

A Comparison of Giuseppe Verdi and Antonio Ghislanzoni's *Aida* and Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida*

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Abstract

A musical theatre fan knows many musicals have been based off books, but opera has also been a popular source of inspiration for musical composers. Aside from obvious genre differences, opera and musical theatre have different storytelling techniques. This comparative essay explores how Elton John and Tim Rice adapted Giuseppe Verdi and Antonio Ghislanzoni's 19th century opera *Aida* into a Broadway musical. The thesis is organized into four main sections: the history of both shows, a plot comparison, character analysis, and the staging of both productions. These sections seek to discover what both productions have in common and more importantly, what is different and why Elton John and Tim Rice made specific choices in modifying the story. This thesis found that the opera and the musical share many similarities, but main plot points and character traits were changed in the musical to appeal to modern audiences.

In an application of these findings, the second half of the project is an original script for a musical based off another Verdi opera, *La Traviata*. In addition to watching the opera, I also read Alexandre Dumas' *La Dame aux Camélias*, upon which *La Traviata* is based. The time setting is unspecified, but the dialogue is completely modern. The opera is rather tragic, so I opted to make my adaption more of a comedy and make the characters more relatable. Just as Elton John and Tim Rice did, I kept to the same story of the opera, but made changes to reflect modern society.

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Introduction

Many cultures enlist the telling of fairy tales. These stories are easy to comprehend and share valuable messages that developing children thrive upon. Disney has monetized fairy tales by making animated movies based on the most popular stories. A common trope its movies utilize is forbidden love, which can be found in some of Disney's most well-known movies, such as *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Aladdin* (1992), and *Pocahontas* (1995). However, a lesser-known Disney "princess story" is *Aida*. Disney purchased the book rights for *Aida* in 1994, but it was never made into a movie by Disney. Instead, it became a Broadway musical in 2000. Perhaps because the original story was not based on a fairy tale, but a 19th century opera.

Aida the opera and *Aida* the musical both depict the same story. Princess Aida is enslaved to the Pharaoh's daughter Amneris. Aida falls in love with an Egyptian soldier named Radames who is, to their despair, betrothed to Amneris. Aida's father, Amonasro, is captured by the Egyptians and they decide to escape together. Radames allows Amonasro to escape and is subsequently charged with treason. They are sentenced to death and are buried alive together in a tomb.

The musical possesses the essence of the opera but was changed to appeal to the modern audience. The difference in audiences between the opera and the musical can be understood through an examination of how Elton John and Tim Rice came to write the musical and how Giuseppe Verdi and Antonio Ghislanzoni came to write the opera. Further investigation into the plot, lyrics, characters, and staging of both shows can illustrate key cultural differences in their intended audiences.

A Brief History of Aida

In 1869, Giuseppe Verdi was commissioned to write an opera for the opening of the Khedivial Opera House in Cairo, Egypt, though its premiere was postponed until 1871. The Viceroy who commissioned the opera wanted it to be a “purely ancient and Egyptian opera.”¹ He wanted a grandiose *mise-en-scène*, a French term referring to the set and scenery of a play, and desired that Giuseppe Verdi compose the score. Egyptologist and French scholar Auguste Mariette wrote the initial outline for *Aida* and after much pleading and many letters, Verdi agreed to compose the opera and Antonio Ghislanzoni wrote the Italian libretto.²

Like Verdi, Elton John needed persuasion to write the music for Disney’s *Aida*. He did not want to work on another animated film after the success of *The Lion King* (1994), for which he had written the music along with lyricist Tim Rice. After originally declining, Disney followed up by asking John “how he felt about doing a stage musical based on the story of Verdi’s classic 1871 opera *Aida*.”³ John agreed and Disney soon acquired the copyright to Leontyne Price’s children’s book, *Aida*. She had written the book after she portrayed the titular role at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York in 1990. Tim Rice and Elton John completed the musical in 1996. Although both works were written by a two-person team, the bases for each were written separately. August Mariette wrote the initial outline for the opera and Leontyne Price wrote the book upon

¹ Busch, “Verdi’s *Aida*,” 11.

² *Ibid*, 34.

³ “Origins Beyond Ancient Egypt.”

which the musical was based. The original source material created a solid base for the composers and lyricists that would lead to the success and popularity of both productions.

Plot Comparison

i. Structural Elements of the Opening

	Opera	Musical
Characters	Ramfis - <i>Introduced</i> , High Priest, Resembles the musical's Zoser	Amneris - <i>Introduced</i> , Pharaoh's Daughter, Radames' betrothed
	Radames - <i>Introduced</i> , Soldier, In love with Aida	Radames - <i>Introduced</i> , Soldier, Betrothed to Amneris
		Aida - <i>Introduced</i> , Newly enslaved Nubian
Notable Musical Numbers	Celeste Aida (Radames)	Fortune Favors the Brave (Radames, Soldiers)
Important Events	Radames daydreams of being Isis' chosen and about his love for Aida	Aida is enslaved

By comparing key structural elements within both shows, we can gain a better understanding of the key plot differences. First, the openings of the opera and musical are vastly different. The opera begins with the high priest Ramfis informing Radames that the goddess Isis has named the commander of the Egyptian army. After their brief meeting, Radames sings “Celeste Aida” (Heavenly Aida) in which he fantasizes about being the chosen Egyptian commander and of his love for Aida. The musical opens in a present-day museum and a mannequin of Amneris comes to life and transports the story back in time to ancient Egypt. In ancient Egypt, Aida is captured alongside other Nubian women, and the scene smoothly changes to Radames sailing while singing “Fortune Favors the Brave.” In the opera, Radames is introduced as a hopeful soldier who is in love with the slave, Aida. His motivation is to fight and conquer for Aida, so he may return her to her native land. In the musical, Radames is introduced as “a brave explorer who loves the

freedom his occupation brings him.”² The timelines of the opera and musical are not aligned.

The opera begins with Radames and Aida in love, whereas in the musical the audience watches the two characters fall in love. The staggered timeline is the boldest distinction between both shows. Perhaps this choice was made so that Aida and Radames could have a more obvious character arc because the musical covers a longer period of time. According to music journalist Maddy Shaw Roberts, “In opera, it’s the music that people remember the most,” whereas “in musicals, the text is at least as important as the music.”⁴ This being said, the audience of the musical is going to be as attentive to the story as they are to the music, so the text must be equally as thrilling as the music.

The creators of *Aida* the musical must have thought the story would be more compelling if the audience were to meet Aida and Radames before they fell in love and watch as the complexity of their love unfolds. According to Dr. Veronica Hefner, who specializes in the study of the consumption of media, *Aida* would be considered a “transitional” Disney princess story because it was created between 1989 and 1998 similar to the examples of *Pocahontas* 1995 and *Mulan* 1998.⁵ The transitional Disney princess stories are characterized by an increase in part size of the Disney “princes” and an increase in challenges the lovers must overcome. *Aida* not only has these characteristics, but also resembles the timeline of transitional princess movies where the “princess” and the “prince” do not fall in love right away.

² Fick, “Deconstructing Disney.”

⁴ Roberts, “What’s the Difference.”

⁵ Hefner et al, “Happily Ever After,” 4.

ii. Structural Elements of the Introduction of Radames & Aida

	Opera (Act I, scene 1)	Musical (Act I, scene 2)
Characters	Radames	Aida
	Amneris - <i>Introduced</i> , Pharaoh's daughter, in love with Radames	Radames
	Aida - <i>Introduced</i> , Ethiopian slave, In love with Radames	
	Pharaoh - <i>Introduced</i> , Ruler of Egypt, Amneris' father	
Notable Musical Numbers	Ritorna vincitor (Aida)	The Past is Another Land (Aida)
Important Events	Radames is chosen to lead the Egyptians into battle against the Ethiopians	
	Aida reveals she is the princess of Ethiopia	

The opera continues with Amneris' entrance after Radames' aria. Radames is beaming and Amneris automatically assumes his expression is because he is in love with a woman. She is in love with Radames and "fears a rival."⁷ Aida enters the palace hall clearly troubled, and Radames' gaze makes Amneris suspect that Aida may be her rival. All three characters are now suspicious of one another and the set transforms into the pharaoh's throne room. Radames is announced to lead the Egyptian army against the Ethiopians. The Ethiopians are being led by their king, Amonasro, and Aida reveals that he is her father. Everyone exits the stage except for Aida. Aida is left alone, and she sings an aria titled "Ritorna vincitor" (Return a Conqueror) where she expresses the torment of her heart as she does not know who to pray for. She does not want to see her people lose and her father in chains, but also does not want Radames dead. The musical continues with Radames and the other soldiers deciding what to do with the captured Aida and Nubian women. Aida boldly takes a drunken soldier's sword and threatens the soldiers to let the captives go, but the Egyptian soldiers threaten her back and without another

⁷ Ghislanzoni and others, "Verdi's Aida," 11.

option, Aida surrenders. Radames takes Aida to his ship's quarters where he removes her cuffs and makes her wash his back, while he insults her people. This causes an outburst from Aida and she proceeds to sing "The Past is Another Land," this song describes her despair at being enslaved and the hopelessness she feels about the continuation of the conflict between Egypt and Nubia.

Aida's identity as the daughter of the Egyptian enemy's king is initially unknown to everyone. Aida's homeland was changed from Ethiopia to Nubia in the musical. Nubia lies between Egypt and Ethiopia, so perhaps the change was made to create a realistic capture site because Nubia lies on the Nile River giving Aida motivation to be away from safety. The opera does not go into details concerning Aida's capture and enslavement and she is portrayed as delicate and of fragile mindset. Her aria "Ritorna vincitor" completely reveals her internal conflict about loving Radames. She proclaims, "Delitto è il pianto a me," which roughly translates to "my tears are a crime" as she cries for the fate that must befall either her father or Radames.⁸ Unlike the opera, in the musical Aida is portrayed as having the spirit of a warrior and not easily controlled, but cognizant of her limitations. She takes a stand against the Egyptian soldiers when she is first captured but knows her own strength because she surrenders when the guards threaten the other Nubian women. Her song "The Past is Another Land" reveals her deep grief for losing her home, much like the opera's "Ritorna vincitor" and it is sung in response to not only her becoming a slave, but also for the ensuing conflict between her homeland and Egypt. The two songs

⁸ Ghislanzoni and others, "Verdi's Aida," 14.

draw many parallels in theme, but “Ritorna vincitor” sings about her love for Radames, whereas “The Past is Another Land” solely focuses on her grief for her former life.

