity of her disease. She is letting herself die because of you.
Giorgio Because of me! Letting herself die?
Doctor This passion she has developed for you -
Giorgio Passion for me? Doctor, I hardly know this woman. She threw herself at me and for no reason. I am sure you will do all you can for her.
Doctor A simple act on your part is also required.
Giorgio I do not wish to get involved.
Doctor You are involved. Go and see her.
Giorgio No! How can I possibly visit Signora Fosca at her sick bed at night? It's improper. The Colonel would never improve.
Doctor You needn't worry about that. I have made all the arrangements.
Giorgio Does she know about this?
Doctor You can't imagine what this has cost her. You're a good-looking young man. Beauty has a price as has goodness - another quality you embody. Be kind. Go and see her now.

Giorgio And if I go, what then? What will she ask of me tomorrow, next week?

Doctor I know how difficult this is for you. But she is dying. And all you have to give her is a few words. Kind

words which will make her well. What is the cost of a few words when a life hangs in the balance? Good night.

(A moment, then Giorgio exits as the Doctor watches)

Scene Seven

Fosca's bedroom.

A lone candle lights the stage; we see Fosca in bed. Giorgio tentatively enters the room and stands for a moment before a startled Fosca sees him; her hair is in a braid, he rhigh fever giving her face a little color.

Giorgio No need to be frightened. It's only me. It's Giorgio.

Fosca Oh my God! It's really you. I never thought you would come. Of course I had hoped ... Will you forgive me for having asked?

Giorgio I am here because I chose to be.

Fosca Sit down.

(Giorgio goes to a nearby chair)

No, sit here.

(She indicates the bed; Giorgio stands frozen for a moment)

Please.

(He walks to the bed and gingerly perches next to her)

Put your feet on the bed.

Giorgio I am fine, Signora.

Fosca I want you to be comfortable. Please.

(Reluctantly, he raises his legs onto the bed; she reaches for a candle, which she raises to his face)

God, you are so beautiful.

Come, let me see you in the light.

No, don't look at me.

Let me look at you.

I feel better in the dark.

Giorgio Your kindness makes you beautiful.

Fosca And do you value such beauty?

Giorgio Yes, of course.

Fosca How do good hearts beat? Can you distinguish them from the bad? Listen to my heart, Giorgio.

(Fosca takes Giorgio's hand and puts it on her heart)

It says it loves you.

(She places her hand on his chest)

What does your heart say?

Giorgio It says it loves you.

Fosca Like a friend?

Giorgio Tonight, *(he hesitates)* tonight it loves you as you wish.

Fosca Thank you, Giorgio. I so wanted to forget you. To think that I could! I wanted to die without seeing you -

Giorgio No, I am here to tell you you'd be happier living.

Fosca That day I was so unpleasant to you

Giorgio Please, don't speak of the past. Now that I've come, now that we've spoken, now you should get some sleep.

Fosca Will you stay if I do?

Giorgio Yes. Yes, of course.

Fosca Will you sleep, too?

Giorgio If I can.

Fosca Put your head near mine. Can we dream together?

Giorgio Yes.

(They close their eyes, as Clara enters)

Clara My darling Giorgio. It's three in the morning. I've just arisen from a dream of you, a dream so real I could swear you were there at my side. I am so used to this, having you in my dreams night after night. How I wish I could just lie by your side and watch you sleep. To see you disarmed, at peace. Sometimes I think when you watch a person sleep there's a transparency that lets you see their soul. How I long to see yours ...

(Clara exits. Fosca wakes up and stares at Giorgio a moment before he wakes. She gently reaches out to touch his face.)

Fosca It is you. I thought I was dreaming. Draw the curtain, please. I want to see the stars before the daylight takes them away.

(Giorgio gets up and complies)

Do you think there are worlds out there?

Giorgio *(staring into the sky)* Yes, I do.

Fosca Will we visit them one day?
Giorgio Oh, I hope so. When I was a child I used to dream I could fly - travel to faraway places.
Fosca What is a man like you doing in the army, Giorgio?
Giorgio My father was an officer. It was expected.
Fosca Call me by my name.
Giorgio Fosca.
Fosca Say "Giorgio and Fosca".
Giorgio Giorgio and Fosca.
Fosca Say "Fosca and Giorgio"
Giorgio Fosca and Giorgio.
Fosca It's music! *(Pause)* Do you love this woman very much?
Giorgio Please don't ask me. I've told you how I feel.
Fosca What is her name?
Giorgio Clara.
Fosca Clara.
Giorgio I should be going. It will be light soon.
Fosca Will you do me a great favor before you go?
Giorgio If I can.
Fosca Would you write a letter for me?
Giorgio Certainly.
Fosca You find paper on my desk.
(He goes to her desk and sits, taking up a pen.)
Giorgio Yes?

I Wish I Could Forget You

Fosca My dearest Fosca ...
(He stops writing and looks at her, annoyed)
Please.
(he resumes writing)
Giorgio 'My dearest Fosca'
Fosca **I wish I could forget you.
Erase you from my mind.
But ever since I met you,
I find, I cannot leave the thought
of you behind.
That doesn't mean I love you ...**
Giorgio **That doesn't mean I love you ...**
Fosca **I wish that I could love you ...
I know that I've upset you,
I know I've been unkind.
I wanted you to vanish from
sight,
But now I see you in a different
light.
And though I cannot love you,
I wish that I could love you.**

**For now I'm seeing love like none
I've ever known.
A love as pure as breath, as
permanent as death.
Implacable as stone
A love that, like a knife, has cut
into a life
I wanted left alone.
A love I may regret, but one I
can't forget.
I don't know how I let you so far
inside my mind,
But there you are and there you
will stay
How could I ever wish you away?
I see now I was blind.
And should you die tomorrow,
Another thing I see.
Your love will live in me.**

(As the music fades)

I remain ... Your Giorgio.

