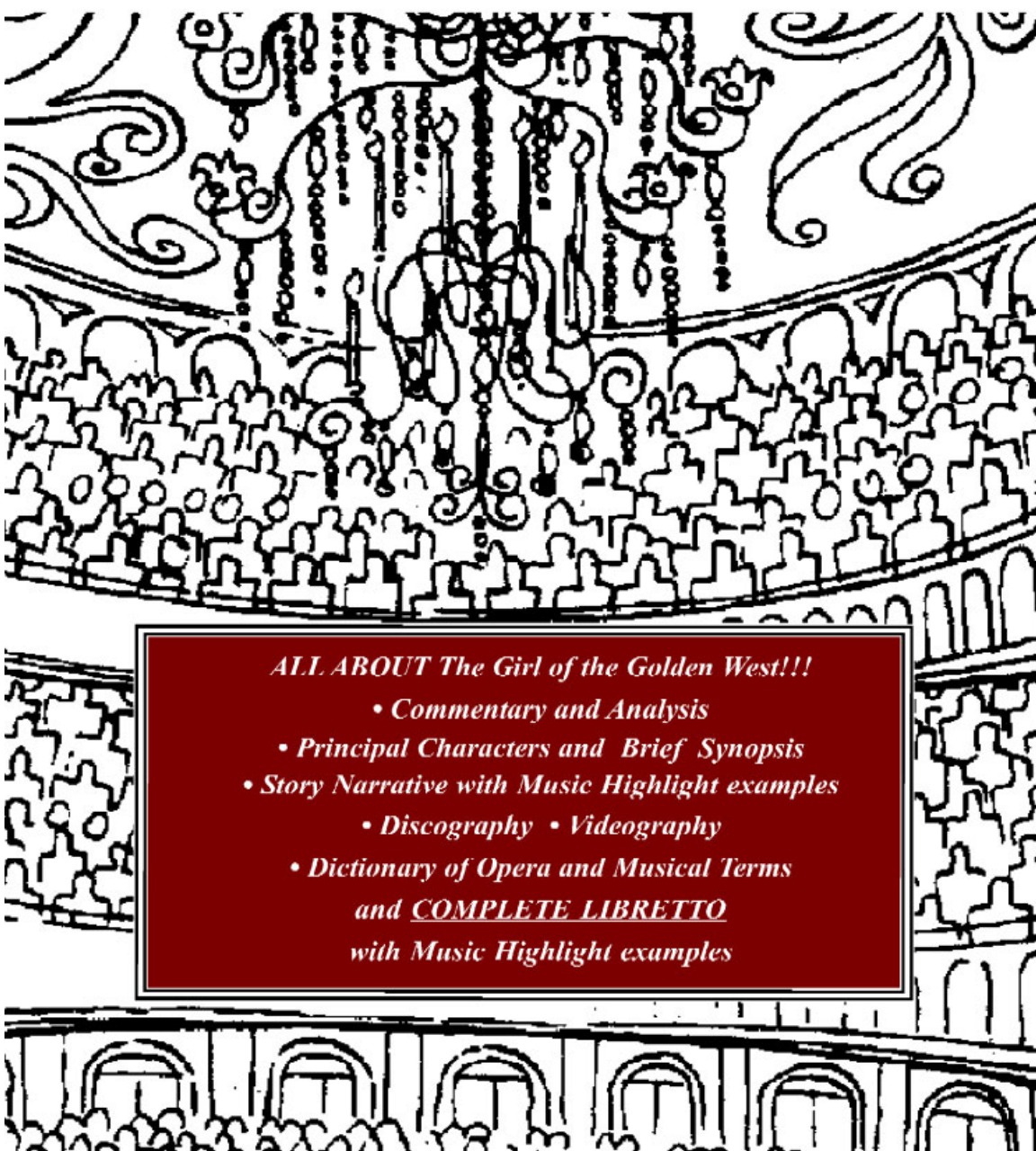


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Puccini's

The Girl of the Golden West



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“I have not gone to sleep nor am I cooling off toward the subject of the *Wild West*. On the contrary! I am thinking of it constantly and I am sure that it will turn out a second *Bohème*, that is, unless my brain and energy fail me.”

-Puccini promising his publisher, Giulio Ricordi, that *The Girl of the Golden West* would become a second *Bohème*: “more vigorous, more daring, and on an altogether larger scale.”

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Giacomo Puccini's

The Girl of the Golden West
("La Fanciulla del West")

OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY™

Edited by Burton D. Fisher

Principal lecturer, *Opera Journeys Lecture Series*

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a Prelude.....

to OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY's

The Girl of the Golden West

Puccini's *The Girl of the Golden West* is considered by many musicologists his finest music drama; in that sense, the opera demonstrates the composer's harmonic maturity, and masterful invention of music appropriate to its dramatic elements.

OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY explores Puccini's *The Girl of the Golden West*: the *Principal Characters*, a *Brief Story Synopsis*, and the *Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples*. The *Commentary and Analysis* features an insightful and in depth background of the opera and its characters.

The *Libretto* for *The Girl of the Golden West* has been newly translated by the Opera Journeys staff with specific emphasis on retaining a literal translation, but also with the objective to provide a faithful translation in modern and contemporary English; in this way, the substance of the opera becomes more intelligible. To enhance educational and study objectives, the *Libretto* contains music highlight examples interspersed within the story's exposition.

In addition, the text includes a selected *Discography*, *Videography*, and a *Dictionary of Opera and Musical Terms*.

The opera art form is the sum of many artistic expressions: theatrical drama, music, scenery, poetry, dance, acting and gesture. In opera, it is the composer who is the dramatist, using the emotive power of his music to express intense, human conflicts. Words evoke thought, but music evokes feelings; opera's sublime fusion of words, music, and all the theatrical arts provides powerful theater, an impact on one's sensibilities that can reach into the very depths of the human soul.

The Girl of the Golden West is a magnificent operatic invention, a towering tribute to the art form as well as to the genius of Giacomo Puccini, the inventor of music that seems unquestionably appropriate to the dramatic action and text.

Burton D. Fisher

Editor

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The Girl of the Golden West

(“La Fanciulla del West”)

Opera in Italian in three acts

Music

by

Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by

Guelfo Civinini and Carlo Zangarini,

after the David Belasco play,

The Girl of the Golden West

Premiere:

New York, Metropolitan Opera House,

December 10, 1910

Commentary and Analysis

After Puccini revised *Madama Butterfly* (1904), the opera achieved worldwide acclaim, joining *Manon Lescaut* and *La Bohème* to become a rage on the international lyric stage. Puccini had become rich and famous, the anointed heir of Giuseppe Verdi.

Nevertheless, Puccini was wounded, if not inhibited by the traumatic experience of *Madama Butterfly*'s initial failure, and a long psychological crisis began: a period of self analysis and scrutiny of his work. Puccini was 46-years old, a turning point of mid-life. He could indeed look back with pride, but he had to look to the future. He began to believe that he had reached an artistic dead end: that his audiences had tired of his sugary music and his musico-dramatic portrayals of tragic heroines experiencing agonizing deaths; he was determined to swing his emotional pendulum away from his muse of tragic despair and produce works with greater musico-dramatic impact. Ricordi urged him to try something more ambitious, perhaps a grand opera with spectacle, but ideally, Puccini was seeking another *La Bohème*, that magic blend of comic and tragic elements, with perhaps less sentimentality.

During the four years following *Madama Butterfly*, Puccini composed very little, his most important piece, a Requiem in memory of Verdi (1905); but he was intensely in search of new inspirations: hunting for extraordinary and original subjects to dramatize musically. He attended the theater whenever possible, and poured himself into reading plays and novels: Gorky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Wilde.

In seeking charismatic subjects, he flirted with a host of vulgar and uncultivated heroines, Carmen stereotypes and femmes fatales who were wild, selfish, unsympathetic, and consumed to use their erotic power to exploit, manipulate, and destroy men. At the same time, he was seeking a subject that would conquer the lucrative American market, an opera like *Madama Butterfly*, which would offer him adventurous opportunities to invent music in a specific idiom: music with rich exotic ambience, and a host of musical impressionism.

In 1907, Puccini visited New York for the Metropolitan Opera premieres of *Manon Lescaut* and *Madama Butterfly*. His search for a new opera subject was resolved when he saw another David Belasco success, *The Girl of the Golden West*.

Belasco was the son of Portuguese Jews, the original name perhaps Velasco. The family fled persecution and eventually settled around San Francisco. During the 1860s, the young Belasco was an actor who toured small California and Nevada towns where memories of the gold rush fever were vivid and even mythologized. His father had once joined a gold-mining camp and subsequently related many authentic incidents to his son, dramatic conflicts that would later appear in *The Girl of the Golden West*: the scenario of Johnson's blood dripping from the loft, and the subsequent poker game between Minnie and Rance for Johnson's life. Jake Wallace, the camp minstrel in both play and opera, is reputed to have been a real historic

character, a wandering minstrel during the Gold Rush days, who visited the various camps and sung old 49'ers songs while accompanying himself on the banjo.

Belasco was a true man of the theater: producer, writer, and stage designer. In his earlier *Madame Butterfly*, he proved his stage wizardry in the lighting effects of the "Night Vigil" scene, an element that strongly influenced Puccini to convert the play into a music drama. In *The Girl of the Golden West*, he likewise produced sensational and spectacular effects: the backdrop was a moving panorama of breathtaking scenes of the majestic western landscape, and a wind and snow machine was built to create the blizzard effects.

But Belasco was first and foremost a writer of realistic melodrama: *The Girl of the Golden West* was "American verismo," a stark melodrama involving a love triangle, with fierce and brutal characters overpowered by their monomania for gold and wealth. For Puccini, Belasco's *The Girl of the Golden West* cried out for music.

There is a striking resemblance between the underlying dramas of Belasco's *The Girl of the Golden West* and Puccini's earlier *Tosca* (1900): both plots involve a rivalry between two men for a woman; *Tosca*'s Cavaradossi and Scarpia are rivals for Tosca, and in *The Girl of the Golden West*, Rance and Johnson are rivals for Minnie. In both stories, the villains are sinister men who possess power: Rance is a Sheriff, and Scarpia a police chief; both are prepared to kill their rival to win their prize. In each scenario, the villain challenges the woman's honor in exchange for her lover's life: both men fail, but unlike *Tosca*, there is no murder or suicide at the conclusion of *The Girl of the Golden West*.

Puccini was captivated by the drama's virile and robust characters, and the exoticism of the harsh natural surroundings of the American West: an intensely powerful drama with stark realism that would inspire his musico-dramatic and symphonic imagination.

The heroine Minnie represented a new personality for Puccini to exploit, an ideal compromise between the tragic heroines of his previous six operas, and the femmes fatales he was exploring for new operas: Minnie possessed wildness and abandon, as well as a girlish innocence and naiveté.

Minnie is the overpowering moral force of the drama: she teaches a group of crude and malicious men about virtue, and that love and compassion will lead to redemption and salvation of the soul. Puccini became intrigued by the story's central focus: redemption through love, which was a new ideal in the Puccini canon.

And it is Minnie herself who is the overpowering redeeming force, her love for Johnson/Ramerez the transforming power that causes the outlaw to abandon his criminal life. The heroic and fearless Minnie rescues Johnson from a vigilante-style hanging, an action that places her in the company of the heroines of German Romanticism: Goethe's "ewige Weibliche," or Wagner's "eternal woman" like Brünnhilde, the reason for the oft-heard sobriquet of Minnie as the "Valkyrie of the American West."

Although Puccini expressed some initial skepticism about the dramatic cohesiveness of Belasco's play, Sybil Seligman, his intimate friend and confidante in London believed strongly in its musico-dramatic potential. She aroused his enthusiasm by commissioning a translation of the play for the non-English speaking Puccini, and also secured at least one book of American songs for him.

Tito Ricordi secured the rights from Belasco in an agreement that granted Puccini the freedom to alter the dramatic action; a flexibility that enabled him to serve his dramatic instincts and alter certain elements of the plot to satisfy his musico-dramatic needs. Puccini was ready to begin his seventh opera: *La Fanciulla del West*.

Puccini was disappointed because his favorite librettists were unavailable: Giacosa was dead, and Illica was fully engaged with another libretto. Ricordi recommended Carlo Zangarini, a dramatist he considered an ideal collaborator because he was half-American. However, the typical Puccini tensions between composer and librettist very quickly arose, and Zangarini was coerced into accepting a collaborator: the journalist and poet, Guelfo Civinini.

Puccini and his librettists struggled with the difficulties of converting Belasco's four-act stage play to the constraints inherent in the opera medium. Essentially, Puccini himself was seeking more dramatic tension: as such, he invented the third act "Manhunt" in the California Forest; the deus ex machina arrival of Minnie on horseback to rescue Johnson from being hanged; and Minnie's poignant farewell to the miners.

In Acts I and III, the miners are prominent protagonists, a considerable challenge to Puccini's talents at ensemble craftsmanship. But he predicted that *La Fanciulla* would prove to be a second *Bohème*, only more vigorous, more daring and larger in scale; in *La Fanciulla* he would transcend what many considered his ingenious treatment of *La Bohème*'s Act II Latin Quarter crowd scene. Otherwise, there is no relationship between these two operas in almost every respect imaginable.

Belasco's miners were utterly savage creatures: true verismo characters. The libretto and Puccini's music endow the miners with humanity: ambivalent characters that are at times sensitive, emotional, and more deeply afflicted by homesickness and sentiment than with cruel and brutal actions.

The libretto stresses Christian ideals of forgiveness and the redeeming power of compassion and love. Minnie represents the overpowering spiritual and moral force of the drama, a preacher and teacher who reads the Fifty-first Psalm of David to the miners in her scripture class, a sublime moment in the opera. In Belasco's play, she reads from a book called "Old Joe Miller's Jokes." And Minnie's unwavering sense of morality is expressed in the opening of Act II when she insists that the Indians Wowkle and Billy marry in a church to legitimize their child.

Puccini made Sheriff Rance far more sinister and savage than the original Belasco character: like Scarpia and Tosca, Rance is overcome by an impassioned monomania to possess Minnie; in the opera he attempts to rape Minnie, a scenario not in the original Belasco play.

Six years would elapse between the completion of *Madama Butterfly* and the premiere of *La Fanciulla del West*, much of the delay attributed to the scandal of the Manfredi affair, not to Puccini's lack of inspiration or musical ideas.

La Fanciulla del West premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in New York on December 10, 1910, with an all-star cast featuring Emmy Destinn (Minnie), Enrico Caruso (Dick Johnson), Pasquale Amato (Jack Rance), and conducted by Arturo Toscanini. It was a triumphant success, the composer receiving fourteen curtain calls after the first act, nineteen after the second, and twenty after the finale. Puccini declared it his best opera.

To capture the ambience of the American West, Puccini incorporated many American folk-songs that were popular in the California West of the 1850's. He resorted to the same methods as in *Madama Butterfly* and created a quasi-authentic ambience by combining American tunes with his own musical inventions composed in the same idiom. As such, there is a remarkable combination of exotic Western and American motifs and rhythms that permeate the overall musical texture: ragtime, cowboy songs, Spanish rhythms, and Native American chants. Nevertheless, just as in *Madama Butterfly*, he was accused of plagiarizing many of the score's melodies, a guilt of many composers from time to time. But stealing a succession of notes is meaningless, for it requires a genius to work the magic of transforming and unifying them, making the cohesive whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Most of the Western-style songs appear in Act I: the nostalgic "Old Dog Tray" (also known as "Echoes from Home"), which is a leitmotif identified with the miners' homesickness and their sad destiny. The song is introduced offstage by Jake Wallace, the camp minstrel, "Che faranno i vecchi miei là lontano?" ("What could my old folks be doing over there, far away?"), and it appears numerous times in different harmonic and rhythmic textures throughout the opera, particularly at the conclusion of the opera when it underscores the miner's sadness as Minnie and Johnson depart: "Mai più ritornerai, no mai più!" ("You will never return again, no never!")

The emotional level of the miners at the beginning of the first act alternates from sentiment and nostalgia to explosions of uncontrollable passions: the nostalgia of "Old Dog Tray" ("Che faranno"), to Larken's homesickness and the miner's compassion for him, to their brutality when Sid is caught cheating at cards, to an almost fatal quarrel between Rance and Sonora over Minnie, the latter signaling Minnie's dramatic entrance.

Minnie reigns in the miners' blustery passions, her very presence calming their savage souls, a power that is heightened by the morality and goodness she preaches in the "Scripture Class."

Belasco's realism captured the supercharged gold rush craze of 1849-50, its rugged individualism, and the pioneering spirit of the era.

The miners represent the emotional core of the opera, a motley aggregation of diverse humanity that can at times be crude, brash, and even savage, but also easily moved to emotion, sentiment and tears. These men have surrendered their souls to

greed and dreams of wealth, a quest that at times leads to passions of violence and brutality. They toil endlessly to reap gold from the almost indomitable California mountains. In their greed, they have descended into a nether world, self-destructing into a community of lost souls, exiles, and ruffians: doomed creatures haunted by despair and melancholy; the ideal inspiration to kindle Puccini's tragic muse. And indeed, Puccini's music unmasks the miners' souls: music conveying pain, suffering, homesickness, loneliness, fear of death, yearning and longing, and above all, the need for the redeeming essence of love and compassion.

The impregnable Cloudy Mountains of California are the miners' enemy. The miners are motivated by dreams of gold and wealth, forced to fight for survival in a brutal, terrifying and dangerous land, and seek wealth in mountains that yield just minuscule amounts of treasure. Rance snarls in Act I: "Che terra maledetta, quest'occidente d'oro" ("What a cursed place this Golden West is.")

The Native Americans, Wowkle and Billy Jackrabbit, are exaggerated stereotypes, marginalized people who have become demoralized by life in the miner's camp: Billy Jackrabbit steals cigars and whiskey and is drunk most of the time; his squaw Wowkle has borne his child out of wedlock. When Billy reveals that Minnie has insisted that they marry, Wowkle's reply is simple, if not innocuous: "Wowkle not know."

Puccini Christianized his "golden West": Minnie insists that Wowkle and Billy marry to legitimize their child. They celebrate their forthcoming nuptials with a hymn based on the Ninetieth Psalm: "The day which the Lord gave unto man is like a blade of grass, once winter descends onto the plains, man becomes sad and dies." The theme of resignation seems an inappropriate blessing for two people about to be married, but it appropriately conveys the sense of human despair that is one of the underlying themes of the opera.

Belasco conceived the hero Johnson as a noble bandit: a tall, smooth-faced gentleman who buys his clothing in fashionable Sacramento. Johnson orders his whiskey mixed with water, a sacrilege at Minnie's "Polka Saloon," where virility is defined by drinking liquor straight. In his first appearance he is modest, certainly the last man one would suspect of being the outlaw Ramerrez.

Ramerrez/Johnson is patterned after courageous, flesh-and-blood historic personages of the American West: the California natives of Hispanic descent known as californios or rancheros, who became victims of the non-latino, or Yankee gold speculators who poured into the region in search of immediate wealth during the Gold Rush of 1849-50.

The Yankees were bigoted, and sometimes murderous. They characterized the latino natives as sub humans, a self-serving race of congenital liars, thieves, and murderers. But in the end, the Yankees used force to extricate the latinos and seize the lands where the precious gold was hidden.

Before the discovery of gold in 1848, the californios and rancheros considered themselves Spanish grandes of the New World, traditionally hospitable and extremely cordial to Yankee visitors from the East. But after gold was discovered in

California, fortune-seekers began pouring in, the population swelling with foreigners who overpowered them. The native californios had extensive experience with mining and were far more successful than the Yankees, which quickly led to serious friction between them and the newcomers.

The treaty that ended the Mexican War in 1848 guaranteed full civil and property rights to the californios, but the Yankees became envious, and many of them, veterans of the recently concluded Mexican War, began driving the californios from the gold fields with threats, beatings, and occasional lynching. As far as the Yankees were concerned, anyone whose mother tongue was Spanish had no business intruding on what was manifestly America's gold: their gold.

Yankee claim-jumpers flogged the californios, hung them, and raped their wives. Deprived of a living in the mines, some californios took to crime: they joined Mexican gangs and became outlaws and bandits who roamed the countryside and terrorized the counties during the 1850s and 1860s; they looted, pillaged, and committed scores of robberies, resorting to bloodshed when necessary. Bands of Texas-style rangers were organized to counter the outlaws, but when that failed, vigilantes emerged and attempted to drive out the entire californio population: anyone with a Spanish surname.

Armed Yankee vigilantes attempted to extricate californios who were working claims near Sutter's Mill and the Sacramento. They were aided by the State Assembly that extorted the miners with levies, and when the state failed to enforce taxation with vigor, the vigilantes marched into the towns, collected the taxes from a few wealthy californios, and warned the rest to relinquish their claims to the mines.

In desperation, the californio outlaws became daring in order to shield their disaffected community from the Yankee pursuers; they became renegades who pursued an outlaw's life which avenged Yankee injustice. Most of them failed, and were apprehended, convicted, and sentenced to hanging.

*L*a *Fanciulla del West*'s Dick Johnson, nee Ramerrez, was one of those bandits, a californio turned outlaw, who was struggling to survive in a land that was overrun by foreigners. Puccini, the musical dramatist and narrator of this story, unabashedly exposes Johnson's despair; a melancholy, anguish and agony that the composer shared with the opera's hero.

In Act II, Johnson hides in Minnie's cabin to avoid the pursuing Sheriff Rance. Rance appears and reveals to Minnie that Johnson is none other than the bandit Ramerrez. Alone with Minnie, Johnson unmask himself, poignantly and passionately revealing his horrible destiny to Minnie: "Sono Ramerrez, nacqui vagabondo: era ladro il mio nome da quando venni al mondo" ("I'm Ramerrez. I was born a vagabond: my name was thief from the moment I was born."); his inheritance after his father's death was "a gang of highway bandits!"

The underlying theme of *La Fanciulla del West* is the redeeming power of love, a hope that Johnson expresses fervently: "Ho sognato d'andarmene con voi tanto lontano e rendimermi tutto in una vita di lavoro e d'amore." ("I dreamed of going far away with to totally redeem myself in a life of work and ardent prayer.")

Johnson expresses the agony of his shame with self-deprecation: “Vergogna mia!” (“My shame!”) Johnson, like all the characters of *La Fanciulla*, is struggling to resurrect his life, to escape from the “terra maledetta,” that cursed land.

Minnie, now aware of Johnson’s identity, expresses pity for him, but she was deceived by him and cannot restrain her moral indignation: she has learned that the first man she ever kissed is an outlaw and a bandit, and also — as she suspected — that Nina Micheltorena is her rival.

Minnie insists that Johnson leave, oblivious to the mortal danger awaiting him outside. But after he is wounded, she is suddenly overcome with compassion for the man she now realizes she truly loves; Minnie’s emotions have conquered reason. She conceals Johnson in the loft, protecting him from Rance and the miners who are pursuing the outlaw.

In Act III, the miner’s manhunt is successful, and Johnson is caught. Rance tries to whip the miners into a frenzy to hang him immediately: he wants his rival for Minnie destroyed. The miners taunt Johnson, but he will not surrender his dignity: “Risparmiate lo scherno” (“Spare yourself the mocking.”) The miners accuse Johnson of being a murderer, which he vehemently denies. (He is, however, an admitted thief.)

Johnson is on the threshold of death, and his thoughts turn to his love for Minnie. The centerpiece of Act III is the aria, “Ch’ella mi creda libero e lontano” (“I want her to believe that I’m free, far away”). The aria is superb, vintage Puccini, a masterpiece from a master song-writer: twenty-one bars that are melodically unforgettable, its music saturated with a sense of self-loathing, longing and suffering: that plaintive, weeping despair that had become Puccini’s musical signature. But above all, “Ch’ella mi creda” represents a passionate longing for a new life, a renewed life far away from the failure and shame of the past.

