No Trifling with Love

A Musical Comedy

Book, Music & Lyrics
by
Steven W Rodgers

Based on the play
On ne badine pas avec l'amour
by Alfred de Musset

Cast of Characters

(4m,3w)

The Baron, 50s, the good-natured but perpetually befuddled lord of the manor

Antoine, 21, his son, recently graduated from the university

Camille, 18, the Baron's sharp-witted niece

Father Bridaine, 40s, the gluttonous Parish priest

Master Blazius, 30s, Antoine's drunken, incompetent tutor

Dame Pluche, 60s, Camille’s pious, irascible governess

Rosette, 16, Camille’s innocent half-sister

Setting

Spring, 1834, Burgundy, France

Musical Numbers

act one

Overture ..... *Orchestra*
Diamonds from Top to Toe ....*Dame Pluche, Master Blazius, Camille & Antoine*
Charming Enigmatical Creatures .....*The Baron & Father Bridaine*
Games We Used to Play..... *Antoine & Camille*
Discombobulated *...The Baron, Father Bridaine, Dame Pluche & Master Blazius*
Kisses ..... *Antoine and Rosette*
That Noble Chair .....*Father Bridaine*
He Comes to Me .....*Rosette*
It's All Over..... *Master Blazius & The Baron*
No Doubt About It ..... *Camille & Antoine*

act two

Entr'acte ..... *Orchestra*
Dream of the Suitor ..... *Antoine & Camille*
Unforeseen Disgrace ..... *Father Bridaine & Master Blazius*
The Letter .....*Dame Pluche, Master Blazius & Antoine*
The Rendezvous .....*Antoine, Rosette & Camille*
The Baron Declines *[reprise of "Discombobulated"]*..... *Baron and Camille*
Saddle My Ass *[reprise of "The Letter"]* ..... *Blazius and Pluche (with Camille)*
The Reckoning ..... *Antoine and Camille*
No Trifling with Love ..... *Company*

Act I Scene 1

The overture ends and lights slowly come up. It is spring 1834. On the road to the chateau just outside Burgundy, France. Master Blazius, a rather lazy tutor with a penchant for drink, rests on the side of the road.

[song 01: Diamonds from Top to Toe]

Master Blazius

LET THOSE WHO WISH TO LEARN SOME NEWS
FIRST BRING ME A GLASS OF WINE
ANTOINE TURNED TWENTY-ONE TODAY
A BETTER MAN YOU'LL NEVER FIND!

(Some peasant children have gathered around him; one brings him a glass of wine, which he gratefully accepts and guzzles).

MY STUDENT'S FULL OF FLOWERY PHRASES
TRAVELED TO SO MANY PLACES
HALF THE TIME YOU DON'T KNOW
HOW TO ANSWER HIM!

(Lights come up on the opposite side of the stage. Dame Pluche, the stern and pious governess, rests on a tree stump, fanning herself frantically and talking to a pair of peasant children. One of them brings her a glass of water, spilling it as she goes).

Dame Pluche

BRING ME A GLASS OF WATER, RABBLE…
WHY ARE YOU SO SLOW?
KNOW YOUR MASTER'S NIECE TODAY
ARRIVES AT THE CHATEAU

SHE'S COMPLETED HER EDUCATION
IT'S A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION
NEVER HAVE YOU SEEN SUCH PURITY!

Master Blazius & Dame Pluche

HE'S / SHE'S A DIAMOND
FROM TOP TO TOE
THAT IS WHAT I LONG TO SHOW
IT'S TO OUR CREDIT
WE'RE THEIR GUARDIANS

(Instrumental interlude underscores the following dialogue):

Master Blazius

Upon my word, the glass is empty! I did not think I'd drunk it all. You there! It is very hot. I should not mind having another drop before continuing my journey.

Dame Pluche

You! Unsightly vagabonds! You have brought me water that tastes of the kitchen! You are nothing but a pack of ill-mannered boobies!

(Lights come up on Antoine, the handsome son of the Baron, and Camille, a picture of beauty and grace. Master Blazius and Dame Pluche fawn over their respective proteges).

Dame Pluche

HER PIETY AND GOODNESS
WOULD PUT A MONK TO SHAME

Master Blazius

HE CAN'T SEE A BLADE OF GRASS
WITHOUT GIVING YOU THE LATIN NAME!

Dame Pluche

HER BEAUTY MAKES THE ANGELS SIGH

Master Blazius

IF IT RAINS, HE'LL TELL YOU WHY

Antoine and Camille

IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHO HAS IT BETTER
YOU…OR I!