(He signs the letter and blots it)

Bring it to me.

(He does)

Thank you, Giorgio. It's getting light. You better go. Do you have sisters?

Giorgio Yes.

Fosca Do you kiss them goodbye?

Giorgio Occasionally.

Fosca Would you kiss me goodbye the way you do them?

(Giorgio gives her a peck on the forehead)

No, like you kiss her.

(Fosca suddenly pulls Giorgio to her and embraces him like a lover. Stunned, he pulls himself away; agitated)

Go now! Go quickly! I'm going to scream!

(Giorgio runs from the room. There is a moment of calm and then Fosca lets out an involuntary scream; blackout)

ACT TWO

Scene One

Lights up as the men gather, play cards; Lombardi stands and watches. The Doctor is sitting on a desk, writing.

Soldiers' Gossip

Torasso **Did you hear the scream last night?**
Augenti **Did anybody not?**
Rizzoli Your turn. Black card.
Lombardi **She knows how to scream, all right.**
Barri **Well, she practices a lot.**
Augenti I forgot, what's trump?
Rizzoli Play that bloody card
Lombardi **So that wasn't dying, we assume.**
Barri **No, I think she just fell off her broom**
Torasso **Or they hung a mirror in the room**
Of la signora!
Barri **La signora!**
Augenti **La signora!**
Rizzoli Please, a little quiet!
(Bugle call. Drums continue softly under as the game continues
Giorgio enters to speak with the Doctor)
Giorgio Doctor.
Doctor Bachetti.
Giorgio Was is absolutely necessary for me to visit her last night?
Doctor Why else would I have asked you to go? I'm not some kind of procurer, Captain.
Giorgio But she hardly seemed close to death.
Doctor I'm sure she summons her strength for you. Her condition was precarious before you arrived. You have done her a great service. You have done a brave thing. Now it is over. Good day.
(Giorgio is going to leave the room.)
Rizzoli Care to play, Captain?
Giorgio No. Thank you for asking.
(He leaves; music resumes over drums)
Torasso **Just a bit aloof, don't you think?**
Lombardi **Not around the Colonel.**
Rizzoli **Care to play, Sergeant?**

Augenti **Never trust a man Who doesn't drink.**
Torasso **And he keeps a journal.**
Barri **Eight-ball off the nine.**
Rizzoli **Maybe, though, he just prefers his books**
Lombardi **Not as much as he prefers his looks.**
Torasso **Which is why he thinks he's got his hooks**
Into la Signora -
Barri **Gentlemen, I'll make a wager: Come the summer, he'll be Major -**
Rizzoli **I'll say!**
All I'll say!
I'll say!

(Music stops.

As the soldiers disappear, we segue to the other side of the stage where the Colonel and Giorgio stroll in)

Flashback

Colonel Captain, I cannot thank you enough. Your kindness to my cousin have meant a great deal.
Giorgio You have no reason to thank me.
Colonel Any attention that is paid to her means so much. Signora Fosca has always had a shortage of friends.
(Fosca is revealed at her writing table)
Fosca My dearest Giorgio. I am writing you even though the Doctor has forbidden it. What a joy to have someone to whom I can tell my feelings. To share my past.
Colonel I was a young man when my parents died. And Fosca's mother and father welcomed me into their house whenever I was on leave.
(Music under as we go back in time)
As a child -
Fosca **As a child -**
Colonel **She was lonely -**
Fosca **I was happy -**
Colonel **Her parents doted on her -**
Fosca **My parents doted on me -**
(Fosca's Mother and Father enter)
Both **They said:**
Parents **Beautiful.**

Mother **So sensitive.**
Parents **So beautiful.**
Fosca **They told me to be:**
Mother **Careful -**
Colonel **Of course -**
Mother **- Fosca**
Colonel **- to them she was.**
Father **A girl as beautiful as you are has to**
Fosca **And so -**
Father **- be careful.**
Fosca **- I thought**
That I was beautiful.
Fosca, Colonel
And then she (I) reached the age
Where being beautiful
Becomes the most important
thing
A woman can be.
Colonel **An unattractive man -**
Fosca **As long as you're a man,**
You still have opportunities.
Colonel **- can still have opportunities.**
Parents **Beautiful ...**
Colonel, Fosca
Whereas, if you're a woman
You either are
a daughter or a wife.
Parents **A woman is a flower.**
Fosca, Colonel
You marry -
Father **- you're seventeen.**
Colonel **- or you're a daughter**
all your life.
Parents **Now is the hour ...**
Colonel **I'd met this nice young man.**
Fosca **I'd seen this nice young man -**
Colonel **He'd introduced himself -**
Fosca **- passing by -**
Colonel **- at my club.**
Fosca **- just below my window.**
Colonel **So -**
Fosca **One day -**
Colonel **- one evening I invited him -**
Fosca **- he tipped his hat to me.**
Colonel **- home.**
Count Ludovic -
Fosca **I must admit that I was flattered -**
Colonel **- this is my Aunt Theresa and my**
Uncle Bruno.
Mother **A count?**
Father **From where, if I may ask.**
Ludovic **Austria.**
Parents **Austria ...**
Mother **What a beautiful place.**