Already the musical has made drastic changes in the character of Aida. The musical has introduced Aida as brave and brutally honest, whereas the opera introduced Aida as reserved and mindful of the words she chooses. The first performances of the opera and the musical were over one hundred years apart, so the creators of the musical needed to modernize the tale. Disney’s original “ideal princess was a damsel-in-distress,” but by the 1980s second-wave feminism had emerged and women were earning more college degrees than men.⁹ These cultural changes were reflected in Disney’s movies as “the main female protagonist began seeking to be released from her societal bonds and expectations.”¹⁰ Social norms and expectations for women had evolved, so Aida was given traits to reflect these changes.

iii. Structural Elements of Amneris’ Interaction with Aida

	Opera (Act I, scene 2 to Act II, scene 1)	Musical (Act I, scene 3-6)
Characters	Radames	Aida
	Ramfis	Mereb - <i>Introduced</i> , Radames' slave, No character like Mereb exists in the opera
	Amneris tricks Aida into admitting her love for Radames	Radames
	Aida	Zoser - <i>Introduced</i> , Radames' father, chief minister, resembles the opera's Ramfis
	Pharoah	Amneris - <i>Reintroduced</i> , Pharoah's Daughter, Radames' betrothed
	Amonasro - <i>Introduced</i> , Ethiopian Prisoner	Pharoah - <i>Introduced</i> , ruler of Egypt

⁹ Barber, “Disney’s Female Gender Roles,” 15.

¹⁰ Ibid.

iii. Structural Elements of Amneris' Interaction with Aida

Opera (Act I, scene 2 to Act II, scene I)		Musical (Act I, scene 3-6)
Notable Musical Numbers		Another Pyramid (Zoser, Ministers) How I Know You (Mereb, Aida) My Strongest Suit (Amneris, Women)
Important Events	Amneris tricks Aida into admitting her love for Radames Amonasro is captured The Pharaoh promises Radames, Amneris' hand in marriage	Zoser reveals he's poisoning the pharaoh Mereb confronts Aida that she's the Nubian Princess The Pharaoh announces that Radames and Amneris will be married in a week

At this point in the opera, Radames is at the altar of Pthà where Radames is presented with sacred armor from the many priestesses for his installation as Egypt's commander in chief. Ramfis alongside other priests call upon Pthà praising and asking for her blessing throughout Radames' ceremony. The musical resumes at the docks of Egypt. The audience is introduced to Mereb, Radames' slave, and Zoser, Radames' father and chief minister of Egypt. Radames sends the captives to help with the harvest, but keeps Aida as a gift for Amneris, the pharaoh's daughter and his betrothed. Radames commands Mereb to deliver Aida to Amneris leaving Zoser and Radames alone. Zoser informs Radames that Pharaoh has fallen ill. This news causes Radames to urgently visit the pharaoh and Zoser reveals in his song "Another Pyramid" that he and his fellow ministers are responsible for the pharaoh's illness because he wants his son to assume the throne quickly to secure his own position in the palace. Zoser in many ways resembles the opera's Ramfis. Both characters are older, highly respected, and work closely with the pharaoh. The two characters also show up at similar moments throughout the plot. However, the musical added the subplot about Zoser's scheme to murder the pharaoh,

which Ramfis never does. "In contemporary theater, people like a subplot" so perhaps this subplot was created so that the musical could have an easily identifiable villain as was common for Disney.¹¹

After Radames sends Mereb to deliver Aida to Amneris, Mereb confronts her in the song "How I Know You." He reveals to Aida (and the audience) that he knows she is the daughter of the Nubian king. The opera does not have a confrontational scene concerning Aida's identity reveal. How the musical uncovers Aida's identity adds shock and suspense between the two characters. Mereb is not in the opera, nor is there a character that parallels him, except for Aida herself. Mereb mirrors Aida in many ways: both are Nubians, captured and made slaves. At this point in the musical Aida is not yet in love with Radames, but this love and devotion develops. Ultimately, both Mereb and Aida reveal that they are torn between their loyalty to Radames and their people. The addition of his character reinforces the theme of duty and freedom.

Act 1, Scene 2 of the opera picks up in Amneris' chamber. Amneris and her slaves are preparing for the celebration of Radames' victory over the Ethiopians. When Amneris hears Aida enter, she tells her other slaves to leave as to respect Aida's mourning for her native land. This is just a ruse, so that she can get Aida to confess her love for Radames. Amneris pretends to share in Aida's grief and delivers her the false news that Radames has been slain in battle. This causes Aida to confess her love for Radames and Aida and Amneris confront each other. Similarly, the musical continues in the palace baths and Amneris is exclaiming her frustration towards Radames to her

¹¹ Heithaus, "TheatreZone's Aida."

handmaidens when Mereb presents Aida. Amneris is pleased with Aida as she is “a slave who knows her fabrics.”¹² What follows is a song sung by Amneris and her handmaidens called “My Strongest Suit.” The song highlights Amneris as being obsessed with appearance because she is insecure about where she stands with Radames. This Amneris is quirker and kinder than the Amneris in the opera. In the opera, Amneris is conniving and jealous. This is telling by the way she handles the knowledge of Aida’s love for Radames. Amneris is the daughter of the Pharaoh, so she is powerful and wealthy, while Aida is a slave and exclaims that she lives “solely for this love.”¹³ Amneris arguably has the most drastic personality change from the opera to the musical than any other character.

With this choice, Amneris was able to act as comic relief amid a serious and tragic story. Disney is known for retelling fairy tales but ridding them of any particular grotesque or scary parts to make them more family-oriented. Amneris’ personality switch was likely a compensation for *Aida*’s heavy subject matter. Besides her newly created comical nature, she is relatable, which allows for empathy and a more gripping love triangle. Amneris from the opera is not very sympathetic and the audience is full heartedly rooting for Aida and Radames, while in the musical the audience wants happiness for Amneris as well as Aida and Radames.

Both the opera and musical continue to a scene with the pharaoh. In the opera the pharaoh is pleased with Radames and “invites him to ask for whatever he wishes.”¹⁴ The

¹² Elton John and others, “Aida,” 18.

¹³ Ghislanzoni, “Verdi’s Aida,” 22.

¹⁴ Ibid, 25.

Ethiopian prisoners are presented to the king and one of the captured is Amonasro, Aida's father and king of Ethiopia, but his identity is unknown. When Ramfis advises the pharaoh to show no mercy to the prisoners, Radames uses his wish to intervene and grant the prisoners their freedom. The pharaoh consents to his wish but keeps Amonasro and Aida as compensation. The pharaoh then offers Radames Amneris' hand in marriage. An important distinction is made in both stories about the nature of Radames and Amneris' relationship. In the opera, Pharaoh offers Amneris' hand in marriage, whereas in the musical the two have been engaged for nine years. Having Amneris and Radames already engaged clarifies Radames' struggle with freedom and fate. He is adventurous and loves the freedom his life has provided, but his fate is to marry Amneris and rule over Egypt, never to leave Egypt again. This projects the theme of freedom and fate that is often contemplated throughout the musical. In the musical, at the banquet with Pharaoh, it is announced that Radames and Amneris will marry in seven days. Beginning here, the opera and musical storylines do not line up. The musical spends the next the next several scenes building relationships between the characters.

After the banquet, Radames and Aida suddenly find themselves confiding in one another. The scene is framed with the song "Enchantment Passing Through" and interspersed with dialogue. Aida and Radames divulge their shared love for sailing and adventure. Radames discloses that he does not wish to marry Amneris because it means he cannot sail again. Aida does not pity Radames and instead insists he can change his fate as he is his own master. The song reveals the characters' confusion in sharing personal experiences with someone they hardly know. This is the first scene in which the audience witnesses the budding romance between the two characters.

Aida retires to Amneris' dressing room and the two share a tender moment as Amneris confides in Aida about the difficulties of being a princess because the people want a goddess, but she is "just human."¹⁵ Radames barges into Amneris' dressing room. Radames reveals to Aida his suspicions that she is from nobility because she is so honest and unintimidated. He shares that he believes Amneris is not the strong leader that Egypt needs and hints at the idea that Aida should be that leader instead. Aida leaves and Mereb takes her to a Nubian slave camp. His intention was for Aida to greet her people as the Princess of Nubia. She confides that she is afraid of her people's expectations as it was her selfish choice to leave the boundaries of her village that got her, and the other Nubian women captured by the Egyptians. Despite these doubts, she accepts her position as the Nubian's leader.

The musical advances a week and Radames confronts Aida about whether she feels anything for him "aside from contempt."¹⁶ The two kiss but are interrupted by Mereb who exclaims that Amneris needs to see Aida. The rest of the scene is arranged around the song "Not Me" interspersed with dialogue. This song is sung by Radames, Mereb, Amneris, and Aida. Radames is giving away all his possessions to the Nubian slaves. Mereb and Aida are astonished by this act of generosity and Amneris takes it as a sign that he no longer has reservations about their marriage. Amneris asks Aida to apologize to Radames for her. She makes a point to ask Aida as friend as she has come to view her as a sister who always "knows what to say."¹⁷ Aida apologizes for Amneris, but

¹⁵ Elton John and others, "Aida," 27.

¹⁶ John, "Aida," 37.

¹⁷ John, "Aida," 41.

Radames takes the opportunity to confess his love for Aida. The two spend the night together. The next day, the soldiers arrive with news that the Nubian king has been captured. With news of the capture, the Nubians are losing hope and fear the impending slaughter of their king. Aida rallies them and declares that Nubia will never die.

iv. Structural Elements of Amonasro and Aida's Plan to Escape

	Opera (Act III)	Musical (Act II, scene 2)
Characters	Ramfis	Mereb
	Amneris	Aida
	Aida	Amonasro - <i>Introduced</i> , King of Nubia, Aida's father
	Amonasro	
Notable Musical Numbers	O patria mia (Aida)	Easy As Life (Aida)
Important Events	Aida and Amonasro make plans to escape	Mereb, Aida, and Amonasro make plans to escape

At this point, the opera and musical resume similar timelines. The opera continues with Amneris and Ramfis going to the temple of Isis to pray on the eve of her wedding night. Aida has also gone to wait near the temple to meet Radames. Amonasro suddenly appears and he tells her of his chance of returning home. He commands her to get Radames to tell her the secret route the Egyptian army will be taking. Amonasro threatens to repudiate her if she does not do as he asks, so Aida reluctantly agrees. In the musical Mereb escorts Aida to her father's cell. The three devise a plan to escape but when Aida mentions Radames, Amonasro is furious and demands that she cut him from her heart.