Belasco wrote *The Girl of the Golden West* for Blanche Bates, a famous actress in her time, and he tailored the role of the heroine to suit the diva’s charisma. As such, Minnie became an overbearing and authoritative character, utterly frank, devoid of vice or immorality, happy, and unsoiled by the coarse and crude miners surrounding her.

But Puccini’s librettists painted Minnie in a much softer, romantic light than Belasco’s rather blustery characterization of the heroine. Minnie possesses deep insight into the men surrounding her, profoundly aware of their yearnings and desires, accustomed to their flattery, and totally capable of keeping their rowdiness under control. Puccini’s Minnie is a synthesis of tomboy, glorified barmaid, and angelic Puritan schoolteacher, a woman as crafty with a revolver as she is artful in pouring whiskey.

In Act I, Minnie’s autobiographical aria, “Laggiù nel Soledad, ero piccina” (“I was a little girl down there in Soledad”) is a poignant reminiscence of her innocent and happy childhood; her parents loved each other profoundly, and the spirit of that love has remained deeply etched in her soul: “S’amavan tanto!” (“They loved each

other so much!") Minnie expresses her own aspirations and yearnings for true love: "Anch'io vorrei trovare un uomo e certo l'amerei." ("I would also like to find a man that I could truly love!")

Minnie conveys a virginal innocence: in Act I. Just before her dance with Johnson, she apologizes to him: "You won't believe it, but I've never danced in my life!" And of course, Johnson will later become the first man she has ever kissed.

In Act II, Johnson expresses his bewilderment, unable to comprehend how Minnie can live such a lonely life in the seclusion of the mountains. Minnie defends her love of nature and a life in which she senses a closeness to God: "Oh, se sapeste come il vivere è allegro!" ("Oh, if you knew how happy my life is!")

Puccini elevated Minnie's character: she alone possesses the secret of renewal, the "via di redenzione," the path to redemption. The Act I Scripture Class expresses the essential underlying theme of the entire opera: that redemption can be achieved through pure love: "Ciò vuol dire, ragazzi, che non v'è al mondo peccatore cui non s'apra una via di redenzione." ("Boys, that means that there's not a sinner in the world for whom a path of redemption is not open.") And she concludes: "Sappia ognuno di voi chiudere in sè una suprema verità d'amore." ("May all of you know how to keep the supreme truth of love inside of you.")

Minnie may take offence at the miners for their slightest impropriety, but she herself thinks nothing of cheating in her poker game with Rance. Nevertheless, Minnie is not compromising her noble ideals by cheating at poker; her actions are those of a woman who is consumed to save the life of the man she loves, the path to redeeming love.

At the conclusion of Act III, Minnie pleads with the miners for Johnson's freedom, her plea for forgiveness underscored with intensive, plaintive lyricism. Minnie's sermon to the miners reminds them again of redemption: "Brothers, there isn't a sinner in the world to which the path of redemption is not open!" Sonora rescues Johnson for Minnie, and sends both off to a new life together.

Belasco described the character of Rance: "A cool, waxen, deliberate gambler, and a dissolute rascal." Belasco implies that Rance is no different than the outlaw Ramerrez, a victim of unfortunate incidents in his youth, perhaps his anticipation of modern discoveries about the psychology of criminals.

Rance is a flawed character, an ambivalent man who vacillates between good and evil: as Sheriff he symbolizes law and order, but he is as prone to criminality as those he pursues. He is as lost and despairing as every other man in the opera, bitter about his life, and obsessed by greed.

In Act I, Rance unmasks his consuming passion for Minnie. Minnie becomes offended by his overtures; after all, he is a married man. In Rance's autobiographical narrative, "Minnie, dalla mia casa son partito" ("Minnie, I left my house, which is beyond the hills."), he defends his yearning for Minnie: a victim of misfortune who left his home long ago; and no one wept when he left. He has had no pleasure in life, never loved any one, and no one has ever loved him. He has reached middle-

age and it is only the lure of gold that attracts him. Yet he would surrender his fortune for one kiss from Minnie.

Rance's music is restless, twisting, haunting, and eerily melancholy, reflecting anxiety and hopelessness; in that sense, his music defies any comparison to the music of *Tosca*'s Scarpia, which is leering and violently lustful. But Rance also believes that he will find redemption through Minnie's love, a resurrected life transcending his greed.

When Rance realizes that Johnson is his rival for Minnie, his jealous passions explode uncontrollably. But in Act II, he has his great opportunity for revenge, cunningly playing on Minnie's jealousy (as Scarpia does with Tosca) by showing Minnie the picture of Ramerrez given to him by Minnie's presumed rival, Nina Micheltorena. In his lust to possess Minnie, Rance has descended into villainy.

Rance lecherously assaults Minnie, Puccini's music appropriately communicating Minnie's fear and Rance's terror. The ensuing poker game is a moment of heightened music drama, Rance's music seemingly twisting like a knife in a wound; and there is a profound sense of terror created by rhythms, discords, and ferocious brass explosions. While the cards are being dealt, Rance asks Minnie about her love for Johnson, who has passed out at the table: "Che ha che tu l'adori?" ("What does he have that makes you adore him?") Minnie responds: "Voi che trovate in me?" ("What do you find in me?") Each exchange between Rance and Minnie intensifies through the emotive power of the underlying music, the music providing a contrast of Minnie's fear and Rance's sinister nature and potential for violence.

Rance is determined to possess Minnie by any means, but he accepts his defeat with honor, even though he has lost the poker game, and lost Minnie to his rival. He withdraws with grace and dignity, merely taking his hat and coat, and leaving with a sneering "Good evening!" But the wound is deep and painful; Rance will have his revenge.

In *La Fanciulla del West*, Minnie represents a beacon of hope for all of the flawed and ambivalent lost souls, men of moral contradictions who vacillate between good and evil.

Minnie not only teaches morality to the miners, but she is also the protector of their gold. Minnie is most vivid at the end of Act I when she reveals to Johnson that she would give her life to protect that gold for the miners: "In quel barile, Johnson, c'è un tesoro" ("Johnson, in that barrel there's a treasure.") Yet, Minnie is unaware that Johnson is Ramerrez, a bandit who has come to rob the "Polka Saloon" of the miner's gold. He will be dissuaded from stealing the gold not by blustery miners with pistols, but by his sudden passion for Minnie.

The essence of *La Fanciulla del West*'s story is that humanity can be redeemed through love. Each of the male characters is a lost soul, but the angelic Minnie has taught them about hope, forgiveness, redemption, compassion, and love. In the end, the lost soul she will rescue and redeem will be Johnson, the man she has learned to love.

In the Act III finale, Minnie heroically arrives to save Johnson from being hanged. She reminds the miners about the “Scripture Class”: that all men can be forgiven and redeemed. The miners release Johnson, and both Minnie and Johnson vanish into the distance, singing their farewell: “Addio mia bella California” (“Farewell, my beautiful California”) In the fairy-tale sense, *La Fanciulla del West* ends happily as the lovers ride off to a new life together: a victory of virtue over vice, of pure love over lust, and most of all, the triumph of the redeeming power of love.

But there is a terrible sadness, underscored by the minstrel’s song of longing that was heard at the beginning of the opera: “Che faranno i vecchi miei.” The miners’ final words are directed to their beloved Minnie: “Mai più ritornerai, no mai più!” (“You will never return again, no never!”): a moment of heartfelt sadness.

These lost souls know in their hearts that somehow they must be liberated from their torment and misery. Minnie taught them how to resolve their despair: through the redeeming power of love; and each of the miners knows in his heart that he must find that love in order to survive.

Puccini declared *La Fanciulla del West* his best opera to date. It is certainly one of his most alluring operas: a straightforward, self-evident plot that features the exoticism and ambience of the American West, and robust characters caught in the heat of heightened passions. And the plot delivers many spine-chilling dramatic situations: Minnie’s poker game with Rance for Johnson’s life, the manhunt in the California forest, and Minnie’s deus ex machina arrival to save Johnson from being hanged.

Nevertheless, almost a century after its premiere, *La Fanciulla del West* has yet to firmly establish itself in the general repertory: it certainly does not share the popularity of Puccini’s greatest successes, particularly its three predecessors: *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, and *Madama Butterfly*, or the later *Turandot*.

Over the years, *La Fanciulla del West* has become the victim of ambivalent criticisms; at times it has been considered silly and inane, and at times a sublime music drama. Critics and audiences alike have been outspoken in condemning its brash plot, which they have derided, mocked, and sometimes deemed senseless: a mythologized, overblown oater that is related in Italian and in the Italian opera art form; the absurdity of cowboys singing in Italian, certainly a dubious vehicle for modern American audiences who have been nurtured on Westerns in the cinema and on television.

In speculation, if Puccini possessed a Wagnerian imagination, he would have redeemed what many consider his musical magnum opus: perhaps a romantic or mythological legend, with a community of lost souls protected by a Minnie-type goddess, a love triangle, and eventual redemption through love.

Nevertheless, most musicians acknowledge that *La Fanciulla del West* is a musico-dramatic masterpiece, and a work of stupendous craftsmanship. Puccini’s orchestra is most definitely a protagonist in this opera, prompting Toscanini to have called it a “great symphonic poem.”

Puccini was speaking a new musical language in *La Fanciulla*, the language of modern music that is patently unrecognizable from the composer of *La Bohème*; the score resonates with echoes of Stravinsky's harmonic innovations, Debussy's Impressionism, and Richard Strauss's Expressionism of *Salome* and *Elektra*. In terms of Impressionism, Puccini again proved himself a master in capturing effects through his musical inventions: Johnson's blood dripping on Rance's hand from the overhead loft in Act II; the Act II blizzard; and the chilling opening of Act III's "Manhunt." Puccini's use of the whole-tone scale represents his most complex and daring harmonic advancements preceding *Turandot*.

The music drama is through-composed, all of its elements seamlessly integrated into an organic unity. Themes associated with characters and ideas (leitmotifs) recur throughout the score; these are melodic units, or blocks of music that Puccini expertly integrates into the score with his typical symphonic mastery. The orchestration is scored for an extremely large and intensely powerful orchestra with a wide range of instrumental colors.

Minnie is at the center of the action in an opera that is commandingly masculine. The miners play significant roles, their choral lines disharmonic and in unison octaves, a technique intended to convey their primitiveness.

Although *La Fanciulla del West* echoes many of the musico-dramatic ideas of Wagner, it is an Italian opera to the core, an opera that does not sacrifice lyricism and melody to musico-dramatic integrity. In fact, with *La Fanciulla del West*, Puccini may have proven himself the Italian master of Wagner's transformations and metamorphoses, just as Wagner, the arch-enemy of the Italian bel canto genre, composed perhaps the greatest bel canto opera in *Lohengrin*.

La Fanciulla del West deserves much praise; it is arguably Puccini's best opera score, a magnificent example of remarkable craftsmanship composed in Puccini's unique personal style.

Principal Characters in
The Girl of the Golden West

Brief Story Synopsis

Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples

Principal Characters in The Girl of the Golden West

Minnie, proprietress of the “Polka Saloon”	Soprano
Jack Rance, sheriff	Baritone
Dick Johnson, alias José Ramerrez, a bandit	Tenor
Nick, bartender at the “Polka Saloon”	Tenor
Ashby, Wells Fargo agent	Bass
Billy Jackrabbit, Native American Indian	Bass
Wowkle, Billy’s squaw	Mezzo-soprano
Jack Wallace, camp minstrel	Baritone
José Castro, one of Ramerrez’s outlaws	Bass
Pony Express Rider (Post boy)	Tenor

Miners: Sonora, Trin, Sid, Bello (Handsome), Harry, Joe, Happy, Larkens

TIME: During the California gold rush — 1849-50

PLACE: A gold mining camp at the foot of the Cloudy Mountains, California

Brief Story Synopsis

Minnie is the proprietress of the “Polka Saloon” located in a mining camp at the foot of the Cloudy Mountains of California. A band of outlaws, led by Ramerrez, has been seen near the mining camp, and the miners fear for the safety of their precious gold, which is stored in the “Polka Saloon.”

The sheriff, Jack Rance, is in love with Minnie, but she has spurned him. A stranger arrives at the “Polka Saloon,” calling himself Dick Johnson from Sacramento; he is actually the bandit Ramerrez in disguise. Minnie becomes attracted to Johnson. They share intimacies, inflaming Rance’s jealousy of his rival. Johnson (Ramerrez) has come to the “Polka Saloon” to rob the miners’ gold; he will be deterred not by guns, but by his growing affection for Minnie.

Minnie and Johnson meet at her cabin that evening. They fall in love. Rance and a posse are seeking the bandit Ramerrez and believe they have tracked him to Minnie’s cabin. At the cabin, Minnie fears Rance’s jealousy and hides Johnson when Rance and miners arrive. Rance informs Minnie that Johnson is the bandit Ramerrez. After they leave, Minnie orders Johnson from her cabin. Outside, he is shot and wounded. Minnie brings him back to her cabin, sheltering him in the loft to avoid his capture by Rance. Rance returns and discovers Johnson in the loft. Minnie plays poker with Rance for Johnson’s life, winning through trickery.

The posse continues to pursue Johnson. He is later caught by the Wells Fargo men, who turn him over to Rance and the miners. Just as they are about to hang him, Minnie arrives. She convinces the miners to free him because he is no longer a bandit, but a man redeemed through their love. Minnie and Johnson leave California to begin a new life together, the miners saddened by the loss of their beloved Minnie.

Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples

The prelude presents musical themes that are heard throughout the opera. The first theme evokes the majestic expanse of the California landscape.

Allegro ma non troppo



A second theme is associated with the love of Minnie and Johnson, the music underscoring their first kiss.

Allegro ma non troppo



A third theme is associated with the bandit Ramerrez, its syncopated “cakewalk” rhythms and accents suggesting a Latin or Mexican ambience.

Robusto e sostenuto



Act I: Inside Minnie's "Polka Saloon."

It is evening. Sheriff Jack Rance plays solitaire, his cigar glowing in the semi-darkness. Nick, the barman, lights the lamps. The boisterous miners arrive at the saloon to relax after an exhausting day of panning and searching for gold. They greet each other with exuberant "Hello's," and then call for cigars and whiskey.

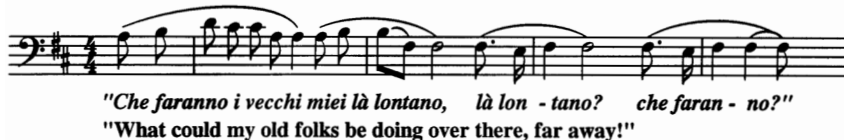
"Dooda dooda, dooda, day"**Allegro vivo con energia****JOE and BELLO**

Sid proposes a game of faro. Harry, Happy, and Joe enthusiastically join him. Sonora, Trin, and other miners arrive.

Larkens sits crouched with his arms covering his head, unaffected by the miner's rowdiness. Sheriff Rance inquires of Nick why Larkens seems so melancholy; Nick informs him that he is homesick, prompting Rance to curse the West, its gold a poison that destroys a man's soul.

Nick urges some the miners to dance in an adjoining room. Trin sits with Sonora, who is eating his supper. Sonora, in love with Minnie, inquires if Nick has learned whether Minnie has finally made up her mind about him. Nick cynically assures Sonora that he is Minnie's favorite; Sonora becomes ecstatic and offers cigars for everyone. Trin similarly asks Nick about his chances with Minnie; Nick encourages him similarly, prompting him to buy everyone a round of whiskey.

From outside the saloon, the itinerant minstrel Jake Wallace sings a nostalgic ballad about family and home.

"Che faranno i vecchi miei, là, lontano, là lontano?"**Andante tranquillo****JACK WALLACE**

Wallace's ballad evokes painful emotions from the miners, and all become pensive and melancholy. As Wallace enters the "Polka Saloon" the gambling and rowdiness cease.

Sonora gives Minnie a bag of gold to pay his bar bill. Minnie hands it to Nick, who weighs it, cancels Sonora's bill, and then places it in the barrel, the depository of the miners' gold.

Minnie opens a bible to begin her nightly "Scripture Class." The miners encircle her. Ashby and Rance talk quietly on the side, Ashby cautioning that it is unwise for the miners to keep gold in the saloon while an outlaw is on the loose; he suggests that it would be safer if it were deposited at the Wells Fargo Agency.

Minnie reads from the 51st Psalm of David, stressing its message that there is not a sinner in the world for whom redemption is not available; and that everyone should experience the supreme truth of redeeming love.

There is excitement as a post boy (Pony Express driver) arrives with mail. The miners read their mail, the news from home causing some to express happiness, and others anger and remorse.

Ashby receives a letter from Nina Micheltorena, the bandit Ramerrez's mistress. She offers to meet with him at the "Palms" at midnight, apparently eager to avenge her perfidious lover by revealing his whereabouts. Rance expresses doubt about trusting a woman of that ilk.

Nick announces that a stranger has arrived outside, seemingly from San Francisco. The stranger has requested whiskey and water, an unmanly drink at the "Polka Saloon." Minnie tells Nick to invite him in so that they can "fix his curls": make a man out of him.

The miners go into the adjoining hall to dance, leaving Rance alone with Minnie. Rance's voice trembles as he declares his impassioned love for Minnie; he promises marriage, and offers her money if she would allow him to kiss her. Minnie bursts into laughter, inquiring what Rance's wife would say if she knew his intentions. But Minnie is truthfully offended by Rance's audacity. She points her pistol at him and asks that he leave her in peace. The spurned Rance walks away in silence. Minnie becomes sensitive and apologizes for angering him, but prides her honesty.

Rance bares his soul to Minnie, his unhappiness and despair. He has never loved, and never been loved; only gambling and gold have provided pleasure in his life. He has become a bitter cynic in his search of the true meaning of life; gold has tortured his soul, but nevertheless, he would surrender his fortune for one kiss from Minnie.

"Minnie, dalla mia casa son partito"

Andante sostenuto

RANCE



Minnie, dalla mia casa son partito che è là dai monti, sopra un altro mare;
Minnie, I left my house, which is beyond the hills, and beyond the high seas;

Love is a noble ideal to Minnie. She nostalgically recalls her childhood in Soledad; her parents ran a tavern, her mother the cook and bartender, and her father the faro dealer who ran the gambling.

Her parents were profoundly in love, a model of true love that has become etched in her heart; she yearns for the day when she will find a man to open her heart to the nobility of that same true love.

“S’amavan tanto”

Con anima
MINNIE



S'amavan tanto! S'amavan tanto! Ah! Anch'io vorrei trovare uomo: e certo l'amerei.
They loved each other so much! Ah! I would also like to find a man that I could truly love.

Minnie's yearning for love inflames Rance's passion for her. But just as he is about to proclaim himself the man who could fulfill her dream of love, Nick reappears with a stranger (Dick Johnson), the man who was outside the saloon requesting whiskey and water.

Johnson's theme: the "Robber" motive

Allegro vibrato



The stranger carries a saddle, and his leather jacket hangs over his left shoulder. He places the saddle on a table. With fierce disdain, he asks, "Who's here to curl my hair?"

Minnie becomes startled when she realizes that she met the stranger before; he likewise expresses surprise when he sees Minnie. Minnie orders Nick to serve the stranger his whiskey as he pleases. The stranger inquires if she was indeed the young lady he accidentally met the other day on the road. Minnie blushes, her revelation that it was indeed a memorable encounter.

Rance watches Minnie and the stranger menacingly, his jealousy immediately transforming into a furious loathing of the stranger. He approaches Johnson aggressively and threateningly, demanding that he explain his presence at the saloon, as well as at the mining camp. Rance intuitively suspects that the stranger might be the outlaw Ramerrez and inquires if he is en route to meet Nina Micheltorena. Johnson replies with indifference, informing him that he only stopped at the saloon for a rest and perhaps to try his luck at baccarat.

Rance presses the stranger to learn his name. He introduces himself as Johnson from Sacramento. As Minnie graciously welcomes him, Rance storms away, fuming with visible anger.

Johnson and Minnie reminisce about their earlier meeting on the road leading to Monterey, a moment in which their chemistry subconsciously united: they talked, picked flowers, and vowed they would never forget each other. While Minnie and Johnson stare amorously into each other's eyes, Rance approaches them, his uncontrollable jealousy prompting him to knock his rival's whiskey glass to the floor.

Rance is suspicious, determined to know the reason for Johnson's presence at the "Polka Saloon." Both stare at each with intense hostility in their eyes, a confrontation in which heightened passions are about to explode. Rance reaches for his revolver, but Minnie intervenes to stop him. Johnson shrugs his shoulders, gesturing indifference at the bellicose sheriff.

But Rance persists in trying to provoke Johnson: he pushes his saddle from the table to the floor, and then rouses the miners against him. Minnie again comes to Johnson's rescue, defusing Rance's fury by vouching for Johnson. Calm returns as the miners cordially welcome Johnson, some effusively shaking his hands. A disappointed Sheriff Rance watches disapprovingly, his anger seething.

Harry invites Johnson to dance, but instead, Johnson offers Minnie his arm and asks her to dance. Minnie bashfully admits that she never danced before. All dance, except Rance, who watches them while grimacing, frowning, and raging with jealousy.

The miners accompany a waltz tune with "La, la, la's," beating time by clapping their hands.

The waltz:

Tempo di Valzer Moderato



Ashby and a posse arrive with a prisoner, José Castro, a member of Ramerrez's gang. He is tied to a chair and questioned. Castro claims that he deserted Ramerrez's outlaws and wants to kill the bandit. He promises to lead them to him, but his real purpose is to draw the miners away from the "Polka Saloon" so that Ramerrez (Johnson) can rob the saloon. Castro notices Ramerrez's saddle on the floor and fears that he has been caught, but he becomes relieved when he sees him dancing in the adjoining hall.

Johnson returns from the dance hall, trying to avoid direct eye contact with Castro. He retrieves his saddle from the floor and places it on the faro table, his back to Castro while he adjusts its stirrups. Castro whispers to Johnson: that he let

himself be caught as a ruse to get the miners out of the saloon to search for Ramerrez. He tells Ramerrez that their men are hiding in the forest, and when he hears their whistle, his whistle response will signal that all is clear to rob the saloon.

Rance, Ashby, and the miners take Castro with them to pursue Ramerrez, leaving Minnie behind to guard their gold. Nick closes the "Polka Saloon" for the night, closing shutters and extinguishing lights.

Johnson goes to the window to confirm that the miners have left. He searches and finds the barrel in which the miners' gold is stored, the object of his planned robbery. He makes a gesture of disdain, and then retrieves his saddle from the table in lieu of leaving.

Minnie suddenly appears, inquiring if Johnson remained behind to help her guard the saloon. Johnson expresses his concern that she is exposed to danger: that anyone is free to enter the saloon either to drink or steal. Minnie assures him that she is capable of protecting herself. Johnson asks, "Even from one who only wants to steal a kiss from you?" Minnie replies: "This has happened to me several times, but I still haven't given my first kiss."

Minnie and Johnson exchange intimacies: intuitively, she feels safe with Johnson, and that she can trust him, even though she knows so little about him; he reveals that he hardly knows himself, but thrives on his love of life. Minnie in turn expresses her insecurity: that she is a humble and inexperienced woman with a meager education, far below Johnson's sophistication, which she aspires to.

But love has dawned for Minnie and Johnson, expressed in a duet that begins with a lyrical expansion of the earlier waltz melody.

Love Duet: "Quello che tacete me l'ha detto il cor"

Andante mosso moderatamente
JOHNSON

Quel - lo che ta - ce - te me l'ha det - to cor,
My heart tells me what you are not saying,

quan - do il brac - cio v'of - fer-si all'a danza con me:
when I offered you my arm and we danced together:

Johnson reveals that when they danced together he felt Minnie trembling against his chest, and he was overcome by a strange and indescribable sense of peace and happiness. Minnie likewise feels joy and happiness in his presence.