WE ARE DIAMONDS
FROM TOP TO TOE
THEY WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW
IT'S TO THEIR CREDIT
WE'RE THEIR PROTEGES!

Antoine

WE'D LIKE TO THINK THAT WE DON'T NEED
OUR GUARDIANS TO SUCCEED

Antoine and Camille

WE BOTH HAVE QUITE SHREWD AND CUNNING WAYS

Camille

WE LONG TO BE
LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

Antoine and Camille
WE KNOW WE CAN MAKE IT ON OUR OWN…..'CAUSE….

Blazius & Pluche &Antoine & Camille
THEY (WE) ARE DIAMONDS FROM TOP TO TOE
THEY (WE) WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW
IT'S TO THEIR (OUR) CREDIT
WE'RE THEIR (THEY'RE OUR) GUARDIANS

The lights fade.

Act I Scene 2

The drawing room of the Baron's chateau, Burgundy, France. The Baron, a portly and befuddled nobleman in his 50s, is with Father Bridaine, the gluttonous parish priest. Master Blazius enters.

The Baron

Father Bridaine, let me introduce Master Blazius, my son's tutor. My son, Antoine, today, at eight minutes past twelve noon, turned twenty-one years old. He has earned his degree, and passed in three subjects. Master Blazius, I introduce to you Father Bridaine, parish priest, and my dearest friend.

Blazius *(proudly)*

Uh…Passed in *four* subjects, your lordship: literature, philosophy, law *and* physiognomy.

Baron

Yes, yes, all right, all right…go to your room, my dear Blazius; my son will be here soon, I trust. Freshen up a bit, and return when the bell rings.

(Blazius exits)

Bridaine

Shall I tell you what I am thinking, my lord? Your son's tutor smells strongly of wine.

Baron

What? Impossible!

Bridaine

I am as sure as I breathe. He spoke to me very closely just now. He smells dreadfully of wine.

Baron

No more of this. I tell you, it is impossible.

(*Dame Pluche enters)*

Ah! There you are, good Dame Pluche! My niece is with you, no doubt?

Dame Pluche

She is following me, my lord. I preceded her by a few steps.

Baron

Father Bridaine, my friend, I present to you Dame Pluche, my niece's governess. My niece, yesterday at seven o'clock p.m., turned eighteen years of age. She is leaving the best convent in France. Dame Pluche, I present to you Father Bridaine, priest of the parish, and my friend.

Dame Pluche

The best convent in France, my Lord, and, if I may add, the most sanctimonious girl in the convent.

Baron

Yes, yes, very good. Run along, Dame Pluche, and get yourself together. My niece will be here shortly, I do hope. Be ready when the dinner bell rings.

(Exit Dame Pluche)

Bridaine

That old lady seems rather…pompous, does she not?

Baron

Pompous, perhaps, but…her virtue is beyond reproach.

Bridaine

But the tutor smells of wine. I am absolutely certain of it.

Baron

Father Bridaine, there are moments when I doubt your friendship. Are you trying to contradict me? Do not speak any more of that matter.

(Beat)

Now then, I have been considering the idea of marrying my son to my niece.

Bridaine

A splendid idea, my lord!

Baron

Oh, my, yes! They are a match made in heaven. Their education has cost me six thousand crowns.

Bridaine

Will the wedding ceremony take place here or in Paris?

Baron

That is just what I expected, Bridaine! I was absolutely certain you would ask that question! Well, then, my friend — what would you say if those very hands — yes, Bridaine, your own hands — don't look at them so deprecatingly — were destined to bless the happy realization of my dearest dreams? Eh?

Bridaine

I am silent; gratitude seals my lips!

Baron

Look out of this window. Do you see my servants crowding to the gate? My two children are arriving at the same moment! It is the happiest combination! I have arranged things in such a way that all is foreseen; my niece will be introduced by this door on the left, my son by the door on the right. What do you say to that? It will be the greatest delight to me to see how they will address one another, and what they will say. The children loved each other since the day they were born.

(Beat)

Say, I have an idea!

Bridaine

What is it, my Lord?

Baron

During dinner, without it seeming…planned — do you understand, my friend? — while toasting a glass of wine — uh…do you know Latin, Bridaine?

Bridaine

I should hope so!

(Grandly)

In vino, veritas!

Baron

(Confused)

No, no, no…*Latin*, Bridane!