Aida is forced to confront her conflicting loyalties between Radames and her homeland. "O patria mia" and "Easy As Life" serve similar purposes in their respective shows. Both reveal the pain Aida feels about her contradictory love for Radames and her

homeland. However, before Amonasro reveals himself in “O patria mia” Aida believes she has lost her opportunity at love with Radames and that she will never see her homeland again. The closing of the aria translates to “Oh my homeland, how much you cost me,” which is the resolution that she will deceive Radames for her father though it pains her.¹⁸ Also following her father’s command, in the musical Aida sings “Easy As Life,” where she reveals her inner conflict about the difficulty of forgetting Radames, but that she must choose Nubia over her own passion. Its lyrics “All I ever wanted and I’m throwing it away,” reveal that if Aida were free to choose, she would pick Radames, but her duty is to return to Nubia.¹⁹ These two solos confront the driving theme of the story: freedom and fate.

Meanwhile, in the musical Zoser discovers Radames’ affair with Aida. Zoser warns him that he will lose the throne if he continues to pursue the relationship. Radames and Zoser realize they do not share the same ambitions and Radames exclaims to his father “there will be no wedding.”²⁰ Zoser is outraged and commands his men to kill Aida. The scheme is unique to the musical and expands on the subplot about Zoser’s plan for power.

v. Structural Elements of Radames’ Act of Treason

	Opera (Act III continued)	Musical (Act II, scene 4-8)
Characters	Radames	Radames
	Aida	Mereb
	Amonasro	Aida
	Amneris	Amneris

¹⁸ Ghislanzoni, “Verdi’s Aida,” 69.

¹⁹ Elton John and others, “Aida,” 52.

²⁰ Ibid, 56.

v. Structural Elements of Radames' Act of Treason

	Opera (Act III continued)	Musical (Act II, scene 4-8)
Characters	Ramfis	Zoser Amonasro
Notable Musical Numbers		
Important Events	Aida tricks Radames into giving her a route of escape	A fellow Nubian slave sacrifices herself for Aida
	Amonasro reveals to Radames that he's the Ethiopian King	Radames provides Aida a boat to escape on
	Radames gets captured by Ramfis	Amneris learns about Radames and Aida's love for each other
		Mereb is killed by Zoser
		Aida and Radames are captured, but Amonasro escapes

In the opera, after meeting with her father, Aida gets Radames to tell her where the army will not be stationed and when Amonasro presents himself to Radames, Radames realizes he has betrayed Egypt. Amneris overhears Radames' act of treason and allows himself to be captured by Ramfis. This act allows Aida and her father to escape. In the musical, Radames, unaware of Aida's plan to escape, informs her that he is calling off the wedding. Aida encourages him to go through with the wedding, to which Radames agrees to under one condition: she must escape by a boat he will provide at the docks. Amneris overhears their conversation and instead of reporting the two she is grieved by the fact that Radames does not love her. The next day, Radames and Amneris' wedding is interrupted by news of Amonasro's escape. Radames quickly meets Aida, Amonasro, and Mereb at the docks, but Zoser has followed behind. Zoser mortally wounds Mereb and Radames and Aida sit with him as he dies while Zoser flees. Radames cuts the rope tying the boat to the dock to allow Amonasro's escape. Both Radames and Aida are arrested.

There are two key differences between the opera and the musical in these scenes. The first difference is in the musical Aida does not have to trick Radames into providing

her a means of escape. Radames provides the information willingly. The second difference is in the musical Aida is arrested alongside Radames rather than fleeing the arrest with her father. I believe the musical made these choices to uphold Aida's strong moral character. In the musical, it is reiterated that Aida is honest and if she were to trick Radames into betraying his country or to flee from the arrest it would dissolve her noble traits. Aida's identity of being the Princess of Nubia would have also gone unknown by the pharaoh and Amneris if she had not been arrested with Radames.

vi. Structural Elements of the Ending

	Opera (Act IV)	Musical (Act II, scene 9)
Characters	Amneris	Amneris
	Radames	Radames
	Aida	Aida
	Pharoah	Pharoah
Important Events	Radames is accused of treason and sentenced to death	Radames and Aida are accused of treason and are sentenced to death
	Aida sneaks into the tomb where Radames is buried	Amneris convinces her father to let the two be buried together

In both the opera and musical Amneris begs Radames to deny the charges against him because there is a chance his life will be spared, but Radames refuses in order to uphold his honor. He is accused of treason and because of Radames' unwillingness to defend himself he is sentenced to die by being buried alive. In the opera, he is sealed in a dungeon by two priests, where he finds Aida who had crept in earlier so that they may die together. In the musical, Amneris convinces her father to let the two be buried together. The musical ends in the modern museum with the reincarnations of Aida and Radames meeting.

Aida is a tragic tale that ends in the death of the two lovers. The musical has a slightly lighter ending. The reincarnations of Radames and Aida meet, which offers the

audience some hope and resolution to the story. The opera focuses its runtime exploring the minds of Aida, Radames, and Amneris, offering ample time for the audience to reflect on the action of the story. The musical on the other hand, has more characters and subplots and spends its runtime driving through the action of the plot. It does not allow as much time for audience reflection because there is so much to pay attention to. Perhaps the choice to be action heavy was made to retain the attention of the younger audiences usually targeted by Disney musicals. However, Disney's *Aida* is arguably not a "kids" show, so the choice to be action heavy could have been a result of having more time for action because there is less music and more dialogue. The opera on the other hand is full of musical composition and has less time for action as opera typically shifts in favor of the music as opposed to the text and drama.²¹

Character Analysis

Aida

Aida, in both shows, often contemplates her conflicting loyalty to her homeland and Radames, ultimately choosing Radames over returning home with her father. In the musical, the audience witnesses Aida experiencing an abundance of emotions, only focusing in on her conflicting loyalties towards the end of Act One. She spends the first half of Act One hating herself and grieving the loss of her homeland but succumbs to her enslavement. At the end of Act One, Aida is in love with Radames, but also has accepted her place as the leader among the enslaved Nubians. This character building that takes place in Act One of the musical has taken place by the time the opera begins. In the

²¹ Roberts, "What's the Difference."

opera, Aida is in love with Radames and is burdened throughout the production with her conflicting loyalties.

Radames

At the beginning of Act One in the musical, Radames pursues exploring and mapping distant lands over spending time with his betrothed. It is revealed later that he does love Amneris because they grew up together, but he would rather live a life of adventure than get married to her. When the pharaoh announces that he will not be leaving Egypt again, Radames is forced to deal with Amneris and his blossoming feelings for Aida. Radames soon falls in love with Aida and because of his affection towards her he regrets much of his past and to cope he gives away all his possessions to the Nubian slaves. For the rest of the musical, he struggles with his loyalty between Aida and Egypt, but he chooses Aida as he cuts the rope for Amonasro's escape. In the opera, Radames is almost always thinking about Aida. His loyalty is not tested until the end of Act Three when Aida proposes they elope. He agrees without thought, but when he realizes he has betrayed his country by revealing the Egyptian army's route, he is distraught. His loyalty to Egypt is what condemns him to death because Amneris tells him that he would live if he would just deny the charges against him. Radames' true loyalty lies with Aida because all it took was her voice to get him to betray his country's military secrets.

Amneris

Amneris does not deal with loyalty in quite the same way as Aida and Radames. She battles with insecurity throughout the opera and musical, however in the musical it is her insecurity that holds her back from being a proper leader of Egypt. Amneris is in love with Radames, and it appears that her only desire is to have his affection returned.

Though she begs Radames to deny the charges against him, when he does not do so, she follows the Egyptian law and condemns him to death. Her loyalties lie with Egypt and love did not change that for her.

Staging of Aida

Opera and musical theatre are both telling a story through song, costumes, and sets. *Aida* has massive sets that represent Egyptian architecture. The set was very important when Verdi was commissioned to write *Aida* and when Disney created the musical the same standard was upheld. In a musical an actor is expected to dance, whereas in opera, it is not common for the singers to dance. The opera and musical use costumes to distinguish between the Egyptians and the slaves. “Vieni, o guerriero vindice” features all the named characters, Egyptian priests, priestesses, soldiers, and newly captured Ethiopians. The costumes of both races are elaborate, but the Egyptians have brighter and variety in color and include glossy fabrics.²² The Egyptian women are wearing black wigs and the men wearing headdresses, priest caps, or helmets, whereas the Ethiopians show their hair. Wigs were a fashion statement in Ancient Egypt and the other caps distinguished the Egyptians between soldiers, priests, and other noblemen. Seeing the Ethiopians hair and the use of earthy colored fabrics is what primarily separated them from the Egyptians (besides the shackles).²³ The musical not only uses costumes to make a distinction between the Egyptians and Nubians, but also dance. “My Strongest Suit” features Amneris and other women of the palace. Their costumes are

²² Warner Classics, “Verdi: Aida.”

²³ Warner Classics, “Verdi: Aida.”

colorful and revealing and the choreography of the scene is sensual and rather simple.²⁴

The scene outlines Amneris' obsession with looks and her belief that appearance is more important than inner qualities. "The Dance of the Robe" features Aida and the other Nubian enslaved. Their costumes are all one color and Aida's is the only one with color.²⁵ The choreography of the scene is much more complex than that in "My Strongest Suit." It is rhythmic, energetic, and tribal-like.²⁶ This scene highlights the Nubians' spirit and marks Aida as their leader.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the choices Elton John and Tim Rice made were to modernize the story of Aida. The plot was tweaked to create more moments of suspense and opportunity for character development. The characters were molded to fit the current culture and it allowed for stronger character arcs. The musical was given comical elements to lighten up the tragic story, usually through Amneris. The opera is void of comedy and the focus is on the love triangle and feud between Amneris and Aida. The character arcs are less distinct, but ultimately each character chooses where his or her loyalty lies. Overall, the essence of the opera is present in the musical—but shaped to appeal to a modern audience.