Nick interrupts Minnie and Johnson. He anxiously searches for his gun, while warning them that another Mexican bandit was seen near the saloon. As Nick leaves, Minnie tries to follow him, but Johnson restrains her.

A whistle is heard from outside, the signal from Ramerrez's bandits. Johnson does not return the whistle. Minnie becomes alarmed; she points to the barrel

containing the miners' gold, and declares that since the miners are away tonight, it is her duty to guard it.

Minnie expresses her heartfelt compassion for the miners, men who have toiled endlessly for gold to send to their families far away. Minnie goes behind the bar and retrieves two pistols. She places them on top of the barrel, her determination to protect the miner's gold.

Largamente



Johnson assures her that no one would dare try to rob the gold.

Johnson prepares to leave, presumably to tell his men to call off the robbery. He asks Minnie if he can meet her later at her cabin. Minnie informs him that the miners will return shortly, and afterwards, he can come to her cabin where they can continue their conversation next to the fire.

Minnie again apologizes because she has so little to offer the sophisticated Johnson, her meager education restricting their conversation: she is merely a simple and humble woman. Johnson comforts her, reassuring her that she is a good and pure soul, with the face of an angel. Johnson takes his saddle and leaves.

Nick enters to put out the remaining lights in the "Polka Saloon." Minnie stands alone in the light of the one lamp that remains lit, slightly dazed, mystified, and absorbed in the intoxication of the emotions that have overcome her. She repeats Johnson's last words to her, "A face of an angel."

Minnie covers her face with her hands, and then emits a deep and prolonged sigh. Minnie has discovered love.

Act II: Minnie's cabin, later that evening.

Wowkle, a young Indian, squats on the floor of the cabin near the fire, rocking her papoose to sleep while singing a lullaby. Billy Jackrabbit arrives. Minnie has insisted that they marry to legitimize their child. They discuss a dowry, and that they will go to the Mission to be married tomorrow.

Minnie appears, overflowing with excitement because Johnson will soon be visiting her. She is happy when Billy informs her that he will marry Wowkle. Minnie orders Wowkle to clean the cabin and prepare dinner for two, her revelation that a visitor is coming astonishing Wowkle.

Minnie dresses in her finest clothes for her rendezvous with Johnson: her fine slippers from Monterey, a handkerchief which she splashes with cologne, a shawl and gloves. Afterwards, she places a rose in her hair.

Johnson arrives. He becomes immediately dazzled by her appearance and comments that she looks exceptionally pretty. He tries to kiss Minnie, but she avoids him, offended by his aggressiveness. He apologizes and begs her forgiveness and offers to leave because of his indiscretion, but Minnie allows him to stay.

Minnie tests Johnson's sincerity, suspiciously inquiring if he really came to the "Polka" this to see her; or did he mistake the path to Nina Micheltorena? Johnson quickly changes the subject, noting how quaint her cabin is. But Johnson is confounded by Minnie's lonely life, so remote from the world. Minnie explains that she is happy and content amid the beauty of nature and the closeness to God. And during the winter storms, she is busy teaching the miners at her "school."

“Oh, se sapeste come il vivere è allegro!”

Allegretto mosso e giocoso

MINNIE



Oh, se sa - pe - ste co-me il vi - ve-re è alle - gro!

Oh, if you knew how happy my life is!

Minnie reveals that she loves to read romance stories. Johnson promises that he will send some to her. Their conversation turns to the meaning of love, which Minnie extols as eternal, not a momentary desire.

Johnson again tries to embrace Minnie. This time Minnie restrains the bold Johnson with the excuse that he will squash her roses. He feels uneasy and decides to leave, but when he opens the door he discovers a violent blizzard outside.

Minnie and Johnson embrace, and then kiss passionately, Johnson admitting that he loved her from the first time he saw her.

As if in fear and fright, Johnson suddenly withdraws from her, confounding Minnie. He declares that their love would be a hopeless dream and again begins to

leave, but Minnie convinces him that there is no path in the snow, so he must remain at the cabin until tomorrow.

Three gunshots are heard. Minnie suggests that it must be the posse on the trail of the bandit Ramerrez; another reason Johnson should stay.

Both affirm their impassioned love: their destiny. They vow never to part again.

“Dolce vivere e morire”

Con espressione grande
MINNIE and JOHNSON

Minnie
Dol - ce vi - ve - re mo - rir e non lasciar - ci

Johnson
Dol - ce vi - ve - re mo - rir e non lasciar - ci
The gentle sweetness of life and death. We'll never part again!

Minnie
più! non la - sciar - ci più!

Johnson
We'll never part again!
più! Col tuo ba - cio fa pu - ro il labbro mio!
Purify my lips with your kiss!

Johnson believes that he hears people outside. Indeed, Nick is heard shouting from outside that the bandit Ramerrez has been seen on the trail. Minnie suspects that Rance and his posse are outside. Fearing the jealous Sheriff Rance, Minnie has Johnson hide behind the bed curtains.

There is a knock on the cabin door. Minnie opens it to find Rance, Ashby, Nick and Sonora, all fully covered with snow. They have come to Minnie's cabin fearing for her safety and to protect her. With relentless malice, Rance explains that Johnson, the man Minnie danced with earlier, is in fact the bandit Ramerrez.

Minnie becomes flabbergasted, refusing to believe Rance's revelation. Ashby adds that the bandit came to the "Polka Saloon" to rob the miners' gold. But Minnie defends Johnson because he did not rob them, although Sonora adds that he certainly had the opportunity. Nevertheless, they have come to her cabin because Nick and Sid saw the bandit take the cabin trail, and the suspicious Rance knows that the trail ends at Minnie's cabin.

Rance notices a cigar stub, and then looks menacingly at Minnie, inquiring forcefully where the bandit has gone. He then plants seeds of jealousy in Minnie, declaring that Nina Micheltorena is indeed Johnson's mistress. He shows Minnie a

picture of both, given to him by Nina Micheltorena. Minnie disguises her outrage by bursting into laughter, and then sends them away.

After they leave, Minnie erupts into furious indignation. She commands Johnson to emerge from hiding and accuses him of planning to rob the “Polka Saloon.” Johnson swears that he would not have stolen anything from the miners, or from Minnie.

“Ma non vi avrei rubato!”

Andante
JOHNSON

The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef, key of D major (two sharps), and 4/4 time. It begins with a half note D4, followed by quarter notes E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, and C5. There is a whole rest for two measures, followed by a half note B4, quarter notes A4, G4, F#4, E4, and D4. The melody is simple and expressive, with a slight rise and fall.

Ma non vi avrei ruba - to! So - no Ramerrez: nacqui vagabondo:
But I wouldn't have robbed you! I'm Ramerrez. I was born a vagabond:

Johnson expresses his remorse, a man cursed from birth to be a robber and criminal. But he claims that after he met Minnie, he suddenly wanted to change his destiny: he yearned to redeem himself from his shame, abandon the life of an outlaw, and perhaps start a new life with her.

“E il labbro mio”

Largo e calmo
JOHNSON

The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef, key of B-flat major (two flats), and 4/4 time. It begins with a half note Bb4, followed by quarter notes C5, D5, Eb5, and F5. There is a whole rest for two measures, followed by a half note E5, quarter notes D5, C5, Bb4, and A4. The melody is slow and somber, with a slight rise and fall.

E il labbro mio mormorò un'ardente preghiera: Oh Dio! Ch'ella non sappia mai, non sappia mai la mia vergogna!
And my lips murmured an impassioned prayer: Oh God! May she never know my shame!

Minnie becomes deeply moved by Johnson's confession, sympathetically and compassionately asking God to forgive his unfortunate life of crime. But Minnie is jealous of Nina Micheltorena, and insists that Johnson leave. With resolution, but without weapons, Johnson hurriedly opens the door and leaves, ready to sacrifice his life and be killed.

Minnie bursts into tears. She hears two gunshots from outside and rushes to the door, opening it to find Johnson wounded on the ground. She helps the staggering Johnson into the cabin, but he insists that he must leave. Minnie persuades him to stay, admitting that she loves him; the man who kissed her for the first time cannot leave her now.

A strong knock is heard at the door; it is Sheriff Rance returning. Minnie decides to hide the protesting Johnson in her loft, the wounded man desperately trying to gather enough strength to climb the ladder.

Rance is certain that the bandit is hiding in Minnie's cabin. He enters the cabin, his gun poised and ready to fire, and carefully scrutinizes every corner of the room. Mockingly, Minnie challenges him to search the cabin. Minnie's determination is so convincing that Rance admits that perhaps he was mistaken.

Rance holsters his gun and moves boldly toward Minnie, lecherously trying to embrace and kiss her. Minnie runs from him as he chases her around the cabin. As Rance extends a menacing hand toward Minnie, cursing his rival and swearing that the bandit shall not possess her either, a drop of blood falls from the loft onto his outstretched hand. He stops in amazement, noticing that there is also blood on the floor. Minnie suggests that perhaps she scratched him, but more blood falls on Rance's hand. The truth quickly unfolds in Rance's mind. He looks toward the loft and shouts ferociously to Johnson, an explosion of hate and joy.

Minnie tries unsuccessfully to restrain him. Rance climbs on a chair, lowers the stairs, and stands before Johnson with his gun drawn. He offers Johnson his choices: death by hanging or by his gun. Impatiently, he orders Johnson to come down.

Johnson descends: pale, numb, and in agonizing pain. He finds a chair, places his head in his arms on the table, and then collapses in a faint.

Minnie is obsessed and determined to save Johnson. She challenges Rance to a game of poker: if Rance wins, he can have her and the wounded bandit, but if he loses, then Johnson is free and belongs to her.

Rance accepts, confident that Minnie will be his final victory. Minnie goes to the cupboard, pretending to be looking for a new deck of cards. She removes some cards and hides them in her stocking.

Their game of poker will be decided by the best two hands out of three. Minnie wins the first hand, and Rance the second; they are even. During the third hand, Minnie pretends that she is fainting and sick. Rance goes to the cupboard to fetch water for her. While he is there, Minnie replaces her cards with cards she had hidden in her stocking. She then rises triumphantly, announcing that she has three aces and a pair: a full house. Rance stares at Minnie's winning hand, and gruffly accepts defeat. He grabs his hat and coat and leaves.

Minnie throws the cards into the air and laughs convulsively. Finally, she bursts into tears, and then embraces the still unconscious Johnson, crying out: "He's mine!"

Act III: A clearing in the Californian forest.

It is early dawn in winter. A posse of miners, together with Sheriff Rance and Ashby's Wells Fargo agents have camped overnight in a forest clearing. Johnson/Ramerez recovered from his wounds, and once again, is being pursued.

Ashby, Billy Jackrabbit, and several miners are sleeping in a forest clearing. Rance is seated near a fire with Nick.

Rance broods because his rival, an outlaw and bandit, has earned Minnie's love. Nick attempts to console Rance, commending his gallantry with Minnie.

The sound of distant voices awakens the sleeping men. Ashby believes that it is a signal that Ramerrez has been caught. A group of shouting men bearing guns, knives, and clubs arrive to announce that the bandit is cornered, and his capture is imminent. Ashby warns that he must be taken alive, and leaves with some men to join the man-hunt.

Rance exults in his forthcoming revenge; while he agonized in tears, Minnie ridiculed his misery. But now his tears are transformed into triumphant laughter; it will be Minnie who weeps when she learns that the man she loved had been hanged to death.

Some miners return to inform Rance that Ashby and his Wells Fargo men are in hot pursuit of the bandit. Then Sonora arrives to announce that the bandit has been caught. The miners, hungry for revenge and blood, celebrate the forthcoming hanging.

Ashby arrives with the captured Johnson and places him in Rance's custody. The accusing mob disdainfully ridicules and berates Johnson. They accuse him of murder, but he defends himself, protesting that he is indeed a thief, not a murderer.

Billy Jackrabbit is ordered to prepare a noose for the lynching, but Nick secretly bribes him to delay as long as possible; Nick dashes off to find Minnie.

Rance allows Johnson to speak before his hanging. Johnson asks the miners for one mercy and one promise: that Minnie shall never know how he died.

“Ch’ella mi creda libero e lontano”

Andante molto lento
JOHNSON



Ch'ella mi cre - da libero e lonta-no, sopra una nuova via di redenzione!
I want her to believe that I'm free, far away, on a new path of redemption!

Johnson wants Minnie to believe that he is free and far away, redeemed in a new life. He invokes Minnie as the flower of his life, the woman who blessed him with her true love. Rance, infuriated by jealousy, approaches Johnson and viciously punches him in the face.

Rance selects the tree for the hanging. Sonora prepares the rope. Johnson stands on a stone under the tree stoically awaiting his fate. A miner throws the rope over a branch, the noose dangling before Johnson's face.

From the woods, the sound of a galloping horse and a prolonged cries of a woman are heard. The miners drop the rope, knowing that it is Minnie. Rance, consumed by his passion to destroy his rival, rushes about in rage while urging the miners to hang the man immediately. But they are inattentive, only concerned with the approaching Minnie.

Minnie dismounts and stands before Johnson, protecting him. The miners retreat. Johnson stands motionless, the noose still around his neck.

Minnie dares the miners to hang Johnson. Rance challenges her, asserting that they must fulfill the demands of justice: vigilante justice. The miners seem to be on the verge of being swayed by Rance. As two men try to seize Minnie, she withdraws from them and quickly raises her pistol, threatening to kill herself and Johnson. To protect Minnie, Sonora places himself between her and the miners.

Minnie stares fixedly at the miners, trembling with fury and rage. She accuses them of ingratitude, touching their consciences and emotions by reminding each one of them of the sacrifices she made for them; she cared for them when they were ill, she taught them to read and write, and she consoled them in their troubles, anxieties, and fears.

But most of all, she taught the miners the virtue of forgiveness and the meaning of redemption. Minnie declares that Johnson is no longer a bandit, but a man reformed from his horrible destiny, and he must be forgiven.

Minnie taught the miners the supreme truth about love, and now she has found that love, a love that destroyed the bandit in Johnson's soul and led him to the path of redemption; that profound love will bring them to new horizons.

Minnie's emotional plea to the miners becomes irresistible; no one protests. Sonora acknowledges that Minnie's words are like those from God. He unties Johnson.

“Addio mia dolce terra, addio, mia California!”

Andante lento con anima
MINNIE and JOHNSON



Ad - dio mia dolce ter - ra, addio, mia Cali-for - nia!
Goodbye my sweet land, goodbye my California!

With sadness, the miners bid farewell to their beloved Minnie. Minnie and Johnson offer their farewell to the miners and beautiful California, and then both ride off to share their new future together.

LIBRETTO

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Act I

A short prelude introduces two themes from the opera: the first, an expansive theme suggesting the vast California landscape; the second, a theme associated with “the kiss,” the moment when Minnie and Johnson avow their love.

Allegro ma non troppo**Allegro ma non troppo**

Inside the “Polka” saloon, a large room with a long bar on one side. Above the room there is a balcony. The entrance is an old western-style swinging door.

There are many windows. All around there are bottles and glasses.

Stuffed animal heads hang on the walls.

There are many chairs and tables, the latter covered with cards and poker chips.

Sheriff Jack Rance is seated at a table, smoking a cigar and playing solitaire.

Nearby, Larkens sits, his head buried in his hands.

Voci lontano:

Hello! Hello!

Alla “Polka”! Alle “Palme”!

Hello! Hello!

Voices in the distance:

Hello! Hello!

To the “Polka”! To the “Palms”!

Hello! Hello!

Un baritono interno:

“Là lontano, là lontan, quanto piangerà!”

A baritone inside:

“There, far away, how much she’ll weep!”

Nick, the barman, light candles, and the “Polka” saloon is suddenly aglow.

Groups of miners return from the mining camps and burst into the saloon.

Harry, Joe, Bello, e Minatori:
Hello, Nick! Hello!

Harry, Joe, Bello, and Miners:
Hello, Nick! Hello!

Nick:
Buona sera, ragazzi!

Nick:
Good evening, boys!

Allegro vivo con energia
JOE and BELLO



Bello, Joe, e Minatori:
"Dooda, dooda day..."

Bello, Joe, and Miners:
"Dooda, dooda day..."

Harry:
Sigari, Nick!

Harry:
Nick, cigars!

Joe:
E Whisky!

Joe:
And whiskey!

Nick:
Son qua, son qua. Sta bene.

Nick:
I'm here! O.K.

Bello:
Minnie?

Bello:
How's Minnie?

Nick:
Sta bene!

Nick:
She's well!

Sid:
Ragazzi, un faraone!
Chi ci sta?

Sid: (*sitting down at a table*)
Boys, a game of faro!
Who wants to play?

Harry:
Io ci sto!

Harry:
I'll play!

Happy:
Anch'io ci sto!

Happy:
I'll play also!

Joe:
Anch'io!

Joe:
Me too!

Bello:
Chi è che tiene il banco?

Bello:
Who'll be the banker?

Happy:
Sid.

Happy: (*indicating Sid*)
Sid.

Bello:
Brutto affare!

Bello:
It's an ugly business!

Sid:
Chi vuol mischiare, mischi!

Sid: *(throwing the cards down disdainfully)*
Whoever wants to shuffle can shuffle!

Harry shuffles the cards.

Joe:
Holla!

Hoe: *(slapping Sid on the shoulder.)*
Holla!

Sonora, Trin, and other miners enter the saloon.

Robusto e sostenuto



Sonora, Trin:
Hello!

Sonora, Trin:
Hello!

Sonora:
Da cena, Nick! Che cosa c'è?

Sonora:
Nick, what's there to eat for supper?

Nick:
C'è poco!
Ostriche sott'aceto.

Nick:
Very little!
Ostrich with vinegar.

Sonora:
Hello! Larkens!

Sonora: *(slapping Larkens on his back)*
Hello, Larkens!

Larkens:
Hello!

Larkens:
Hello!

Harry e Minatori:
Andiamo!

Harry and Miners: *(ready to play cards)*
Let's go!

Sid:
Fate giuoco!

Sid:
Ante up!

Joe:
Al giardino!

Joe:
To the queen!

Harry:
Alle piccole!

Harry:
To low cards!

Bello:
Alle grandi!

Minatori:
Nick, da bere!

Nick:
Vengo, vengo!

Sonora:
T'aspetto?

Trin:
Vengo!

Happy:
Gettoni!

Sid:
Un re. Un asso.

Bello:
Maledetto!

Bello:
To high cards!

Miners:
Nick, something to drink!

Nick:
I'm coming!

Sonora: *(to Trin)*
Should I wait for you?

Trin: *(to Sonora)*
I'm coming!

Happy:
Chips!

Sid:
A king. An ace.

Bello: *(angrily)*
Damn!

*As Nick passes by, Rance points to Larkens,
sitting crouched with his arms covering his head.*

Rance:
Larkens che ha? Sta male?

Nick:
Il suo solito male.
Nostalgia. Mal di terra natia!
Ripensa la sua vecchia Cornovaglia e alla
madre lontana che l'aspetta.

Rance:
Che terra maledetta, quest'occidente d'oro!

Nick:
Ha la malaria gialla.
L'oro avvelena il sangue a chi lo guarda.

Rance:
E Minnie, come tarda?

Sid:
Quanti dollari?

Rance:
What's wrong with him? Is he sick?

Nick:
The usual sickness.
Nostalgia! Homesickness!
He's always thinking about his mother and
Cornwall, and that they're waiting for him.

Rance: *(relighting his cigar)*
This golden west is a cursed land!

Nick:
He's got the yellow fever.
Gold poisons the blood of anyone who sees it.

Rance: *(looking at his pocket watch)*
How come Minnie is late?

Sid: *(showing Happy the ante)*
How much?

Happy:

Dieci.

Happy:

Ten.

Sid:

E novanta, fan cento.

Fante. Regina.

Sid:

And ninety makes a hundred.

A Jack. A Queen.

Joe:

Hola! Evviva!

Joe:

Hurrah!

Harry:

Sacramento!

Harry:

Damn it!

Trin:

Australiano d'inferno!

Trin:

Damned Australian!

Joe:

Il tre non vince mai!

Joe:

The three never wins!

Trin:

Tutto sul tre!

Trin:

Everything on the three!

Sid:

Tre. Sette.

Sid:

Three. Seven.

Trin:

Tutto perso. "Goodbye!"

Trin:

It's all lost. "Goodbye!"

Trin rises from the table and sits down at the table where Sonora is eating.

Nick:

Nella sala, ragazzi, vi si vuol ballar!

Nick:

Boys, you can dance in the hall!

Some of the men go into the dance hall.

Sonora:

A ballare? Son pazzi!

Io non ballo con uomini! Ti pare?

Sonora:

Dance? They're crazy!

I don't dance with men! Do you agree?

Trin:

È giusto!

Trin:

You're right!

Sonora:

Minnie infine s'è decisa per me?

Sonora: (*aside to Nick*)

Has Minnie finally made up her mind about me?

Nick:

Certo: ho capito che siete il preferito!

Nick: (*cunningly playing along with him*)

Certainly: I understand you're her favorite!

Sonora:
Sigari a tutti!

Sonora: (excitedly)
Cigars for everyone!

Tutti:
Hurrà! Hurrà!

All:
Hurrah!

Trin:
Nick, che t'ha detto?

Trin: (aside to Nick)
Nick, What did she tell you?

Nick:
Mah! Se ho ben capito voi siete il preferito!

Nick: (playing along with him)
Well, if I understand it, you're her favorite!

Trin:
Whisky per tutti!

Trin:
Whiskey for everyone!

Tutti:
Hurrà! Hurrà!

All:
Hurrah!

Andante tranquillo
JACK WALLACE



"Che faranno i vecchi miei là lontano, là lon - tano? che faran - no?"

Jake Wallace:
"Che faranno i vecchi miei là lontano,
là lontano?
Tristi e soli i vecchi miei piangeranno,
penseranno che non torni più!"

Jake Wallace: (from outside)
"What could my old folks be doing over
there, far away?
They're probably weeping, thinking that
I'll never come home again!"

Nick:
Ragazzi, v'annunzio Jake Wallace, il
cantastorie del campo!

Nick:
Boys, let me introduce Jake Wallace, the
minstrel of the camp!

*Jake Wallace's song affects the men emotionally, and they become pensive.
As Wallace enters the "Polka" the gambling ceases.*

Jake Wallace:
"La mia mamma, che farà s'io non torno?
Quanto piangerà!"

Jake Wallace:
"What will my mother do if I don't return?
She'll weep so much!"

**Trin, Harry, Joe, Sonora, Bello, Happy, e
Minatori:**
"Quanto piangerà!"

**Trin, Harry, Joe, Sonora, Bello, Happy,
and Miners:**
"She'll weep so much!"

Wallace ei Minatori:

“Al telaio tesserà lino e duolo pel lenzuolo
che la coprirà.”

Minatori:

Il mio cane dopo tanto mi raviserà?

Harry:

O mia casa al rivo accanto.

Minatori:

Là lontano, chi ti rivedrà?

**Trin, Harry, Joe, Sonora, Bello, Happy,
e altri:**

Jim, perchè piangi?

Jim! Che hai?

Larkens:

Non reggo più, ragazzi, mandatemi via!

Son malato, non so di che.

Son rovinato!

Son stanco di piccone e di miniera!

Voglio l'aratro, voglio la madre mia!

Wallace and the Miners:

“In her grief, she'll weave the shroud that
will cover her.”

Miners:

Will my dog recognize me after so long a time?

Harry:

Oh my home beside the river.

Miners:

There, far away, who will see you again?

**Trin, Harry, Joe, Sonora, Bello, Happy,
and others:**

Jim, why are you crying?

Jim, what's wrong?

Larkens:

Boys, I can't take it anymore, send me
away!

I'm sick, I don't know from what.

I'm broke!

I'm tired of picks and mining!

I want to plow, I want my mother!

