

Libretto: La Boheme

Music by *Giacomo Puccini*

Libretto by *Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa*

Cast:

Heather Buckmaster	MIMI, a seamstress (Soprano)
Joseph Buckmaster	RODOLFO, a poet (Tenor)
Mike Dewis	MARCELLO, a painter (Baritone)
Conall O'Neill	COLLINE, a philosopher (Bass)
David Cane	SCHAUNARD, a musician (Baritone)
Martin Lamb	BENOIT, a landlord (Bass)
Rachael Hughes	MUSETTA, a grisette (Soprano)
Martin Lamb	ALCINDORO, a state councillor and follower of Musetta (Bass)

ACT ONE

A garret over-looking out over the snow-covered roofs of Paris. Christmas Eve.

MARCELLO This Red Sea freezes me into numbness as if water were falling on me drop by drop. To revenge myself, I'll make Pharaoh drown! What are you doing?

RODOLFO I'm watching a thousand Parisian chimneys smoking in the grey skies and thinking of that lazy old swindling stove living in idleness like a lord!

MARCELLO He hasn't received his lawful dues for a long while.

RODOLFO Those silly forests, what do they do under the snow?

MARCELLO Rodolfo, I'll tell you my profound conviction: I'm freezing cold.

RODOLFO And I, Marcel, won't hide the fact from you that I don't believe in the sweat of the brow.

MARCELLO My fingers are as frozen as if they had been locked in that icebox which is Musetta's heart.

RODOLFO Love is a fire which wastes too much ...

MARCELLO... and too quickly!

RODOLFO... where Man is a bundle of wood

MARCELLO... and Woman is the fire-dog

RODOLFO... one burns in a flash ...

MARCELLO... and the other looks on.

RODOLFO But meanwhile we are freezing here ...

MARCELLO... and dying of hunger!

RODOLFO We must have a fire.

MARCELLO Wait ... we'll sacrifice the chair!

RODOLFO Eureka!

MARCELLO Have you thought of something?

RODOLFO Yes! A splendid idea. Let thought burst into flame.

MARCELLO Shall we burn the Red Sea?

RODOLFO No, painted canvas stinks. My drama, let my burning drama warm us.

MARCELLO You intend to read it, perhaps? You turn me cold!

RODOLFO No, the paper will dissolve into ashes, and the spirit will ascend to the skies.

A great loss menaces posterity ... Rome is in peril!

MARCELLO You're magnanimous!

RODOLFO Here's the first act for you.

MARCELLO Give it here.

RODOLFO Tear it up.

MARCELLO Light it.

RODOLFO What a cheerful spark!

MARCELLO What a cheerful spark!

COLLINE Signs of the Apocalypse are already appearing. On Christmas Eve they won't accept pledges! A blaze!

RODOLFO Quiet, they're giving my play ...

COLLINE ...to the fire. I find it brilliant.

RODOLFO Lively.

COLLINE But it doesn't last long.

RODOLFO Brevity is a great virtue.

COLLINE Author, give me the chair.

MARCELLO Quick.

RODOLFO Act two.

MARCELLO Not a whisper.

COLLINE Profound thought!

MARCELLO Perfect colour!

RODOLFO In that languid blue flickering an ardent love scene goes up in smoke!

COLLINE A page crackles.

MARCELLO There were kisses there!

RODOLFO Now I want to hear three acts all at once.

COLLINE Thus the idea of brilliant men is integrated!

RODOLFO, MARCELLO, COLLINE Beautiful to vanish in a joyous flash.

MARCELLO Oh Lord! The flame's already dying down.

COLLINE What a vain, fragile drama!

MARCELLO It's crinkling, crackling and dying down already!

MARCELLO, COLLINE Down with the author!

RODOLFO Wood!

MARCELLO Cigars!

COLLINE Bordeaux!

RODOLFO Wood!

MARCELLO Bordeaux!

RODOLFO, MARCELLO, COLLINE Fate has destined the wealth of the fair for us.

SCHAUNARD The Bank of France is in the red on your account.

COLLINE Pick 'em up! Pick 'em up!

MARCELLO They're pieces of tin!

SCHAUNARD Are you deaf? Are you bleary-eyed? Who's this man?

RODOLFO Louis-Phillipe! I bow to my King.

RODOLFO, MARCELLO, SCHAUNARD, COLLINE Louis-Philippe is at our feet!

SCHAUNARD Now I'll tell you; there's a fine story to this gold, or rather, silver.

MARCELLO Let's warm up the stove!

COLLINE It's suffered so much cold!

SCHAUNARD To Englishman, a gentleman, Lord, or my Lord whoever it was, wanted a musician ...

MARCELLO Away! . . . Let's lay the table!

SCHAUNARD... Me, perhaps? I fly ...

RODOLFO Where's the tinder?

COLLINE There.

MARCELLO Here.

SCHAUNARD... and present myself. He accepts me, I ask him ...

COLLINE Cold roast!

MARCELLO Sweet pudding!

SCHAUNARD... when do we start lessons? I present myself, he accepts me, and I ask him: when do we start lessons? He answers: "Let's start! ... Look! "And he points to a parrot on the first floor, then adds: "You play till that this!"

RODOLFO Ablaze is the room with splendour.

SCHAUNARD And here's what happened: I played for three whole days ...

MARCELLO Now the candles!

COLLINE Sweet pudding!

SCHAUNARD Then I exercised my masculine charm I sweet-hearted the maid ...

MARCELLO Do we eat without a tablecloth?

RODOLFO An idea!

MARCELLO, COLLINE The "Constitutional!"