²⁴ Disney on Broadway, "My Strongest Suit."

²⁵ Disney on Broadway, "Dance of the Robe."

²⁶ Ibid.

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The Fallen Woman

Based on Giuseppe Verdi's Opera *La Traviata* and Alexandre Dumas fils novel *Camille*

Written by Hayley Gretz

ACT 1**Scene 1***Streets of Paris*

[Armand and Gaston enter]

GASTON

What a beautiful wedding.

ARMAND

Leroy really went all out.

GASTON

The food was especially the highlight of the night.

ARMAND

How long do you think they'll last?

GASTON

Half a year.

ARMAND

I bet 3 months. It's not her fault, she's a nice lady as far as I can tell. But Leroy's not exactly faithful. He says he wants to settle down, but he's never been with the same woman for longer than six months and he just married her sister after two.

GASTON

It sounds like quite the scandal, but he's wealthy, so any stain to his name will be ignored.

ARMAND

He falls in and out of love too quickly. Do you remember when he said

EVERY LADY DESERVES

ARMAND

I MET A LOVELY LADY LAST WEEK
NOT GONNA LIE SHE MADE MY LEGS WEAK
HER EYES BURNED LIKE A THOUSAND STARS
THEY COULD HAVE STARTED WILDFIRES

GASTON

(spoken) Then we would say

YOU SAY THIS ALL THE TIME
REMEMBER RUBY ROUX?

YOU SAID HER SMILE SHINED LIKE THE MOON
 HER VOICE RANG LIKE A JOYFUL TUNE
 THAT YOU WERE LUCKY SHE GAVE YOU HER TIME
 THEN YOU MET CYNTHIA PINE

ARMAND

LADY AFTER LADY
 EACH ONE'S DIFFERENT, NOT ONE'S THE SAME
 I LOVE HOW EACH ONE SAYS MY NAME
 EACH ONE'S DIFFERENT, EACH ONE'S FAIR GAME
 THEY ONLY WISH I COULD STAY
 EVERY LADY DESERVES A LOVER
 A LOVER WHO WILL LOVE HER
 EVEN IF HE HAS TO PAY
 AND HAS TO WAIT TILL FRIDAY

GASTON

THIS LIFESTYLE WILL GET YOU IN TROUBLE
 REMEMBER WHEN YOU PAID DOUBLE

ARMAND

SHE SAID SHE GOT ENGAGED

GASTON

FACE IT, YOU GOT PLAYED
 LADY AFTER LADY
 NOT ONE'S DIFFERENT, EACH ONE'S THE SAME
 I BET SOME PAY YOU TO GO AWAY

ARMAND

EACH ONE'S DIFFERENT, EACH ONE'S GOT A NAME
 THEY ONLY WISH I COULD STAY

ARMAND

EVERY LADY DESERVES A LOVER

A LOVER WHO WILL LOVE HER

I WILL PAY ANY PRICE

AS LONG AS THE LADY LOOKS NICE

GASTON

YOU SAY THEIR SMILES' SHINE LIKE
 THE MOON

THEIR HAIR CAN MAKE ANY MAN
 SWOON

YOU SAY YOU'RE LUCKY

SHE GAVE YOU THE TIME

ARMAND/GASTON

LADY AFTER LADY

EACH/NOT ONE'S DIFFERENT, NOT/EACH ONE'S THE SAME

I'LL/YOU LET THESE LADIES LEAD ME/YOU ASTRAY

EACH/NOT ONE'S DIFFERENT, EACH ONE'S FAIR GAME

ARMAND

I ONLY WISH I COULD MAKE THEM STAY

GASTON

Got any plans for the rest of the night?

ARMAND

Actually, I'm headed to the opera.

GASTON

Really? I didn't think you liked the theater.

ARMAND

It's not for the show. I haven't told you, but my parents are flying in next week and since they're always pestering me about being single, Leroy told me about a lady who frequents the theater who may be able to help me with my problem.

GASTON

Uh huh, so you're gonna hire an escort?

ARMAND

I guess so.

GASTON

Wow you are desperate.

ARMAND

What can I say, I like being single and I don't have any female friends.

GASTON

We were literally just at a wedding reception that was probably full of women who were looking for a fling.

ARMAND

Yeah, well I'm not. And this woman Leroy told me about is apparently a wonderful actress, so she'll be able to trick my parents into thinking we've been together for a few months. Besides Leroy says she's a great cook and very pretty, so I get to enjoy a good meal, my parents will be appeased, and I don't have to break any hearts.

GASTON

Whatever man. You've gone crazy. Do you even know her name or what she looks like?

ARMAND

No, I don't. But she's known as the Lady of the Camellias because she wears a white camellia when she's off assignment and a red one when she's on assignment.

GASTON

Do you even know if she'll be there tonight?

ARMAND

I hope so. I've gone the last three nights with no luck. Wanna come with me? That way when she doesn't show, I'll have a friend to remind me what a special, lovable idiot I am?

GASTON

You can count on me.

Scene 2

In front of a theatre

GASTON

So, you've been coming here for the past three nights just to sit outside the theatre for three hours? You don't even go inside to watch the show?

ARMAND

Of course not. I'm trying to not blow my money.

GASTON

But you're hiring a—

ARMAND

I know.

[A horse drawn carriage pulls up and out steps Flora and Violetta]

GASTON

Hey is that her?

ARMAND

Yes? Definitely, that has to be her.

[Armand walks over to Violetta]

ARMAND

Good evening, ladies.

FLORA

What's your business?

VIOLETTA

Flora be nice, he looks nervous.

ARMAND

Are you who—
Or is your—
Do you go by—

VIOLETTA

Are you referring to the camellia in my hair?

ARMAND

Yes.

VIOLETTA

I'm in a hurry to take my seat in the theatre, but—

[Violetta removes camellia from hair and hands it to Armand]

take this to the Grand Hotel tomorrow when the flower has wilted.

[The ladies walk into the theatre and Gaston jaunts up to Armand]

GASTON

A hotel? The Grand Hotel? You don't think she's planning—

ARMAND

What did I do? I bet Leroy...he would do something like this.

GASTON

I sincerely hope she isn't expecting you to pay for this hotel room.

ARMAND

Yeah. Man, I don't know what I was thinking.

GASTON

You ready to head back to the apartment?

[pause]

GASTON

Well, I thank you for inviting me to your midlife crisis and I hope you enjoy your solitary walk back to your apartment. And good luck tomorrow because you're gonna need it.

[Gaston exits]

FLOWER IN MY HAND

ARMAND

THEY SAY YOUR WHOLE LIFE CAN CHANGE IN A SECOND
 A MISSED STEP, CALL, OR NEWS FROM A FRIEND
 YOUR LIFE CAN BE OVER OR JUST BEGINNING
 IT'S LIKE BALANCING ON A BIRD'S WING

MY LIFE HAS BEEN THE SAME FOR YEARS
 GLIDING THROUGH THE CROWD AND FLYING NORTH FOR FUN
 NO RISK, COMMITMENTS, OR BAD NEWS OVER THE YEARS
 SHOULD I DOUBT THAT LIFE IS MEANT TO BE MORE THAN FUN

WHY DOES IT FEEL MY LIFE'S ABOUT TO CHANGE
 HOW COULD HER GAZE CHANGE WHO I AM
 IT WAS WHEN SHE PUT THIS FLOWER IN MY HAND

I NEVER KNEW BEFORE
 WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO HOLD THE POWER OF MY FATE
 UNTIL SHE PUT THIS FLOWER IN MY HAND

I LOVED MY LIFE
 COMMITTED TO TRAVEL ACROSS THE LAND
 UNTIL SHE PUT THIS FLOWER IN MY HAND

THIS TIME I WON'T LISTEN TO REASON
 I WILL MEET THE FLOWER GIRL AT ELEVEN

[Armand exits]

[Violetta and Flora reenter]

FLORA

I don't know why I come here so often. It's not like I understand a word that's sung.

VIOLETTA

Between you and me, I like going because I get to dress up and pretend to be someone of importance.

FLORA

It's like a game of pretend you used to play as a child.

VIOLETTA

Exactly!

FLORA

Do you ever think about pursuing a career as an opera singer? Imagine playing pretend as a job.

VIOLETTA

Flora, playing pretend is my job. And we both know I like to sing for fun.

SING FOR FUN**VIOLETTA**

I LIKE TO SING DA DUM DA DA DA DUM
 AS I HEAR THE CROWD AROUND ME HUM
 I LIKE TO SING FA LA LA LA LA LI
 WHEN I HEAR A WHISTLING BREEZE
 I LIKE TO SING OOH LA LA OOH LA LA
 WHEN I HEAR THE SIREN OF THE LAW
 I LIKE TO SING RING A DING RING A LING
 WHEN I HEAR THE JINGLE OF A KEY
 I ALREADY STRESS ABOUT THE WAY I DRESS
 I NEED TO CARE HOW I WEAR MY HAIR
 I LIVE SO MANY LIVES IT'S HARD TO FIND MINE
 IT MAY BE FUN TO BE A HUNDRED PEOPLE IN ONE
 BUT WHEN THE PRESSURE IS ON, I LIKE TO SING FOR FUN

(spoken) Try it.