The miners are moved by Larkens' outburst.

Sonora removes his hat and takes up a collection for him.

Sonora:

Per rimandarlo a casa.

Sonora:

To send him back home.

Minatori:

Prendi. To'.

Cinque dollari!

Altri cinque!.

A te Son. Anche questi.

Miners:

Take it. Here.

Five dollars!

Another five!

For you Sonora. This too.

Sonora empties the contents of his hat into Larkens' hands.

Larkens is overcome by emotion; he smiles and thanks his friends.

Sonora:

Coraggio!

Sonora:

Courage!

Larkens:

Grazie, grazie, ragazzi!

Larkens:

Thanks, boys!

The miners return to their seats and resume their gambling.

Sid:

Va tutto?

Minatori:

Al quattro. Al tre.

Raddoppio. Due.

Sid:

Giuoco fatto!

Sonora:

Raddoppio!

Sid:

Niente va più! Due. Tre.

Sid:

Ready?

Miners:

To the four. The three.

I double. Two.

Sid:

Bets are in!

Sonora:

I double!

Sid:

No more bets! Two. Three.

*Sonora catches Sid cheating. He viciously slams his fists on the table,
and then throws the cards in Sid's face.*

Bello:

Questa è da ladro!

Bello:

That's cheating!

Sonora:

Su le mani! Baro!

Sonora: *(revolver drawn, threatening Sid)*

Raise your hands! Cheater!

*Everyone is agitated. Joe grabs Sid by the shoulders.
Trin removes Sid's gun and hands it to Nick.*

Minatori:

Baro!

Miners:

Cheater!

Bello takes cards from Sid that he hid in his vest pocket and throws them on the table.

Bello:

Su le braccia! Guardate!

Bello:

Raise your arms! Look!

Harry e otre:

Sia legato! Al laccio!

Il ladro! Baro!

Harry and others:

Tie him up! Hang him!

The thief! Cheater!

Sid:

Per carità!

Sid:

For pity's sake!

*Sid is dragged to the center of the room and beaten.
Rance approaches them with cold indifference.*

Rance:

Che succede?

Rance:

What's happening?

Bello:

Ha barato!

Avrà quel; che gli spetta!

Bello:

He cheated!

He'll get what he deserves!

Tutti:

Al laccio! Sid! A morte!

All:

Hang him! Put Sid to death!

Rance places himself between Sid and the miners.

Rance:

Andiam, ragazzi; un po' di calma.

Su: vediam!

Rance:

Boys, come now; calm down.

Get up, let's see!

Tutti:

Al laccio, Sid! A morte!

All:

Hang him! Put him to death!

Rance:

Evvia! Cos'è la morte?

Un calcio dentro il buio e buona notte!

So un castigo più degno.

Datemi la sua carta.

Rance: *(stopping them)*

Be off! What is death?

A kick in the dark and good night!

I know a more appropriate punishment.

Give me his card.

Rance is given the two of spades, which he pins on Sid's chest, right over his heart.

Sopra il cuore, come si porta un fiore.

Non toccherà più carte.

È questo il segno.

Se s'azzardasse a toglierlo, impiccatelo!

Over his heart, like one wears a flower.

He won't touch cards any more.

This is the sign.

If he dares to take it off, hang him!

Rance grabs Sid brutally by his collar and throws him to the floor.

Domani al campo, tu spargi la voce.

Va!

Tomorrow, spread the word at the camp.

(kicking Sid) Get out!

Sid:

Ragazzi, siate buoni!

Sid: *(whimpering)*

Boys, be lenient!

Tutti:

Ladro! Fuori! Via di qua!

All:

Thief! Out! Get out of here!

Rance sits town at a table, and invites Sonora, Trin, and others to join him at poker.

Rance:

Un poker! Nick, gettoni!

Rance:

Some poker! Nick, chips!

As they start playing Ashby enters.

Ashby:

Sceriffo, hello!

Ashby: *(approaching Rance)*

Hello, Sheriff!

Rance:

Ragazzi, fate largo!
Salute a Mister Ashby, dell'Agenzia Wells
Fargo.

Ashby:

Nick, portami da bere!
Come sta la ragazza?

Minatori:

Grazie, bene.

Rance:

Che nuove del bandito?

Ashby:

Da tre mesi l'apposto!
Non è molto discosto!

Rance:

Boys, stand aside!
Say hello to Mr. Ashby of the Wells Fargo
Agency.

Ashby: (greeting all, shaking hands with Rance)

Nick, bring me something to drink!
How is the girl?

Miners:

She's well, thanks.

Rance:

Any news about the bandit?

Ashby:

I've been tracking him for three months!
He can't be very far away!

Everyone gathers around Ashby to hear the news.

Rance:

Dicon che ruba come un gran signore!
È spagnolo?

Ashby:

La banda di ladri a cui comanda è
messicana: gentaccia gagliarda, astuta,
pronta a tutto.
State in guardia.
Io mi sdraio.
Sono stanco, ho l'ossa rotte.
A tutti buona notte!

Rance:

They say he steals like a gallant gentleman!
Is he Spanish?

Ashby:

The band of thieves he's leading are
Mexican: they're rabble, but sturdy and
cunning, ready for anything.
Be on your guard.
I'm stretching out.
I'm dead tired and I have to go to bed.
Good night to all of you!

Nick brings in a jug of whiskey, lemon and glasses. He hands glasses to the men.

Trin:

Cosa c'è?

Trin: (to Nick)

What's this?

Nick:

Offre Minnie!

Nick:

Minnie's treat!

Minatori:

Viva Minnie! La nostra Minnie!

Miners: (as they drink)

Long live Minnie! Our Minnie!

Rance:

Mistress Rance, fra poco.

Rance:

Very soon to be Mrs. Rance.

Sonora:

No, faccia di cinese!
Minnie si prende giuoco di te!

Rance:

Ragazzo, è il whisky che lavora.
Ti compatisco.
Di Jack Rance finora nessuno, intendi,
nessuno s'è mai preso giuoco! Intendi?
E buon per te ch'io non curi le offese degli
ubriachi!

Sonora:

Vecchio biscazziere!
Minnie ti burla!

Rance:

Provalo!

Sonora:

Ti burla, muso giallo!

Rance:

Briaco! Ah, miserabile!

Sonora:

No, you yellow face!
Minnie's toying with you!

Rance: *(turning livid)*

Boy, the whiskey is making you babble
too much. I feel sorry for you.
Up to now, no one, no one toys with Jack
Rance! Understand!
It's a good thing that I don't listen to
insults from drunkards!

Sonora: *(slamming the table)*

You're a dirty old gambler!
Minnie's making fun of you!

Rance: *(calmly advancing toward Sonora)*

Prove it!

Sonora:

She's making fun of you, yellow face!

Rance:

Drunkard! Ah, you wretch!

The two men draw their guns. Just as they are about to shoot,

Trin grabs Sonora's shoulders, and the gunshot is diverted.

Minnie appears at the door, rifle in hand. She approaches Sonora and takes his pistol.

The anger subsides as all greet Minnie.

Andante vibrato



Tutti:

Hello, Minnie!

All:

Hello, Minnie!

*Minnie returns Sonora's pistol, and then pushes him towards Rance,
forcing him to shake hands with the Sheriff. Rance complies coldly,
and then goes to a table and begins to play cards by himself.*

Minnie:

Che cos'è stato?
Sempre tu, Sonora?

Minnie: *(to Sonora)*

What happened?
Sonora, is it you again?

Trin:

Nulla, Minnie, sciocchezze.
Si scherzava!

Trin:

It's nothing, Minnie, just nonsense.
They were fooling around!

Minnie:

Voi manderete tutto alla malora!
Vergogna!
Non farò più scuola.

Sonora:

No, Minnie!
Sai, quando tu tardi ci s'annoia. E allora.

Minnie: (*angrily*)

You'll send everything to blazes!
What a shame!
I'm not going to run the school anymore.

Sonora:

No, Minnie!
You know that when you're late we get edgy.

Minnie shakes her head and smiles. Then she notices Bello in contemplation.

Minnie:

Bello, che fai?
Che guardi?

Minnie:

Bello, what are you doing?
What are you looking at?

Bello:

Nulla.

Bello: (*smiling and perplexed*)

Nothing.

Minatori:

Guardava te!

Miners:

He was looking at you!

Joe:

Minnie, li ho colti lungo il "Torrente Nero."
Al mio paese ce ne son tanti!

Joe: (*offering her flowers*)

Minnie, I've gathered them along the
"Black Torrent." There are so many in my
village!

Minnie:

Oh, grazie, Joe!

Minnie:

Oh Joe, thank you!

Sonora:

È passato pel campo oggi un merciaio di
San Francisco, aveva trine e nastri.
Questo è per voi.
Vedete, è color porpora come la vostra
bocca.

Sonora: (*giving Minnie a ribbon*)

A trader from San Francisco passed
through the camp today with laces and
ribbons. This is for you.
Look, it's the color of crimson, just like
your lips.

Harry:

E questo è azzurro, come il vostro sguardo!

Harry: (*giving her a silk handkerchief*)

And this is blue, like your eyes!

Minnie:

Grazie, grazie!

Minnie:

Thanks!

Ashby:

Gli omaggi di Wells Fargo!

Ashby: (*offers Minnie a drink*)

A tribute from Wells Fargo!

Minnie:

Hip! Hip!

Minnie: (*takes a sip*)

Hip! Hip!

Minnie offers Ashby cigars.

"Regalias," "Auroras," "Eurekas"?

"Regalias," "Auroras," "Eurekas"?

Ashby:

Se li scegliete voi, la qualità non conta nulla.
Ognuno avrà per me il profumo della man che li tocca!

Nick:

Vi prego, andate in giro: ogni vostro sospiro è una consumazione!

Minnie:

Mala lingua!

Vi do la buona sera, sceriffò!

Rance:

Buona sera, Minnie.

Sonora:

Tira una riga sul mio conto!

Ashby: (*gallantly*)

If you choose any, the quality is unimportant.
Each cigar will have the perfume of the hand that touches them!

Nick: (*to Minnie*)

Please make the rounds: each sigh of yours brings satisfaction!

Minnie:

What a naughty remark!

(*to Rance*)

Sheriff, I bid you good evening!

Rance:

Good evening, Minnie.

Sonora: (*giving Minnie a small bag of gold*)

Cancel a row of charges on my bill!

*Minnie gives the gold to Nick, who cancels Sonora's bill.
He weighs the gold, and then places it in the barrel.*

Ashby:

Con queste bande in giro è una pazzia tener l'oro qua dentro.
All'Agenzia starebbe molto meglio.

Ashby: (*approaching Rance*)

With those outlaws on the loose, it's madness to keep the gold here.
It would be much safer at the Agency.

Minnie takes out a Bible. She goes to the center of the room and all encircle her, except Rance and Ashby, who talk quietly on the side.

Minnie:

Dove eravamo?
Ruth? Ezechiel? No, Ester?
No, ecco il segno.
Salmo cinquantunesimo di David.

Minnie:

Where were we?
Ruth? Ezekiel? No, Esther?
No, here's the place.
Psalm Fifty-One of David.

Harry, ricordi chi era David?

Harry, do you remember who David was?

Harry:

Era un re dei tempi antichi, un vero eroe che quando era ragazzo, armatosi d'una mascella d'asino, affrontò gran gigante e l'amazzò.

Harry: (*rising like a schoolboy*)

He was a king in ancient times, a real hero who armed himself with the jawbone of an ass, and confronted a big giant and killed him.

Minnie:

Che confusione! Siedi.
A posto, Joe!

Minnie: (*laughing*)

What confusion! Sit down.
Find your place Joe!

Ora leggiamo.

Versetto secondo: “Aspergimi d’issòpo e sarò mondo.”

Trin:

Cos’è quest’isòpo, Minnie?

Minnie:

È un’erba che fa in Oriente.

Joe:

E qui da noi non fa?

Minnie:

Sì, Joe, nel cuore ognun di noi ne serba un cespuglietto.

Joe:

Nel cuore?

Minnie:

Nel cuore.

“Lavami e sarò bianco come neve.

Poni dentro al mio petto un puro cuore, e rinnovella in me, uno spirito eletto.”

Ciò vuol dire, ragazzi, che non v’è al mondo peccatore cui non s’apra una via di redenzione.

Sappia ognuno di voi chiudere in sè una suprema verità d’amore.

Now let’s read.

The second verse: “Purify me with hyssop and I’ll be cleansed.”

Trin:

Minnie, what is hyssop?

Minnie:

An herb that grows in the Orient.

Joe:

Does it grow here?

Minnie:

Yes, Joe, everyone’s heart has a little bush of hyssop in it.

Joe:

In the heart?

Minnie:

In the heart.

“Purify me and I’ll be white as snow.

Place a pure heart in my breast, and renew a righteous spirit in me.”

Boys, that means that there’s not a sinner in the world for whom a path of redemption is not open.

May all of you know how to keep the supreme truth of love inside of you.

Minnie’s words stun the miners. She approaches Trin to ask him a question, but he avoids her. Then she approaches Sonora and pokes him to be sure that he has retained the message of her lesson.

Nick:

La posta!

Nick: *(running to the door)*

The mail!

Trin, Harry, Joe, Bello:

La posta!

Trin, Harry, Joe, Bello:

The mail!

Postiglione:

Hello, ragazzi! State attenti!

S’è visto sul sentiero un ceffo di meticcio.

Post boy: *(appearing at the door)*

Hello, boys! Be on your guard!

A half-breed has been seen on the trail.

The post boy gives Nick a packet of letters, which he distributes. He also gives Ashby a dispatch, and a newspaper to Harry. Ashby becomes incredulous as he reads the dispatch.

Ashby:

Postiglione!
Conosci certa Nina?
Nina Micheltorena?

Minnie:

È una finta spagnuola nativa di Cachuca,
una sirena che fa consumo di nero fumo
per farsi l'occhio languido.
Chiedetene ai ragazzi!

Ashby:

Sceriffo, questa sera ho Ramerrez al laccio.

Rance:

Come?

Ashby:

L'avventuriera mi dice che sa il covo del
bandito, e che stanotte a mezzanotte vada
alle "Palme."

Rance:

Quella Micheltorena è una canaglia.
Ashby, non vi fidate.

Ashby:

Vendette di donne innamorate.
Ad ogni modo, Rance, tengo l'invito.

Ashby:

Post boy!
Do you know a certain Nina?
Nina Micheltorena?

Minnie:

She's a native of Cachuca who pretends to
be Spanish. She's a seductress who puts
lots of black soot on her eyes to look sexy.
Ask the boys!

Ashby: (to Rance)

Sheriff, tonight I'll have Ramerrez with a
noose around his neck.

Rance:

How?

Ashby:

The daring woman has told me that she
knows the bandit's hideout, and tonight, at
midnight, I'm to meet her at the "Palms."

Rance:

That Micheltorena woman is a good-for-
nothing. Ashby, don't trust her.

Ashby: (winking)

It's the vengeance of women in love.
In any case, Rance, I'll keep the
appointment.

*Ashby and Rance leave. Some miners read their letters: some are so pleased with the news
and kiss their letters; others seem angered.*

Happy:

Perfino il pappagallo s'è avvilito.
Chiama "Happy" e poi dice "partito!"

Harry:

Incendi, guerre, terremoti, piene,
quante cose nel mondo!
Al mio paese, che faranno laggiù?
Staranno bene?

Bello:

Ketty sposa?
E chi sposa la mia Ketty?

Happy:

The parrot has also become depressed.
He calls out "Happy" and then says
"gone"!

Harry:

So many things in the world: fires, wars,
earthquakes, floods! What are they doing
down in my village? Are they all right?

Bello:

Is Ketty getting married?
And who's marrying my Ketty?

Senti!
L'orologia suo vicino.
Quel vecchio sordo!
Bah! Povera Ketty!

Joe:
Pur troppo, Joe, ci son notizie, notizie tristi.

Tutte:
Joe, che c'è?
Brutte nuove? Su, coraggio!

Joe:
E anche nonna se n'è andata!

Listen!
It's her neighbor, the watchmaker.
That old man is deaf!
Bah! Poor Ketty!

Joe: (reading)
But for Joe, there's sad news.

All:
Joe, what is it?
Bad news? Come on, be brave!

Joe: (expressing anger)
Grandma has passed away!

Joe dries his tears.

Whisky!

Nick:
C'è fuori uno straniero.

Minnie:
Chi è?

Nick:
Non l'ho mai visto.
Sembra di San Francisco.
M'ha chiesto whisky ed acqua.

Minnie:
Whisky ed acqua?
Che son questi pasticci?

Nick:
È quello che gli ho detto: All "Polka" si
beve il whisky schietto.

Minnie:
Ben, venga! Gli aggiusteremo i ricci.

Whiskey!

Nick:
There's a stranger outside.

Minnie:
Who is it?

Nick:
I've never seen him before.
He looks like he's from San Francisco.
He asked me for whiskey and water.

Minnie:
Whiskey and water?
What kind of nonsense is that?

Nick:
That's what I told him: at the "Polka" a
man drinks whiskey straight.

Minnie:
Well, let him come! We'll fix his curls.

As Nick goes out, Rance approaches Minnie and speaks to her in a trembling voice.

Rance:
Ti voglio bene, Minnie!

Minnie:
Non lo dite.

Rance:
Minnie, I love you!

Minnie: (smiling and indifferent)
Don't say that.

Rance:

Mille dollari, qui, se tu mi baci!

Minnie:

Rance, mi fate ridere. Su via, finitela!

Rance:

Tu non puoi star qui sola! Ti sposo.

Minnie:

E vostra moglie, che dirà?

Rance:

Se tu lo vuoi, ma più mi rivedrà!

Minnie:

Rance, basta! Basta!
M'offendete!

Rance:

Here's a thousand dollars if you kiss me!

Minnie:

Rance, you're making me laugh. Now stop it!

Rance:

You can't stay here alone! I'll marry you.

Minnie:

And what will your wife say?

Rance:

If it's your wish, she'll never see me again!

Minnie: (with pride)

Rance, enough!
You're offending me!

Minnie takes out her pistol and flashes it before Rance.

Vivo sola così, voi lo sapete, perchè così
mi piace, con questa compagnia sicura e
buona che mai non m'abbandona.
Rance, lasciatemi in pace!

I live alone, and you know that it's because
I like it that way; there's a safe and good
company of men who'll never abandon me.
Rance, leave me in peace!

*Minnie puts her pistol back in her blouse. Rance walks away in silence,
and then nervously starts playing at the faro table.*

Siete in collera, Rance?

Perchè? V'ho detto il mio pensiero
schietto.

Rance, are you angry?

Why? I've told you my honest thoughts.

Andante sostenuto

RANCE



Minnie, dalla mia casa son partito che è là dai monti, sopra un altro mare;

Rance:

Minnie, dalla mia casa con partito che è là
dai monti,
sopra un altro mare: ma non rimpianto,
Minnie, m'ha seguito,
non un rimpianto vi potea lasciare!

**Rance: (throwing down the cards
violently)**

Minnie, I left my house, which is beyond
the hills, and beyond the high seas: when I
left there was not one regret,
and I left no regrets behind!

Nessuno mai m'amò, nessuno ho amato,
nessuna cosa mai mi diè piacere!
Chiudo nel petto un cuor di biscazziere
amaro avvelenato,
che ride dell'amore e del destino:
mi son messo in cammino attratto sol dal
fascino del l'oro.
È questo il solo che non m'ha ingannato.
Or per un bacio tuo getto un tesoro!

Minnie:

L'amore è un'altra cosa.

Rance:

Poesia!

Minnie:

Laggiù nel Soledad, ero piccina,
avevo una stanzuccia affumicata nella
taverna sopra la cucina.
Ci vivevo con babbo e mamma mia.
Ah! Tutto ricordo: vedo le persone entrare,
uscire a sera.

Mamma faceva da cuoca e cantiniera,
babbo dava le carte a faraone.
Mamma era bella, aveva un bel piedino.
Qualche volta giocava anch'essa:
ed io che me ne stavo sotto al tavolino
aspettando cader qualche monetta,
la vedevo serrar furtiva il piede al babbo
mio.

No one ever loved me; I never loved
anyone, and nothing ever gave me pleasure!
A poisoned and bitter gambler dwells in
my heart, and it laughs at love and at
destiny.
My journey in life is only for the attraction
and fascination of gold. Gold is the only
thing that hasn't deceived me. But for one
kiss from you, I'd give up a fortune!

Minnie: (*dreamily*)

Love is another thing.

Rance:

Nonsense!

Minnie:

I was a little girl down there in Soledad,
I had a tiny smoky room in the tavern,
above the kitchen.
I lived there with my mom and dad.
Ah! I remember everything: I can see the
people coming and going in the evening.

Mamma was the cook and bartender,
and Daddy dealt the cards at faro.
Mamma was beautiful, with lovely feet.
Sometimes she also gambled:
and I would be under the little table
waiting for some coins to fall,
I saw her snuggle her feet to daddy's feet.

Con anima
MINNIE



S'amavan tanto! S'amavan tanto! Ah! Anch'io vorrei trovare uomo: e certo l'amerei.

S'amavan tanto!
Ah! Anch'io vorrei trovare un uomo e
certo l'amerei!

Rance:

Forse la perla è già trovata?

They loved each other so much!
Ah! I would also like to find a man that I
could truly love!

Rance: (*menacingly*)

Perhaps the pearl has already been found?

Just as Minnie is about to respond to Rance, Nick reappears, accompanied by a stranger (Dick Johnson.) Johnson carries a saddle and a leather jacket over his left shoulder. He places the saddle on a table.

Allegro vibrato



Johnson:
Che c'è per farmi i ricci?

Johnson: (forcefully)
Who's going to curl my hair?

Minnie is startled when she realizes that she met the stranger before.

Minnie:
Salute allo straniero!

Minnie:
Hello stranger!

Johnson:
Io son quello che chiesi whisky ed acqua.

Johnson: (also surprised at seeing Minnie)
I'm the one who asked for whiskey and water.

Minnie:
È vero?
Nick, il signor prende l'whisky come gli pare.

Minnie:
Is that so?
Nick, let the gentleman drink his whiskey as he pleases.

Nick and Rance exchange glances. Rance frowns as Nick gets a bottle of whiskey and searches for a bottle of water.

Minnie:
Sedete. Sarete stanco.

Minnie: (motioning Johnson to sit down)
Sit down. You must be tired.

Johnson:
La ragazza del campo?

Johnson:
Are you the girl I met at the camp?

Minnie:
Sì.

Minnie: (blushing)
Yes.

Rance:
Nessun straniero può entrare al campo.
Certo, voi sbagliaste sentiero.
Per caso andavate a trovare Nina Micheltorena?

Rance: (aggressively approaching Johnson)
No stranger is allowed to enter the camp.
You must have surely missed the trail.
Any chance you were en route to meet Nina Micheltorena?

Minnie:
Rance!

Minnie:
Rance!

Johnson:

Fermai il cavallo qualche momento appena, per riposarmi, e al caso, tentare un baccarat.

Rance:

Giocare? E il vostro nome?

Minnie:

Forse che qui si sa il nome della gente?

Johnson:

Johnson.

Rance:

Johnson. E poi?

Johnson:

Vengo da Sacramento.

Minnie:

Benvenuto fra noi, Johnson di Sacramento!

Johnson: *(with indifference)*

I stopped here to rest my horse for a few minutes, and maybe try my chances at baccarat.

Rance: *(roughly)*

To gamble? What's your name?

Minnie: *(laughing)*

Since when do we ask people's names here?

Johnson: *(staring at Rance)*

Johnson.

Rance: *(with hostility)*

Johnson. And what else?

Johnson:

I come from Sacramento.

Minnie: *(very pleasantly)*

Welcome among us, Johnson from Sacramento!

Rance goes off, shaking and fuming with anger.

Johnson:

Grazie. Vi ricordate di me?