Colonel **Fosca, we have a visitor!**
Fosca **Imagine my surprise ...**
Colonel **I'd like you to meet a new friend.**
Count Ludovic.
Fosca **He was even more handsome up**
close.
Colonel **I was amazed to see the Count take**
such an interest in my cousin.
Ludovic **If I had know you where here,**
Signorina -
Fosca **"If he had known ..." Of course he**
knew.
Ludovic **- I would have brought you many**
flowers.
Colonel **If I had known ...**
Ludovic **You do like flowers?**
Fosca **Yes.**
Colonel **I should have known.**
Ludovic **I've seen you at your window.**
Mother **Won't you stay for dinner?**
Father **Do. Yes.**
Ludovic **I've watched you every day since**
I arrived.
Fosca **I had my suspicion.**
Colonel **I had no suspicion.**
Fosca, Colonel
I chose not to see.
Ludovic **The way you move,**
The way you gaze at the sky ...
Fosca **For love had made me blind -**
Colonel **How could I be so blind?**
Fosca **- or what I took for love.**
Colonel **Within a month, he had asked for**
her hand.
Giorgio **Signora Fosca has been married?**
Colonel **Yes.**
Parents **Austria ...**
Count Ludovic of Austria ...
Fosca **I sensed in him a danger,**
Deception, even violence.
I must admit to some degree
That it excited me.
Parents **Austria ...**
Count Ludovic of Austria ...
Colonel **Once they were married, once he'd**
received my uncle's sizable dowry,
he traveled a great deal, was
unavailable to Fosca.
Fosca **He gambled away the dowry. I was**
forced to go to my parents to
borrow from what little savings
they had left.
Colonel **Then one day, as she was coming**
from market ...

Mistress Excuse me. You're the wife of a Count Ludovic?
Fosca Yes.
Mistress **You fool.**
The man's a fraud, a fake.
The trips he said he had to take abroad
He took them so that he could be with me.
He calls himself a Count, but he's not.
He's never had a title in his life!
He doesn't have a title,
But he does have a wife
And a child in Dalmatia.
Fosca No, you must be mistaken.
Mistress Oh, yes.
He only wants to bleed you
Until the day he doesn't need you.
I warn you he'll abandon you
As he abandoned her and me
And countless others, I've no doubt.
I'm telling you, the man was born without a heart.
You fool ...
Fosca I confronted him with this information, and he made no attempt to deny it.
Ludovic **A well, at last you know the truth, Signorina.**
But you as well must face the truth.
I've no desire to deceive you any more.
But do admit what you ignore:
We made a bargain, did we not?
And we got what we bargained for.
You gave me your money, I gave you my looks
And my charm and my arm.
I would say that more than balances the books.
Now it's done
Where's the harm?
If women sell their looks,
Why can't a man, if he can?
Besides, the money wasn't even yours,
It belonged to those ridiculous old bores,
Your parents.
Forgive me, my dear, but though you are no beauty,

I fear, you are not quite the victim you appear.
Well, let us part by mutual consent and be content.
And so good luck and goodbye.
I must go.
Oh, and yes, we haven't paid the rent
Since July ...
Just so you know ...
Fosca I returned home, to find my parents impoverished and in poor health.
Colonel Fosca's health failed ...
Fosca **A woman's like a flower ...**
Colonel She began to suffer her first convulsions. My aunt and uncle nursed her as best they could.
Fosca **A flower's only purpose is to please ...**
Colonel I spent months looking for the man.
Fosca Beauty is power ...
Colonel By then, of course, he'd vanished.
Fosca **Longing a disease ...**
Colonel To this day, I dream of finding him and realizing my revenge.
Fosca My father died not long thereafter.
Colonel **How could I be so blind?**
Fosca **I couldn't face the world.**
Colonel **It took her many months to leave her bed.**
Fosca **It took me months to leave my bed.**
Colonel When her mother died, she had nothing really. No one.
Fosca And so I went to stay with my cousin, who in some way felt responsible for my circumstances.
Colonel **Why could I not admit the truth?**
How could I not have seen through the veneer?
I told myself,
"As long as she seems happy, why interfere?"
Or was I just relieved to know
That somebody would want her for a wife?
In war you know the enemy,
Not always so in life.
The enemy was love -
Selfishness really, but love,
All of us blinded by love
That makes everything seem possible.
You have to pay a consequence
For things that you've denied.

This is the thorn in my side.
Mistress **As long as you're a man,
You're what the world will make
of you.**
Mistress, Mother
**Whereas if you're a woman,
You're only what it sees.**

Colonel, Father, Ludovic
**A woman is a flower whose
purpose is to please.**
All **Beauty is power, longing a
disease**
*(As we segue to the next scene, Clara enters in a
robe, her hair down)*

Scene Two

The mountainside, a distance from the outpost.

Sunrise Letter

Clara **Giorgio,
I stand here staring at the
sunrise,
Thinking how we've never seen a
Sunrise together
Thinking that the sunrise
Only means another day without
you,
And thinking:
Can our love survive so much
separation,
Keep itself alive, much less
thrive?**

**If only you were here,
If I could feel your touch,
I wouldn't have such fear.
If only we had more than letters
Holding us together,
If we just could hold each other
now,
The sunrise then could be
A thing that I could see
And merely think, "How
beautiful ..."**

Clara, Giorgio
**Giorgio,
I now sit staring at the mirror -
You may not believe it, but I
swear
As I stare there it is plain as day:
A gray hair,
Of which I was unaware,
Which is more than I can bear,
Which I'm ripping out right now
And am sending on to you
As a milestone of my age,
As a turning of the page ...**

Perhaps when next we meet,

**I'll be a sorry sight,
You won't know who I am,
My hair completely white,
My face a mass of wrinkles.
What will you feel then, my
Giorgio?**
Giorgio **Time is now our enemy ...**
*(Unsteadily, Fosca has entered and made her
way towards Giorgio; Clara exits)*
Fosca You came a great distance to read
her letters. Are you trying to get
away from me?
*(Giorgio doesn't respond; he returns the letter to
his pocket)*

Ever since I have recovered, you
have made every effort to run away
from me. To be free of my
company.
Giorgio There are times when I wish to be
alone.
Fosca I know that I offend you.
Giorgio I won't have this conversation.
Fosca And what kind of conversation
would you prefer, Captain?
Something innocuous? Perhaps we
could discuss your troops? Or
maybe we should talk about the
weather? It feels like rain, don't you
think?
Giorgio I think you can be incredibly
difficult.
Fosca I didn't come here to be difficult. I
came here to share your company.
(He notices blood on her hands)
Giorgio What have you done to your hands?
Fosca *(looking at them blankly)* I must
have fallen.
Giorgio *(attending to her hands)*
You have no business being out
here on your own.
Fosca Do you wish me dead?
Giorgio Fosca, don't be so unfair!
Fosca I know I'm unfair. I want to free
you from the burden of my
affection. I know the torture you are

going through. I do know what it is
that I am doing to you.
*(There is a long, painful moment of silence as
they sit and stare off into space)*

Why is it that the daisies and violets
are in blue?