FLORA

I LIKE TO SING DA DUM DA DA DA DUM
 AS I HEAR THE CROWD AROUND ME HUM

BOTH

I LIKE TO SING FA LA LA LA LA LI
 WHEN I HEAR A WHISTLING BREEZE
 I LIKE TO SING OOH LA LA OOH LA LA
 WHEN I HEAR THE SIREN OF THE LAW
 I LIKE TO SING RING A DING RING A LING
 WHEN I HEAR THE JINGLE OF A KEY

FLORA

I ALREADY STRESS ABOUT THE WAY I DRESS
 I NEED TO CARE HOW I WEAR MY HAIR
 I LIVE SO MANY LIVES IT'S HARD TO FIND MINE

VIOLETTA

IT MAY BE FUN TO BE A HUNDRED PEOPLE IN ONE

BOTH

BUT WHEN THE PRESSURE IS ON, I LIKE TO SING FOR FUN

FLORA

I FEEL THE MUSIC ALL AROUND US

VIOLETTA

I FEEL LIKE A CHILD WHEN I PLAY THE PIANO

FLORA

I LIKE TO DANCE WITHOUT A FUSS

VIOLETTA

MY VOICE DOESN'T NEED A SHOW

BOTH

IT'S FUN TO BE THE ONLY ONE
HEARING ME SING FOR FUN

[Carriage pulls up]

VIOLETTA

I ALREADY STRESS ABOUT THE WAY I DRESS
I NEED TO CARE HOW I WEAR MY HAIR
I LIVE SO MANY LIVES IT'S HARD TO FIND MINE
IT MAY BE FUN TO BE A HUNDRED PEOPLE IN ONE
BUT WHEN THE PRESSURE IS ON, I LIKE TO SING FOR FUN

[Flora and Violetta exit]

Scene 3

Violetta's Suite

FLORA

I still can't believe you invited that random man over the day of our lunch.

VIOLETTA

I like to have a little fun with my clients. Besides his face was priceless when I mentioned the Grand Hotel.

FLORA

You think he'll actually show?

VIOLETTA

I hope so. He was handsome in a desperate, dorky kinda way. It's also my way of weeding out clients. If he shows with my camellia, he's trustworthy. If not, he can keep his money. Annina, please tell me you'll stay for lunch.

ANNINA

That is exactly why I clean your suite first. Isn't your dad coming over today?

VIOLETTA

He is, but not until 1. He's meeting with the management company today.

FLORA

Boring. I want to hear about Annina's latest finds. Did you find anything scandalous or weird?

ANNINA

Nothing scandalous, but room 921 is definitely hiding a cat. I'm not going to say anything, but I hope she doesn't get caught.

[knock on door]

[Violetta goes to open the door]

VIOLETTA

Hey guys!

LUCAS

Hey Viola, Flora, and...

ANNINA

Annina.

LUCAS

Annina!

TAYLOR

We brought a hostess gift.

VIOLETTA

Aww you guys didn't have to do that. They're beautiful! Now that everyone's here. I have an announcement to make. The doctor says I am in remission!

[Everyone cheers]

VIOLETTA

I just wanted to tell all of you at once. Now please enjoy the food.

[knock on door]

[Violetta answer's the door]

VIOLETTA

Hello?

ARMAND

Hi. Here's your flower.

VIOLETTA

Thank you. Come on in.

LUCAS

Are you working today, Viola?

VIOLETTA

It'll only be a minute.

[Violetta and Armand walk downstage away from the group]

ARMAND

I don't know what you think I wanted, but this is not—

VIOLETTA

The camellia was a test to see if you were trustworthy. Thanks for bringing the flower back. So, what do you need from me?

[Violetta coughs]

[silence]

VIOLETTA

You don't have to be shy.

ARMAND

My parents are coming to town and they or I—

VIOLETTA

You told them you have a girlfriend?

ARMAND

Yes.

VIOLETTA

Give me the date, time, and location.

[Violetta hands Armand a form]

Scene 4

Armand's apartment

VIOLETTA

So, our story is, we met online?

ARMAND

Yes. It will make sense to my parents why I didn't tell them about you sooner.

VIOLETTA

Sounds believable. Now tell me about yourself. [coughs] We need to sell this façade, so tell me things you'd tell a girlfriend if you had one.

ARMAND

I'll tell you about me if you do the same. This is a healthy relationship with open communication after all.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

ARMAND

MY NAME IS ARMAND
MY FATHER LIVES IN LYON
I GO GAMBLING FOR FUN
TWO IS NEVER BETTER THAN ONE

VIOLETTA

MY NAME IS VIOLETTA
BUT YOU CAN CALL ME VIOLA
I LIVE IN PARIS
AND I ENJOY MY SOLUS

ARMAND

I LIKE TO WRITE POETRY BEFORE I GO TO BED
I FIND THAT WRITING CALMS ME AND CLEARS MY HEAD
I NEVER GO TO THE THEATRE BECAUSE OF THE CROWD
I'D RATHER BE IN THE COUNTRY WHERE THE BIRDS SING LOUD

VIOLETTA

I LIKE TO PLAY PIANO AFTER DINNER
 IT DOESN'T SOUND PRETTY BECAUSE I'M A BEGINNER
 I LIKE TO BE THE CENTER OF ATTENTION
 IT HELPS ME FORGET MY DISPOSITION

BOTH

I'M GETTING TO KNOW YOU
 IS IT JUST ME OR IS THERE SOMETHING ABOUT YOU
 THAT IS WORTH LEARNING
 I WON'T TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU
 I WANNA KNOW WHAT YOUR DREAMING
 SO, TAKE THIS CHANCE WITH ME
 AND OPEN UP TO ME

ARMAND

MY FATHER SENT ME TO BOARDING SCHOOL WHERE I LEARNED FROM
 THE BEST
 AS YOU CAN SEE, I MADE A REAL WASTE OF IT FROM THE WAY I DRESS
 I'M NO SCIENTIST OR PROFESSOR
 I'M A POET WHO LIVES OFF HIS FATHER

VIOLETTA

I HARDLY KNEW ME MOTHER BEFORE SHE PASSED
 I RAN AWAY FROM HOME TO ESCAPE THE PAST
 I SPENT MY LATE TEENS ON THE STREETS WHERE THE MEN THOUGHT I
 WAS PRETTY
 I LEARNED IT'S EASY TO BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY THE CITY

BOTH

I'M GETTING TO KNOW YOU
 IS IT JUST ME OR IS THEIR SOMETHING ABOUT YOU
 THAT'S HONEST AND REDEEMING
 I CAN'T TAKE MY MIND OFF YOU
 NOT EVEN WHEN I'M DREAMING
 SO TAKE THIS CHANCE WITH ME
 OPEN UP TO ME

Scene 5

Armand's and Violetta's apartments are both visible

GASTON

How was your parent's visit?

FLORA

How was your assignment?

ARMAND

It was actually easy.

VIOLETTA

It was actually fun.

ARMAND

In fact

ARMAND & VIOLETTA

We're going out tomorrow night.

GASTON & FLORA

You're kidding.

ARMAND

Now before you say anything, she asked me out and why would I say to no to a woman who's so beautiful.

VIOLETTA

He was so honest, and he writes poetry. [coughs] Why would I not ask out a man who's so romantic?

GASTON

Maybe because you paid her to hang out with you and your parents.

FLORA

Because he paid you to hang out with his parents.

ARMAND

But this was her choice.

VIOLETTA

It's my choice.

GASTON

Come on man.

FLORA

Listen.

YOU DON'T KNOW

FLORA

I KNOW YOU SAY HE'S ROMANTIC AND UNIQUE

GASTON

SHE MAY SEEM BEAUTIFIL AND SWEET

FLORA/GASTON

BUT HE'S/SHE'S NOT TRUSTWORTHY OR WORTHY OF YOUR TIME

GASTON

AND BY WORD OF MOUTH, SHE GETS AROUND

FLORA

HE MUST BE A LONER, I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM AROUND

FLORA & GASTON

DON'T BE SO HASTEY

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S/SHE'S HIDING

ARMAND

I KNOW MY WORTH AND I'M IN CONTROL

VIOLETTA

IT'S JUST DINNER AND AN EVENING STROLL

ARMAND

I ADMIT SHE'S ALL I CAN THINK OF

VIOLETTA

BUT I HAVE A HEART THAT'S READY FOR LOVE

VIOLETTA & ARMAND

I'VE OFTEN FELT ALONE IN THIS CITY

ARMAND

I FINALLY MET A WOMAN WHO UNDERSTANDS ME

VIOLETTA

I FINALLY MET A MAN WHO ACCEPTS ME

VIOLETTA & ARMAND

I KNOW YOU'RE LOOKING OUT FOR ME BUT LET ME BE

FLORA

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HE COULD BE HIDING
HE MAY BE A MILLIONAIRE, BUT AS BORING AS A CHAIR

GASTON

SHE MAY BE THE PRETTIEST SIGHT, BUT ALWAYS LOOKING FOR A FIGHT

FLORA/GASTON

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HE/SHE COULD BE HIDING

FLORA

HE MAY BE IRRESISTABLE, BUT HE COULD BE A CRIMINAL

GASTON

SHE MAY SEEM MYTHICAL BUT MAKE YOU MISERABLE

FLORA/GASTON

TRUTH IS, YOU DON'T KNOW HIM/HER

ARMAND

I'VE OFTEN FELT ALONE IN THE CITY

VIOLETTA

I'VE FINALLY FOUND SOMEONE WHO MAY LOVE SOMEONE LIKE ME

VIOLETTA & ARMAND

LIFE HAS NO GUARENTEES

VIOLETTA

SO, STOP PROTECTING ME

VIOLETTA & ARMAND

I'M NOT AFARID OF BEING HURT
I'M AFRAID OF MISSING THE HURT

Scene 6

Violetta's suite

ANNINA

Wow he sounds fabulous Viola! I can't believe that's the same guy who crashed our little dinner party.

VIOLETTA

I know right! See Flora, this is how you should respond when your best friend is dating the guy of her dreams.

ANNINA

The guy of your dreams! You have to get married. When were you thinking?

VIOLETTA

[coughs] I've always dreamt of a winter wedding, but he really likes the countryside, so the summer would probably be—

FLORA

Does he even know that you're still "seeing" customers?

VIOLETTA

Of course, he does. It's obvious.

FLORA

Have you told him?

VIOLETTA

I don't think that's necessary. I mean how could he expect me to stop working when the relationship is so new?

FLORA

Exactly, so stop talking about marriage. This whole thing is just an act. You say you're happy, but you're afraid to tell him the truth. Trust me, I don't blame you. I mean what man would possibly be okay with his girlfriend sleeping with the richest men in Paris for money.

VIOLETTA

First of all, all my jobs this passed month have been strictly acting jobs. I haven't had to show more than what I'm showing you now. And second, what makes you think I haven't told Armand?

FLORA

You know why. Your Armand will never accept you the way you are. You know this and it scares you.

VIOLETTA

Yes, I'm scared. But you're wrong about Armand. He has accepted me, and he has not once asked me about my profession.

[knock on door]

[Violetta opens the door]

VIOLETTA

Hello.