Minnie:

Sì, se anche voi mi ricordate.

Johnson:

E come non potrei?

Fu pel sentier che mena a Monterey.

Minnie:

Fu nel tornare m'offriste un ramo di gelsomino.

Johnson:

E poi vi dissi: Andiamo a coglier le more.

Minnie:

Ma io non venni.

Johnson:

È vero.

Johnson:

Thanks. Do you remember me?

Minnie: *(smiling)*

Yes, if you also remember me.

Johnson:

And how could I not?

It was on the road that leads to Monterey.

Minnie:

It was while I was returning that you offered me a sprig of jasmine.

Johnson:

And then I said let's go and pick some berries.

Minnie:

But I didn't come.

Johnson:

That's right.

Minnie:
Ricordate, signore?

Johnson:
Come adesso.

Minnie:
Io ripresi il cammino.
Voi dicevate. Non ricordo più.

Johnson:
Sì, che lo ricordate: Dissi che da quell'ora...

Minnie:
...Non m'avreste scordato.

Johnson:
Nè v'ho scorado mai, mai, mai!

Minnie:
Quanto tempo sperai di rivedervi.
E non vi vidi più!

Minnie:
Sir, do you remember?

Johnson:
As if it was right now.

Minnie:
I went on my way.
You were saying. I don't remember any more.

Johnson: (*coming closer to Minnie*)
Yes, remember I said that from that moment...

Minnie:
...You would never forget me.

Johnson:
Nor have I ever forgotten you, never!

Minnie:
I waited a long time to see you again.
And I never saw you again!

*As Minnie and Johnson look fixedly each other's eyes, Rance approaches them.
In a fit of jealousy, he knocks Johnson's glass down.*

Rance:
Mister Johnson, voi m'avete seccato!
Sono Rance, sceriffo.
Non mi lascio burlare.
Che venite a far qui?

Rance:
Mister Johnson, you've bothered me!
I am Rance, the Sheriff.
I don't let myself be fooled.
What did you come here to do?

Johnson takes a step back, and stares at Rance. He is about to draw his gun but Minnie intervenes to stop him. Johnson smiles, shrugs his shoulders, and goes to the counter, paying no attention to the seething Rance.

Ragazzi!
Uno straniero ricusa confessare perchè si trova al campo!

Boys!
A stranger refuses to tell us why he's in the camp!

Minatori:
Chi è? Lo faremo cantar!

Miners:
Who is he? We'll make him talk!

Minnie:
Io lo conosco! Innanzi al campo intero sto garante per Johnson!

Minnie: (*commandingly*)
I know him! I vouch for Johnson in front of the entire camp!

Minnie's intervention calms the miners. They approach Johnson and greet him cordially.

Sonora:

Buona sera, Mister Johnson!

Sonora:

Good evening, Mister Johnson!

Johnson:

Ragazzi, buona sera!

Johnson: (*effusively shaking hands*).

Boys, good evening!

Trin:

N'ho piacere per lui!

Trin: (*indicating a discouraged Rance*)

I'm happy for him!

Questo cialtrone smetterà fare da padrone!

That rogue will now stop being so bossy!

Harry:

Mister Johnson, un valzer?

Harry: (*indicating the dance floor*)

Mister Johnson, a waltz?

Johnson:

Acceto!

Johnson:

I accept!

But instead of dancing with Harry, Johnson offers his arm to Minnie.

Permetete?

Will you allow me?

*All look at Minnie, as to urge her to dance with Johnson. Rance frowns.***Minnie:**

Io? Scusatemi: voi non lo crederete, non ho mai ballato in vita mia!

Minnie:

Me? Forgive me. You won't believe it, but I've never danced in my life!

Johnson:

Andiamo.

Johnson:

Let's go.

Tutti:

Avanti, Minnie!

All:

Go on, Minnie!

Minnie:

Andiamo pure!

Minnie: (*gracefully taking Johnson's arm*)

Then let's go!

Tutti:

Musica!

All: (*except Rance*)

Music!

Hip! Hurrah!

Hip! Hurrah!

La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la...

La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la...

*Minnie and Johnson dance. The onlooking miners accompany the waltz tune, and beat the time with their hands.***Tempo di Valzer Moderato**

Nick:
Dov'è Minnie?

Nick: (*approaching Rance*)
Where's Minnie?

Rance:
È là dentro che balla con quel can di pelo
fino giunto da Sacramento!

Rance:
She's inside dancing with that dandy who
just arrived from Sacramento!

Nick shrugs his shoulders. Rance angrily kicks Johnson's saddle off the table.

Uomini fuori:
Al laccio! Al Laccio! A morte!

Men outside:
Hang him with the noose! Death to him!

Ashby arrives with Castro, a bandit he has just apprehended.

Ashby:
Al laccio!

Ashby: (*pushing Castro to the floor*)
Hang him!

Castro:
(La sella del padrone! L'hanno preso!)

Castro: (*after seeing Johnson's saddle*)
(The boss's saddle! They've caught him!)

Ashby:
Da bere! Son morto!

Ashby: (*to Nick*)
Something to drink! I'm dead tired!

Rance:
Figlio di cane, mostraci la tua lurida
faccia! Tu sei con Ramerrez?

Rance: (*grabbing Castro's hair*)
You dog, show us your filthy face.
Are you one of Ramerrez's men?

Castro:
Son fuggito. L'odiavo.
Se volete vi porto sulla sua traccia!

Castro:
I ran away. I hated him.
If you want, I'll put you on his trail!

Sonora:
Questo sudi cio ladro c'inganna!

Sonora:
This dirty thief is lying to us!

Castro:
No, non v'inganno!

Castro:
No, I'm not lying!

Rance:
Conosci il nascondiglio?

Rance:
Do you know his hiding place?

Castro:
È a poco più d'un miglio: alls Madrona
Canyada.
Vi mostrerò la strada.
In nome di mia madre, Maria Saltaja,
giuro che non v'inganno!
Se volete, vi porto.
Gli pianterò nel dorso la mia navaja!

Castro:
It's in the Madrona Canyada, just a little
more than a mile from here.
I'll show you the way.
In the name of my mother, Maria Saltaja,
I swear that I'm not lying to you!
If you want, I'll take you there.
I'll plant my dagger in his back!

Rance:
Si va?

Rance: *(to the others)*
Shall we go?

Ashby:
S'è annuvolato. Avremo la tormenta.

Ashby: *(studying the weather outside)*
It's clouded up. We're going to have a storm!

Rance:
Legatelo!

Rance: *(indicating Castro)*
Tie him up!

Some of the miners tie Castro to a chair.

Sonora:
È un buon colpo.

Sonora:
It's a stroke of luck!

Trin:
Si tenta!

Trin:
We'll try it!

Trin e Sonora:
A cavallo, a cavallo!

Trin and Sonora:
Let's get our horses!

Castro:
(Non è preso! È nel ballo!)

Castro: *(happily, as he notices Johnson)*
(He's not caught! He's dancing!)

Minatori:
Dove si va?

Miners:
Where do we go?

Rance:
S'insegue Ramerrez!

Rance:
We'll track Ramerrez!

Nick and Sonora push the barrel with the gold to the center of the room.

Nick:
E l'oro?

Nick:
And the gold?

Sonora:
Gl'occhi di Minnie bastano a guardare il tesoro!

Sonora:
Minnie's eyes are enough to guard the treasure!

Rance and the miners leave.

Castro:
Aguardiente!

Castro: *(shouting to Nick)*
Fire water!

Nick goes behind the bar to get a drink for Castro. Johnson emerges from the dance hall, controlling himself after he sees Castro. He picks up his saddle from the floor and places it on the faro table, all the while pretending that he is adjusting the stirrups.

He turns his back to Castro, who whispers to him.

Mi son lasciato prendere per sviarli.
Mi seguono nel bosco i nostri.
Presto udrete un fischio.
Se c'è il colpo, col fischio rispondete!

I let myself be caught to mislead them.
Our men followed me and are in the forest.
Soon you'll hear a whistle.
If the robbery is "on" answer with your whistle!

Nick:
Quest'uomo sa la traccia di Ramerrez.

Nick: (*addressing Johnson*)
This man knows the trail to Ramerrez.

Rance:
Ora, via!

Rance: (*indicating Castro*)
Now, let's go!

The men drag Castro with them. After sneering at Johnson, Rance follows them.

Nick:
Buona fortuna!

Nick: (*standing at the door*)
Good luck!

Nick prepares to close the "Polka" saloon. He closes the window shutters and extinguishes lights. Johnson goes to the window, looks out, and when he turns he sees the barrel. He makes a gesture of disdain, and then goes to the faro table to retrieve his saddle. Minnie appears at the door of the dance hall.

Minnie:
Mister Johnson, siete rimasto indietro a farmi compagnia per custodir la casa?

Minnie:
Mister Johnson, have you remained behind to join me in guarding the saloon?

Johnson:
Se volete.
Strana cosa! Ritrovarvi qui dove ognuno può entrare per bere e per rubare.

Johnson: (*slightly startled*)
If you wish.
It's so strange, to find you here where anyone can come in to drink or to steal.

Minnie:
Vi do la mia parola che saprei tener fronte a chiunque.

Minnie:
I promise you that I know how to stand up to anyone.

Johnson:
Anche a chi non volesse rubare più ch'un bacio?

Johnson: (*smiling*)
Even one who only wants to steal just a kiss from you?

Minnie:
Anche! Questo m'è accaduto più volte ma il primo bacio debbo darlo ancora.

Minnie: (*laughing*)
That too! That's happened to me several times but I still haven't given my first kiss.

Johnson:
Davvero?
E abitate qui alla "Polka"?

Johnson:
Really?
Do you live here at the "Polka"?

Minnie:
Abito una capanna a mezzo monte.

Minnie:
I live in a cabin half way up the hill.

Johnson:
Meritate di meglio.

Johnson:
You deserve better.

Minnie:

Mi contento.
A me basta; credete.
Ci vivo sola senza timore.

Minnie:

I'm content.
Believe me, it's sufficient for me.
I live there alone and without fear.

Minnie places some coins in an empty cigar box, and then approaches the barrel.

Io sento che anche in voi mi fiderei,
benchè non so chi siate.

I also feel that I can trust you, even though
I don't know who you are.

Johnson:

Non so ben neppur io quel che sono.
Amai la vita, e l'amo, e ancor bella
m'appar!

Johnson:

I hardly even know myself.
I loved life, and I love life, and it still
seems beautiful to me!

Certo anche voi l'amate, ma non avete
tanto vissuto per guardar fino in fondo alle
cose del mondo.

Surely you love life also, but you haven't
lived long enough to absorb the entire
essence of the world.

Minnie:

Non so, non so.
Io non son che una povera fanciulla oscura
e buona a nulla.
Mi dite delle cose tanto belle che forse non
intendo.
Non so che sia, ma sento nel cuore uno
scontento d'esser così piccina
e un desiderio d'innalzarmi a voi su,
come le stelle, per esservi vicina, per
potervi parlare.

Minnie: (somewhat confused)

I don't know.
I am merely a poor girl of humble birth
with very little to offer.
You say such beautiful things to me but
perhaps I don't understand them all.
I don't know what it is, but in my heart I
feel disappointed that I'm so
inconsequential. I'd like to elevate myself
to your level, like the stars, to be close to
you and be able to talk to you.

Andante mosso moderatamente
JOHNSON

Quel - lo che ta - ce - te me l'ha det - to cor,
My heart tells me what you are not saying,

quan - do il brac - cio v'of - fer-si alla danza con me:
when I offered you my arm and we danced together:

Johnson:

Quello che tacete me l'ha detto il cor,
quando il braccio v'offersi alla danza con
me:
control il mio petto vi sentii tremar;
e provai una gioia strana,
una nuova pace che dir non so!

Johnson:

What you don't say, my heart tells me.
When I offered you my arm, and then we
danced together,
I felt you trembling against my chest;
and I felt a strange joy,
a new kind of peace that I can't describe!

Minnie:

Come voi, leggermi in cor non so: ma ho l'anima piena di tanta allegrezza, di tanta pau..

Minnie interrupts herself after noticing that Nick has come in from outside, looking fearful.

Che cosa c'è?

Nick:

S'è visto qui attorno un altro ceffo messicano.

Minnie:

Dove, Nick?

Johnson:

Non andate!

Minnie:

I can't read my heart like you do: but I have a soul full of so much happiness, and so much fea...

What is it?

Nick: (*getting a gun from behind the counter*)

They've seen another ugly Mexican around here.

Minnie: (*following Nick*)

Nick, where?

Johnson: (*trying to restrain Minnie*)

Don't go!

A whistle is heard from outside.

(Il segnale!)

(The signal!)

Minnie:

Ascoltate! Che sarà questo fischio?

Minnie: (*scared, seeking Johnson's protection*)

Listen! What can that whistle be about?

Minnie points to the barrel.

In quel barile, Johnson, c'è un tesoro.
Ci ripongono l'oro i ragazzi.

Johnson, there's a fortune in that barrel.
The boys put their gold in there.

Johnson:

E vi lascian così?

Johnson:

And they leave you alone like this?

Minnie:

Ogni notte rimangon qui a vegliarlo a turno un po' per uno.
Stanotte son partiti sulle peste di quel dannato!

Minnie:

Every night, one of them takes turns to watch it.
Tonight they left to follow the track of that damned bandit!

Oh, se qualcuno vuol quell'oro,
pria di toccarlo dovrà uccidermi qui!
Povera gente!
Quanti son di loro che han lasciato lontano una famiglia, una sposa, dei bimbi,
e son venuti a morir come cani in mezzo alla fanghiglia per mandare un po' d'oro ai cari vecchi, e ai bimbi lontani!
Ecco, Johnson, perchè chi vuol quest'oro,
pria passerà su me!

If someone wants that gold, he'll have to kill me before he can touch it!
Those poor people!
So many of them have left family, a betrothed, and children, far away from here.
They've come here to work like dogs in the middle of this mire so they can send a bit of gold to their parents and children far away!
Here Johnson, whoever wants this gold will first have to pass over my dead body!

*Minnie goes behind the counter and gets two guns, which she places on top of the barrel.
Johnson stretches out his hand to her, which she clasps forcefully.*

Johnson:

Oh, non temete, nessuno ardirà!
Come mi piace sentirvi parlare così!
E me ne debbo andare.
Avrei voluto salire a darvi l'ultimo saluto
nella vostra capana.

Johnson:

Oh, don't be afraid, no one will dare!
How I like to hear you talk like that!
And now I must leave.
I would have liked to go up to your cabin
to at least say goodbye

Johnson retrieves his jacket and hat.

Minnie:

Dovete proprio andare?
Che peccato!
I ragazzi saranno qui fra poco.
Quando saran tornati, io me ne andrò.
Se volete venir a salutare seguireremo la
conversazione standoci accanto al fuoco.

Minnie: (*sadly*)

Must you really leave?
What a shame!
The boys will be returning shortly.
When they return, I'll be able to leave here.
If you want to come and say goodbye to
me, the two of us can continue the
conversation next to the fire.

Johnson:

Grazie, Minnie.
Verrò!

Johnson: (*hesitant, then decisive*)

Thanks, Minnie.
I'll come!

Minnie:

Non v'aspettate molto!
Non ho che trenta dollari soli
d'educazione.
Se studiavo di più, che avrei potuto essere?
Ci pensate?

Minnie:

Don't expect too much!
I only have thirty dollars worth of
education.
What could I have become if I studied
more? What do you think?

Johnson:

Ciò che avremmo potuto essere!
Io lo comprendo ora che vi guardo,
Minnie!

Johnson:

That which we have we can become!
Minnie, I understand, now that I look at
you!

Minnie:

Davvero? Ma che vale!

Minnie: (*drying a tear*)

Is that the truth? But what's the use!

Minnie sobs, hiding her face in her hands.

Oscura e buona a nulla.

I'm of humble birth and good for nothing.

Johnson:

No, Minnie, non piangete.
Voi non vi conoscete.
Siete una creatura d'anima buona e pure e
avete un viso d'angelo!

Johnson: (*tenderly*)

No, Minnie, don't cry.
You don't know yourself.
You are a person with a good and pure
soul, and you have the face of an angel!

Johnson exits. Nick enters and puts out the lights. It is unusually silent in the "Polka" saloon. Minnie, as if half dazed, stands alone in the light of the one lamp that is still lit, as if lost in an intoxicating memory.

Minnie:

Ha detto.

Come ha detto?

Un viso d'angelo!

Minnie:

He said.

What did he say?

A face of an angel!

Minnie covers her face with her hands, and then vents her feelings of happiness with a deep, prolonged sigh.

END OF ACT I

Act II

A cabin with a single room and a loft above. At the back, a door leads to a short landing. There are two windows with curtains, a bed covered with a quilt, and at the foot of the bed a small table. There is a hand basin and jug, a bureau with several woman's accessories, a wardrobe on which a dress hangs, a hat and shawl on a hook, and pots and pans hang on a bracket. On the mantelpiece of the fireplace there is an old clock, an oil lamp with a globe, a bottle of whiskey, and a glass.

In front of the mantelpiece, a bearskin. To one side, there is a small table set for two.

*One hour has elapsed since Johnson parted from Minnie at the "Polka" saloon.
The wind outside is howling, and the window panes are covered with frost.*

The young Wowkle, an Indian squaw, squats on the floor near the fire, her papoose on her back. She sings a lullaby to her baby in a soft, monotonous melody.

Wowkle:

"Il mio bimbo è grande e piccino,
sta dentro la cuna, è grande e tocca la luna,
col suo ditino.
Hao, wari! Hao, Wari!"

Billy:

Ugh.

Wowkle:

Ugh.

Wowkle:

"My baby inside the crib is big and small,
he's big and touches the moon with his little
finger.
Hao, wari!"

Billy: *(enters and greets Wowkle)*

Ugh.

Wowkle:

Ugh.

Billy sees cookies and milk on the table and is about to taste them.

Crema. Biscotti. Padrona.
Non toccare.

Billy:

Tua padrona mandare.
Dice: Billy sposare.

Wowkle:

Wowkle non sapere.

Billy:

Cosa dare tuo padre per nozze?

Wowkle:

Non sapere.

Billy:

Billy dare quattro dollari tuo padre; e una
coperta.

Cream. Cookies. The missus.
Don't touch.

Billy: *(sits down next to Wowkle)*

Your musses order me.
She say: Billy must marry.

Wowkle:

Wowkle not know.

Billy:

What do I give your father to marry you?

Wowkle:

Not know.

Billy:

Billy will give your father four dollars and a
blanket.

Wowkle:

Wowkle dire: meglio tenere coperta noi per bimbo.

Billy:

Nostro bimbo!

Wowkle:

Wowkle says: better we keep the blanket for the baby.

Billy: (boasting)

Our baby!

Billy lights a pipe and passes it to Wowkle. She takes a puff and then returns it to him.

Domani chiesa cantare.

I sing in church tomorrow.

Wowkle e Billy:

“Come fil d’erba è il giorno che all’uomo diè il Signor,
scende l’inverno al piano,
l’uomo intristisce e muor.”

Wowkle and Billy:

“The day which the Lord gave unto man is like a blade of grass,
once winter descends onto the plains, man becomes sad and dies.”

Billy:

Dopo sposare: avere perle e whisky!

Billy:

After marrying we get beads and whiskey!

Wowkle:

Ecco padrona!

Wowkle:

Here’s the missus!

Minnie appears at the door with a lantern. Wowkle and Billy draw back as if confused. Minnie has difficulty concealing her excitement. She looks around the room as if trying to see what impression it will make on Johnson when he arrives. She hangs the lantern on a nail. Wowkle turns up the lamp on the table.

Minnie:

Billy, è fissato?

Minnie:

Billy, has the marriage date been set?

Billy:

Domani.

Billy:

Tomorrow.

Minnie:

Sta bene. Va via!

Minnie:

All right. Go away!

Stanotte, Wowkle, cena per due.

(to Wowkle)

Tonight, Wowkle, dinner for two.

Wowkle:

Altro venire? Ugh!
Mai prima d’ora.

Wowkle:

Another come? Ugh!
Never before now.

Minnie:

Zitta! Pulisci!
Che ora è?
Sarà qui fra poco.

Minnie:

Quiet! Clean up!
What time is it?
He’ll be here soon.

Minnie removes her boots and throws them to Wowkle, who then places them in a closet.

Piglia!
Dove hai messo le mie rose rosse?

Catch!
Where have you put my red roses?

Wowkle points to the chest.

Wowkle:
Ugh.

Wowkle:
Ugh!

*Wowkle removes her papoose, places it near the fire, and starts to prepare dinner.
Minnie places her gun in a drawer. She looks into a mirror and places some roses in her hair.*

Minnie:
Il bimbo come sta?
Billy davvero t'ha detto?

Minnie:
How's the baby?
Has Billy really said he'll marry you?

Wowkle:
Noi sposare.

Wowkle:
We marry.

Minnie:
To', pel bimbo!

Minnie: *(throwing a ribbon to Wowkle)*
There, for the baby!

Wowkle:
Ugh! Ugh!

Wowkle:
Ugh! Ugh!

Minnie:
Vorrei mettermi queste.
Le scarpette di Monterey.
Purchè mi riesca d'infilarle!
Ahi! Son strette!

Minnie:
I'd like to wear these slippers from
Monterey,
provided they'll fit me!
Ouch! They're tight!

Guardami: credi che gli piaceranno?
Voglio vestirmi tutta come in giorno di festa,
da capa a piedi.

Look at me: Do you think he'll like them?
I want to dress from head to foot like it's a
holiday.

Minnie throws a shawl over her shoulders and looks into the mirror.

Non son poi tanto brutta.

I'm not so ugly after all.

She pours cologne on her handkerchief.

Anche il profumo. Vedi?

Even the perfume. See?

She puts on her gloves.

E i giunti.
È più d'un anno che non li metto!
Non sarò poi troppo elegante?

And these gloves.
It's been over a year since I've worn them!
Does it seem too dressy?

Johnson:
Hello! Hello!

Johnson: (*knocking on the door*)
Hello! Hello!

Minnie:
Wowkle, è già qui!

Minnie: (*startled*)
Wowkle, he's already here!

Minnie notices stockings hanging on a clothes-line and angrily motions to Wowkle to remove them. Minnie looks at herself again in the mirror, hastily places a rose in her hair, and throws a shawl over her shoulders. She stands near the bed, seemingly embarrassed.

Johnson:
Hello!

Johnson: (*at the door, with a lantern*)
Hello!

Minnie:
Buona sera!

Minnie: (*shyly*)
Good evening!

Johnson:
Uscivate!

Johnson:
Were you going out?

Minnie:
Sì. No. Non so. Entrate.

Minnie: (*extremely confused*)
Yes. No. I don't know. Come in.

Johnson:
Come siete graziosa!

Johnson:
How pretty you look!

Johnson is about to kiss Minnie, but she turns away. Then he notices Wowkle.

Perdonate. Non avevo osservato.

Forgive me. I hadn't noticed.

Minnie:
Basta così, signore: non aggiungete scuse.

Minnie: (*as if offended*)
That's quite enough, sir. No more excuses.

Johnson:
Mi siete apparsa così bella.

Johnson:
You seem so lovely to me.

Minnie:
È un andare un po' troppo per le corte.

Minnie: (*still resentful*)
You're getting to the point too quickly.

Johnson:
Vi prego scusare.

Johnson: (*coming closer*)
I beg you to forgive me.

Minnie:
Siete pentito?

Minnie: (*seriously*)
Are you sorry?

Johnson:
No!

Johnson: (*jokingly*)
No!

Minnie lowers her head, and then looks up at Johnson. Their glances meet and she blushes. Wowkle puts out Johnson's lantern and then goes to snuggle up next o the fire.

Rimango?
Grazie.

Amici?
Che pensate?