RODOLFO An excellent sheet. We eat, and devour ...

SCHAUNARD I gave him parsley;...

RODOLFO the supplement!

SCHAUNARD... Polly stretched his wings, Polly opened his beak; a scrap of parsley, and like Socrates, he died!

COLLINE Who?

SCHAUNARD

The Devil take the lot of you! And now what are you doing? No! These victuals are in store for the dark days ahead. Dine at home on Christmas Eve while the streets of the Latin Quarter are festooned with sausages and titbits? When the smell of fritters pervades those old streets?

There, young girls are singing happily . . .

RODOLFO, MARCELLO, COLLINE Christmas Eve!

SCHAUNARD... and each has a student for echo! Let's observe tradition, gentlemen: we'll drink at home, but let's eat out!

BENOIT May I come in?

MARCELLO Who's there?

BENOIT Benoit.

MARCELLO The landlord!

SCHAUNARD Bolt the door.

COLLINE Nobody's home.

SCHAUNARD It's locked.

BENOIT Just one word.

SCHAUNARD Just one!

BENOIT Rent.

MARCELLO Here! Give him a chair.

RODOLFO At once.

BENOIT Don't bother, I'd like ...

SCHAUNARD Be seated.

MARCELLO Something to drink?

BENOIT Thank you.

RODOLFO and COLLINE A toast.

SCHAUNARD Drink.

BENOIT This is the bill for three months' rent ...

MARCELLO That's fine ...

BENOIT Therefore ...

SCHAUNARD Another drop.

BENOIT Thank you

THE FOUR A toast. To your health!

BENOIT I come to you because last quarter you promised me...

MARCELLO I promised and I'll pay.

RODOLFO What are you doing?

SCHAUNARD Are you crazy?

MARCELLO You see? Now then stay with us a moment. Tell me: how old are you, dear M. Benoit?

BENOIT My age? ... Spare me!

RODOLFO Our age, more or less, I'd say.

BENOIT More, much more.

COLLINE He said more or less.

MARCELLO The other evening at Mabilly they caught him making love.

BENOIT Me?

MARCELLO They caught him at Mabilille the other evening...Deny it, then.

BENOIT An accident.

MARCELLO A lovely woman!

BENOIT Ah! Very!

SCHAUNARD, then RODOLFO You rascal!

COLLINE Seducer! He's an oak, a ball of fire!

RODOLFO He's a man of taste.

MARCELLO With that curly, tawny hair. How he swaggered, proud and happy!

BENOIT I'm old but strong.

COLLINE, SCHAUNARD and RODOLFO How he swaggered, proud and happy!

MARCELLO Feminine virtue gave in to him.

BENOIT I'm paying myself back now for my shy youth ... my pastime, you know, a lively woman ... a bit ... well, not a whale exactly or a relief-map of the world or a face like a full moon, but not thin, really thin. No!

Thin women are worrisome and often ... a nuisance ...

always full of complaints, for example ? my wife ... !

MARCELLO This man has a wife and foul desires in his heart!

THE OTHERS Horrors!

RODOLFO He corrupts and pollutes our respectable home.

THE OTHERS Out with him!

MARCELLO Burn some incense!

COLLINE Throw out the scoundrel.

SCHAUNARD Our offended morality expels you!

BENOIT I say ... I...

THE OTHERS Silence!

BENOIT My dear sirs ...

THE OTHERS Silence ... Out, sir, away with you! And good evening to your worship! Ha

MARCELLO I've paid the rent.

SCHAUNARD In the Latin Quarter Momus awaits us.

MARCELLO Long life to him who pays!

SCHAUNARD We'll divide my loot!

THE OTHERS Let's divide!

MARCELLO Beauties are there, come from above. Now you're rich, you must look presentable. You bear! Trim your beard.

COLLINE I'll make my first acquaintance of a barber. Lead me to the absurd, outrageous razor.

ALL Let's go.

RODOLFO I must stay to finish my article for the paper, "The Beaver".

MARCELLO Hurry, then!

RODOLFO Five minutes. I know my trade.

COLLINE We'll wait for you downstairs.

MARCELLO You'll hear us if you dawdle.

RODOLFO Five minutes.

SCHAUNARD Cut that Beaver's tail short.

MARCELLO Watch the stairs. Hold on to the railing.

RODOLFO Careful.

COLLINE It's pitch dark.

SCHAUNARD That damn janitor!

COLLINE Bright!

RODOLFO Colline, are you killed?

COLLINE Not yet.

MARCELLO Come soon.

RODOLFO I'm not in the mood. Who's there?

MIMI Excuse me.

RODOLFO a woman!

MIMI I'm sorry ... my light has gone out.

RODOLFO Here.

MIMI Would you...?

RODOLFO Come in for a moment.

MIMI There's no need.

RODOLFO Please ... come in. You're not well?

MIMI No ... it's nothing.

RODOLFO You're pale!

MIMI I'm out of breath ... the stairs ...

RODOLFO Now what shall I do? So. How ill she looks! Are you better now?

MIMI Yes.

RODOLFO It's so cold here. Come and sit by the fire. Wait... some wine.

MIMI Thank you.

RODOLFO Here.

MIMI Just a little.

RODOLFO There.

MIMI Thank you.

RODOLFO (What a lovely creature!)

MIMI Now, please, relight my candle. I'm better now.

RODOLFO Such a hurry!

MIMI Yes. Thank you. Good evening.

RODOLFO Good evening.

MIMI Oh! foolish me! Where have I left the key to my room?

RODOLFO Don't stand in the door: the wind makes your light flicker.

MIMI Heavens! Will you relight it?