(Bridaine stares blankly)

Oh, never mind, never mind. I would be very happy to see you test my son, discreetly of course — in front of his cousin — that cannot fail to make a favorable and lasting impression! Ask him to speak a little Latin; not precisely while we're eating…that would spoil our appetites, and as for me, I don't understand a word of it, but after dessert, don't you see?

Bridaine

If you don't understand a word of it, my lord, perhaps your niece suffers the same affliction!

Baron

All the more reason. Would you have a woman admire what she understands? Were you born in a barn, Bridaine? That is a pathetically impalpable piece of reasoning.

Bridaine

I don't know much about women; but it seems to me difficult to admire what one does not understand.

Baron

Ah, Bridaine, but *I* know them; I know the charming, enigmatical creatures!

[Song 02: Charming Enigmatical Creatures]

Baron
WHEN SHE SAYS IT'S TIME TO TALK
THAT'S WHEN YOU TAKE A WALK
PACK YOUR BAGS AND LEAVE TOWN!
IF YOU STAY
YOU'RE GONNA PAY!
YOUR HEAD'LL BE REELING

Bridaine
SHE'LL ONLY WANT YOU BOTH TO GET
IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FEELINGS

Baron
THE OLDEST TRICK THAT'S IN THE BOOK
IS WHEN SHE ASKS YOU HOW SHE LOOKS
SHE NEVER WANTS AN HONEST REPLY!

Bridaine
IT'S A STICKY SITUATION
SHE JUST WANTS YOUR ADULATION
ALL YOU CAN EVER DO IS LIE

(Father Bridaine recognizes his faux pas and crosses himself)

Baron and Bridaine
THESE CHARMING ENIGMATICAL CREATURES!
WITH SUCH STRANGE, ERRATIC FEATURES
TEND TO DRIVE THE AVERAGE MAN INSANE!

(Instrumental as the Baron awkwardly attempts to teach Father Bridaine how to dance)

Baron
Shall we dance? Splendid! …Cha cha cha!

(Struggling with the uncoordinated priest)

Under my arm! Under my arm! ….Cha cha cha….. Very good! ….Cha cha cha….. I didn't know you had a pirouette in you!

Baron and Bridaine
WOMEN DRIVE THE AVERAGE MAN INSANE!

Baron

NOW FOR THE BAD NEWS
SHE COULD HAVE FORTY PAIRS OF SHOES
AND STILL NOT PASS UP A SHOE STORE
TRY TO TALK HER OUT OF IT
SHE MAY JUST POUT A BIT

Bridaine

THEN GO OUT AND BUY FORTY MORE!

Baron

WHEN SHE SAYS THERE'S NOTHING WRONG
YOU KNOW NOTHIN'S RIGHT!
TO FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU'VE DONE
YOU'D BE UP HALF THE NIGHT!
INSTEAD OF TELLIN' YOU
SHE'LL YELL AT YOU
FOR NOT BEING SMARTER

Father Bridaine

SHE WON'T SOLVE THE PROBLEM,
SHE'D PREFER TO BE A MARTYR

Baron & Bridaine

THESE CHARMING ENIGMATICAL CREATURES
WITH SUCH STRANGE, ERRATIC FEATURES
TEND TO DRIVE THE AVERAGE MAN INSANE!

AND YET WHEN ALL'S SAID AND DONE…
WHAT AM I…WITHOUT ONE!?

(Song ends. Enter on one side, Antoine, Camille on the other)

Baron

Ah! Good day, children! Good day, my dear Camille, and you, my dear Antoine! Kiss me and kiss each other.

Antoine

Good day, Father, and you, my darling cousin. How delightful; how happy I am!

Camille

How do you do, Uncle…and you, Cousin?

Antoine

How tall you are, Camille, and as beautiful as the day!

Baron

When did you leave Paris, Antoine?

Antoine

Wednesday, I think — or Tuesday.

(He can't take his eyes off Camille)

Why, you are transformed into a woman! So we are both adults, now, are we? It seems just yesterday I saw you only so high!

Baron

You must both be tired. It has been a long journey, and the day is hot.

Antoine

Oh, no, not at all! Look how pretty Camille is, Father.

Baron

Come, Camille, give your cousin a kiss.

Camille

I beg your pardon?

Baron

A compliment deserves a kiss. Give her a kiss, my boy!

Antoine

Lovers may kiss one another…friends rarely do so.

Camille

Neither friends nor lovers should accept anything they cannot repay.

Baron

(To Father Bridaine)

This does not seem to be a good omen.