Minnie:
Un pensiero.
Questa notte alla “Polka” non veniste per me.
Che vi condusse, allora?
Forse è vero che smarriste il sentiero della Micheltorena?
Wowkle il caffè!

Johnson:
Che graziosa stanzetta!

Minnie:
Vi piace?

Johnson:
È tutta piena di voi.
Che cosa strana; la vostra vita, su questa montagna solitaria, lontana dal mondo!

Minnie:
Oh, se sapeste come il vivere è allegro!
Ho un piccolo polledro che mi porta a galoppo laggiù per la campagna;
per prati di giunchiglie, di garofani ardenti,
per riviere profonde cui profuman le sponde
gelsomini e vainiglie!

Poi ritorno ai miei pini ai monti della Sierra
così al cielo vicini che Iddio passando pare la
sua mano v’inchini,
lontani dalla terra così, che vien la voglia di
battere alla soglia del ciel per entrar!

Johnson:
E quando infuriano le tempeste?

Minnie:
Allor sono occupata. È aperta l’accademia.

Johnson:
L’accademia?

Do I stay? (*Minnie nods “yes.”*)
Thanks.

Johnson takes Minnie’s hand.
Friends?
What are you thinking about?

Minnie:
Just a thought.
This evening, you didn’t come to the
“Polka” to see me.
Then what brought you there?
Perhaps it’s true: that you took the wrong
path en route to that Micheltorena woman?
Wowkle, the coffee!

Johnson: (*as he looks around*)
What a pretty little room!

Minnie:
Do you like it?

Johnson:
It’s full of your charm.
What a strange and lonely life you lead living on
this lonely mountain, far away from the world!

Minnie:
Oh, if you knew how happy my life is!
I have a little colt that takes me down there
at a gallop, down through the fields of
daffodils, of red carnations, and through
deep shores whose banks are scented with
jasmine and vanilla!

Then I return to my pines and the hills of the
Sierra that are so close to Heaven that God can
almost touch them with His hand as He passes
by, and it’s so far away from the earth that I can
almost knock at Heaven’s threshold to enter!

Johnson:
And what happens when the storms rage?

Minnie:
Then I’m busy because school is open.

Johnson:
School?

Minnie:

È la scuola dei minatori.

Johnson:

E la maestra?

Minnie:

Io stessa.

Del biscotto alla crema?

Johnson:

Grazie. Vi piace leggere?

Minnie:

Molto.

Johnson:

Vi manderò dei libri.

Minnie:

Oh, grazie, grazie!

Delle storie d'amore?

Johnson:

Se volete. Vi piacciono?

Minnie:

Sì! Tanto!

Per me l'amore è una cosa infinita!

Non potrò mai capire come si possa,
amando una persona desiderarla per un'ora
sola.

Johnson:

Credo che abbiate torto.

Vi sono delle donne che si vorrebbero nella
nostra vita per quell'ora soltanto, poi morire!

Minnie:

Davvero?

Quante volte siete morto?

Uno dei nostriavana?

La candela!

Minnie: *(laughing)*

It's the school for the miners.

Johnson:

And the teacher?

Minnie:

I myself.

Minnie offers Johnson sweets.

Some biscuit with cream?

Johnson:

Thanks. Do you like to read?

Minnie:

Very much.

Johnson:

I'll send you some books.

Minnie:

Oh, thanks!

Some love stories?

Johnson:

If you wish. Do you like them?

Minnie:

Yes! So much!

For me love is an eternal thing!

I won't ever be able to understand how
someone can love a person and desire her
for only one hour.

Johnson:

I think you're wrong.

There are some women whom we would
desire for only an hour, but then want to die!

Minnie: *(playfully)*

Really?

How many times have you died?

Minnie offers Johnson a cigar.

One of our Havanas?

Calling to Wowkle.

A light!

Wowkle brings a candle to light Johnson's cigar. Then Johnson tries to embrace Minnie.

Ah, le mie rose! Me le sciuperete!

Ah, my roses! You'll squash them!

Johnson:

Perchè non le togliete?

Un bacio, un bacio, un bacio solo!

Johnson:

Why don't you remove them?

A kiss, just one kiss!

Minnie:

Mister Johnson, si chiede spesso la man per avere il braccio!

Minnie:

Mister Johnson, go slowly. Before one asks for an arm, ask for a hand!

Johnson:

Il labbro nega quando il cuor concede!

Johnson:

The lips deny when the heart concedes!

Minnie:

Wowkle, tu a casa!

Minnie:

Wowkle, go home!

(to Johnson)

Voi potete restar un'ora, due, o più.

You can stay one hour, two, or more.

Wowkle:

Ugh! Neve!

Wowkle:

Ugh! Snow!

Minnie:

Va! Riposati sul fieno.

Minnie: *(nervously)*

Go! Rest yourself on the hay.

Johnson:

Un bacio, un bacio almen!

Johnson:

A kiss, one kiss, at least!

Minnie:

Eccolo, è tuo!

Minnie: *(falling into Johnson's arms)*

Here it is, it's yours!

Minnie and Johnson embrace, kissing passionately; oblivious to a gust of wind that suddenly blows open the door and sends snow violently flying inside. Gradually the wind subsides, the door closes by itself, and a calm descends upon the room.

The gusts of wind are still heard howling outside.

Johnson:

Minnie, che dolce nome!

Johnson:

Minnie, what a sweet name!

Minnie:

Ti piace?

Minnie:

Do you like it?

Johnson:

Tanto!

T'amo da che t'ho vista.

Johnson:

Very much!

I've loved you since I first saw you.

Johnson suddenly withdraws from Minnie, as if in fear and fright.

Ah, no, non mi guardare, non m'ascoltare!
Minnie, è sogno vano!

Minnie:

Perchè questa parola?
Sono una povera figliuola, lo so.
Ma quando t'ho incontrato mi son detta:
Egli è perfetto; egli m'insegnerà.
Se mi vorrà, m'avrà!

Johnson:

Sii benedetta! Addio!

No, don't look at me, don't listen to me!
Minnie, it's a hopeless dream!

Minnie: *(unable to understand)*

Why are saying such words?
I know that I'm a poor girl.
But when I met you, I said to myself:
he is perfect, he will teach me.
If he wants me, he'll have me!

Johnson:

Be blessed! Farewell!

*Johnson kisses Minnie, and then rushes to the door.
As he opens the door, a sudden gust of snow blows into the room.*

Nevica!

It's snowing!

He closes the door. Minnie takes Johnson to a window and opens the curtains.

Minnie:

Guarda! Il monte è tutto bianco:
non c'è più sentier per andar!

Johnson:

Debbo!

Minnie:

Look! The hill is all white:
there isn't a path to walk on!

Johnson: *(very agitated)*

I must leave!

Minnie:

Perchè?
Domani t'apriranno la via!
È destino! Rimani!

Minnie:

Why?
They'll open the path for you tomorrow!
It's destiny! Stay!

Three gunshots are heard outside.

Johnson:

Ascolta!

Johnson:

Listen!

Minnie:

Ascolta! Forse è un bandito!
Forse è Ramerrez!
A noi che importa!

Minnie:

Listen! Perhaps it's a bandit!
Perhaps it's Ramerrez!
But why should we care about that!

Johnson:

A noi che importa?

Johnson: *(darkly)*

Why should we care?

Minnie:

Resta! È destino!

Minnie:

Stay! It's destiny!

Johnson:

Resto! Ma ti giuro ch'io non ti lascio più!
Mi stringo a te, confuso cuor a cuor, sol con te!

Johnson:

I'll stay! But I swear that I won't ever leave you again! I'll draw close to you, united only with you, heart to heart!

Con espressione grande
MINNIE and JOHNSON

Minnie
Dol - ce vi - ve - re mo - rir e non lasciar - ci
Johnson
Dol - ce vi - ve - re mo - rir e non lasciar - ci
Minnie
più! non la - sciar - ci più!
Johnson
più! Col tuo ba - cio fa pu - ro il labbro mio!

Minnie e Johnson:

Dolce vivere e morir e non lasciarci più!

Minnie and Johnson:

The sweetness of life and death. Don't ever leave us!

Johnson:

Col tuo bacio fa puro il labbro mio!

Johnson:

Purify my lips with your kiss!

Minnie:

Fammi, amor, degna di te!

Minnie:

My love, make me worthy of you!

Johnson:

Sai dirmi che sia questo soffrir?
Non reggo più!
Ti voglio per me!

Johnson:

Do you understand this suffering?
I can't bear it any longer!
I want you only for myself!

Minnie e Johnson:

Eternamente in estasi santa d'amor,
verso la vita,
sotto più fulgido ciel!

Minnie and Johnson:

Eternally, in love's holy ecstasy,
towards a new life,
under a more resplendent sky!

Ah, vivrem nella pace!
Vivremo di bontà!
Mia gioia o amor!
Con te mio amor!

Ah, we'll live in peace!
We'll live from goodness!
My joy and beloved!
With you my beloved!

Johnson:
Minnie! Minnie!

Johnson:
Minnie! Minnie!

Minnie:
Sognavo: si stava tanto bene!
Ora conviene darci la buona notte.

Minnie: (*gently withdrawing*)
I was dreaming: it was so nice!
Now we must say goodnight to each other.

Minnie points to the bed.

Ecco il tuo letto.
Io, presso il focolar.

Here's your bed.
I'll sleep close to the fireplace.

Johnson:
Non vorrò mai!

Johnson: (*protesting*)
I'll never allow it!

Minnie:
Ci sono avvezza, sai?
Quasi ogni notte quando fa troppo freddo
mi rannicchio in quella pelle d'orso e
m'addormento.

Minnie:
Don't you know that I'm used to it?
Almost every night when I'm cold, I curl up
in that bearskin and fall asleep.

Minnie finds a pillow and blanket in the closet and places it on the bearskin near the fireplace. She stands on a chair to extinguish a lamp, and then goes behind the closet and changes into a long white nightgown that she covers with a bright colored robe.

Johnson has thrown his jacket and hat on the bed. He removes his gun from its holster, primes it, and places it on the pillow. As he is about to draw the curtain on the windows, Minnie reappears.

Minnie:
Ora mi puoi parlare, là dalla tua cuccetta.

Minnie:
Now you can talk to me from your bed.

Johnson:
Benedetta!

Johnson:
You are blessed!

Johnson throws Minnie a kiss. Before going into the bed, he hears noises from outside. He goes to the door and listens attentively. Minnie prays before she lies down in bed.

Johnson:
Che sarà?

Johnson: (*whispering near the door*)
What can it be?

Minnie:
Son folate di nevischio.

Minnie:
It's a gust of sleet.

Johnson:
Sembra gente che chiami.

Johnson:
It seems like people are calling.

Minnie:

È il vento dentro ai rami.
Dimmi il tuo nome.

Johnson:

Dick.

Minnie:

Per sempre, Dick!

Johnson:

Per sempre!

Minnie:

Non conoscesti mai Nina Micheltorena?

Johnson:

Mai.

Johnson e Minnie:

Buona notte!

Nick:

Hello! Hello!

Johnson:

Chiamano!

Minnie:

Chi sarà?

Johnson:

Non rispondere!

Minnie:

Non farti sentire.
È geloso Jack Rance.

Nick:

Hanno veduto Ramerrez sul sentiero.

Minnie:

Vengono a darmi aiuto?

Minnie:

It's the wind through the branches.
Tell me your name.

Johnson:

Dick.

Minnie:

Dick, forever!

Johnson:

Forever!

Minnie:

Did you ever know Nina Micheltorena!

Johnson:

Never.

Johnson and Minnie:

Good night!

Nick: *(from outside)*

Hello! Hello!

Johnson:

They're calling!

Minnie: *(rising)*

Who could it be?

Johnson: *peers through the curtains and then seizes his gun)*

Don't answer!

Minnie:

Don't let them know that you're here.
Jack Rance is jealous.

Nick: *(shouting outside)*

They've seen Ramerrez on the trail.

Minnie:

Are they coming here to help me?

Minnie pushes the reluctant Johnson behind the bed curtains. She opens the door and Rance, Ashby, Nick and Sonora enter; they are fully covered with snow.

Sonora:

Sei salva! Io tremo tutto!

Nick:

Abbiam passato un brutto quarto d'ora!

Minnie:

Perchè? Perchè?

Ashby:

Temevano per te.

Minnie:

Per me?

Ashby:

Quel vostro Johnson...

Nick:

Lo straniero.

Rance:

Il tuo damo alla danza era Ramerrez!

Minnie:

Che dite?

Rance:

Abbiamo detto che il tuo perfetto Johnson di Sacramento è un bandito da strada!

Minnie:

Ah! Non è ver! Lo so!

Rance:

Bada di non fidarti troppo un'altra volta!

Minnie:

Non è vero! No! Mentite!

Ashby:

Questa notte alla "Polka" è venuto a rubare.

Minnie:

Ma non rubò!

Sonora:

Non ha rubato, è vero.

Pure, avrebbe potuto!

Sonora:

You're safe! I'm trembling all over!

Nick:

We've spent an ugly quarter of an hour!

Minnie: (*curious*)

Why?

Ashby:

They feared for you.

Minnie:

For me?

Ashby:

That Johnson of yours...

Nick:

The stranger.

Rance: (*maliciously*)

The dandy you danced with was Ramerrez!

Minnie: (*dumbfounded*)

What are you saying?

Rance: (*intently*)

We've said that your Johnson, the dandy from Sacramento, is a highway robber!

Minnie:

It's not true! I know it!

Rance:

Next time, watch that you're not so trusting!

Minnie:

It's not true! No! You're lying!

Ashby:

He came to the "Polka" tonight to rob it.

Minnie:

But he didn't rob it!

Sonora:

It's true, he didn't rob it.

However, he could have!

Rance:

Ha detto Nick che Sid l'ha veduto prender
questo sentiero.
È vero, Nick?

Nick:

È vero!

Rance:

Qui finisce la traccia.
Tu non l'hai visto.
Dov'è dunque andato?

Nick:

(Uno dei nostri avana! È qui!)
Forse ho sbagliato.
Quel Sid è una linguaccia!

Minnie:

Ma chi v'ha detto insomma che il bandito sia
Johnson?

Rance:

La sua donna!

Minnie:

La sua donna? Chi?

Rance:

Nina.

Minnie:

Nina Michtorena? Lo conosce?

Rance:

È l'amante!
Quando capimmo d'essere giocati traemmo
dietro Castro prigioniero,
e predemmo il sentier verso le "Palme."
Eravamo aspettati.
Nina era là.
Ci ha fatto vedere il suo ritratto.
A te!

Rance:

Nick said that Sid saw him take this trail.

Isn't that true, Nick?

Nick:

It's true!

Rance: (*looking fixedly at Minnie*)

The trail ends here.
You haven't seen him?
Then where has he gone?

Nick: (*sees a cigar stub*)

(One of our Havanas! He's here!)
Perhaps I'm mistaken.
That Sid is a blabbermouth!

Minnie: (*proudly*)

But who told you that the bandit is Johnson?

Rance: (*staring intently at Minnie*)

His woman!

Minnie:

His woman! Who?

Rance: (*sneering*)

Nina.

Minnie:

Nina Micheltorena? She knows him?

Rance:

She's his lover!
After we found out that we were duped by
the prisoner Castro,
we took the path to the "Palms."
We were expected there.
Nina was there.
She showed us his picture.
Look!

After Rance show Minnie the picture, she bursts out laughing.

Minnie:

Ah, ah, ah, ah!

Minnie:

Ah, ah, ah, ah!

Rance:

Di che ridi?

Minnie:

Oh, di nulla, di nulla.

La compagnia gentil ch'egli s'è scelto!

Nina!

Sonora:

Impara!

Minnie:

Ora, ragazzi, è tardi. Buona notte.

Sonora:

Vi lasciamo dormire.

Minnie:

Grazie. Ora son calma.

Ashby:

Andiamo.

Nick:

Se volete io resto.

Minnie:

No. Buona notte.

Ashby:

Buona notte.

Rance:

What are you laughing about?

Minnie:

Oh, nothing.

What lovely company he's chosen!

Nina!

Sonora:

You've learned something!

Minnie:

Now, boys, it's late. Good night.

Sonora: (*gently*)

We'll let you sleep.

Minnie:

Thanks. I'm calm now.

Ashby:

Let's go.

Nick: (*to Minnie*)

I'll stay if you want.

Minnie:

No, good night.

Ashby:

Good night.

They all leave. Minnie turns with disdain to where Johnson is hiding.

Minnie:

Vieni fuori, vieni fuori, vieni fuor!

Sei venuto a rubare!

Johnson:

No! No! Tutto m'accusa, ma...

Minnie:

Mentisci! Sì! Finisci!

Perchè sei qui, se non per rubare?

Johnson:

Ma quando v'ho veduta...

Minnie:

Come out!

You came to rob us!

Johnson:

No! Everyone accuses me, but...

Minnie:

You're lying! Yes! Finish!

Why are you here if not to steal?

Johnson: (*approaching Minnie*)

But when I saw you...

Minnie:

Adagio, adagio! Non muovere un passo o
chiamo aiuto!

Un bandito! Un bandito!

Ah! Ah! Son fortunata!

Puoi andartene! Va! Va, va, va!

Minnie: (*stopping him decisively*)

Slow down! Don't take a step or I'll call for
help!

A bandit!

Ah! I'm so fortunate!

You can get yourself out of here! Go!

Johnson:

Una parola sola!

Non mi difenderò sono un dannato!

Johnson:

Let me have just one word!

I won't defend myself. I'm a cursed man!

Andante
JOHNSON



Lo so, Io so!

Ma non vi avrei rubato!

Sono Ramerrez, nacqui vagabondo:
era ladro il mio nome da quando venni al
mondo.

Ma finchè visse mio padre, io non sapevo.

I know it!

But I wouldn't have robbed you!

I'm Ramerrez, I was born a vagabond:
my name was thief from the moment I came
into the world.

But while my father lived, I didn't know it.

Or son se mesi che mio padre morì.
Sola ricchezza mia, per la madre e pei
fratelli, alla dimane,
l'eredità paterna una masnada di bandito di
strada!

Now it's six months since my father died.
My only wealth, for my mother, for my
brothers, for the future,
was my father's inheritance: a gang of
highway bandits!

L'accettai!

Era quello il mio destino!

Ma un giorno v'ho incontrata.

Ho sognato d'andarmene con voi tanto
lontano e redimermi tutto in una vita di
lavoro e d'amore.

I accepted it!

It was my destiny!

But one day I met you.

I dreamed of going far away with you to
totally redeem myself in a life of work and
love.

Largo e calmo
JOHNSON



E il labbro mio mormorò un'ardente preghiera:
Oh Dio! Ch'ella non sappia mai la mia
vergogna!
Ahimè! Ahimè! Vergogna mia!
Il sogno è stato vano!
Ora ho finito!

And my lips murmured an impassioned
prayer:
Oh God! May she never know my shame!
Alas! My shame!
The dream has been in vain!
Now I'm finished!

Minnie:

Che voi siate un bandito ve lo perdoni Iddio.
Ma il primo bacio mio vi siete preso,
chè vi credevo mio, soltanto mio.
Andate, andate!
V'uccideranno! Che m'importa!

Minnie: *(moved but angry)*

May God forgive you for being a bandit.
But you took my first kiss,
and I thought you were mine alone.
Go away!
They'll kill you! What to I care!

Minnie is confounded. But Johnson is desperate and resolved: without weapons, he opens the door, ready to sacrifice his life and be killed.

Johnson:

Addio!

Johnson:

Goodbye!

Johnson leaves hurriedly.

Minnie:

È finita. Finita!

Minnie: *(drying her tears)*

It's over!

Two gunshots are heard outside.

L'han ferito.

Che importa?

They've wounded him.

What do I care?

Minnie goes to the door and hears Johnson fall. With a cry of anguish she opens the door. Johnson lies on the ground wounded. She drags him into the house.

Johnson:

Non chiudete la porta.
Debbo uscire, no!

Johnson:

Don't close the door.
I must leave!

Minnie:

Entra, sta qui! Sei ferito!
Nasconditi qui!

Minnie:

Come in, stay here! You're wounded!
Hide here!

Johnson:

No! Aprite la porta!
Voglio uscire! No!

Johnson:

No! Open the door!
I want to leave!

Minnie:

Resta! Resta! Resta!

Minnie:

Stay!

Io t'amo!
Ah! Sei l'uomo che baciai la prima volta!
Non puoi morir!

I love you!
You're the man I kissed for the first time!
You can't die!

Minnie lowers the loft ladder.

Su, su, su, presto!
Su, salvati!
Poi verrai con me. Lontano! Così!
Lo puoi, lo devi! Coraggio!

Up, quickly!
Up, save yourself!
Then you'll come with me! Far away!
You can, you must! Have courage!

Johnson protests, but desperately gathers his strength and ascends the ladder.

Johnson:
Non posso più!

Johnson:
I can't any more!

Minnie:
Su! T'amo! t'amo! Su ! Su!

Minnie:
Up! I love you! Up!

A strong knock is heard at the door. Johnson has crawled into the loft.

Minnie calms herself and then goes to answer the door.

Rance enters, gun in hand, and carefully scrutinizes every corner of the room.

Che c'è di nuovo, Jack?

Jack, what's new?

Rance:
Non son Jack, son lo Sceriffo, a caccia del
tuo Johnson d'inferno!
N'ho seguito la traccia.
Dev'esser qui. Dov'è?

Rance: (*imperiously*)
I'm not Jack. I'm the Sheriff in search of
your damned Johnson!
I've followed his trail.
He must be here. Where is he?

Minnie:
Ah! M'avete seccato con questo vostro
Ramerrez!

Minnie:
Ah! I'm sick of hearing about this Ramerrez
of yours!

Rance:
È là! Non c'è, ma l'ho ferito perdio, ne son
certo!
Non può esser fuggito!
Non può esser che qua!

Rance: (*pointing his gun toward the bed*)
He's there! He isn't! But by God, I wounded
him, I'm certain of it!
He couldn't have gotten away!
He can't be anywhere but here!

Minnie:
E cercatelo dunque! Rovistate dove vi pare,
e poi levatevi dai piedi una volta per sempre!

Minnie: (*harshly*)
Then look for him! Search wherever you
please, and then get out, once and for all!

Rance:
Mi giuri che non c'è?

Rance:
Do you swear that he isn't here?

Minnie:
Perchè non seguitate a cercarlo?

Minnie:
Why don't you keep looking for him?

Rance:
E sarà! L'avrò sbagliato!

Rance: (*holstering his gun*)
All right! I must have been mistaken!

Rance suddenly turns towards Minnie with unbridled passion.

Ma dimmi che non l'ami!

But tell me that you don't love him!

Minnie:
Siete pazzo!

Minnie: (*with disdain*)
You're crazy!

Rance:
Lo vedi, son pazzo di te!
T'amo! Ti voglio!

Rance: (*approaching Minnie*)
You see, I'm crazy for you!
I love you! I want you!

*Rance violently grabs Minnie, attempting to kiss her.
She fends him off and he chases around the room.*

Minnie:
Vigliacco! Via di qua! Esci!

Minnie:
Coward! Out of here! Get out!

Rance:
Sei fiera! L'ami!
Vuoi serbarti a lui!
Sì, vado.
Ma ti giuro che non t'avrà!

Rance:
You're wild! You love him!
You want to keep yourself for him!
Yes, I'm going.
But I swear to you that he won't have you!

*As Rance extends a menacing hand towards Minnie, a drop of blood
falls from the loft onto his hand. He stops in amazement.*

Oh, strano!
Del sangue sulla mano.

Oh, strange!
Blood on my hand.

Minnie:
Forse v'avrò graffiato!

Minnie: (*trembling*)
Perhaps I scratched you!

Rance:
Non c'è graffio.
Guarda! E sangue ancora!

Rance:
No, it isn't a scratch.
Look! There's more blood!

