



## **La Traviata, The Story of Violetta, "The Fallen Woman."**

This is the second in the series of Operas in a Nutshell and, unlike Turandot with its happy ending, it is a tragic opera. But like Turandot, it has a beautiful and memorable aria.

Let's see what our courtesan, Violetta, is up to. Violetta has led a life with many lovers but values her freedom above all. She has no desire for commitment and love.

In her Parisian salon, she is greeting guests as they arrive for her party. Her health has improved and she has decided to celebrate. Her latest lover, Baron, is in attendance and she greets many friends including Gastone, who introduces her to Alfredo Germont. Alfredo has loved Violetta for quite some time and even visited her bedside while she was sick. There is a lot of drinking going on at the party and the guests

(probably drunk) begin to sing to celebrate drinking, pleasure and love. Here is one of the most famous arias from this act of the opera. The translation of what they are singing is shown on the screen.

[Click here to see the scene with the aria.](#)



*Alfredo professes his love for her*

Moments later, Violetta, not feeling well, tells her guests to go to the ballroom to dance. Once they have gone, Alfredo confesses his love for her. She scoffs and tells him that love means nothing to her. But Alfredo continues to declare his love. She begins to have a change of heart and tells him that she will meet him the next day. Is he the man for her?

### **Three months later...**

... the couple are in Violetta's country house outside of Paris. She has given up her former lifestyle, and she and Alfredo are happy and calm. That afternoon, the maid, Annina, returns to the house. Alfredo, curious, asks her where she went. She tells him that Violetta sent her to sell all of her mistresses belongings to support their country life. With both love and anger, Alfredo goes to Paris to settle matters on his own. When Violetta enters the room looking for Alfredo, she sees a party invitation from her friend, Flora. Violetta decides that she will not attend as she wants nothing more to do with her previous life. But Alfredo's father, Giorgio, comes to the house. Giorgio tells her that she must break up with Alfredo. His daughter is about to be married, but Violetta's reputation threatens the engagement. Violetta refuses. He pleads with her to make a sacrifice for his family's wellbeing and she finally relents.



*Giorgio, Alfredo's father, upsets the apple cart*

Her RSVP is sent to Flora accepting and she writes a farewell letter to Alfredo. As



she writes, Alfredo returns. Through her tears, she tells Alfredo of her undying love for him before rushing off to Paris. He sees Flora's party invitation and believes that Violetta has returned to her former lover, Baron. He leaves to confront Violetta at the party.



*She confesses her love for Baron. Will Baron challenge Alfredo to a duel?*

When Alfredo arrives, he bitterly sits down at the card table and begins gambling. Violetta walks in with Baron and when Alfredo sees her, he tells Baron, "She will be leaving with me." Baron angrily challenges Alfredo to a game of cards but loses a small fortune to him. Violetta asks Alfredo to leave the party fearing that Baron will challenge him to a duel. Alfredo demands that she admit she loves Baron. Desperate for him to leave, she lies and tells him she does. Alfredo begins shouting at her and calls in the guests to witness her betrayal. As he humiliates her, he throws his winnings at her. Violetta, overwhelmed, faints and falls to the floor. As she feared, Baron challenges him to a duel.

### **Six months have passed...**

... and Violetta's condition has worsened. Her tuberculosis is terminal and she only has a few days left to live. As she lays in her bed, she reads a letter from Alfredo's father telling her that Baron was only wounded in the duel. He also confessed to Alfredo that it was his fault for their separation and has sent Alfredo to her to ask for forgiveness. Violetta, however, has no life left in her. When Alfredo arrives, he enters the bedroom and

embraces Violetta. Suddenly, a surge of energy rushes through her body, and she no longer feels pain. She jumps out of bed but as quickly as she rose, she falls dead to the floor at Alfredo's feet.



And that is the story of La Traviata.

Would you like to watch the whole opera now that you know what's going on? Click [here for the whole show with English subtitles](#).

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