Giorgio They mistake the warmth of
autumn for April.

Fosca What is that bird?

Giorgio A wren.

Fosca What does it look like?

Giorgio Small and grey. I think it's the
smallest of birds.

Fosca You know so much. *(pause)* Kiss
me. I know I shouldn't ask such a
thing. A woman shouldn't have
followed a man here. Well, given
my appearance, I don't behave as
other women do. And so I ask you
for a kiss.

Giorgio No.

Fosca Then I will kiss you.

Is This What You Call Love ?

Giorgio Is this what you call love?
**This endless and insatiable
Smothering pursuit of me.
You think that this is love?**

**I'm sorry that you're lonely,
I'm sorry that you want me as
you do.**

**I'm sorry that I fail to feel
The way you want me to feel.
I'm sorry that you're ill,
I'm sorry you're in pain.
I'm sorry that you aren't
beautiful.**

**But yes, I wish you'd go away
And leave me alone!**

Scene Three

Outside. The soldiers are on guard.

Soldiers' Gossip

Torasso Both of them were soaked to the
skin.
Rizzolli Where had they been?
Augenti On the bluff.
Lombardi Were they all alone?
Torasso No one knows.
Lombardi You don't suppose -?

**Everywhere I turn, there you are
This is not love
Just some kind of obsession.
Will you never learn when too far
is too far,
Have you no concern
For what I want, what I feel?**

(pointing at Clara's letter)

**Love is what you earn and return
When you care for another
So much that the other's set free.
Don't you see?
Can't you understand?**

**Love's not a constant demand,
It's a gift you bestow
Love isn't sudden surrender
It's tender and slow, it must
grow.**

**Yet everywhere I go,
You appear or I know you are
near**

**This is now love just a need for
possession.
Call it what you will
This is not love, this is a reverse
Like a curse, something out of
control**

**I've begun to fear
For my soul ...**

*(Music stops; a loud clap of thunder is heard.
Trembling, Fosca sudders momentarily and
crumples to the ground. Giorgio turns and sees
her lying there; he crosses the stage past her
and begins to exit. He stops, pauses for a
moment, then reluctantly returns to her,
covering her with his coat. He picks her up and
carries her offstage as the lights fade to black.)*

Barri Ugh!
Rizzolli Gentlemen, enough!
Torasso Still, it would explain Signora's
attitude -

Augenti Why she comes to every meal.
Barri It isn't for the veal.
Torasso And it would explain the
Colonel's gratitude.

Lombardi I hear he calls him "Giorgio" -
Rizzolli But nobody is that brave.
Augenti No, that's cheek.
Rizzolli Nobody is that brave.

Lombardi **Wouldn't you like to peek?**
 Torasso **Ugh!**
 Barri **Gentlemen, I think I'll change my
 wager:
 He'll be major next week.**
 Rizzolli **I'll say!**
 All **I'll say!
 I'll say!**

(A bed is rolled onstage. At first we can't quite make out who's in it: we see a clack-caped form writhing as the bed spins. The black figure lifts up: it is Fosca atop Giorgio, who struggles beneath; the Soldiers and Attendants surround this action)

Nightmare

Group 1 **Everywhere I turn**
 Group 2 **Everywhere I turn**
 Group 1 **There you are.**
 Group 2 **There you are.**
 All **This is not love, just some kind of
 obsession.**
 Group 1 **Everywhere I go,**
 Group 2 **Everywhere I go,**
 All **You appear,
 Or I know you are near.**
 Group 2 **You are near.**
 All **You are near.**
 Giorgio **Let go of me! Please!**
 All **Love,
 Love's not a constant demand.
 It's a gift you bestow.**

Scene Four

Outside. The soldiers are on guard again.

Soldiers' Gossip

Torasso **Forty days - !**
 Lombardi **Where does he get all the luck?**
 Torasso **Forty days -!**
 Rizzolli **The man is sick**
 Torasso **But forty days - !**
 Barri **Yes, he's sick of being stuck in
 the sticks.**
 Augenti **Who isn't?**
 Torasso **In Milan - !**
 Lombardi **He's gone
 Because it's gone a little thick
 with the Signora.**

**Love isn't sudden -
 It's tender and slow ...**
 Group 1 **Tender and slow ...
 Tender and slow ...**
 Group 2 **Sudden surrender ...
 Sudden surrender ...**
(All exit including Fosca, who disappears into the shadows as the Doctor appears; we are now in Giorgio's bedroom. The Doctor wakes him.)
Doctor **It's all right. Calm down. It was
 only a dream.**
Giorgio **I feel so warm.**
Doctor **You became ill after carrying
 Signora Fosca back in the rain.**
Giorgio **When was that?**
Doctor **Two days ago.**
(He put his hand to Giorgio's head.)
Doctor **You still have a fever, but it seems
 to be low. My boy, you will recover
 from this illness, but it will take
 some time. You might as well enjoy
 it away from here. I am putting you
 on sick leave.**
Giorgio **Sick leave?**
Doctor **Fourty days. This is a dreary place.
 It can get to us all. As soon as you
 are well enough, you will depart for
 Milan.**
Giorgio *(fondly)* **Milan ...**
Doctor **Don't look so sad, my boy. I trust
 there is someone there who can
 oversee your recuperation.**

Rizzolli **Gentlemen -**
Augenti **He'd better get out quick from the
 Signora.**
 Rizzolli **Gentlemen -**
 Barri **That's not an easy trick with the
 Signora.**
 Rizzolli **Gentlemen!
 You know what I think?**
Others **What?**
 Rizzolli **I think we need a drink!**
 Lombardi **I'll say.**
 Rizzolli **I'll say!**
 All **I'll say!
 I'll say!
 I'll say!**

Scene Five

A train compartment. Clara strolls through.