[Guy hands her a camellia]

GUY

I'm here to make an appointment.

THERE COMES A MOMENT

VIOLETTA

THERE COMES A MOMENT WHEN YOU MUST DECIDE
DO I FACE THE UNKNOWN OR GET OFF THE RIDE
I COULD FACE MY FEAR AND TELL HIM THE TRUTH
OR STAY SILENT AND TAKE CARE OF MY CLIENT

(spoken) Give me the date, time, and location.

[Violetta hands the Guy the form]

[The set changes behind Violetta to a ballroom scene]

I'VE BEEN ROYAL, INFORMAL, EVEN ONE TIME PARANORMAL
I KISS THESE MEN AS THEY SHARE THEIR FANTASIES WITH THE GIRL OF
THEIR DREAMS
FOR THEM THE EXPERIENCE IS REAL BUT FOR ME IT'S JUST ANOTHER
DEAL
WHAT DO I DO WHEN I CAN'T PRETEND TO BE HAPPY FOR MY CLIENT
DO I FACE MY FEAR OR DO I STAY SILENT

[set changes to a bedroom]

WHAT IF I'M THROWING AWAY MY ONLY SHOT AT LOVE
DO I FOLLOW THROUGH WITH YOU OR RUN BACK TO MY LOVE
IT'S EASY TO FALL INTO ROUTINE

(spoken) Take down the hair take off the clothes and he'll do the rest.

BUT HOW WOULD ARMAND FEEL IF HE SAW THIS SCENE
I CANNOT DO THIS
I'M BREAKING MY PROMISE

(spoken) Here's the money, consider tonight free.

I'M GOING TO THE MAN I LOVE

[Violetta goes to exit the stage]

[Armand enters at the same time]

[Armand sees what's going on and leaves]

THERE COMES A MOMENT WHERE YOU MUST DECIDE
TO RUN AFTER YOUR MAN OR TO RUN AWAY AND HIDE
WOULD HE BELIEVE ME AFTER WHAT HE'S SEEN
HOW CAN I EXPECT UNDERSTANDING AFTER KNOWING ME

[cell phone rings]

(spoken)Armand? See you at 12.

Scene 7

Violetta's suite

[Violetta clunking on the piano]

VIOLETTA

How can I play eight sharps one after another?

[Violetta practices here scales]

[Flora enters holding a letter]

VIOLETTA

Hey Flora, it's nice to see you but do you mind not being here? I'm expecting Armand and it's probably going to be a long serious conversation.

[Flora holds out a letter]

FLORA

This was left outside your door.

[Violetta takes the letter from Flora]

ARMAND (OFFSTAGE)

My dear Violetta, I hope I didn't interrupt your appointment yesterday. I came by your suite at 11 to see you but was told you were at the hotel on 7th street attending a gala. There I saw you with a man and watched as you followed him to a room. Forgive me for the few tedious hours that I have given you but be assured that I shall never forget the

happy moments which I owe to you. Know that I would have come by today, but I intend to go to my father's. Goodbye my dear Viola. I had truly hoped my love would rescue you. I am not rich enough to offer you what your clients do or poor enough to treat you as you treated me. Let us forget each other's names, which must be indifferent to you as our happiness has become impossible.

FLORA

Viola, are you okay?

[Viola laughs]

VIOLETTA

Can you believe this guy? He didn't even have the courage to come talk to me and yet he seems to think he has me all figured out. It's childish almost. Hey Flora, at least you get to tell me I told you so. Armand didn't accept me or respect me enough to attempt an understanding. He assumed everything.

NO DOUBT

VIOLETTA

NO DOUBT HE'LL BE EXPECTING A REPLY
 NO DOUBT HE WANTS TO SEE ME BEG AND CRY
 NO DOUBT HE WANTED TO HURT ME
 WELL, DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME 'CAUSE I DON'T WANT YOU BABY

I USED TO SLEEP IN THE STREETS WITH NOTHING BUT A PAPER
 I TRIED TO GET BY, BY BEGGING FROM STRANGERS
 THEN A MAN OFFERED ME A ROOF AND SOME SPARE FOOD
 IF I COULD PROVIDE HIM A SERVICE OF GRATITUDE

NO DOUBT HE'LL BE EXPECTING AN APOLOGY
 NO DOUBT HE WANTS ME TO WANT HIM BADLY
 NO DOUBT HE THINKS HE'S HURTING ME
 WELL TOO BAD 'CAUSE MY HEART DON'T BELONG TO YOU BABY

IT WAS THE GLITTER IN MY EYE
 IT WAS THE ACCENT BEHIND MY SMILE
 THAT MADE THE MEN TRIPLE THEIR SPEND
 FOR ME TO PRETEND TO BE THEIR GIRLFRIEND

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW
 YOU'LL WISH YOU'D KNOWN
 ARMAND YOU WERE NEVER MY PRINCE AND I WAS NEVER YOURS TO
 SAVE
 MY KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR'S NOT YOU IT'S THE GUY I CALL DAD

HE TOOK ME OFF THE STREETS AND TAUGHT ME TO BE SAFE
HE TOOK THE TIME TO TALK TO ME BEFORE HE GOT MAD

NO DOUBT YOU COULD USE A LESSON OR TWO
NO DOUBT YOU'LL BE LOOKING FOR ME TOO
NO DOUBT YOU'LL BE HURTING
WELL, DON'T EXPECT MY SYMPATHY 'CAUSE YOU LEFT ME BABY

NO DOUBT YOU'LL BE EXPECTING A REPLY
TO BAD 'CAUSE I'M SAYING GOODBYE

Scene 8

Armand's family home

MARGARET

I am so glad you decided to come by today, Armand. I've been waiting forever for you to meet Sam. You know we're getting married at the end of the summer.

ARMAND

I'm sorry I haven't been in contact as much. I've been busier than usual.

MARGARET

I know! Mom and Dad told me everything. There's no shame in meeting someone online, by the way. And she is totally invited to the wedding. Just make sure she doesn't look too pretty. From what Mom and Dad said she is absolutely—

ARMAND

She will not be coming. In fact, she was never real.

MARGARET

I don't understand.

ARMAND

I paid her to pretend to be girlfriend

MARGARET

Why would you do that? That's insane.

ARMAND

No what's insane is I actually fell in love with her, and she threw it away.

MARGARET

Armand—

ARMAND

No, I should've known better. People like her can never be committed to anyone but themselves.

MARGARET

I'm so sorry. Did she cheat on you?

ARMAND

Yeah, I caught her leaving a man's hotel room. I was better off alone wasting my time at a slot machine.

MARGARET

Armand don't say that. You are worth more than the time it takes to win a jackpot. How did things go when you talked to her?

ARMAND

I didn't. I wrote her a letter.

MARGARET

A letter? You didn't confront her? Come on, how else do you expect to move on?

ARMAND

You know I'm better on paper than I am with words.

MARGARET

But now she'll think of you as the guy who didn't have the courage to talk to her.

ARMAND

Why should I care what some whore thinks of me?

MARGARET

Woah Armand. You said you loved her. I think that's worth a real conversation. Let me tell you something. I haven't told many people, but Sam and I almost broke up a year ago because I thought he cheated on me. I saw him at the mall with another girl when he told me he was working late. I went to his apartment to leave a note expressing how hurt I was, but I decided to stay. And guess what, when I confronted him, it turned out he had asked a girl from work to help him pick out an engagement ring because her husband owned the jewelry store. So even if there's just a slight chance you may be wrong about what you saw, you deserve to know. And I think she deserves a chance to explain herself.

ARMAND

Thank you for sharing, Maggie, but I'm not sure you understand. She's an escort. Seeing her coming from a man's hotel room can only mean one thing.

MARGARET

You knew she was an escort when you dated her? Did she agree to stop working?

ARMAND

I thought it would be obvious.

MARGARET

Well, I don't think it was, but it's a good thing you two aren't together. Sam's father is a chairperson and Sam would do anything to keep his father's reputation clean.

[pause]

ARMAND

Maggie, you're right. I need to have this conversation with her if I'm going to get over this quickly. When does the next train leave for Paris?

MARGARET

I don't know, I never go anywhere. But I thought you were staying the night?

ARMAND

I'm sorry I was really looking forward to meeting Sam, but I gotta deal with this first.

MARGARET

It's fine Armand. Here take this.

[Margaret hand Armand a key]

MARGARET

Dad's giving Sam and I the farmhouse when we get married, so you should enjoy it while it's still unoccupied. Also, if you wanna do some landscaping, it'll totally make up for bailing on me.

ARMAND

Thank you.

Scene 9

Violetta's suite

[Violetta plays a song on the piano]

MR. D'AUBIGNY

You get better every time I hear you play.

VIOLETTA

Thank you, Dad. You know today marks 10 years since you rescued me.

MR. D'AUBIGNY

And not one day goes by that I don't thank the heavens that I caught you picking my car lock.

[both laugh, Violetta's turns into a light cough]

MR. D'AUBIGNY

Violetta?

VIOLETTA

I'm fine, just a little tickle. I actually wrote you a song to thank you for everything.