RODOLFO There ... Now mine's out, too.

MIMI Ah! And where can my key be?

RODOLFO Pitch dark!

MIMI Unlucky me!

RODOLFO Where can it be?.

MIMI You've a bothersome neighbour...

RODOLFO What do you mean? Not at all!

MIMI Search.

RODOLFO I'm searching.

MIMI Where can it be?

RODOLFO Ah!

MIMI Did you find it?

RODOLFO No.

MIMI I thought ...

RODOLFO Truthfully!

MIMI Are you hunting?

RODOLFO I'm hunting for it.

MIMI Ah!

RODOLFO How cold your little hand is! Let me warm it for you. What's the use of searching? We'll never find it in the dark. But luckily there's a moon, and she's our neighbour here. Just wait, my dear young lady, and meanwhile I'll tell you in a word who and what I am.

Shall I? Who am I? I'm a poet. My business? Writing. How do I live? I live. In my happy poverty I squander like a prince my poems and songs of love. In hopes and dreams and castles in the air, I'm a millionaire in spirit. But sometimes my strongbox is robbed of all its jewels by two thieves: a pair of pretty eyes. They came in now with you and all my lovely dreams, my dreams of the past, were soon stolen away. But the theft doesn't upset me, since the empty place was filled with hope. Now that you know me, it's your turn to speak. Who are you? Will you tell me?

MIMI Yes. They call me Mimi, but my real name's Lucia. My story is brief. I embroider silk and satin at home or outside. I'm tranquil and happy, and my pastime is making lilies and roses. I love all things that have gentle magic, that talk of love, of spring, that talk of love, that talk of dreams and fancies - the things called poetry ...Do you understand me?

RODOLFO Yes.

MIMI They call me Mimi –I don't know why. I live all by myself and I eat all alone. I don't often go to church, but I like to pray. I stay all alone In my tiny white room, I look at the roofs and the sky. But when spring comes the sun's first rays are mine. April's first kiss is mine, is mine! The sun's first rays are mine! A rose blossoms in my vase, I breathe its perfume, petal by petal. So sweet is the flower's perfume. But the flowers I make, alas,

The flowers I make, alas, alas, have no scent. What else can I say? I'm your neighbour, disturbing you at this impossible hour.

SCHAUNARD Hey! Rodolfo!

COLLINE Rodolfo!

MARCELLO Hey! Can't you hear? You slow?coach!

COLLINE You scribbler!

SCHAUNARD To hell with that lazy one!

RODOLFO I've a few more words to write.

MIMI Who are they?

RODOLFO Friends.

SCHAUNARD You'll hear about this.

MARCELLO What are you doing there alone?

RODOLFO I'm not alone. There's two of us. Got to Momus and get a table. We'll be there soon.

MARCELLO, SCHAUNARD and COLLINE Momus, Momus, Momus. Quietly, discreetly, we're off.

Momus, Momus. He's found his poem at last.

RODOLFO Oh! lovely girl! Oh, sweet face bathed in the soft moonlight. I see in you the dream I'd dream forever!

MIMI (Ah! Love, you rule alone!)

RODOLFO Already I taste in spirit The heights of tenderness!

MIMI (You rule alone, O Love!)

RODOLFO Already in spirit the heights of tenderness! Love trembles in our kiss!

MIMI (How sweet his praises enter my heart ...Love, you alone rule!). No, please!

RODOLFO You're mine!

MIMI Your friends are waiting.

RODOLFO You send me away already?

MIMI I daren't say what I'd like ...

RODOLFO Tell me.

MIMI If I came with you?

RODOLFO What? Mimi! It would be so fine to stay here. Outside it's cold.

MIMI I'd be near you!

RODOLFO And when we come back?

MIMI Who knows?

RODOLFO Give me your arm, my dear

MIMI Your servant, sir

RODOLFO Tell me you love me!

MIMI I love you.

RODOLFO and MIMI Beloved! My love! My love!

ACT TWO

Later the same evening, outside the Café Momus in the Latin Quarter; the café is so crowded that customers have to be accommodated at tables outside.

SCHAUNARD That D's out of tune! Pipe and horn, how much?

COLLINE It's a little worn ...

RODOLFO Come.

MIMI Shall we get the bonnet?

COLLINE... but it's sober looking and cheap.

RODOLFO Keep tight hold of my arm.

MIMI I'll cling on to you.

MIMI, RODOLFO Let's go!

MARCELLO I feel like shouting: which of you pretty ladies would care for a bit of love!

MARCELLO... I'll give my virgin heart for a sou!

SCHAUNARD Shoving and bustling the crowd comes running, and delights in sampling mad unsatisfying pleasures.

COLLINE A rare copy ? unique even -the runic grammar!

SCHAUNARD Fine fellow!

MARCELLO To supper!

SCHAUNARD, COLLINE Where's Rodolfo?

MARCELLO He went into a milliner's.

RODOLFO Come, our friends are waiting.

MIMI Does this pink bonnet suit me?

RODOLFO You're dark,...and that colour becomes you.

MIMI What a lovely ...coral necklace!

RODOLFO I have a rich uncle. If the good God has any sense, I'll buy you a much better necklace than that! Who are you looking at?

COLLINE I hate the common crowd as much as Horace did.

MIMI Are you jealous?

RODOLFO Suspicion for ever jogs the happy man's elbow.

SCHAUNARD And when I feed ...I like plenty of room.

MIMI Are you happy?

MARCELLO We want a choice supper.

RODOLFO Oh yes! So happy!

MARCELLO Be quick!

SCHAUNARD For a lot of people!

RODOLFO And you?