Father Bridaine

(To the Baron)

Too much modesty is a defect, no doubt; but marriage has a way of bringing couples out of their shells.

Baron

(To Father Bridaine)

I am shocked — I am hurt! That answer displeased me. Oh my! Did you see that she made a show of crossing herself?

(The Baron brings Father Bridaine downstage. Antoine retreats upper stage left, examining a potted plant. Camille crosses upstage right to gaze on a painting)

Baron *(cont'd)*
It pains me to no end. This moment, that was to be so sweet, is completely spoiled for me. I am annoyed…distraught. Everything is going to hell!

Father Bridaine
Talk to them; look at them turning their backs on each other.

Baron
Well, children, what in the world are you thinking of? What are you doing there, Camille, in front of that painting?

Camille
(Looking at a picture)
That is a fine portrait, uncle. Isn't she my great grandmother?

Baron
Yes, my child, or, rather your great grandmother's *sister*; since the charming lady never contributed — except, I believe, in *prayers* — to the enhancement of the family. She was a pious woman, I declare.

Camille
Oh yes, a saint. She is my great-aunt Isabel. How becoming she looks in that nun's dress!

Baron
And you, Antoine, what are you doing behind that flowerpot?

Antoine
That's a charming flower, Father. It is called a heliotrope.

Baron
You are joking! Such a fancy name for such an insignificant flower? — it's no bigger than a fly!

Antoine
That little flower no bigger than a fly is worth having all the same.

Father Bridaine
No doubt our young scholar is right. Ask him what species it belongs to, or how it gets its color, he will entrance you with a description of said plant, from its roots to the tips of its leaves.

Antoine
I…don't know so much about it, Your Reverence. I just think it smells good, that's all.
(Lights fade)

Act I Scene 3

(Drawing room, later that day. The Baron is pacing nervously as Dame Pluche enters).

Baron

Venerable Dame Pluche, I am pained.

Dame Pluche

Is it…*possible*, my lord?

Baron

Yes, Dame Pluche, possible. I had planned it for a long time now — I had even put everything down in my journal — that this day was to be the most enjoyable of my life. Yes, my good madam, the most enjoyable. You know how I planned to marry my son to my niece. It was decided, arranged — I had even asked Father Bridaine to perform the ceremony, here in this very room — and I see how coldly these children speak to each other.

Dame Pluche

There they come, my lord. Do they know of your scheme?

Baron

I dropped a few hints to each of them in private. I think it would be well, since they are thrown together now, that we should go behind these plants and leave them to themselves.

(He withdraws to one side with Dame Pluche. Enter Camille and Antoine)

[song 03: Games We Used to Play]

Antoine

IT'S NOT NICE TO REFUSE A KISS

Camille

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THIS

Antoine

LET'S STROLL THROUGH THE WILDWOOD

Camille

I HAVE NO WISH TO RELIVE MY CHILDHOOD
YESTERDAY'S ALREADY DONE

Both

AND TOMORROW NEVER COMES

Antoine

LET'S FLOAT
IN A BOAT
DOWNSTREAM
IT'LL SEEM JUST LIKE A DREAM
NEVER FEAR
YOU CAN STEER
AND I WILL BE THE NAVIGATOR

Camille

I'M TOO OLD TO AMUSE MYSELF WITH THE
GAMES WE USED TO PLAY

Antoine

(overlapping)
WHAT ABOUT THE GAMES WE USED TO PLAY?

Antoine

THESE MEMORIES NEVER FADE

Camille

IT'S JUST A MASQUERADE

Antoine

OUR WHOLE PAST ONCE LAY HERE

Camille

BUT NOW IT'S DISAPPEARED.

Antoine

LET'S THROW
SKIPPING STONES
IN THE CREEK
I WILL BEAT YOU AS I ONCE DID
AS A KID

Camille

YOU NEVER DID!
I CAN SEE YOUR MEMORY'S NOT IMPROVED WITH AGE

Antoine

YOU'RE NOT TOO OLD TO APPRECIATE…

Camille

(overlapping)
I'M TOO OLD TO APPRECIATE…

Both
ALL THE THINGS WE USED TO DO

Antoine
I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU

(Song ends. The two exit in opposite directions)

Baron
(Coming out from behind the plants with Dame Pluche)
Do you hear, Dame Pluche? I expected the softest harmony; and I feel as if I were attending a concert where the violin is playing "My heart, it sighs," while the flute plays "Long live King Henry." Think of the frightful discord such a combination would produce, yet that is what is going on in my heart!