*Rance cleans the blood off his hand with a handkerchief. More blood drips from above.
Rance looks up and shouts ferociously, a cry of hate and joy.*

È là!

He's there!

Minnie:
Ah, no! Non voglio!

Minnie: (*desperately holding him back*)
No! I won't let you!

Rance:
Lasciami!
Mister Johnson, scendete!

Rance:
Let me go!
Mister Johnson, come down!

Minnie:

Aspettate, non può, vedete, non può!

Minnie:

Wait, he can't, you see, he can't!

*Rance climbs on a chair, lowers the ladder, and stands before Johnson with his gun drawn.***Rance:**

Scendete, o, perdio!

Rance: (*impatiently*)

By God, come down!

*Johnson starts to descend, pale and in pain.***Minnie:**

Un minuto, Rance, un minuto ancora!

Minnie: (*imploringly*)

Rance, one minute, one minute more!

Rance:

Un minuto? E perchè?

Ah, ah, ah, che mutamento!

Volete ancor giocare la partita con me,
signor di Sacramento?**Rance:**

A minute? Why?

Ah, how things have changed!

Do you still want to play the game with me,
gentleman from Sacramento?*With the help of Minnie, Johnson descends the last rungs of the ladder.
He drags himself to the table.*

La scelta a voi: a corda o a pistola!

The choice is yours: by rope or by gun!

*Johnson faints on the table, his head in his arms.***Minnie:**

Basta, uomo d'inferno!

Vedetelo, è svenuto!

Non può darvi più ascolto!

Minnie: (*violently*)

Enough, you devil!

Look at him, he's fainted!

He can't hear you any more!

Minnie approaches Rance, looks at him fixedly, and then excitedly addresses him.

Parliamoci tra noi e si finisca!

Chi siete voi, Jack Rance?

Un biscacchiere. E Johnson? Un bandito.

Io? Padrona di bettola e di bisca.

Vivo sul wisky e l'oro.

Tutti del pari!

Tutti banditi e bari!

Stanotte avete chiesto una risposta all vostra
passione.

Evvovi la mia posta!

Let's talk between ourselves and end this!

Jack Rance, who are you?

A gambler. And Johnson? A bandit.

Me? Owner of a tavern and gambling house.

I live on whiskey and gold.

We're both the same!

Both bandits and cheaters!

Tonight you asked for an answer to resolve
your passion.

Here's my offer!

Rance:

Che vuol dire?

Rance:

What do you mean?

Minnie:

Ch'io v'offro quest'uomo e la mia vita!
Una partita a poker!
Se vincete, pendetevi questo ferito e me.
Ma se vinco, parola di Jack Rance,
è mio quest'uomo!

Rance:

Come l'ami! Accetto, sì!
T'avrò!

Minnie:

La parola?

Rance:

So perdere come un signore.
Ma, perdio! Son tutto della sete di te arso e
distrutto.
Ma se vinco, t'avrò!

Minnie:

I offer you this man and my life!
A game of poker!
If you win, you take this wounded man and me.
But if I win, on Jack Rance's word,
this man is mine!

Rance:

How much you love him! Yes, I accept!
I'll have you!

Minnie:

Your word?

Rance:

I know how to lose like a gentleman.
But, by God! I've been burned and destroyed
from thirsting for you.
But if I win, I'll have you!

*Minnie goes behind the open door of the cupboard,
furtively hiding something in her stocking.*

Minnie:

Aspettate un momento.

Rance:

Che aspetti?

Minnie:

Wait a moment.

Rance: (*shuffling a deck of cards*)

What are you waiting for?

Minnie:

Cercavo un mazzo nuovo.

Minnie:

I'm looking for a new deck.

Minnie approaches the table and puts down the deck of cards.

Son nervosa, scusatemi.

È una cosa terribile pensar che una partita
decide d'una vita.
Siete pronto?

Excuse me, I'm nervous.

It's a terrible thing to think that one game
decides a life.
Are you ready?

Rance:

Son pronto. Taglia. A te.

Rance:

I'm ready. Cut. It's yours.

Minnie:

Due mani sopra tre.

Minnie:

The best two hands out of three.

Rance:

Quante?

Rance:

How many?

Minnie:

Due.

Minnie:

Two.

Rance:

Che ha che tu l'adori?

Rance:

What does he have that makes you adore him so?

Minnie:

Voi che trovate in me?

Minnie:

What do you find in me?

Both anxiously watch their cards. Minnie shows her cards.

Che avete?

What do you have?

Rance:

Io re.

Rance: *(showing his cards)*

Me, a king.

Minnie:

Io re.

Minnie:

Me, a king.

Rance:

Fante.

Rance:

Jack.

Minnie:

Regina.

Minnie:

Queen.

Rance:

Hai vinto. All mano seguente!

Rance:

You've won. Next hand!

*Minnie shuffles, makes Rance cut, and then deals the cards.***Minnie:**

Quante?

Minnie:

How many?

Rance:

Una.

Rance:

One.

*Minnie gives Rance one card. She hides her hand in her stocking and then takes five more cards.***Minnie:**

Due.

Minnie:

Two.

Rance:

Due assi e un paio.

Rance:

Two aces and a pair.

Minnie:

Niente!

Minnie: *(showing her hand)*

Nothing!

Rance:
Pari! Siam pari! Evviva!

Rance: (*joyously*)
Even! We're even! Hurray!

Minnie:
Ora è la decisiva?

Minnie:
Now comes the decisive game?

Rance:
Sì, taglia!

Rance:
Yes, cut!

Minnie:
Rance, mi duole delle amare parole.

Minnie: (*trying to appease him*)
Rance, I'm sorry for the bitter words.

Rance:
Scarta!

Rance:
Discard!

Minnie discards two cards. Rance gives her two, and keeps three for himself.

Minnie:
Ho sempre pensato bene di voi, Jack Rance,
e sempre penserò...

Minnie:
I've always thought highly of you, Jack
Rance, and I'll always think...

Rance:
Io penso solamente che t'avrò fra le mie
braccia.
Tre re! Vedi: ti vinco!

Rance: (*thinking only of victory*)
I think only that I'll have you in my arms!

Three kings! See, I've beaten you!

Minnie:
Presto Jack, per pietà!
Qualche cosa, sto male!

Minnie: (*as if fainting*)
Jack, quickly, for pity's sake!
Something is wrong, I'm sick!

Rance:
Che debbo darvi?

Rance: (*rising hastily*)
What can I give you?

Minnie:
Là!

Minnie: (*pointing to the cupboard*)
There!

Rance:
Ah! La bottiglia. Vedo.
Ma il bicchiere dov'è?

Rance:
Ah! The bottle. I see it.
But where is the glass?

*While Rance is at the cupboard, Minnie quickly changes the cards,
replacing her hand with cards she hid in her stocking.*

Minnie:
Presto Jack ve lo chiedo per pietà!

Minnie:
Jack, hurry up, I beg you, for pity's sake!

Rance:
So perchè sei svenuta: la partita è perduta!

Rance: (*bringing a glass of water to Minnie*)
I know why you've fainted: you lost the game!

Minnie:

Vi sbagliate. È la gioia!

Ho vinto io!

Tre assi e un paio!

Minnie: *(rising triumphantly)*

You're wrong. It's my joy!

I have won!

Three aces and a pair!

Rance looks at Minnie's cards, and then grabs his hat and coat.

Rance:

Buona notte!

Rance:

Good night!

Once Rance has gone, Minnie throws the cards into the air and laughs convulsively.

Finally, she bursts into tears and embraces the still unconscious Johnson.

Minnie:

È mio!

Minnie:

He's mine!

END OF ACT II

Act III

*A large California forest. There is an open space that is surrounded by tall pine trees.
In the background there are dense woods and a trail winding through the trees.
Snow-capped mountains can be seen in the distance. There are large felled tree trunks that
serve as seats for the miners. Near one of them, a fire burns.*

*It is an early dawn in winter. Ashby and some of the miners are sleeping.
Rance is seated near the fire with Nick.*

Nick:

Ve lo giuro, sceriffo, darei tutte le mance di
dieci settimane pur di tornare indietro d'una
sola, quando questo dannato Johnson della
malora non ci s'era cacciato ancor fra i piedi!

Rance:

Maledetto cane!
Parea ferito a morte.
E pensar che d'allora, mentre noi si gelava
fra la neve,
è stato là, scaldato dal respiro di Minnie,
accarezzato, baciato.

Nick:

Oh, Rance!

Rance:

Un ladro del suo stampo!
Avrei voluto a tutti gridar quel che sapevo.

Nick:

E non l'avete fatto.
È stato proprio un tratto cavalleresco.

Rance:

Ah, sì!
Ma che ci vede, dimmi, che ci trova la nostra
Minnie in quel fantoccio?

Nick:

Qualcosa ci vedrà! Amore, amore!
Paradiso, inferno, è quel che è:
tutto il dannato mondo s'innanamora!
Anche per Minnie è giunta oggi quell'ora.

Nick:

I swear to you, Sheriff, I'd give all my tips
for ten weeks if I could return for one
moment to the days before that damned
Johnson crossed our paths!

Rance: (angrily)

That cursed dog!
He seemed to be mortally wounded.
And to think, since then, while we were
freezing in the snow,
he was up there, warmed by Minnie's
breath, and caressed and kissed by her.

Nick:

Oh, Rance!

Rance:

A thief of his breed!
I wanted to shout what I knew for all to hear.

Nick:

And you didn't do it.
That was truly a chivalrous act.

Rance: (grinning bitterly)

Ah, yes!
But tell me, what does Minnie see or find in
that little animal?

Nick:

She sees love in him!
Paradise and hell is what it is:
the whole damned world falls in love!
The time for love arrived, even for Minnie.

*Dawn slowly appears. Shouts are heard in the distance.
Ashby leaps to his feet, unties his horse, and leads it towards the path.
Rance and Nick also rise.*

Ashby:

Hurrah, ragazzi!
Sceriffo, avete udito?
N'ero certo! Han trovato il bandito!
Una buona giornata per Wells Fargo!

Minatori:

Holla! Holla!

Ashby:

Udite? Ah, questa volta non mi sfuggi,
brigante!

Rance:

Siete più fortunato di me!

Ashby:

Da quella notte alla "Polka" non v'ho
capito più, Sceriffo!

Ashby:

Hurrah, boys!
Sheriff, did you hear?
I wasn't sure! They've found the bandit!
It's a good day for Wells Fargo!

Miners:

Hello! Hello!

Ashby:

Do you hear? This time that scoundrel isn't
going to escape from me!

Rance:

You're luckier than me!

Ashby:

Sheriff, since that night at the "Polka" I
haven't been able to understand you!!

A group of men appear, bearing guns, knives and clubs, They are all shouting wildly.

Ashby:

Holla! Fermi tutti!
Perdio! Giù le armi!
Dev'esser preso vivo!
Dov'è?

Coro:

S'insegue. Per di qua.

Ashby:

Dove?

Coro:

Di là dal monte!
Il bosco fino a valle è già tutto in allarme.
Ashby, a fra poco. addio!

Ashby:

Vengo con voi!

Ashby:

Holla! All of you stop!
By God! Put down your weapons!
He must be caught alive!
Where is he?

Chorus:

We're after him. Through there.

Ashby:

Where?

Chorus:

There in the hills!
They're alerted from the woods to the valley.
See you soon, Ashby, goodbye!

Ashby:

I'm coming with you!

Ashby leaves with the miners. Rance and Nick remain alone.

Rance:

Or piangi tu, o Minnie, or piangi tu!
Per te soltanto mi son disfatto per notti di
pianto, e tu ridevi alla miseria mia!

Ora quel pianto mi trabocca in riso!
Minnie, ora piangi tu, or piangi ti, tu che
m'hai deriso!
Quegli che amasti non ritornerà.
La corda è pronta che l'impiccherà!

Nick:

Dite! Dite!

Minatori:

È rinchiuso! Fra poco! Urrah!
Avanti! Avanti!

Nick:

Sceriffo, avete udito?

Rance:

Johnson di Sacramento, un demonio
t'assistè!
Ma, perdio, se ti prendono al laccio e non ti
faccio scontare ogni tormento, puoi sputarmi
sul viso!

Joe, Minatori:

Fugge!

Rance:

Ah! Perdio! Come? Dove?

Harry:

È montato a cavallo!

Harry, Joe, Bello:

Alla Bota già un uomo gli era sopra.
Sembrava ormai spacciato!
Non gli restava scampo!
Già l'avea acciuffato per i capelli,
quand' ecco...

Rance:

Racconta!

Rance: (*pointing menacingly to Minnie's cabin*)

Minnie, now you are going to weep!
I was overcome to possess you. I spent nights
in tears while you laughed at my misery!

Now my tears have turned to laughter!
Minnie, you derided me; now you can weep
yourself!
The man you loved won't return to you.
The rope that will hang him is ready!

Nick: (*to the returning men*)

Tell me what happened!

Miners:

He's surrounded! Soon! Hurrah!
Go on!

Nick:

Sheriff, did you hear that?

Rance:

Johnson from Sacramento, a demon is
assisting you!
But, by God, if they catch you in the noose
and I don't make you pay for tormenting me,
you can spit in my face!

Joe, Miners:

He's run away!

Rance:

Ah! By God! How? Where?

Harry:

He's mounted a horse!

Harry, Joe, Bello:

A man was already on top of him at the Bota.
It seemed that he'd been apprehended!
There was no escape left for him!
We had him caught by the hair,
when suddenly...

Rance:

Tell me!

Harry, Joe, Bello e Minatori:

Quand' ecco il maladetto, con un colpo lo
sbalza giù d' arcioni, s'afferma ai crini,
balza in sella, e sprona e via come un
lampo!

Gli uomini di Wells Fargo l' inseguono a
cavallo!
Ashby colla sua gente gli son tutti alle spalle!

Han passato il torrente!
È un turbine che passa!
Guardate! Urrah!
Via, ragazzi! Alla caccia!
Alla valle! Via tutti!

Joe:
È Sonora, guardate!

Rance, Harry, Joe, Bello:
Racconta!

Sonora:
È preso!

Minatori:
Come fu? Dov' è stato?
Non l' hai visto?
Di' su presto!

Sonora:
L' ho veduto! Perdio! Pareva un lupo stretto
dai cani!
Fra poco sarà qui!

Minatori:
Maledetto spagnuolo!

Rance:
Minnie, Minnie, è finita!

Harry, Joe, Bello, Minatori:
Che ne faremo?
Un ottimo pendaglio!
Lo faremo ballar!

Rance:
Io non fui, non parlai, tenni fede ai divieto!

Harry, Joe, Bello, Miners:

When that scoundrel knocked him out of the
saddle with one blow, grabbed the horse's
mane, jumped into the saddle, kicked the horse
with his spurs, and he was off in a flash!

The Wells Fargo men are now chasing him
on horseback!
Ashby and his men are close behind him!

They've crossed the stream!
It's like a whirlwind passing!
Look! Hurrah!
Go on, boys! To the hunt!
To the valley! Go on, all of you!

Joe:
Look, it's Sonora!

Rance, Harry, Joe, Bello:
Tell us what happened!

Sonora:
He's caught!

Miners:
How did it happen? Where did it happen?
Didn't you see it?
Tell us quickly!

Sonora:
I saw it! By God! He seemed like a wolf set
upon by dogs!
He'll be here soon!

Miners:
That accursed Spaniard!

Rance:
Minnie, it's over!

Harry, Joe, Bello, Miners:
What will we do with him?
Give him a perfect lynching!
We'll make him dance!

Rance:
It wasn't me, I didn't speak, I kept my word!

Harry, Joe, Bello, Minatori:

E quando ballera, Pam, Pam!
Tiremo al bersaglio! Pam! Pam!

Minatori:

Dooda, dooda, dooda, dooda day!

Rance:

A che ti valse?
A che ti vale ormai?
Il tuo bel vagheggin dondolerà da un albero
al rovaio!

Minatori:

Lo farem ballare appena arriva! Urrah!

Nick:

Questo è per te! Ritarda ancor a fare il
laccio.
Guai se mi tradisci! In parola di Nick, bada,
t'amazzo!

Minatori:

A morte! Al laccio!
Al laccio lo spagnuolo!

Ashby:

Sceriffo Rance, consegno a voi quest'uomo
perchè sia dato all comunità.
Faccia essa giustizia!

Trin, Harry, Joe, Bello, Happy::

La farà!

Ashby:

Buona fortuna, o mio bel gentiluomo!

Rance:

E così, Mister Johnson, come va?
Scusate se v'abbiamo disturbato.

Johnson:

Purchè facciate presto!

Rance:

Oh, quanto a questo bastano sbrigarci pochi
minuti.

Harry, Joe, Bello, Miners:

And when he dances, Pam, Pam!
We'll shoot at him like he's the bulls-eye!

Miners:

Dooda, dooda, dooda, dooda day!

Rance: *(thinking of Minnie)*

Was it worth it for you?
What is it worth to you now?
Your pretty dandy will be swinging from a
tree in the north wind!

Miners:

We'll make him dance as soon as he gets
here! Hurrah!

Nick: *(giving Billy some gold coins)*

This is for you! Delay awhile in making the
noose.
It'll be disaster if you betray me! On my
word, be careful, or I'll kill you!

Miners:

To death! To the noose!
The noose for the Spaniard!

Ashby: *(leading Johnson, who is tied up)*

Sheriff Rance, I give you this man so that he
be given over to the community.
Administer justice accordingly!

Trin, Harry, Joe, Bello, Happy:

It will be done!

Ashby: *(to Johnson)*

Good luck, my handsome gentleman!

Rance: *(blows a cigar puff in Johnson's face)*

So Mister Johnson, how are you?
Forgive us if we've disturbed you.

Johnson: *(with disdain)*

As long as you get it over with quickly!

Rance:

Oh, as far as finishing you off, it's only a
matter of minutes.

Johnson:

È quello che desidero.

Rance:

E che desideran tutti, vero?

Trin, Harry, Joe, Bello, Happy, Minatori::

Al laccio! A morte! Cane!

Figlio di cane! Ladro!

Harry:

Hai saccheggiato tutto il paese!

Bello:

La tua banda ladra ha rubato ed ucciso!

Johnson:

No! No!

Trin:

La squadra di Monterey, bandito, fu
massacrata dalle faccie gialle di quelle tue
canaglie messicane!

Happy:

Pugnolasti alle spalle il povero Tommy!

Johnson:

No! Non è vero!

Happy, Minatori:

Sì!

Harry:

Non è un mese, all'vale fu ucciso un
postiglione!

Bello, Harry, Trin:

Tu l'uccidesti! A morte!

Johnson:

No!

Maledizione a me!

Fui ladro, ma assassino, mai!

Joe, Minatori:

No, non è ver!

Johnson:

That's what I want.

Rance:

And that's what we all want, right?

Trin, Harry, Joe, Bello, Happy, Miners:

To the noose! To death! Dog!

Son of a bitch! Thief!

Harry:

You sacked the whole countryside!

Bello:

Your band of thieves robbed and killed!

Johnson:

No! No!

Trin:

Bandit, the Monterey squadron was
massacred by that yellow-faced Mexican
rabble of yours!

Happy:

You knifed poor Tommy in the back!

Johnson:

No! It isn't true!

Happy, Miners:

Yes!

Harry:

Less than a month ago, a post boy was
murdered in the valley!

Bello, Harry, Trin:

You killed him! To death!

Johnson:

No!

I'm cursed!

I was a thief, but a never a murderer!

Joe, Miners:

No, it isn't true!

Harry, Minatori:

Se pure, fu la sorte che t'aiutò!

Trin:

Alla "Polka" quella notte venisti per rubare!

Sonora:

Furon gl'occhi e il sorriso di Minnie a disarmati!

Bello:

Anche lei ci hai rubato!
Ladro d'oro e di ragazze!

Minatori:

Al laccio lo spagnuolo!
A morte!
Billy ha la mano maestra!
E sarai fatto re della foresta!

Trin, Harry, Joe:

Ti farem ballare l'ultima contraddanza!

Minatori:

Ti farem cantare la romanza della "Bella Fanciulla."

Rance:

Non vi preoccupate, caballero!
È una cosa da nulla!

Johnson:

Risparmiate lo scherno.
Della morte non mi metto pensiero;
e ben voi tutti lo sapete!
Pistola o laccio è uguale.
Se mi sciogliete un braccio, mi sgozzo di mia
mano!
D'altro voglio parlarvi: della donna ch'io
amo.

Rance:

Hai due minuti per amarla ancora.

Trin, Harry, Joe, Bello, Happy, Minatori:

Basta! Per Dio!
Fatelo star zitto! Che sfacciato!
È meglio finirla!

Harry, Miners:

If so, it was luck that helped you!

Trin:

That night, you came to the "Polka" to steal!

Sonora:

Minnie's eyes and smile disarmed you!

Bello:

You even stole her from us!
You're a thief of gold and girls!

Miners:

Put the Spaniard to the noose!
To death!
Billy has the hand of a master!
And you'll be made king of the forest!

Trin, Harry, Joe:

We'll make you dance your last square dance!

Miners:

We'll make you sing the ballad of the "Pretty Girl."

Rance: (with irony)

Boy, don't preoccupy yourself!
It's nothing at all!

Johnson:

Spare yourself the mocking.
I don't give a thought about death;
and you all well know it!
Pistol or noose is the same.
If you untie one of my arms, I'll slit my
throat with my own hand!
I want to talk to you about something else:
about the woman who I love.

Rance:

You've two minutes to still love her.

Trin, Harry, Joe, Bello, Happy, Miners:

That's enough! By God!
Make him shut up! What impudence!
It's better to end it right away!

Alla corda!
Parlerà da quel ramo!

To the rope!
He'll speak from that branch!

Sonora:
Lasciatelo parlare!
È nel suo dritto!

Sonora: (*authoritatively*)
Let him speak!
It's his right!

Sonora nears Johnson and looks at him fixedly: a look of hate, admiration, and jealousy.

Johnson:
Ti ringrazio, Sonora!
Per lei soltanto, che tutti amate,
a voi chiedo una grazia e una promessa.
Ch'ella non sappia mai come son morto!

Johnson: (*with surprise*)
Thank you, Sonora!
I ask of you one mercy and one promise for
her sake alone, for the woman you all love:
that she may never know how I died!

Rance:
Un minuto, sii breve.

Rance:
One minute, but be brief.

Andante molto lento
JOHNSON



Ch'ella mi cre - da libero e lonta-no, sopra una nuova via di redenzione!

Johnson:
Ch'ella mi creda libero e lontano,
sopra una nuova via di redenzione!
Aspetterà ch'io torni.
E passeranno i giorni ed io non tornerò.

Johnson:
I want her to believe that I'm on a new path of
redemption, free and far away!
She'll be waiting for me to return.
The days will pass and I won't return.

Minnie, che m'hai voluto tanto bene!
Ah! Tu della mia vita mio solo fior!

Minnie, who has loved me so much!
Ah! You are the only flower in my life!

Rance:
Ah! Sfacciato!
Hai null'altro da dire?

Rance: (*punching Johnson in the face*)
Ah! What impudence!
Have you anything more to say?

Johnson:
Nulla. Andiamo!

Johnson:
Nothing. Let's go!

Rance indicates the tree for the hanging. Sonora winds the rope. Johnson stands on a stone under the tree, stoically awaiting his fate. One miner throws the rope over a branch, the noose now dangling before Johnson's face.

From the woods, a galloping horse is heard, accompanied shouts from a womanm. The miners drop the rope and run to see who is coming: it is Minnie.

Minatori:

È Minnie!

Miners:

It's Minnie!

Rance:

Impiccatelo!

Rance:

Hang him now!

*Rance, in a crazed state, runs toward Johnson, and urges the miners to hang his rival,
but their only concern is the approaching Minnie.
Minnie dismounts from her horse, picks up the rope, and stands before Johnson, protecting
him. The miners step back. Johnson stands motionless, the noose still around his neck.*

Minnie:

Ah! No! Chi l'oserà?