Forty Days

Clara **Giorgio, darling,
Forty days' leave so soon!
Imagine that, a whole forty days -
Well, forty marinees.
I'll be there to greet the train
That carried you away from me
Because it brings you home.**

(Giorgio enters slowly. He has a blanket around him and carries a suitcase as he moves towards the train compartment where he sits)

**I'm filling up the room, our secret room
With every flower in bloom.
I'll have the fire lit, the table set,
I'll wear the blue chemise.**

**And once we're in our room, our secret room,
Where I'll be able to care for you,
Kiss you, embrace you,
Be there for you ...**

(She exits. The train whistle blows and, just as the train start to move, Fosca enters, carrying a small suitcase)

Giorgio How could you? How dare you follow me?

Fosca You needn't speak to me. You could pretend that I'm not even here.

Giorgio I am sick, don't you understand?

Fosca I understand all too well. I could attend to you. I could help you get better.

Giorgio I don't want you to help. You're the reason I'm sick.

Fosca I apologize. Nothing could be further from what I wanted for you. That is why I want to follow you to Milan. To see that you are well.

Giorgio Fosca, you can't do this.

Fosca I heard what you said, Giorgio. I've come to tell you that I will keep my distance. I will stay out of your path. But I can be nearby, I can be quietly watching.

Giorgio And you think that this will make me love you?

Fosca No, no. I am doing this because I love you.

Giorgio My heart feels nothing for you. How many times do you have to hear this?

Fosca This has nothing to do with your heart. This has to do with your eyes. What you see. If I were beautiful. If I were warm and soft to your touch - you would feel otherwise.

Giorgio *(firm)*No. Your appearance is no excuse for the way you behave. My feelings towards you are because of your relentlessness, your constant selfishness and insensitivity.

Fosca I'm sorry. No one has ever told me how to love. I know I feel too much, Giorgio. I often don't know what to do with my feelings. You understand that, don't you?

Giorgio *(slowly, pleading)* Fosca, you have to face the truth. Please. You have to give me up.

Loving You

Fosca **Loving you is not a choice,
It's who I am.
Loving you is not a choice
And not much reason to rejoice,
But it gives me purpose
Gives me voice to say to the world:
This is why I live
You are why I live.
Loving you is why I do
The things I do
Loving you is not in my control.
But loving you, I have a goal
For what's left of my life ...
I would live,
And I would die for you.**

(As music continues under)

Giorgio Die for me? What kind of love is that?

Fosca The truest love. Would Clara give her life for you? Would she? I would. Happily. In time you will come to see what is beautiful about me. Do you wish me to move to another compartment?

Giorgio We're getting off at the next stop and I'm taking you back. And then I'll go on to Milan.

(getting up)

You must be cold. Here.

(He wraps his blanket around her)

Take this. Can't have you getting
more ill, can I?

Fosca (staring out the window)

The moonlight makes even this
landscape look lovely. Look over
there. There seem to be faces in
those rocks. They're smiling back at
us.

Scene Six

The Milan train station.

Transition

Augenti **To feel a woman's touch,
To touch a woman's hand,
Reminded me how much I long to
be with you,
How long I've been without you
near.**

**And then to hear a woman's
voice.
To hold a woman's arm,
To feel a woman's touch ...**

(Clara and Giorgio stroll from the train station
to a bench nearby; music under.)

Railway Sequence

Clara **Giorgio,
I didn't tell you in my letter
Something even better,
A surprise here at home:
In a week my husband goes to
Rome.
It's the first time he's away,
He'll be gone at least a day,
Maybe two or even three.**

**I can visit you at night,
We'll be lighted by the moon,
Not a shuttered afternoon.
Just think of having time
That we can call our own,
Together and alone.
Perhaps we'll take a drive into
the country,
And perhaps at last we'll share a
sunrise
Wouldn't that be beautiful - ?**

Giorgio Clara -

Clara What?

Giorgio Leave your husband. Let's have a
life together, not just a week or two.

Clara Giorgio, you know that's not
possible.

Giorgio Everything is possible.

Clara I would lose my child.

Giorgio And what if you were to lose me?

Clara I don't want to lose you, Giorgio.
You knew my situation.

Giorgio Let's run away together. We could
take your child -

Clara You're not thinking clearly. You're
not yourself.

Giorgio I am myself.

Clara Where would we go? How would
we live?

Giorgio We would manage.

Clara Giorgio, we are not two people who
could ever just "manage". We have
to carve out a life for ourselves
around our present obligations. We
have no choice.

Giorgio We have a choice.

Clara Let's not argue about what we don't
have. We have a wonderful
opportunity to be together right
now. The future will solve itself ...

Giorgio Clara, I'm not taking my sick leave.

Clara It's that woman, isn't it?

Giorgio There are many reasons -

Clara No! You constantly write to me
about her. You always speak of her
when we're together. Giorgio, she's
always on your mind! Do you love
her?

Giorgio Don't be ridiculous!

Clara I hate this woman and I don't even
know her.

Giorgio There are times when I hate her,
too.

Clara Then why do you sacrifice yourself
on her behalf?

Giorgio I'm not sure. Clara, don't be angry
with me. This woman has no
friends. She has no one to talk to. I
know the power I have over her,
now. I didn't ask for this power -
she bestowed it upon me. And it
carries responsibilities I can't seem
to shed.

Clara She needs you.
Giorgio Don't you need me, too?
Clara Of course I do, Giorgio. But not like this woman. I've often wondered if you would love me as much if I were free.
Giorgio I would. You know I would. I love you.