[Song 04: Discombobulated]

Dame Pluche
CAMILLE'S NOT TO BLAME

Baron
WHAT? ARE YOU INSANE?

Dame Pluche
NOTHING'S IN WORSE TASTE
THAN TAKING BOAT TRIPS DOWN THE RIVER!
SHE HAS AN OBLIGATION
TO GUARD HER REPUTATION
YOUR FUTURE DAUGHTER
MUSTN'T RISK HERSELF ON OPEN WATER!
IT'S BEST TO STAY
FAR AWAY
FROM DANGEROUS PURSUITS!

Baron
REALLY, MADAM!
WHAT COULD HAPPEN?
YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A POOR, CONTEMPTIBLE,
MISGUIDED NINCAMPOOP!

(Enter Father Bridaine, who approaches the Baron)

Father Bridaine
MY LORD, IT'S BEEN REPORTED
THE TUTOR'S WORDS ARE DISTORTED
HE DRANK WINE FOR HOURS

Father Bridaine *(Cont'd)*
THEN HE TRAMPLED ON THE FLOWERS!

Baron
THIS REPORT'S ABSURD

Father Bridaine
I GIVE YOU MY WORD!
HE DRANK A DOZEN BOTTLES
AND WHAT'S MORE, HIS SPEECH WAS SLURRED!

Baron
(spoken)
A dozen bottles? My! That *is* excessive!
(sung)
MY PLANS ALL HAVE BEEN SHATTERED
I'VE LOST ALL THAT MATTERS!

Dame Pluche
WHY DID I BRING CAMILLE?

Father Bridaine
I NEED A HEARTY MEAL!

Pluche & Bridaine
HA HA, HA HA, HA HA, HA HA

Baron
THIS IMPORTANT DAY
HAS SOMEHOW GONE ASTRAY

Pluche
AND YET WE'RE HERE TO RECTIFY
YOUR PROBLEMS, IF YOU'LL LET US TRY.

Master Blazius *(entering)*
MY LORD, A WORD WITH YOU

Baron
OH GOOD LORD, NOT YOU, TOO!

Master Blazius
YOUR SON IS FLIRTING WITH THE PEASANTS

Baron
WHAT? THAT CAN'T BE TRUE!

Master Blazius
I'M ABSOLUTELY SURE

Dame Pluche
SEEMS HIGHLY IMMATURE

Master Blazius
HE PLAYED 'DUCK DUCK GOOSE' WITH THEM

Father Bridaine
A STRANGE WAY TO SEDUCE THEM

Baron
MY BRAIN! IT'S REELING!

Blazius and Pluche
SEE HOW HE'S FEELING!
HIS IDEAS ARE ALL DISCOMBOBULATED

Baron
THIS IMPORTANT DAY
HAS SOMEHOW GONE ASTRAY
A LAWYER CANNOT FLIRT WITH PEASANTS!

Pluche
TAKE BACK ALL THE WEDDING PRESENTS

Blazius and Pluche
HE ONCE WAS ELATED
NOW HE'S AGITATED
HE'S A DISCOMBOBULATED MAN

(Blackout)

Act I Scene 4

(Antoine is outside the home of Rosette, Camille's half-sister. She is only 16, and not as sophisticated as Camille, and rather naïve, but she is grounded and exceedingly honest)

Antoine

Rosette, come here, little one!

Rosette

(Giggling)

Yes, Antoine. I mean, "My Lord."

Antoine

You saw me earlier from your window, and you did not come down, you wicked girl! Give me that hand of yours, quick now, and those cheeks to be kissed.

Rosette

Yes, My Lord.

(He kisses her on her cheeks while holding both her hands)

Antoine

Are you married, little one? They told me you had found someone.

Rosette

Oh, no.

Antoine

Why? There isn't a prettier girl than you in the village. We'll find you a match, child. Your half-sister Camille is come! Have you seen her?

Rosette

She has not come this way yet.

Antoine

Be off quick. Put on your new dress, and come to supper at the chateau.

Rosette

Yes, my Lord.

(Lights fade).

Act I Scene 5

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(Drawing Room. Enter Master Blazius and Antoine)

Master Blazius

My lord, your father is in despair.

Antoine

Why so?

Master Blazius

You realize, of course, that he had plans for you to marry your cousin, Camille.

Antoine

Well, I ask for nothing better!

Master Blazius

Nevertheless, the Baron thinks he perceives an incompatibility in your characters.

Antoine

That is unlucky. I can't remodel mine.

