

“E strano...Ah, fors’è lui che l’anima...Sempre libera” (How strange...Ah! Perhaps it’s he whom my heart...Always I must be free), scena, LA TRAVIATA, Act I, music by Giuseppe Verdi,; libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, 1853. One of the most performed of all operas, the libretto is based on the play by Alexandre Dumas fils, *La dame aux camélias* (The Lady of the Camellias), which Dumas created from his novel of the same name.

## SYNOPSIS

Violetta, a courtesan suffering from tuberculosis, has never really known love. She meets Alfredo at a glittering party, where he declares his year-long ardent passion for her, which he has not revealed until now. She makes light of his advances but after the party, muses about the stranger’s declaration and the emotions he has inspired in her.

## VIOLETTA

E strano, è strano! In core  
scolpiti ho quegli accenti!  
Seria per me sventura un serio amore?  
Che risolvi, o urbata anima mia?  
Null’uomo ancora t’accendeva...  
O gioia ch’io non conobbi,  
essere amata amando!  
E sdegnarlo poss’io  
per l’aride follie del viver mio?

Ah, fors’è lui che l’anima  
solinga ne’tumulti  
godeva sovente pingere  
\*de’ suoi colori occulti!  
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;  
miserioso, altero,  
\*croce, croce e delizia al cor!\*

Follie! Follie! Delirio vano è questo!  
Povera donna, sola,  
abbandonata in questo  
popoloso deserto  
che appellano Parigi...  
che spero or più?  
Che far degg’io? Gioire  
di voluttà ne’ vertici  
di voluttà perir!

How strange, how strange! In my heart  
I have those words engraved!  
Could a real love end in calamity for me?  
What’s your decision, oh, my tormented soul?  
No man has ever yet set you on fire...  
Oh, joy that I’ve never known,  
to be loved and love in return!  
Will I be able to spurn that,  
for the sterile madness of the life I lead?

Perhaps it’s he, whom my heart,  
alone in the riotous crowd,  
often delighted in depicting  
in dim, mysterious colors!  
He, who modest and caring,  
haunted the door of illness  
yielding to new-found fever,  
awakening me to love...  
To that sweet love which is the heart-beat  
of the entire universe;  
mysterious and exalted,  
\*torment, torment and joyful delight of the heart!\*

Madness! Madness! This is vain delirium!  
Pitiful woman, alone,  
abandoned here, within this  
cruel and lonely teeming desert,  
the great city of Paris...  
What hope is there now?  
What should I do? Plunge  
into the vortex of pleasure,  
engulfed in pleasure, I’ll die!

Gioir! Gioir! Ah!

\*Sempre libera, dogg'io  
folleggiare 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, ah!  
A dilette sempre nuovi  
dee volare il mio pensier, ah.  
il mio pensier.  
Ah, amor, etc.

In joy! In joy! Ah!

Always free, must be my motto,  
as I run from pleasure to pleasure,  
in a life that's smoothly gliding  
on the pathways of constant joy.  
Let each day succeed the other,  
always merry in a crowd, ah!  
To delightful new-found adventures  
all my thoughts must fly away, ah!  
must fly away...  
Ah, to love, etc.

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