Clara And I love you. How long will you stay?
Giorgio I'll stay four days.
Clara You're not coming back, are you?
Giorgio Clara, I can't imagine my life without you. I'll be back.
Clara And I'll think of what you've asked of me.

Scene Seven

The courtyard

Transition

Woman **How long were we apart ...**
Man **A month, a week, a day?**
Woman **To feel your touch again ...**
Both **You've never been away ...**

Lights up on the courtyard where Giorgio is met by the Doctor.

Doctor Captain Bachetti, what are you doing here? You're supposed to be in Milan.
Giorgio I decided to forgo my sick leave.
Doctor Has Signora Fosca brought you to this?
Giorgio Not at all. This was my decision.
Doctor Don't you see what she's doing to you? To your mental state? That woman can be insidious.
Giorgio Then why did you bring her into my life?
Doctor I thought it would help her. I thought it would bring her some

small degree of happiness ... I had no intention for it to turn to this. Honestly, I didn't. I apologize.

Giorgio Excuse me, I have things to do. *(Walks away)*
Doctor Captain Bachetti, you seem to forget that I am your superior. You can't decide to forgo a sick leave just like that. Come on, my boy. Christmas is just a few days. Don't be foolish, go to Milan. Take the time you need to be yourself again.
Giorgio I intend to spend Christmas here. Thank you.
Doctor You don't seem to understand, Captain. I can see to it that you are transferred permanently. If I send a dispatch to headquarters, you'll be ordered to leave.
Giorgio No! I don't wish to be transferred!
Doctor Why are you behaving this way?
Giorgio I feel it my duty to help her.
Doctor Don't you understand? No one can help her. Good day.

Scene Eight

The Colonel's dining room.

We segue to a Christmas party in the dining quarters with all the Soldiers, household staff, the Colonel and the Doctor. Fosca plays the piano as Torasso sings a Christmas carol.

Christmas Carol

Torasso **La pace sulla terra
È a voi tranquillità.
È nato un bambino
Che il mondo salverà
Dal gran poter di Sàtan
E da sua protestà.
O novella di gran felicità!**
(His grand ending is met with enthusiasm)

Colonel Thank you so much, Lieutenant. *(to Fosca)* That was beautiful, my dear. *(to all)* So, Merry Christmas, everyone. And Good Health!

All Good Health!

Rizzoli When is dinner to be served, Sergeant Lombardi?
Lombardi The pheasant will be ready shortly.
Barri We've been waiting for pheasant all year and we're still waiting.

(Giorgio enters)

Colonel Ah, look who's arrived. Thank you so much for coming, Captain. I am so happy you decided not to take your leave.

(Augenti enters with a stack of letters, which he distributes.)

Augenti Christmas post!

Colonel We've come to think of you as one of the family.
Rizzolli Something for me at last.
Giorgio I appreciate that.
(Augenti hands the Colonel a letter; he moves away, leaving Giorgio and Fosca alone)
Fosca I hope you're feeling better, Captain?
Giorgio Yes, thank you.
Fosca It's so kind of you to join us.
Giorgio My pleasure. You look very charming.
Fosca Thank you.
Augenti Captain.
(He gives Giorgio a letter; there is an awkward moment between Fosca and Giorgio)
Fosca It's alright, Captain. It's fine. Go ahead. Read your letter. *(She retreats to the Doctor's side)*
Barri I can smell the perfume on Captain Bachetti's letter from here. A very fragrant perfume it is, Captain. My correspondence smells like it comes from a barn.
Rizzolli It does.
Lombardi Dinner will be ready in ten minutes. I've just put in the truffles.
Rizzolli Truffles, indeed. I can't remember the last time I had truffles.
Torasso I hope they'll be recognizable after Sergeant Lombardi ...
Colonel Captain Bachetti -
(Giorgio realizes the Colonel is addressing him)
Is it you or the gentlemen from the ministry who are responsible for this surprise?
(A hush falls over the room)
You have been transferred back to headquarters. You are to report immediately.
Giorgio *(taken completely by surprise)* Immediately?
Colonel This is most unusual, Captain Bachetti.
Giorgio Really, sir, *(turning to the Doctor)* I don't understand!
Fosca *(emotional)* Giorgio, my darling. Please don't leave me. Please don't leave me there.
(She throws herself into his arms; there is an embarrassing moment as everyone in the room tries to hide his discomfort.)
Colonel *(losing his temper)* No, take your hands off her. Doctor!
(The Doctor leads Fosca out of the room.)

Gentlemen. *(a pause)* I speak to you later, Captain Bachetti.
(he rushes out.)
orasso Well, more food for the rest of us then.
(Everyone except Giorgio exits. Giorgio pauses in confusion; Clara enters; music under)

Farewell Letter

Clara **Giorgio ...**
(He stares)

Giorgio ... Giorgio ...
(Suddenly he remembers Clara's letter; he opens it and begins to read)

**I am writing to you, my angel,
Though not long since you've
been gone
With a most unhappy heart.**

**Because, in truth, as time goes on,
I think of nothing else but you -
And us.
Oh, my love, my sweet, you've
changed,
I've watched you change,
You're not the man I thought I
knew.
At times, these past few days
together,
I would wonder whether you
were here
Really here with me.
I thought, was I naive to believe
We'd continue year by year?
Is it over forever?**

It seems to me the answer rests with you. Yes, I have obligations at home, Giorgio, but my heart is yours. When my son is older, when he goes off to school, there is the chance for us to be together. I will make the sacrifice you ask of me then. Please understand why I can't now. Will you wait for me, Giorgio? I have to know. We both have to know.