MIMI Yes, so very!

MARCELLO, COLLINE, SCHAUNARD Quick!

RODOLFO Two chairs.

COLLINE At last!

RODOLFO Here we are. This is Mimi, merry flower-girl. Her arrival completes the fine company, for I am the poet and she the poetry. From my brain burst songs, from her fingers burst flowers, from our exultant souls bursts love!

MARCELLO, COLLINE, SCHAUNARD Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

MARCELLO Heavens, what rare fancies!

COLLINE She is worthy to enter.

SCHAUNARD Let her come in, if she must.

COLLINE I can only say: Agreed.

COLLINE Sausage.

SCHAUNARD Roast venison!

MARCELLO A turkey!

SCHAUNARD Rhine wine!

COLLINE Table wine!

SCHAUNARD Dressed most praised!

RODOLFO And what do you want, Mimi?

MIMI Cream-caramel.

SCHAUNARD And a grand spread. There's a lady with us!

MARCELLO Mademoiselle Mimi, what rare present has your Rodolfo given you?

MIMI A lace bonnet, all embroidered in pink; it'll go well with my dark hair. For ages I've been wanting a bonnet like this, and he read what was hidden in my heart. Now, he who can see into a heart knows the ways of love and is very clever.

SCHAUNARD An expert .

COLLINE... who already has diplomas and whose verses are not early attempts.

SCHAUNARD So much so that what he says seems true.

MARCELLO Oh happy age of illusions and Utopias! One believes and hopes and everything seems lovely.

RODOLFO The most divine poetry, my friend, is that which teaches us to love!

MIMI Love is even sweeter than honey!

MARCELLO Depending on taste, it's honey or poison!

MIMI Oh dear! I've hurt his feelings!

RODOLFO He's in mourning, Mimi darling,

SCHAUNARD, COLLINE Let's be merry - a toast!

MARCELLO Something to drink here!

MIM, RODOLFO, MARCELLO Away with sad thoughts, up with your glasses! Let's drink!

ALL Let's drink!

MARCELLO Let me drink poison!

RODOLFO, SCHAUNARD, COLLINE Oh!

MARCELLO Her!

RODOLFO, SCHAUNARD, COLLINE Musetta!

ALCINDORO Like a porter ...running here and there ...No! No! I won't put up with it

MUSETTA Come, Lulu!

ALCINDORO... I've had enough!

MUSETTA Come, Lulu!

ALCINDORO I'vehad enough!

SCHAUNARD That ugly fellow..... seems to be sweating!

ALCINDORO What! Here outside? Here?

MUSETTA Sit, Lulu!

ALCINDORO I beg you to reserve search nicknames for later!

MUSETTA Don't be looking a Bluebeard!

COLLINE Here is vice dignified.

MARCELLO With the chaste Susanna!

MIMI She's very well dressed though!

RODOLFO The angels go naked.

MIMI You know! Who is she?

MARCELLO Ask me that. Her name is Musetta

MUSETTA Marcello has seen me

MARCELLO... surname: Temptation!

MUSETTA... and won't look at me, the beast!

MARCELLO Her vocation is to play the weather-vane,

MUSETTA That Schounard's laughing!

MARCELLO... she turns and turns and often changes both lovers and love

MUSETTA They all annoy me!

MARCELLO... and like the owl

MUSETTA If I could only hit them!

MARCELLO... she is a bird of prey.

MUSETTA If I could scratch them!

MARCELLO Her daily fare ...

MUSETTA But I have nothing to hand

MARCELLO... is a heart!

MUSETTA... but this toothpick!

MARCELLO She eats hearts!

MUSETTA Just wait!

MARCELLO That's why I've none anymore!

MUSETTA Here! Waiter!

MARCELLO Pass the stew.

MUSETTA Here! Waiter! This plate stinks of frying!

ALCINDORO No, Musetta ... quiet, quiet!

MUSETTA He's not turning round!

ALCINDORO Quiet! Quiet! Behave, where are your manners!

MUSETTA Ah, he's not turning round!

ALCINDORO To whom are you talking?

COLLINE This chicken is a dream!

MUSETTA Now I'll hit him, I'll hit him!

ALCINDORO With whom are you talking?

MUSETTA To the waiter! Don't be a nuisance!

SCHAUNARD The wine is out of this world!

MUSETTA I want to do as I please.

ALCINDORO Necessity so loud!

MUSETTA I'll do as I like!

ALCINDORO Speak more softly!

MUSETTA Don't be a nuisance!

MUSETTA Can he be jealous of this old mummy?

ALCINDORO Propriety ... my position ... your honour

MUSETTA Let's see if I still have enough power over him to make him give in!

SCHAUNARD What a stupendous joke!

MUSETTA You don't look at me!

ALCINDORO You can see I'm ordering!

SCHAUNARD A rip-roaring farce!

COLLINE Stupendous!

RODOLFO For your future guidance, be self-guided. I wouldn't be constantly forgiving you.

SCHAUNARD She speaks to one that the other may hear.

MIMI I love you so much and I'm all yours!

COLLINE And the other unkind in vain

MIMI Why do you talk to me of forgiveness?

COLLINE ... pretends not to understand, but is in heaven!

MUSETTA But your heart is hammering!

ALCINDORO Speak softly!

MUSETTA Your heart is hammering!

ALCINDORO Softly! Softly!

MUSETTA When I walk out alone along the street, all the people stop and stare, and seek out all my beauty from top to toe.

MARCELLO Tie me to the chair!

ALCINDORO What will those people say?