VIOLETTA'S SONG**VIOLETTA**

AT 16 MY MOTHER WENT TO HEAVEN
MY FATHER SUNK INTO A DEEP DEPRESSION
I WANTED HIS ATTENTION SO I BEGAN TO LIE
I'D DISAPPEAR FOR HOURS SO HE COULD CRY

THE BOTTLE BECAME HIS ONLY FRIEND
I PRETENDED I WAS 18 TO MAKE ENDS MEET
I'D SAVE WHAT I COULD AND THE REST HE'D SPEND
I'M LUCKY I WAS PRETTY OR WE WOULDN'T EAT

I RANAWAY WITH A MAN AT 17
HE PROMISED ME FOOD AND A PLACE TO REST
I FELL IN LOVE AND BEGAN TO SUPPORT HIM
IT WAS NEVER ENOUGH AND I DIDN'T REST
I GAVE UP TEN MONTHS OF MY LIFE
TO A MAN WHO SWORE HE WANTED A WIFE

I PACKED MY BAGS AND LEFT FOR PARIS
I TRIED TO HOTWIRE THE NEAREST CAR
WHEN YOU CAUGHT ME I WAS SO EMBARRASSED
I TRIED TO RUN BUT I DIDN'T GET FAR

YOU WELCOMED ME IN YOUR HOME
YOU TOOK A BROKEN GIRL AND GAVE HER THE WORLD
SHE NOT ONLY SURVIVED BUT ALSO THRIVED
YOU BROUGHT A DEAD GIRL WALKING BACK TO LIFE

YOU LET ME IN AND GAVE ME WARMTH
WHEN I PUSHED AWAY YOU GAVE ME MORE

IT MAY HAVE BEEN MY FACE THAT SAVED MY LIFE
BUT YOU TAUGHT ME PEOPLE CAN BE KIND

I ARRIVED TO YOU WITH A BROKEN HEART, A BROKEN LIFE
MY PLANS HAD CHANGED AND BEEN ERASED
I HAD ESCAPED MY GREATEST MISTAKE
YOU LET ME CRY IN YOUR TIGHT EMBRACE

[Violetta starts crying]

[Mr. d'Aubigny puts his arm around her]

MR. D'AUBIGNY

YOU WERE AN ANGEL SENT TO BRING ME BACK
YOU GAVE ME A SECOND CHANCE TO BE A DAD
I MAY HAVE SAVED YOU BECAUSE YOU LOOKED LIKE HER
BUT I'VE COME TO LOVE YOU AS A SECOND DAUGHTER

(spoken) And no matter what happens, I am so blessed to have gotten to know you.

VIOLETTA & MR. D'AUBIGNY

OUR PLANS HAD CHANGED AND BEEN ERASED
BUT YOU LET ME CRY IN YOUR EMBRACE

[knock on door]

VIOLETTA

I'm sorry, I have no idea who that could be.

[Violetta crosses over to the door]

MR. D'AUBIGNY

Don't worry about it. You're a popular woman.

[Violetta opens the door]

[Armand rushes in holding a bouquet of camellias]

VIOLETTA

Armand!

ARMAND

I came here to apologize. In the past month I was never clear about what you meant to me or what I expected from the relationship.

VIOLETTA

Armand, I want you to know—

ARMAND

And I don't care what you did in that hotel room because I love you, Viola.

VIOLETTA

Armand, this is my dad, Mr. d'Aubigny.

ARMAND

Oh.

[pause]

It's very nice to meet you sir.

MR. D'AUBIGNY

It's nice to meet you too son.

[pause]

ARMAND

Violetta, if you'll have me and if your father allows, will you move in with me? My father has a beautiful house in the country that's open until the end of the summer. And I can support you. It won't be as lavish as your used to, but you'll be comfortable.

VIOLETTA

Armand, I can't move in with you.

ARMAND

Viola—

VIOLETTA

Unless we get married.

ARMAND

Married? Yes, I'll marry you. Mr. d'Aubigny do we have your blessing?

MR. D'AUBIGNY

You two are crazy, but I've always wanted to see my daughter married. So, you have my blessing.

I'M GETTING MARRIED

VIOLETTA

I'M GETTING MARRIED

ARMAND

I'M GETTING MARRIED

VIOLETTA & ARMAND

WE'RE GETTING MARRIED

FLORA, GASTON, & ANNINA

THEY'RE GETTING MARRIED

VIOLETTA

I'VE DREAMED OF THIS DAY SINCE I WAS SMALL
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD HAPPEN FOR ME

ARMAND

SHE'S BEEN DREAMING OF THIS DAY SINCE SHE WAS SMALL
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT SHE'D BE LOOKING AT ME

VIOLETTA

I'M GETTING MARRIED

ARMAND

I'M GETTING MARRIED

VIOLETTA & ARMAND

WE'RE GETTING MARRIED

ALL

THEY'RE GETTING MARRIED

MR. D'AUBIGNY

I'VE DREAMED OF THE DAY I'D GIVE MY GIRL AWAY
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD HAPPEN THIS WAY

FLORA, GASTON, & ANNINA

WE'VE DREAMED OF THE DAY OF HEARING I DO
BUT WE DIDN'T THINK IT'D BE COMING FROM YOU

MARGARET

I'VE BEEN DREAMING OF MY PERFECT DAY
DRESSED IN WHITE WITH A LILY BOUQUET
FRIENDS AT MY SIDE AND ROOM OF LAUGHTER
AUGUST COULDN'T GET HERE ANY FASTER

FLORA, GASTON, & ANNINA
I'M GETTING MARRIED

VIOLETTA & ARMAND
WE'RE GETTING MARRIED

FLORA, GASTON, ANNINA, & MR. D'AUBIGNY
THEY'RE GETTING MARRIED

WOMEN
I'VE DREAMED OF THIS DAY SINCE I WAS YOUNG

MEN
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD HAPPEN FOR ME

WOMEN
WITH FLOWERS ON THE DOOR AND THE CURTAINS HUNG

VIOLETTA & ARMAND
LOOKS DON'T MATTER AS LONG AS YOU'RE THEIR WITH ME
BECAUSE WE'RE GETTING MARRIED

ACT 2

Scene 1

Country home

I'VE LOVED GETTING TO KNOW YOU

ARMAND
EVERY MORNING IS A REMINDER I'M NOT ALONE
I KNOW COMPROMISE IS BETTER THAN WINNING
TWO MINDS ARE NEEDED TO MAKE A HOME
I'M EXCITED THAT OUR LIVES ARE JUST BEGINNING

[Violetta walks out in a robe]

VIOLETTA
(spoken) If you want a hot shower, you'll probably have to wait an hour or two. I didn't mean to use it all, but the showerhead is spectacular! It's like a waterfall.

[Violetta exits]

ARMAND
I'VE LOVED GETTING TO KNOW YOU
THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR WORLD
I'LL LOVE YOU FOREVER YOU HAVE MY WORD

[Violetta reenters and sits at the table with a laptop]

I'VE LOVED GETTING TO KNOW YOU
 I LOVE HOW YOU SING WHEN YOU COOK
 AND HOW YOU LOSE YOURSELF IN A BOOK
 FOR YOU I'M NOT AFRAID TO LOOK LIKE A FOOL
 I'VE LOVED GETTING TO KNOW YOU

VIOLETTA

EVERY DAY YOU TEACH ME SOMETHING NEW
 BEFORE YOU I DIDN'T KNOW HOW PRINTERS WERE USED
 OUR TWO HANDS HAVE MADE THIS A BEAUTIFUL HOME
 I CAN'T WAIT TO LOOK FOR ONE OF OUR OWN

ARMAND

(spoken) Viola! We should get a dog. I've been looking at these adoption sites and there's hundreds of them just waiting to be rescued. Or we could get a cat or both.

VIOLETTA

I'VE LOVED GETTING TO KNOW YOU
 THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME ANOTHER CHANCE
 I WOULDN'T WANT TO MISS OUT ON THIS ROMANCE
 I'VE LOVED GETTING TO KNOW YOU
 I LOVE THAT YOU STILL WRITE BY HAND
 AND HOW YOU SOLVE PROBLEMS WITHOUT A PLAN
 I NOW SEE THE WORLD FROM A DIFFERENT VIEW
 I'VE LOVED GETTING TO KNOW YOU

(spoken) So, it's decided, we'll get a dog and cat.

ARMAND

And a towel warmer.

BOTH

GETTING TO KNOW HAS BEEN THE GREATEST GIFT
 I STILL REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME WE KISSED
 I WOULD PICK YOU IF I WAS GIVEN A LIST
 MY LIFE COULDN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS

ARMAND

IF I HAD ONE WISH
 I'D WISH I'D MET YOU SOONER

VIOLETTA

IF I HAD ONE WISH

[Armand kisses Violetta]

ARMAND

Love you. See you when I get back.

[Armand exits]

VIOLETTA

I'D WISH FOR MORE TIME

Scene 2

Country home

[knock on door]

[Violetta gets up from the couch to answer the door]

VIOLETTA

Armand did you forget your—
Oh! Good afternoon, sir. Who are you?

MR. GERMONT

Hello Violetta. It is a pleasure to meet you. I'm Mr. Germont Armand's father.

VIOLETTA

Please come in. Armand didn't say you were coming.

MR. GERMONT

That's because I didn't tell him, and I don't intend for him to know that I was here.

VIOLETTA

Isn't that why you're here? To see your son?

MR. GERMONT

No, no, no I am just here to see you.

[pause]

VIOLETTA

This house is beautiful. Armand and I have worked very hard these past few weeks. We've been weeding the flower beds and we started a vegetable garden. Armand even bought some bird feeders. We love to watch them in the morning.

[pause]

Look, I'm so sorry Mr.—

Sir. We didn't invite you to the wedding because it really wasn't a formal wedding. We just went to the courthouse with my father and a few friends. But Armand was the perfect gentleman, which I'm sure he learned from you. He even asked my father for his blessing to marry me.

MR. GERMONT

I already know everything Violetta. Armand wrote a couple weeks ago. I don't want you to worry about that. I am not upset.

VIOLETTA

That's a relief. So, you wanted to see me. Why don't you want to Armand to know about your visit?

MR. GERMONT

Listen Violetta. From my son's letters I can tell that my son is very much infatuated with you and that your union makes him happy. I can also tell that you're a reasonable woman who's had her fair share of hardship and that my son's happiness is important to you.

VIOLETTA

Yes, but I don't understand why we can't tell Armand. He can't have gotten far. I'll call him and I know he'll come right back.

MR. GERMONT

There's no need Violetta. You must understand my children's happiness is the most important thing to me as a father. I would do anything to ensure they lead happy lives. Has Armand told you that his sister is to marry at the end of summer?

VIOLETTA

He has and he is working so hard to make this a beautiful home for Margaret and Sam. He even got a job at the local tavern, so he can put insulation in the attic and reinforce its flooring, so they can turn it into another bedroom. He knows she's always wanted children.

MR. GERMONT

And what are you making there?

VIOLETTA

Oh, I'm knitting a tea cozy for Margaret and Sam. To go with it I've also been drying hibiscus leaves from the tree out front. I know it's nothing like what Armand's doing but—

MR. GERMONT

It's lovely Violetta. But the couple will never see it.

VIOLETTA

Why do you say that?

MR. GERMONT

Because Sam has called off the wedding.

VIOLETTA

Why would he do that? I thought he loved Margaret.