Giorgio **Just another love story.**
Clara **No one is to blame.**
Giorgio **A temporary love story.**
Clara **But it needn't end the same.**
Giorgio **I thought that we had more.**

Clara **We had more -**
Giorgio **We had something more -**
Both **- than any other love story.**
Clara **All that happiness -**
Giorgio **You think that this is love?**
Clara **- we had then -**
Giorgio **This logical and sensible**
Practical arrangement -
Clara **We can have that happiness -**
Giorgio **- this foregone conclusion -**
Clara **- once again!**
Giorgio **- You think that this is love?**
Love isn't so convenient.
Love isn't something scheduled in
advance,
Not something guaranteed you
need
For fear it may pass you by.
You have to take a chance,
You can't just try it out.
What's love unless it's
unconditional?
Love doesn't give a damn about
tomorrow
And neither do I!
Clara **All that happiness -**
Giorgio **It was fine.**
Clara **- in the past -**
Giorgio **I was yours, you were mine.**
Clara **That was not just happiness,**
Love was in that happiness
That's why it will last.
Giorgio **Love is more, I want more.**
Both **I thought I knew what love was -**
Clara **I didn't know that**
Love was a complication.
Giorgio **I do know that it's**
not a negotiation.
Clara **We'll take it in our stride.**
Giorgio **What we had -**
Clara **You decide.**
Giorgio **- wasn't bad.**
Clara **We could have everything.**
I want you more than anything.
Giorgio **How sad -**
Clara **To wait is nothing.**
We're young and time is nothing.
Giorgio **- that what we have is nothing ...**
Clara **Nothing ...**
Both **Nothing ...**
(She disappears as the Colonel enters,
brandishing a piece of paper)
Colonel **Bachetti, I found this letter at my**
cousin's bedside. This is your
signature, isn't it?

Giorgio **Yes.**
Colonel **You have taken advantage of my**
cousin's affections.
Giorgio **That was not my intention, sir.**
Perhaps you should discuss this
matter with Signora Fosca.
Colonel **My Cousin is asleep. And in any**
event, I wouldn't subject her to such
a question. No one can make me
believe that a man such as yourself
would desire a woman like Signora
Fosca. Would ever write her a letter
like this.
Giorgio **Why is that?**
Colonel **The reason seems obvious.**
Giorgio **Not to me. Forgive me, but you**
should not read that letter, nor
should you take it from her room.
Colonel **My cousin is at the end of her life!**
She does not deserve to be led on in
such a manner!
Giorgio **You don't know your cousin. She is**
not a child! She is not just a sick
person. Signora Fosca is as
responsible for her actions as I am
for mine.
Colonel **You have abused my good faith,**
come into my house to dishonor it.
Your attitude towards me is nothing
short of contemptuous. I must
demand a reparation from you - and
mere words will not suffice.
Giorgio **What? A fight? A duel?**
Colonel **I confided you. You know that my**
cousin has been taken advantage of
before.
(The Doctor enters and stands off to the side)
We will meet tomorrow mornint at
eight, behind the castle steps.
Doctor *(trying to make light of the*
situation) **Gentlemen, please.**
Colonel, there is an explanation.
Captain Bachetti, speak up. Say
how she forced you -
Giorgio **Not at all. Nothing was forced on**
me.
Doctor **Oh please, let's come to our senses**
here.
Colonel **One thing more. My cousin knows**
nothing of this discovery. She must
know nothing of what is going to
happen. I need your word on that.
Giorgio **She will not hear of this matter**
from me.
Colonel **Very well. Tomorrow. *(he exits)***

Doctor It's deplorable that that woman should have brought you to this. Let's not panic. The Colonel will calm down. There's still time to explain -

Giorgio You will arrange for me to see Fosca.

Doctor Are you totally mad?

Giorgio Whatever the outcome of this duel, I will never see her again. You will arrange for me to see her as you did before.

Doctor Impossible.

I Was Wrong

Giorgio **Don't you see what you've endured, Doctor?
What that woman has endured?
My rejection, my disgust
My indifference, my anger
My contempt and, yes, my ugliness
What that woman has endured,
Doctor**

**No one has ever loved me as that woman has
No one has truly loved me, just Fosca
Love without reason
Love without mercy
Love without pride or shame
Love unconcerned with being returned
No wisdom, no judgement**

Scene Nine

Fosca's bedroom.

Quietly, Giorgio enters. Fosca is resting on the bed and doesn't hear him.

Giorgio Fosca. Fosca.
(She lifts herself up)

I'm sorry to surprise you.

Fosca Thank you for coming.

Giorgio I wanted you to know that I had nothing to do with this transfer.

Fosca I know that now. The Doctor told me.

Giorgio That letter from Clara ...

Fosca Yes?

Giorgio It's over. Finished.

Fosca I'm so sorry.

**No caution, no blame
No one has ever known me as that woman has
No one has truly shown me
What love could be like until now
I was wrong
I was wrong**

Doctor You're taken leave of your senses

Giorgio You may have forgotten how to cure a disease, Doctor, but you induced mine. Don't pretend you don't know what I'm talking about.

Doctor I hope you understand that woman can never be your lover. Her physical condition -

Giorgio You will arrange for me to see her.

Doctor No, I take no part in this madness
(The Doctor exits)

Giorgio **I was wrong,
Love's a demand,
I was wrong,
Love needn't grow,
Love can be sudden surrender,
Not tender, not slow,
And I know now that
I love Fosca,
No, not the way that she loves me,
But, I love Fosca,
And nothing will come of it,
And, if I should die tomorrow,
Or live and be forced to go,
No one has truly loved her but me,
And I want her to know...**

Giorgio Sorry? I thought you'd be happy.

Fosca There was a time when I'd welcomed that. But I realise now I don't want you to be unhappy. I don't wish to see you sad.

Giorgio I feel so much ... but I'm not really sad.

Fosca I thought you loved Clara?

Giorgio I did love Clara. I did. But ...

No One Has Ever Loved Me

Giorgio **No one has ever loved me
As deeply as you.
No one has truly shown me
What love could be like until now:**

**Not pretty or safe or easy
But more than I ever knew.
Love within reason -
That isn't love.
And I've learned that from you ...
Are you cold?**

Fosca No, I'm afraid.