MUSETTA And then I relish the sly desire which shines from eyes and can infer hidden beauties from outward charms. Thus the breath of desire whirls around me and makes me happy!

ALCINDORO That scurrilous song is making me angry, it enrages me!

MUSETTA And you who know, who remember and fret, do you fly from me like that?

I know full well you'll not tell. Your sufferings....

MIMI I know full well that poor girl is very much in love, terribly in love with Marcello, She's terribly in love!

MUSETTA... I know, yet you feel ready to die!

ALCINDORO What will those people say!

RODOLFO Marcello used to love her.

SCHAUNARD Ah! Marcello'll give way!
RODOLFO The coquette left him ...
COLLINE Who knows what will happen!
RODOLFO... to enjoy an easier life.
SCHAUNARD The deception is equally sweet ...
COLLINE Holy saints, into such-like trouble ...
SCHAUNARD... to the one who proffers it and the one who shuts his eyes to it.
COLLINE... Colline wants never fall!
MUSSETTA Ah! Marcello ...
ALCINDORO Talk quietly!
MUSSETTA... is uneasy. Marcello is beaten!
MIMI I feel sorry for her, poor thing!
ALCINDORO Quiet, quiet!
COLLINE She's pretty, I'm not blind, ...
MIMI I love you!
SCHAUNARD That swaggerer ...
RODOLFO Mimi!
SCHAUNARD... will give way at any moment now!
MIMI I'm so sorry for that poor girl!
RODOLFO It's a poor sort of love that cannot avenge injuries!
SCHAUNARD The fun's tremendous!
COLLINE... but I much prefer a Pipe and a Greek text!
MUSSETTA I know full well you won't admit your sufferings!
ALCINDORO Behave yourself, can't you?
MIMI A selfish love is a bad love!
RODOLFO A dead love never revives!
SCHAUNARD Marcello'll give in!
COLLINE They please me a great deal more!
MUSSETTA Ah! But you feel like dying!
ALCINDORO Be quiet! Be quiet!
MUSSETTA I'm going to do just as I please! I'll do whatever I like! Don't be a nuisance! Let me alone!
MIMI I'm so sorry for.,
RODOLFO It's a Poor sort of love,
SCHAUNARD If a pretty girl like that were to engage you, You'd consign all your grumbling maxims to the devil!
COLLINE She's very pretty I'm not blind, but I much prefer,

MUSSETTA ... Don't interfere! Now I must get rid of the old man! Ow!
ALCINDORO What's wrong?
MUSSETTA What a pain! What agony!
ALCINDORO Where?
MUSSETTA In my foot!
MARCELLO My youth, you're not dead, neither is the memory of you!
MUSSETTA Undo it! Untie it! tear it, break it! Please! There's a cobbler over there, run, quick! I want another pair!
ALCINDORO Be more discreet!
MUSSETTA Ow! What a twinge! Curse that tight shoe!
ALCINDORO What will those people say?
SCHAUNARD, COLLINE What a rip-roaring farce!
MARCELLO If you were to knock on my door,...
MUSSETTA Now I'll take it off!
ALCINDORO But my position ...
MUSSETTA There it is!
MARCELLO... my heart would run to open to you!

MIMI I can see full well she's desperately in love with Marcello!
RODOLFO And I can see full well a stupendous joke!
MUSSETTA Run! Run along! Quickly, go on, go!
ALCINDORO... do you wish me to compromise it? Wait! Musetta! I'll go!
SCHAUNARD, COLLINE What a rip?roaring farce!
MUSSETTA Marcello!
MARCELLO Siren!.

SCHAUNARD We've reached the final scene!
RODOLFO, SCHAUNARD, COLLINE The bill?
SCHAUNARD So soon?
COLLINE Who asked for it?
SCHAUNARD Let's see!
COLLINE, RODOLFO It's quite enough!
RODOLFO, SCHAUNARD, COLLINE Out with your money!
SCHAUNARD Colline, Rodolfo, and you, Marcello?
MARCELLO We're broke!
SCHAUNARD What?
RODOLFO Thirty pence is all I've got!
MARCELLO, SCHAUNARD, COLLINE What! Isn't there any more?
SCHAUNARD But what's become of my treasure?
MUSSETTA Give me my bill. Quick, add that bill on to mine!
MUSSETTA The gentleman that was here with me will pay!
RODOLFO, MARCELLO, SCHAUNARD, COLLINE The gentleman wants to pay!
COLLINE The gentleman wants to pay!
SCHAUNARD The gentleman wants to pay!
MARCELLO The gentleman!
MUSSETTA And where he was sitting he'll find a greeting from me!
RODOLFO, MARCELLO, SCHAUNARD, COLLINE And where he was sitting he'll find a greeting from her!
MARCELLO, COLLINE Mind the old man doesn't see usrunning off with his prey!
MARCELLO, SCHAUNARD, COLLINE This dense crowd is a ready hiding place!
MIMI, MUSSETTA, RODOLFO MARCELLO, SCHAUNARD, COLLINE Quickly, quickly!
RODOLFO, MARCELLO, SCHAUNARD, COLLINE Hurrah for Musetta! Heart full of mischief –glory and honour, honour and glory of the Latin Quarter!

INTERVAL

ACT THREE

At the Barrière d'Enfer, one of the tollgates of Paris. Inside the gate stand the customs house and a tavern, to which Marcello's painting, appropriately modified, serves as sign. It is very early one morning in February. Everything lies deep in snow.

MUSSETTA'S VOICE Ah! If in a glass pleasure's to be found, on young lips there is love!

MIMI Excuse me, can you tell me which is the inn where a painter is at work?

SERGEANT Over there.