Minnie:

No! Who'll dare to hang him?

Rance:

Giustizia lo vuol!

Rance:

Justice demands it!

Minnie:

Di qual giustizia parli tu, vecchio bandito?

Minnie:

Old bandit, what justice do you speak about?

Rance:

Bada, donna, alle tue parole!

Rance: (*menacingly*)

Woman, watch your words!

Minnie:

Che puoi farmi?

Non ti tremo! Ah!

Minnie: (*staring him fixedly at Rance*)

What can you do to me?

I'm not afraid of you!

Rance:

Strappatela di là!

Nessun di voi ha sangue nelle vene?

Una gonna vi fa sbiancare il viso?

Strappatela di là! Orsù!

Rance: (*inciting the miners*)

Get her away from there!

Are you all a bunch of bloodless cowards?

Has a woman's skirt made you turn pale?

Get her away from there! Right now!

Minnie:

Avanti! Osate!

Minnie: (*keeping the miners back*)

Come on! Dare it!

Rance:

Finiamola!

Bisogna che giustizia sia fatta! Basta!

Rance: (*vehemently angry*)

Let's end it!

It's necessary that justice be done! Enough!

Minatori:

Basta! Al laccio!

Miners:

Enough! To the noose!

*Two men go behind Minnie and grab her by the shoulders.
She pulls away, presses closer to Johnson, and quickly raises her gun.*

Minnie:

Lasciatemi o l'uccido e m'uccido!

Minnie:

Leave me alone or I'll kill him and myself!

Sonora places himself between Minnie and the miners.

Sonora:
Lasciatela!

Sonora:
Leave her alone!

All step back. Rance sits down on a tree trunk. Sonora remains with Minnie and Johnson.

Minnie:
Non vi fu mai chi disse: “Basta”
quando per voi davo i miei giovani anni
quando, perduta fra bestemmie e risse,
dividevo gli affari e i disagi con voi!
Nessuno ha detto allora: “Basta”!

Minnie: (*trembling and angry*)
No one of you ever said: “enough”
when I sacrificed my youth for you,
when I shared your distress and discomforts,
and your swearing and quarrels!
No one said then: “enough”!

The miners are silent, touched by Minnie’s words.

Ora quest’uomo è mio come di Dio!
Dio nel ciel l’avea benedetto!
Se n’andava lontano verso nuovi orizzonti!
Il bandito che fu è già morto lassù,
sotto il mio tetto.
Voi non potete ucciderlo, no!

Now this man is mine, as if he is from God!
God in heaven had blessed him!
He was going far away, toward new horizons!
There, inside my cabin, the bandit in him
had died.
No, you cannot kill him!

The miners become emotional. No one protests to Minnie.

Sonora:
Ah, Minnie, più dell’oro ci ha rubato il tuo cuore!

Sonora: (*seemingly in tears*)
Ah, Minnie, more than robbing gold, he has
robbed us of your heart!

Minnie:
Il mio Sonora buono sarà primo al perdono.

Minnie: (*with great affection*)
My good-hearted Sonora will be the first to
forgive him.

Sonora:
Minnie!

Sonora:
Minnie!

Minnie:
Perdonerai come perdonerete tutti.

Minnie:
You’ll forgive him, as will all of you.

Minatori:
No! Non possiamo!

Miners:
No. We cannot!

Minnie:
Si può ciò che si vuole!

Minnie:
You can do it if you want to!
(*turning to Joe*)

E anche tu lo vorrai, Joe.
Non sei tu che m’offrivi i fiori simili a quelli
delle tue brughiere?

Joe, you also want to forgive him.
Didn’t you offer me flowers just like those
from your heaths?

Turning to Harry, caressing his hand.

Harry, e tu, quante sere t'ho vegliato
morente e nel delirio credevi vedere la tua
piccola Maud, la sorella che adori venuta da
lontano.

And you, Harry, there were so many
evenings when you were near death and I
cared for you, and in your delirium you
believed you saw little Maud, your sister far
away, whom you adore so much.

Harry begins to weep.

Sonora:

È necessario. Troppo le dobbiamo!

Sonora:

It's necessary. We owe her so much!

Minnie:

E tu, mio Trin, a cui ressi la mano quando
scrivevi le prime incerte lettere che partivan
di qui per San Domingo.

Minnie: *(to Trin)*

And you, my Trin, whose unsteady hand I
guided when you were writing your first
letters to San Domingo.

Sonora:

Deciditi anche tu!

Sonora: *(to a miner)*

You also decide!

Happy e Minatori:

Non possiamo!

Happy and Miners: *(shaking their heads)*

We cannot!

Sonora:

Tu taci! È nel suo dritto! È necessario!

Sonora: *(to Happy)*

You are silent! She's right! It's necessary!

Minatori:

E Ashby, che dirà?

Miners:

And what will Ashby say?

Sonora:

Dirà quel che vorrà!
I padroni siamo noi!
Andiamo! Non t'opporre, tu! Ragazzi!

Sonora:

He'll say whatever he wants!
We're our own bosses!
Come on, boys! Don't refuse!

Minnie:

E tu buon Happy, e tu, Bello,
che ha gl'occhi cerulli d'un bimbo.
E voi tutti, fratelli del mio cuore, anime rudi
e buone.

Minnie:

And you, good Happy, and you, Bello,
who has the blue eyes of a baby.
And all of you good and rough souls,
brothers within my heart.

Minnie throws down her gun.

Ecco! Getto quest'arma!
Torno quella che fui per voi,
l'amica, la sorella che un giorno v'insegno
una suprema verità d'amore!

Here! I'm throwing down this weapon!
I'm returning to being who I was for you:
the friend and sister who one day taught
you the supreme truth about love!

Minatori:

È una viltà!
Per dispetto a Rance non possiamo!
Tu lo vuoi?

Trin, Harry, Joe:

Non si può resistere!

Happy:

Rideran di noi!

Sonora:

Anche tu, su, via! Per me lo fate!
Guardate come l'ama!

Happy, Trin:

M'ha fatto piangere!

Harry, Joe, Happy, Minatori:

E come è bella!

Harry, Joe, Sonora:

Minnie merita tutto!

Minatori:

Resister non possiamo!

Minnie:

Fratelli, non v'è al mondo peccatore cui non
s'apra una via di redenzione!

Sonora:

Le tue parole sono di Dio.
Tu l'ami come nessuno al mondo!
In nome di tutti, io te lo dono!

Johnson:

Grazie, fratelli!

Sonora:

Va, Minnie, addio!

Minatori:

Mai più ritornerai, no mai più!
Addio!

Minnie, Johnson:

Addio mia dolce terra, addio mia California!

Miners:

It's cowardice!
Despite Rance, we cannot!
You want it?

Trin, Harry, Joe:

I can't resist her!

Happy:

They'll laugh at us!

Sonora: (to other miners)

You also, come on! Do it for my sake!
Look at how much she loves him!

Happy, Trin:

She's made me cry!

Harry, Joe, Happy, Miners:

And how beautiful she is!

Harry, Joe, Sonora:

Minnie deserves everything!

Miners:

We can't resist!

Minnie:

Brothers, there isn't a sinner in the world to
whom the path of redemption is not open!

Sonora:

Your words are from God!
You love him like no one in the world!
In the name of all of us, I give him to you!

Johnson: (clasping Sonora's hand)

Thank you, brothers!

Sonora: (weeping)

Go, Minnie, goodbye!

Miners: (except Rance)

You will never return again, no never!
Goodbye!

Minnie, Johnson:

Goodbye my sweet land, goodbye my
California!

Andante lento con anima
MINNIE and JOHNSON



A musical score for two voices, Minnie and Johnson, in 4/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is 'Andante lento con anima'. The melody features several triplets and a long note at the end. The lyrics are written below the staff.

Ad - dio mia dolce ter - ra, addio, mia Cali-for - nia!

Bei monti della Sierra, nevi, addio!

Lovely hills of the Sierra, snows, goodbye!

END OF OPERA

Discography

- 1950 Gavazzi (Minnie); Vasco Campagnano (Johnson); Savarese (Rance);
Radio Italiana Orchestra and Chorus;
Basile (Conductor)
- 1958 Nilsson (Minnie); Gibin (Johnson); Mongelli (Rance);
La Scala Orchestra and Chorus;
von Matacic (Conductor)
- 1958 Tebaldi (Minnie); del Monaco (Johnson); MacNeil (Rance);
Academia di Santa Cecilia Orchestra and Chorus;
Capuana (Conductor)
- 1977 Neblett (Minnie); Domingo (Johnson); Milnes (Rance);
Royal Opera House Orchestra and Chorus;
Mehta (Conductor)
- 1991 Zampieri (Minnie); Domingo (Johnson); Roni (Rance);
La Scala Orchestra and Chorus;
Maazel (Conductor)
- 1995 Casolla (Minnie); Martinucci (Johnson); Roni (Rance);
La Scala Orchestra and Chorus;
Sinopoli (Conductor)

Videography

Castle VHS (1978)

Neblett (Minnie); Domingo (Johnson); Caroli (Rance);
Royal Opera House Orchestra and Chorus;
Santi (Conductor);
Faggioni (Director);
Vernon (Video Director)

DG (1993)

Daniels (Minnie); Domingo (Johnson); Milnes (Rance);
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus;
Slatkin (Conductor);
Del Monaco (Director);
Large (Video Director)

Opus Arte DVD (1991)

Zampieri (Minnie); Domingo (Johnson); Pons (Rance);
Teatro alla Scala Orchestra and Chorus;
Maazel (Conductor)

DICTIONARY OF OPERA AND MUSICAL TERMS

Accelerando - Play the music faster, but gradually.

Adagio - At a slow or gliding tempo, not as slow as largo, but not as fast as andante.

Agitato - Restless or agitated.

Allegro - At a brisk or lively tempo, faster than andante but not as fast as presto.

Andante - A moderately slow, easy-going tempo.

Appoggiatura - An extra or embellishing note preceding a main melodic note. Usually written as a note of smaller size, it shares the time value of the main note.

Arabesque - Flourishes or fancy patterns usually applying to vocal virtuosity.

Aria - A solo song usually structured in a formal pattern. Arias generally convey reflective and introspective thoughts rather than descriptive action.

Arietta - A shortened form of aria.

Arioso - A musical passage or composition having a mixture of free recitative and metrical song.

Arpeggio - Producing the tones of a chord in succession rather than simultaneously.

Atonal - Music that is not anchored in traditional musical tonality; it does not use the diatonic scale and has no keynote or tonal center.

Ballad opera - Eighteenth-century English opera consisting of spoken dialogue and music derived from popular ballad and folksong sources. The most famous is *The Beggar's Opera*, which is a satire of the Italian opera seria.

Bar - A vertical line across the stave that divides the music into measures.

Baritone - A male singing voice ranging between bass and tenor.

Baroque - A style of artistic expression prevalent in the 17th century that is marked by the use of complex forms, bold ornamentation, and florid decoration. The Baroque period extends from approximately 1600 to 1750 and includes the works of the original creators of modern opera, the Camerata, as well as the later works by Bach and Handel.

Bass - The lowest male voice, usually divided into categories such as:

Basso buffo - A bass voice that specializes in comic roles: Dr. Bartolo in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*.

Basso cantante - A bass voice that demonstrates melodic singing quality: King Philip in Verdi's *Don Carlos*.

Basso profondo - the deepest, most profound, or most dramatic of bass voices: Sarastro in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Bel canto - Literally, "beautiful singing." It originated in Italian opera of the 17th and 18th centuries and stressed beautiful tones produced with ease, clarity, purity, and evenness, together with an agile vocal technique and virtuosity. Bel canto flourished in the first half of the 19th century in the works of Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti.

Cabaletta - A lively, concluding portion of an aria or duet. The term is derived from the Italian word "cavallo," or horse: it metaphorically describes a horse galloping to the finish line.

Cadenza - A flourish or brilliant part of an aria (or concerto) commonly inserted just before a finale. It is usually performed without accompaniment.

Camerata - A gathering of Florentine writers and musicians between 1590 and 1600 who attempted to recreate what they believed was the ancient Greek theatrical synthesis of drama, music, and stage spectacle; their experimentation led to the creation of the early structural forms of modern opera.

Cantabile - An indication that the singer should sing sweetly.

Cantata - A choral piece generally containing Scriptural narrative texts: the *St. Matthew Passion* of Bach.

Cantilena - Literally, "little song." A lyrical melody meant to be played or sung "cantabile," or with sweetness and expression.

Canzone - A short, lyrical operatic song usually containing no narrative association with the drama but rather simply reflecting the character's state of mind: Cherubino's "Voi che sapete" in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Castrato - A young male singer who was surgically castrated to retain his treble voice.

Cavatina - A short aria popular in 18th and 19th century opera that usually heralded the entrance of a principal singer.

Classical Period - A period roughly between the Baroque and Romantic periods, the late 18th through the early 19th centuries. Stylistically, the music of the period stresses clarity, precision, and rigid structural forms.

Coda - A trailer added on by the composer after the music's natural conclusion. The coda serves as a formal closing to the piece.

Coloratura - Literally, "colored": it refers to a soprano singing in the bel canto tradition. It is a singing technique that requires great agility, virtuosity, embellishments and ornamentation: The Queen of the Night's aria, "Zum Leiden bin ich auserkoren," from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Commedia dell'arte - A popular form of dramatic presentation originating in Renaissance Italy in which highly stylized characters were involved in comic plots involving mistaken identities and misunderstandings. Two of the standard characters were Harlequin and Colombine: The "play within a play" in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*.

Comprimario - A singer who performs secondary character roles such as confidantes, servants, and messengers.

Continuo, Basso continuo - A bass part (as for a keyboard or stringed instrument) that was used especially in baroque ensemble music; it consists of an independent succession of bass notes that indicate the required chords and their appropriate harmonies. Also called *figured bass*, *thoroughbass*.

Contralto - The lowest female voice, derived from "contra" against, and "alto" voice; a voice between the tenor and mezzo-soprano.

Countertenor - A high male voice generally singing within the female high soprano ranges.

Counterpoint - The combination of two or more independent melodies into a single harmonic texture in which each retains its linear character. The most sophisticated form of counterpoint is the fugue form, in which from two to six melodies can be used; the voices are combined, each providing a variation on the basic theme but each retaining its relation to the whole.

Crescendo - A gradual increase in the volume of a musical passage.

Da capo - Literally, "from the top"; repeat. Early 17th-century da capo arias were in the form of A B A, with the second A section repeating the first, but with ornamentation.

Deus ex machina - Literally "god out of a machine." A dramatic technique in which a person or thing appears or is introduced suddenly and unexpectedly; it provides a contrived solution to an apparently insoluble dramatic difficulty.

Diatonic - A major or minor musical scale that comprises intervals of five whole steps and two half steps.

Diminuendo - Gradually becoming softer; the opposite of crescendo.

Dissonance - A mingling of discordant sounds that do not harmonize within the diatonic scale.

Diva - Literally, “goddess”; generally the term refers to a leading female opera star who either possesses, or pretends to possess, great rank.

Dominant - The fifth tone of the diatonic scale; in the key of C, the dominant is G.

Dramatic soprano or tenor - A voice that is powerful, possesses endurance, and is generally projected in a declamatory style.

Dramma giocoso - Literally, “amusing (or humorous) drama.” An opera whose story combines both serious and comic elements: Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*.

Falsetto - A lighter or “false” voice; an artificially-produced high singing voice that extends above the range of the full voice.

Fioritura - It., “flowering”; a flowering ornamentation or embellishment of the vocal line within an aria.

Forte, fortissimo - Forte (*f*) means loud; mezzo forte (*mf*) is fairly loud; fortissimo (*ff*) is even louder; additional *fff*’s indicate greater degrees of loudness.

Glissando - Literally, “gliding.” A rapid sliding up or down the scale.

Grand opera - An opera in which there is no spoken dialogue and the entire text is set to music, frequently treating serious and tragic subjects. Grand opera flourished in France in the 19th century (Meyerbeer); the genre is epic in scale and combines spectacle, large choruses, scenery, and huge orchestras.

Heldentenor - A tenor with a powerful dramatic voice who possesses brilliant top notes and vocal stamina. Heldentenors are well suited to heroic (Wagnerian) roles: Lauritz Melchior in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*.

Imbroglia - Literally, “intrigue”; an operatic scene portraying chaos and confusion, with appropriate diverse melodies and rhythms.

Largo or larghetto - Largo indicates a very slow tempo, broad and with dignity. Larghetto is at a slightly faster tempo than largo.

Legato - Literally, “tied” or “bound”; successive tones that are connected smoothly. The opposite of legato is staccato (short and plucked tones.)

Leitmotif - Literally, “leading motive.” A musical fragment characterizing a person, thing, feeling, or idea that provides associations when it recurs.

Libretto - Literally, “little book”; the text of an opera.

Lied - A German song; the plural is “lieder.” Originally, a German art song of the late 18th century.

Lyric - A voice that is light and delicate.

Maestro - From the Italian “master”; a term of respect to conductors, composers, directors, and great musicians.

Melodrama - Words spoken over music. Melodrama appears in Beethoven’s *Fidelio* and flourished during the late 19th century in the operas of Massenet (*Manon* and *Werther*).

Mezza voce - Literally, “medium voice”; singing with medium or half volume. It is sometimes intended as a vocal means to intensify emotion.

Mezzo-soprano - A woman’s voice with a range between soprano and contralto.

Obbligato - An accompaniment to a solo or principal melody that is usually played by an important, single instrument.

Octave - A musical interval embracing eight diatonic degrees; from C to C is an octave.

Opera - Literally, “work”; a dramatic or comic play in which music is the primary vehicle that conveys its story.

Opera buffa - Italian comic opera that flourished during the bel canto era. Highlighting the opera buffa genre were buffo characters who were usually basses singing patter songs: Dr. Bartolo in Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*; Dr. Dulcamara in Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love*.

Opéra comique - A French opera characterized by spoken dialogue interspersed between the musical numbers, as opposed to grand opera in which there is no spoken dialogue. Opéra comique subjects can be either comic or tragic.

Operetta, or light opera - Operas that contain comic elements and generally a light romantic plot: Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*, Offenbach’s *La Périchole*, and Lehar’s *The Merry Widow*. In operettas, there is usually much spoken dialogue, dancing, practical jokes, and mistaken identities.

Oratorio - A lengthy choral work, usually of a religious nature and consisting chiefly of recitatives, arias, and choruses, but performed without action or scenery: Handel's *Messiah*.

Ornamentation - Extra embellishing notes—appoggiaturas, trills, roulades, or cadenzas—that enhance a melodic line.

Overture - The orchestral introduction to a musical dramatic work that sometimes incorporates musical themes within the work. Overtures are instrumental pieces that are generally performed independently of their respective operas in concert.

Parlando - Literally, “speaking”; the imitation of speech while singing, or singing that is almost speaking over the music. Parlando sections are usually short and have minimal orchestral accompaniment.

Patter song - A song with words that are rapidly and quickly delivered. Figaro's “Largo al factotum” in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* is a patter song.

Pentatonic - A five-note scale. Pentatonic music is most prevalent in Far Eastern countries.

Piano - A performance indication for soft volume.

Pitch - The property of a musical tone that is determined by the frequency of the waves producing it.

Pizzicato - An indication that notes are to be played by plucking the strings instead of stroking the string with the bow.

Polyphony - Literally, “many voices.” A style of musical composition in which two or more independent melodies are juxtaposed; counterpoint.

Polytonal - Several tonal schemes used simultaneously.

Portamento - A continuous gliding movement from one tone to another through all the intervening pitches.

Prelude - An orchestral introduction to an act or a whole opera that precedes the opening scene.

Presto, prestissimo - Vigorous, and with the utmost speed.

Prima donna - Literally, “first lady.” The female star or principal singer in an opera cast or opera company.

Prologue - A piece sung before the curtain goes up on the opera proper: Tonio's Prologue in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*.

Quaver - An eighth note.

Range - The span of tonal pitch of a particular voice: soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, and bass.

Recitative - A formal device used to advance the plot. It is usually sung in a rhythmically free vocal style that imitates the natural inflections of speech; it conveys the dialogue and narrative in operas and oratorios. *Secco*, or dry, recitative is accompanied by harpsichord and sometimes with other continuo instruments; *accompagnato* indicates that the recitative is accompanied by the orchestra.

Ritornello - A refrain, or short recurrent instrumental passage between elements of a vocal composition.

Romanza - A solo song that is usually sentimental; it is shorter and less complex than an aria and rarely deals with terror, rage, or anger.

Romantic Period - The Romantic period is usually considered to be between the early 19th and early 20th centuries. Romanticists found inspiration in nature and man. Von Weber's *Der Freischütz* and Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1805) are considered the first German Romantic operas; many of Verdi's operas as well as the early operas of Wagner are also considered Romantic operas.

Roulade - A florid, embellished melody sung to one syllable.

Rubato - An expressive technique, literally meaning "robbed"; it is a fluctuation of tempo within a musical phrase, often against a rhythmically steady accompaniment.

Secco - "Dry"; the type of accompaniment for recitative played by the harpsichord and sometimes continuo instruments.

Semitone - A half step, the smallest distance between two notes. In the key of C, the half steps are from E to F and from B to C.

Serial music - Music based on a series of tones in a chosen pattern without regard for traditional tonality.

Sforzando - Sudden loudness and force; it must stand out from the texture and be emphasized by an accent.

Singspiel - Literally, "song drama." Early German style of opera employing spoken dialogue between songs: Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Soprano - The highest range of the female voice ranging from lyric (light and graceful quality) to dramatic (fuller and heavier in tone).

Sotto voce - Literally, “below the voice”; sung softly between a whisper and a quiet conversational tone.

Soubrette - A soprano who sings supporting roles in comic opera: Adele in Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*; Despina in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*.

Spinto - From the Italian “spingere” (to push); a singer with lyric vocal qualities who “pushes” the voice to achieve heavier dramatic qualities.

Sprechstimme - Literally, “speaking voice.” The singer half sings a note and half speaks; the declamation sounds like speaking but the duration of pitch makes it seem almost like singing.

Staccato - Short, clipped, detached, rapid articulation; the opposite of legato.

Stretto - Literally, “narrow.” A concluding passage performed in a quick tempo to create a musical climax.

Strophe - Strophe is a rhythmic system of repeating lines. A musical setting of a strophic text is characterized by the repetition of the same music for all strophes.

Syncopation - A shifting of the beat forward or back from its usual place in the bar; a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent in music caused typically by stressing the weak beat.

Supernumerary - A “super”; a performer with a non-singing and non-speaking role: “Spear-carrier.”

Symphonic poem - A large orchestral work in one continuous movement, usually narrative or descriptive in character: Franz Liszt’s *Les Preludes*; Richard Strauss’s *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, and *Ein Heldenleben*.

Tempo - The speed at which music is performed.

Tenor - The highest natural male voice.

Tessitura - The usual range of a voice part.

Tonality - The organization of all the tones and harmonies of a piece of music in relation to a tonic (the first tone of its scale).

Tone poem - An orchestral piece with a program.

Tonic - The principal tone of the key in which a piece is written. C is the tonic of C major.

Trill - Two adjacent notes rapidly and repeatedly alternated.

Tutti - All together.

Twelve-tone - The twelve chromatic tones of the octave placed in a chosen fixed order and constituting, with some permitted permutations and derivations, the melodic and harmonic material of a serial musical piece. Each note of the chromatic scale is used as part of the melody before any other note is repeated.

Verismo - Literally “truth”; the artistic use of contemporary everyday material in preference to the heroic or legendary in opera. A movement particularly in Italian opera during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana*.

Vibrato - A “vibration”; a slightly tremulous effect imparted to vocal or instrumental tone to enrich and intensify sound, and add warmth and expressiveness through slight and rapid variations in pitch.