Giorgio Of what?

Fosca **All this happiness,
Coming when there's so little
time.**

**Too much happiness
More than I can bear.**

I pray for the strength to enjoy it.
You'll leave tomorrow. This is the
only time we have.
You do love me, don't you?

Scene Ten

An open field.

*We hear the sound of military drums. Daybreak.
The Colonel, the Doctor, Torasso, Barri,
Lombardi, Augenti and two Soldiers are waiting.
Giorgio enters. He looks hollow-eyed and
dishevelled.*

Lombardi Gentlemen

*(The Colonel crosses to center; Giorgio stands
numb)*

Doctor Captain.

*(Giorgio comes to life and makes his way to
center; Lombardi presents a box with the pistols.*

Scene Eleven

A hospital.

*Lights up on Giorgio, dazed, sitting at a desk. A
nurse enters and brings him a box with a letter.
As Giorgio opens the letter, the Doctor enters.*

Doctor

Captain Bachetti. I didn't write to you before,
because I knew your illness might prevent you
from comprehending the contents of my letter. I
now have heard that you're close to recovering
and that your nervous condition has improved.
I don't know what you've been told or what you
even remember of the events that led you away.
Signora Fosca died three days after the night you
last saw one another. She died without knowing
of what took place between you and her cousin.
The Colonel's wound was serious, but not

Giorgio Yes, I love you.

Fosca Say it again.

Giorgio I love you.

Fosca Once more.

Giorgio I love you.

Be calm. Be strong. I am yours.

Fosca This isn't a dream?

Giorgio This isn't a dream.

*(She begins to lead him towards the bed but
Giorgio resists)*

No, Fosca, we can't.

Fosca To die loved is to have lived.

*(They kiss. Fosca becomes weak, and Giorgio
lifts her and carries her to the bed where he
gently puts her down. He stares at her
momentarily; her strength returns and she pulls
him onto the bed as the music swells and the
lights fade.)*

*Giorgio and the Colonel each take one and then
move to their positions.)*

Torasso Ten paces, Gentlemen. One, two,
three, four, five, six, seven, eight,
nine, ten.

*(The Colonel and Giorgio mark off ten paces.
They turn and fire almost simultaneously. The
Colonel stands frozen for an instant, then
trembles and falls to the ground; the Doctor and
the other men rush to his aid, leaving Giorgio
standing alone on the other side of the stage.
Suddenly, Giorgio lets out a high-pitched howl -
a cry that is clearly reminiscent of Fosca's - as
lights fade to black)*

mortal. He recovered in a few months. I wanted
to speak to the Colonel about you in order to
convince him of your innocence, but in the end I
was afraid that I would hurt your cause more
than help it.

In a box that I am sending, you will find papers
that were left behind in your desk. Also, I've
enclosed some personal belongings of Signora
Fosca's, and a letter she wrote to you just prior to
her death.

*(As Giorgio goes through the papers in the box,
he summons up his past.)*

Finale

Barri, Rizzolli, Torasso

**The town, it is remote, isn't it?
And provincial -
Don't you think?**

Clara **I'm filling up our room,
Our little room,
With every flower in bloom.
I'll have the fire lit,
The table set,
I'll wear the blue chemise ...**

Ludovic **The time has come to face the
truth
Signorina ...**

Attendants **This sterile little town
These pompous little men.**

Lombardi, Augenti, Soldier 1 **This military madness ...**

Attendants **Military madness ...**

Lombardi, Augenti, Attendants **Uniforms, uniforms ...**

Clara **Imagining your fingers touching
mine
Imagining our room
The bed, the secrecy
The world outside
Your mouth on mine ...**

Colonel **An unattractive woman
Is easily deceived ...**

Doctor What is the cost of a few words
when a life hangs in the balance?
*(Giorgio picks up Fosca's letter, opens it and
starts to read)*

Giorgio My dearest Giorgio.
The end is near. The time has come
for me to surrender life gracefully.
These past two days since you have
left, since we were together, have
been a revelation.
**Now at last I see what comes
from feeling loved.
Strange, how merely feeling
loved,**

Giorgio, Fosca **You see things clearly.
Things I feared, like the world
itself,
I now love dearly.
I want to live.
Now I want to live,
Just from being loved.**

Fosca **All that pain I nursed inside
For all those years -**

Giorgio **All that vain and bitter self-
concern -**

Both **All those tears and all that pride
Have vanished into air ...**

Fosca **I don't want to leave.**

Giorgio **Now that I am loved.**

Fosca **I don't want to leave.**

Both **Everywhere I turn, you are there.**

Fosca **Everywhere I look things are
different.**

Both **Everything seems right
Everythings seems possible,
Every moment bursts with
feeling.
Why is love so easy to give
And so hard to receive?
But though I want to live,
I now can leave
With what I never knew:
I'm someone to be loved.
I'm someone to be loved.**

Giorgio **I'm someone to be loved.**

Fosca **And that I learned from you.**

All **I don't know how I let you
So far inside my mind.
But there you are and there you
will stay
How could I ever wish you away?
I see now I was blind.**

Fosca **And should you die tomorrow,
Another thing I see:**

Giorgio **Your love will live in me ...**

Fosca **Your love will live in me ...**

Giorgio, Group 1 **Your love will live in me ...**

Fosca, Group 2 **Your love will live in me ...**

Giorgio, Group 1 **Your love will live in me ...**

Fosca, Group 2 **Your love will live in me ...**

Giorgio, Group 1 **Your love will live in me ...**

Fosca, Group 2 **Your love will live in me ...**

Giorgio **Your love will live in me ...**

Fosca **Your love will live in me ...**

Giorgio **Your love will live in me ...**

PLEASE NOTE: This is the libretto of the London production. A libretto of the Broadway production is published by Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 355 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

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