MIMI Thank you. Please find the painter Marcello for me? I have to speak to him. I'm in such a hurry. Tell him on the quiet that Mimi's waiting for him.

MARCELLO Mimi!

MIMI I was hoping to find you here.

MARCELLO Yes, we've been here a month at the innkeeper's expense. Musetta teaches singing to the patrons, I am painting those warriors on the facade. It's cold. Come inside.

MIMI Is Rodolfo here?

MARCELLO Yes.

MIMI I can't go in, no, no!

MARCELLO Why?

MIMI Oh good Marcello, help me! Help me, do!

MARCELLO What's happened?

MIMI Rodolfo ...Rodolfo loves me and avoids me; my Rodolfo is consumed with jealousy. A step, a word, a necklace, a flower make him suspicious, so that he is vexed and angry. Sometimes at night I pretend to be asleep, and I can feel him intently spying on my dreams in my face. He constantly cries, you're no good to me; find yourself another lover, you're no good to me! Alas! Alas! It's the fury talking inside him, I know, but what can I answer him, Marcello?

MARCELLO Two people like you shouldn't live together.

MIMI You are right; you're right; we must part. Help us, oh do help us; we have tried many times, but in vain.

MARCELLO I'm easy-going with Musetta, and she with me, because we love light-heartedly. Singing and laughter, these are the flowers of lasting love!

MIMI You're right, you're right, we must leave one another. Do what you can for the best.

MARCELLO Right! I'll wake him now.

MIMI Is he asleep?

MARCELLO He landed here an hour before dawn and fell asleep on a bench. Look. What a cough!

MIMI Since yesterday I've been chilled to the bone. He left me last night, saying: It's all over.

At daybreak I came out and made my way in this direction.

MARCELLO He's waking ... he's getting up ... he's looking for me . . . he's coming ...

MIMI He mustn't see me!

MARCELLO Go home now, Mimi, for goodness' sake! Don't make a scene here!

RODOLFO Marcello. At last! No one can hear us here. I want to leave Mimi.

MARCELLO Are you so fickle?

RODOLFO Once before I believed my heart was dead, but at the splendour of those blue eyes it revived. Now boredom assails it.

MARCELLO And you want to renew the funeral?

RODOLFO For ever!

MARCELLO Change your tune. It's only the love of fools that's dismal and distils tears. If it doesn't laugh and sparkle, love's feeble and gruff. You're jealous ...

RODOLFO A little.

MARCELLO... touchy, moody, full of prejudices, tiresome, headstrong!

MIMI Now he'll make him angry! Poor me!

RODOLFO Mimi's a coquette who flirts with everybody. Some dandy of a viscount makes eyes at her. She lifts her skirts and shows her ankle in a most provocative and encouraging way.

MARCELLO Must I say it? I don't think you mean all that.

RODOLFO Very which I, I don't. In vain, in vain I hide my real torment. I love Mimi more than anything in the world, I love her, but I'm afraid! Mimi is so very ill! Every' day she grows weaker. The poor little thing is doomed!

MARCELLO Mimi?

MIMI What does he mean?

RODOLFO A terrible cough shakes her weak frame, her pale cheeks are flushed.

MARCELLO Poor Mimi.

MIMI Alas, I do must this?

RODOLFO My room is a squalid den...I've no fire. The cold north wind comes in and blows all round. She sings and smiles, and remorse assails me. I am the cause of this fatal malady that's killing her.

MARCELLO What's to be done, then?

MIMI Oh my life!

RODOLFO Mimi is a hot-house plant. Poverty has stripped her of her flowers. to recall her to life, love is not sufficient.

MIMI Alas! Alas! It's all over! Oh my life is at an end! Alas, to have to die!

MARCELLO O how pitiful! Poor little thing!

MARCELLO She was listening, then!

RODOLFO Did you hear what I was saying? An easy prey to fear, I get in a state about nothing! Come into the warm!

MIMI No that fug suffocates me!

RODOLFO Ah, Mimi!

MARCELLO That's Musetta laughing. Who's she laughing with? Ah, you flirt, I'll teach you!

MIMI Goodbye.

RODOLFO What! Are you going?

MIMI Whence happily she came at your call of love Mimi will return to her lonely nest; she'll return once again to embroidering imitation flowers. Goodbye; and no hard feelings.

Lists. Gather up the few things I left about. Shut in my drawer is that little gold ring, and my prayer book. Bundle everything up in an apron And I'll send the concierge. Look, under the pillow you'll find the pink bonnet. If you want to, keep it as a souvenir of our love! Goodbye, goodbye - and no hard feelings!

RODOLFO So, it's all over! You're leaving me, my little one, Farewell, dreams of love!

MIMI Farewell, sweet wakings in the morning!

RODOLFO Farewelllife of dreams!

MIMI Farewell, reprimands and jealousy ...

RODOLFO... that a smile from you would disperse!

MIMI Farewell, suspicions,...

RODOLFO kisses ...

MIMI... stinging bitterness ...

RODOLFO...that I, like a true poet, would rhyme with tenderness!

MIMI To be alone ...

MIMI, RODOLFO... in winter is a terrible thing!

MIMI Alone!

MIMI, RODOLFO But in spring there is the sun for companion!

MIMI The sun for companion!

MARCELLO What were you doing, what were you saying ...

MUSETTA What do you mean?

MARCELLO... by the fire, to that man?

MUSETTA What do you mean?

MIMI Nobody is alone in April.

MARCELLO When I came in you changed colour!

MUSETTA That gentleman was asking me: "Do you like dancing, ...

RODOLFO One can talk to the lilies and the roses.