MR. GERMONT

He does and so do I, which is why I am here to ask you to divorce and separate yourself from Armand.

VIOLETTA

What? Why?

MR. GERMONT

Sam's father is a chairperson and having someone of your previous occupation brings shame to my family and would by association bring shame to Sam's family. I want what's best for Armand and Margaret. Margaret is heartbroken and it pains me to see her in such grief. As for Armand, I know he'll be devastated for a while, but he has friends to help him through, Margaret is alone.

THERE COMES A MOMENT REPRISE

THERE COMES A MOMENT WHEN YOU MUST DECIDE
DO I FACE THE UNKNOWN OR GET OFF THE RIDE
I COULD FACE MY FEAR AND TELL HIM NO SIR
OR I COULD TAKE CARE OF ARMAND'S SISTER

VIOLETTA

Mr. Germont, I understand. As this is your house and at your request I'll leave. I don't wish you ruin your relationship with Armand, so you don't have to tell him the truth, but I want you to know that I love Armand and if I could go back in time, I would have gone to work with him. I hope you understand what you're asking me to do Mr. Germont.

[Mr. Germont sets a train ticket on the table and exits]

I'M GETTING MARRIED REPRISE

VIOLETTA

I GOT MARRIED
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D GET MARRIED
SOMEHOW, I KNEW IT WOULDN'T LAST FOR ME

[Violetta writes a note and sets it on table]

[Violetta picks up the train ticket and exits]

[Armand enters carrying a cat carrier]

ARMAND

Viola, I did something kind of crazy, but—

Viola I'm home.

Where—

[Armand notices note and begins to read]

Scene 3

Armand's apartment and Violetta's apartment are in view

[Armand and Gaston are playing cards]

[Violetta, Flora, Annina, Lucas, and Taylor are sitting around a table]

ARMAND

Not gonna lie man, I've missed having you around.

VIOLETTA

It's been a couple months since we've all been together. I'm so glad we're able to do this again

GASTON

I'm here for you Armand anytime you need to talk.

TAYLOR

I've missed your cooking. I think I've definitely lost weight since I last saw you.

ARMAND

Thanks Gaston, I should be relieved this happened. I couldn't even imagine getting married three months ago, now I'm getting a divorce.

GASTON

Life has a way of being ironic. What she did to you was complete crap man.

VIOLETTA

The divorce is going pretty swiftly. It's not like we ever got around to sharing a bank account.

FLORA

I can't believe you didn't tell Armand the truth. All for the preservation of a father son relationship.

VIOLETTA

A father's relationship is too important. Besides we'd only known each other a few months, it's an easier relationship to remove than family.

[Violetta coughs]

GASTON

Do you wanna go play roulette and role some dice tonight?

VIOLETTA

You guys are more than welcome to stay, but I gotta get to an appointment.

LUCAS

I can't believe your taking appointments already. Good for you Viola. To moving on.

ARMAND

To moving on.

FLORA, ANNINA, TAYLOR, & GASTON

To moving on!

IT'S BEST TO BE ON MY OWN

ARMAND

I'VE MISSED THE WILD LIGHTS OF THE CITY
I'VE MISSED THE THRILL OF THE GAME
I'M GLAD TO BE RID OF THE LADY
SHE DID NOTHING BUT PLAY GAMES

VIOLETTA

I'VE MISSED THE BUZZ OF THE STREETS
I'VE MISSED THE SONG OF THE THEATRE
BUT I MISS THE COUNTRY'S QUITE AND PEACE
WHY DO I FEEL LIKE A CHEATER

BOTH

I WAS NEVER ENOUGH FOR HER/HIM
THE CITY REMINDS ME OF THIS

I AM A SMALL PART IN THE LIFE OF HER/HIM
 I'LL TRY TO FORGET THE WAY WE KISSED
 I DIDN'T WANT TO BE ALONE
 BUT IT'S BEST TO BE ON MY OWN

ARMAND

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHERE WE WENT WRONG
 I MISS HEARING HER SING ALONG
 WHY DID SHE CHANGE HER MIND ABOUT ME
 I MISS WATCHING HER MAKE TEA

VIOLETTA

ARMAND, I WISH YOU KNEW IT WASN'T YOU
 I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO LOSE YOUR FAMILY
 I WISH I COULD TELL YOU THE TRUTH
 BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO LOSE YOUR FAMILY

BOTH

I WAS NEVER ENOUGH FOR HER/HIM
 THE CITY REMINDS ME OF THIS
 I AM A SMALL PART IN THE LIFE OF HER/HIM
 I'LL TRY TO FORGET THE WAY WE KISSED
 I DIDN'T WANT TO BE ALONE
 BUT IT'S BEST TO BE ON MY OWN

[Violetta exits]

ARMAND

I'M GLAD TO HAVE MY FRIEND BACK
 I LIKE SETTling BACK INTO MY OLD ROUTINE
 I'M GLAD THE NIGHT IS NO LONGER BLACK
 BUT I'M STILL WONDERING HOW'VE YOU'VE BEEN

[Violetta reenters wearing a hospital gown]

VIOLETTA

I AM SCARED TO BE GOING THROUGH THIS ALONE
 MAYBE I SHOULD TALK TO SOMEONE ON THE PHONE
 NO, THEY'LL JUST END UP ALONE
 IT'S BEST I'M ON MY OWN

BOTH

I WAS NEVER ENOUGH FOR HER/HIM
 THE CITY REMINDS ME OF THIS
 I AM A SMALL PART IN THE LIFE OF HER/HIM

I'LL TRY TO FORGET THE WAY WE KISSED
I DIDN'T WANT TO BE ALONE
BUT IT'S BEST TO BE ON MY OWN

Scene 4

Reception room

[bells ringing]

ALL

Kiss, kiss, kiss...

[Margaret and Sam kiss]

[crowd cheers]

ARMAND

Thank you for being my plus one. I would've really hated to go to my sister's wedding alone.

GASTON

No problem. I understand.

[Margaret and Sam walk over]

MARGARET

Sam, meet the best brother in the world! He's the whole reason why we were able to make this happen.

ARMAND

Finally nice to finally meet you Sam. Congratulations! Maggie what do you mean I made this happen?

MARGARET

Let's not dwell on it. What's done is done. Nice seeing you, Gaston.

[Sam and Margaret walk away to mingle with other guests]

ARMAND

What do you think she meant by that?

GASTON

I don't know. Brides are crazy.

ARMAND

You don't think this has something to do with Violetta?

GASTON

Why would it?

ARMAND

I know it sounds farfetched, but in the letter she left me she said she wishes happiness for me and my family.

GASTON

Okay?

ARMAND

I gotta call her. I knew the way she left was too sudden.

[Armand takes out his phone and call Violetta]

ARMAND

Viola! I'm surprised you picked up so fast. Listen—
Flora? Where's Vi—
What is it?

THERE ARE FEW

ARMAND

THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE THAT WILL CHANGE YOU FOREVER
THERE ARE FEW MOMENTS THAT WILL MAKE TIME STAND STILL
IT'S DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN UNDER ALL THE PRESSURE
IT'S LIKE I'VE LOST MY FREEWILL

TAKE IT BACK
TAKE ME BACK TO THE START OF THE SUMMER
I'LL CHANGE MY MIND AND NEVER GO TO THE THEATER
I TAKE IT BACK
I'D TAKE BACK THE FEELINGS I EVER HAD FOR YOU
I WOULD RATHER LIVE IN IGNORANCE THAN TRUTH
I WANT AMNESIA, SO I CAN'T REMEMBER YOUR FACE
THE WAY YOU SANG AND YOUR AIR OF GRACE

BUT I COULD NEVER TRADE MY MEMORIES OF YOU FOR ANYTHING
PLEASE VIOLA WAIT FOR ME

THERE ARE FEW MEMORIES THAT HAVE THE POWER CHANGE YOUR LIFE
THERE ARE FEW DECISIONS THAT CAN CAUSE SUCH HEARTBREAK
IT'S DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN WHEN YOUR HEART FEELS LIKE A KNIFE

IT'S LIKE THIS MEMORY IS FAKE

TAKE IT BACK

TAKE ME BACK TO THE START OF THE SUMMER

I'LL CHANGE MY MIND AND NEVER GO TO THE THEATER

I TAKE IT BACK

I'D TAKE BACK THE FEELINGS I EVER HAD FOR YOU

I WOULD RATHER LIVE IN IGNORANCE THAN TRUTH

I WANT AMNESIA, SO I CAN'T REMEMBER OUR LOVE

PLEASE DON'T BE LOOKING DOWN FROM ABOVE

I WOULD TRADE ANYTHING TO HAVE HAD MORE TIME

NOW I ONLY ASK FOR A LITTLE MORE TIME

GOD, PLEASE HEAR MY PRAYER

VIOLA HOLD ON UNTIL GET THERE

[Set changes to Violetta's suite]

TAKE IT BACK

TAKE ME BACK TO THE START OF THE SUMMER

I'LL BRING A DOZEN CAMELLIAS TO THE THEATER

I TAKE IT BACK

I'D TAKE BACK EVERY MEAN THING I SAID TO YOU

I WOULD STOP THE GAMES AND TELL YOU THE TRUTH

I'LL CHARISH YOUR EVERY SCAR AND FLAW

BECAUSE I LOVE YOU VIOLETTA

MY LADY OF THE CAMELLIAS

[Armand walks over to Violetta, and she reaches out her hand]

Scene 5

Violetta's suite

LADY 1

I've never heard of an estate sale for a hotel suite, but I'm really glad I came. I mean look at these clothes.

LADY 2

I guess the late resident was a woman of the streets if you know what I mean. So, I understand the owner wanting to get rid of everything.

LADY 1

Luckily, I'm not afraid of a little dry cleaning.

LADY 2

This tea cozy doesn't seem to fit into the rest of the decor. I wonder how much they're asking for it.

ARMAND

Good afternoon, ladies. See anything you like?

LADY 1

Lots of stuff sir.

LADY 2

I'm interested in this tea cozy. How much?

ARMAND

There's actually a bit of a story behind it. If you let me tell you, I'll let you take it for free.

LADY 2

I've got nothing better to do.

LADY 1

Neither do I.

[The two ladies take a seat at the table and Armand picks up the tea cozy]

ARMAND

Like any great story, it started in the theater.

END