MIMI From the birds' nests comes a pretty chirping.

MUSETTA... mademoiselle?"

MARCELLO You vain frivolous flirt!

MUSETTA Blushing I replied: "I'd dance from dusk till dawn!"

MARCELLO Such talk hides dishonest aims!

MUSETTA I want to be absolutely free!

MARCELLO I'll give you a good hiding...

RODOLFO, MIMI In the blossoming springtime we've the sun for companion!

MUSETTA What are you on about?

MARCELLO... if I catch you flirting!

MUSETTA What's that you're shouting? What are you on about? We're not married!

MARCELLO Take care! Under my hat I don't wear horns!

MUSETTA I detest those lovers who go onlike ... ha ha! ha! husbands.

RODOLFO, MIMI The fountains babble, the evening breeze spreads balm on human ills.
MARCELLO I'll not be a laughingstock for your enterprising novices.
MUSETTA I'll make love with whom I please!
MARCELLO Vain frivolous coquette!
MUSETTA Don't you like it? I'm going to make love with who I please! Musetta's off, yes, she's off!
MARCELLO You're off? I'm duly grateful! I've grown rich now!
MUSETTA, MARCELLO Good ... bye!
MIMI, RODOLFO Would you like us to await the coming of spring once more?
MUSETTA I bid you goodbye with the greatest of pleasure, sir!
MARCELLO At your service; I'm off!
MUSETTA Housepainter!
MARCELLO Viper!
MUSETTA Toad!
MARCELLO Witch!

MIMI Always yours, for life.
RODOLFO We'll part ...
MIMI We'll part when the flowers bloom again.
RODOLFO... when the flowers bloom again.
MIMI I'd like winter to last for ever!
MIMI RODOLFO We'll part, when the flowers bloom again!

ACT FOUR

The garret as in Act I, Marcello and Rodolfo are pretending to work.

MARCELLO In a brougham?
RODOLFO With a pair and livery. She greeted me, laughing. "Well, Musetta! And how's your heart? " I said. "It isn't beating, or I don't feel it, thanks to the velvet that covers it."
MARCELLO I'm really glad to hear it!
RODOLFO Go on with you, Jesuit! You grin and bear it!
MARCELLO Not beating? Good! I too saw ...
RODOLFO Musetta?
MARCELLO Mimi.
RODOLFO You saw her? Oh fancy that!
MARCELLO She was in a carriage, dressed like a queen.
RODOLFO Hurray! I'm pleased about that.
MARCELLO The liar, he's dying of love.
RODOLFO Let's work.
MARCELLO Let's work.
RODOLFO Confounded pen!
MARCELLO Confounded brush!
RODOLFO O Mimi, you will return no more. O happy days, tiny hands, sweet-scented tresses,
MARCELLO I don't know how it is my brush works and slaps on colours against my will.
RODOLFO... snow-white neck! Oh Mimi, my short-lived youth!
MARCELLO If I want to paint, whether it be sky or land or winter or spring, it draws for me two dark eyes and provocative lips. And there is Musetta's again face, . . .
RODOLFO And you, dainty bonnet, which she hid under the pillow when she left, you know all our happiness. Come to my heart, to my broken heart, oh, come to my heart, for love is dead.
MARCELLO ... and there's Musetta's face all charms and deceits. Meanwhile, Musetta's enjoying life and my craven heart calls here, ails her and waits, my craven heart!

RODOLFO What time might it be?
MARCELLO Yesterday's dinner time.
RODOLFO And Schaubard isn't back?

SCHAUNARD Here we are.
RODOLFO Well?
MARCELLO Well? Bread?
COLLINE And a dish worthy of Demosthenes: A herring.
SCHAUNARD Salted.
COLLINE Supper is served.
MARCELLO This is a veritable feast of plenty.
SCHAUNARD Now let's put the champagne on ice.
RODOLFO Choose, baron, trout or salmon?
MARCELLO Duke, a parrot's tongue?
SCHAUNARD Thank you, no, it blows me out. I'm going to a ball tonight.
RODOLFO Finished already?
COLLINE I'm in a hurry. The king expects me.
MARCELLO Is there a plot on?
RODOLFO Some mystery?
SCHAUNARD A mystery?
MARCELLO A mystery?
COLLINE The king has summoned me to the Ministry.
SCHAUNARD Wonderful!
MARCELLO Splendid!
RODOLFO Marvellous!
COLLINE However ...I shall see ...Guizot! Give me the goblet!
MARCELLO Yes! drink, I'm gorging myself!
SCHAUNARD I beg the noble company to permit me ...
RODOLFO, COLLINE That'll do!
MARCELLO It's feeble!
COLLINE What a concoction!
MARCELLO Off with you!
COLLINE Give me the goblet!

SCHAUNARD I am irresistibly inspired by the spirit of song!
RODOLFO No!
MARCELLO No!
COLLINE No!
SCHAUNARD A choreographic exploit then?
RODOLFO, MARCELLO, COLLINE Yes! Yes!
SCHAUNARD A dance with vocal accompaniment!
COLLINE Clear the room! Gavotte!
MARCELLO Minuet!
RODOLFO Pavane!
SCHAUNARD Fandango!
COLLINE I suggest a quadrille.
RODOLFO Take your partners.
COLLINE I'll call.
SCHAUNARD Lallera, lallera, lallera, la!
RODOLFO Pretty maiden ...
MARCELLO Respect my modesty, I beg of you.
SCHAUNARD Lallera, lallera, lallera, la.
COLLINE Balancez!
MARCELLO Lallera, ... lallera, lallera, la!
SCHAUNARD The Rond comes first.
COLLINE No! Ace!
SCHAUNARD What disgusting behaviour!
COLLINE If I'm not mistaken you're being offensive. Out with your sword.
SCHAUNARD Ready. Have a taste of that! I'm thirsting for your blood.

COLLINE One of us wants be disembowelled!

SCHAUNARD Prepare a stretcher.

COLLINE Prepare a cemetery.

RODOLFO, MARCELLO While the duel is raging, the rigaudon bounces and turns.

MARCELLO Musetta!

MUSETTA It's Mimi following me and she's not well.

RODOLFO Where is she?

MUSETTA She couldn't manage the stairs.

RODOLFO Ah!

SCHAUNARD We'll draw up this old bed.

RODOLFO There. Get her a drink.

MIMI Rodolfo!

RODOLFO Hush; rest quietly.

MIMI Oh my Rodolfo! Do you want me here with you?

RODOLFO My own Mimi! Always! Always!

MUSETTA I heard it said that Mimi, having left the viscount, was dying. Where was she living? I searched and searched, then I saw her pass in the street hardly able to crawl. She said: I can't go on, I'm dying! I feel it. I want to die with him. Perhaps he's waiting for me

MARCELLO Hush!

MIMI I feel much better.

MUSETTA... Come with me, Musetta?

MIMI Let me look round. Oh, how nice it is here! I feel stronger every moment I feel life again here.

RODOLFO Dear lips, ...

MIMI No,...

MUSETTA What is there in the house?

MIMI... you will ...

RODOLFO... you speak ...

MARCELLO Nothing!

MIMI... leave me no more!

RODOLFO... to me again!

COLLINE Nothing!

MUSETTA No coffee? No wine?

MARCELLO Nothing! Oh, what it is to be poor!

SCHAUNARD She'll be dead in an hour.

MIMI I'm so cold! If only I had a muff! Shall I never be able to warm these hands of mine?

RODOLFO Here, in mine! Keep quiet! Talking tires you.

MIMI I've a bit of a cough. I'm used to that. Hello, Marcello, Schaunard, Colline, hello. All of you here, all of you here here.

RODOLFO Don't talk, don't talk.

MIMI I'm talking softly. Don't worry. Marcello, believe me: Musetta is so very good.

MARCELLO I know it, I know it.

MUSETTA Take these, sell them and suggest a cordial, call a doctor.

RODOLFO Rest.

MIMI You won't leave me?

RODOLFO No, no!

MUSETTA Lists! This may be the very last time she'll express a wish, poor thing! I'll see to the muff. I'll come with you.

MARCELLO You're so good, my Musetta.

COLLINE Dear old coat, listen, I stay here below, but you must now ascend the mount of piety! Receive my thanks. You never bent your threadable back to the rich and powerful. You have sheltered in your pockets like peaceful caves, philosophers and poets. Now that happy days have fled, I bid you farewell, my faithful friend, farewell, farewell. Schaunard, each in his own way let us put two acts of charity together. I ... this! And you leave them alone there together.

SCHAUNARD Philosopher, you are right! It is so! I go!

MIMI Have they gone? I pretended to be asleep because I wanted to be left alone with you. I've so many things to tell you . . . or rather only one, but that one huge as the ocean, as deep and infinite as the sea. You are my love and my whole life.

RODOLFO Oh, Mimi, my beautiful Mimi!

MIMI At I still beautiful?

RODOLFO Beautiful as the dawn.

MIMI You're mistaken in your comparison. You meant beautiful as the sunset. They call me Mimi ...why ... I don't know ...

RODOLFO The swallow's returned to the nest and is chirping.

MIMI My little bonnet! Do you remember when I came here for the first time?

RODOLFO Do I remember!

MIMI My light had gone out ...

RODOLFO You were so concerned! Then you lost the key.

MIMI And you started groping about to find it!

RODOLFO And I searched and searched!

MIMI My handsome young sir, I can say it now, you found it quite soon.

RODOLFO I was helping fate.

MIMI It was dark and you couldn't see me blushing. "What a frozen little hand, let me warm it for you ..." It was dark and you took my hand ...

RODOLFO Oh God! Mimi!

SCHAUNARD What's happened?

MIMI Nothing. I'm all right.

RODOLFO Keep quiet, for pity's sake!

MIMI Yes, yes, I'm sorry. I'll be good now.

MUSETTA Is she asleep?

RODOLFO She's resting.

MARCELLO I've seen the doctor. He's coming; I hurried him up. Here's the cordial.

MIMI Who's talking?

MUSETTA Me, Musetta.

MIMI Oh, how lovely and soft it is! My hands no longer be frozen. The warmth wants to make them beautiful. Did you give it me?

MUSETTA Yes.

MIMI You! How rash! Thank you. But it must have been expensive. You're crying? I'm all right. Why are you crying like that? Here, my love ... with you always!

My hands in the warm . . . and . . . to sleep ...

RODOLFO What did the doctor say?

MARCELLO He's coming.

MUSETTA Blessed Virgin, grant thy grace to this poor soul that she may not the ... We need a guard here, the flame is flickering. So that she may be cured. Holy Virgin, I am unworthy of pardon, but Mimi is an angel from heaven. RODOLFO I still hope. Do you think she's in danger?

MUSETTA I don't think so.

SCHAUNARD Marcello, she's dead.

COLLINE Musetta, take this.

COLLINE How is she?

RODOLFO Look. She's quite peaceful. What's the meaning of all this coming and going?

Why are you looking at me like that?

MARCELLO Be good.

RODOLFO: Mimi ... Mimi ...