Master Blazius

Will you allow this to make the match impossible?

Antoine

I tell you once more, I ask no better than to marry Camille. Go and find the Baron and tell him so.

Master Blazius

My lord, I withdraw; here comes your cousin.

(Blazius exits. Enter Camille)

Antoine

Up already, cousin? And you'll be happy to know, I haven't altered my opinion of you since yesterday; you are ever so pretty!

Camille

Let us be serious, Antoine. Your father wants to make a match between us. I don't know what you think of it, but I consider it right to forewarn you that I have made up my mind on the matter.

Antoine

The worse for me, if you dislike me.

Camille

No more than anyone else; I simply don't intend to marry. There is nothing in that to wound your pride!

Antoine

I don't deal in pride: I care for neither its joys nor its pains.

Camille

I came here only to settle my mother's property; tomorrow I go back to my convent.

Antoine

Well, you play fair. Shake hands and let us be good friends!

Camille

I don't like demonstrations.

Antoine

(Taking her hand)

Give me your hand, Camille, I beg of you. What do you fear of me? You choose that we not be married. Very well, we won't get married.

Camille

I am very glad my refusal leaves you unconcerned.

Antoine

I am not unconcerned, Camille. Your love would have given me life, but your friendship shall console me for the lack of it. Don't leave the chateau tomorrow. Stay here a few days; let me hope that our past life is not dead forever in your heart.

Camille

I feel I must leave.

Antoine

Why?

Camille

That is my secret.

Antoine

Do you love another?

Camille

No, but I will go.

Antoine

Is it irrevocable?

Camille

Yes, irrevocable.

Antoine

Well! Adieu. I should have liked to sit with you under the chestnuts in the little wood, and chat like kind friends for an hour or two. But if you don't care for that, let us say no more. Good-bye, my child.

(Antoine exits. Enter Dame Pluche)

Camille

Is all ready, Dame Pluche? Shall we start tomorrow?

Dame Pluche

Yes, dear unspotted dove. The Baron called me a nincompoop yesterday, and I am delighted to go.

Camille

Stay; here is a note you will take to Lord Antoine, before dinner, from me.

Dame Pluche.

O Lord in heaven! Is it possible? *You* writing a note to…to a *man*?

Camille

Am I not to be his wife? Surely I may write to my fiancé.

Dame Pluche

But…but…Lord Antoine has just left this spot. What could you possibly have to write about?

Camille

Do what I tell you, and make all ready for my departure.

Dame Pluche

(Exiting)

Your fiancé!? Heaven help us! Can it be true that you are forgetting your delicate upbringing?

(Lights fade)

Act I Scene 6

(*Outside. Afternoon. Rosette and Antoine are kissing)*

[song: 05 Kisses]

Rosette
DO YOU THINK ALL OF THESE KISSES
DO US ANY GOOD?

Antoine
YOU'RE MY COUSIN, PART OF THE FAMILY
LET'S NOT WORRY TOO MUCH IF WE SHOULD

Rosette
WORDS ARE ONLY WORDS, I KNOW
KISSES MEAN A BIT MORE
AND I'M NOT SO GRAND A LADY
AS THE ONES YOU'VE KISSED BEFORE

(Brief instrumental as the two kiss, playfully dancing)

Antoine
I'M ENCHANTED BY YOUR HEAVENLY SMILE
AND YOUR DELICATE TOUCH

Rosette
YOU RESPECT MY SMILE IT SEEMS
BUT YOU DON'T SPARE MY LIPS TOO MUCH

KISSES COME IN MANY VARIETIES
I KNOW JUST WHAT EACH ONE MEANS
FATHERS KISS YOU ON YOUR FOREHEAD
AND WE KISS THE BACK OF THE HAND OF THE QUEEN

BUT KISSING ON THE LIPS IS
SOMETHING ONLY LOVERS MAY DO
IT WOULD BE A TRAVESTY
IF THE VILLAGERS WERE TO MISCONSTRUE

Antoine
LET THE VILLAGERS GOSSIP
I DON'T CARE WHAT THEY DO!
AND MAYBE THIS ONE TIME
THEIR INNUENDOS ARE TRUE

Both
THEY KNOW I CARE ABOUT YOU
AND MAYBE YOU CARE
JUST A LITTLE BIT ABOUT ME, TOO.

(They kiss again as the music finishes. Lights fade)

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Act I Scene 7

(The dining hall)

Baron

Master Blazius, won't you join me once again at dinner tonight, at the chair to my right?

Blazius

Your generosity overwhelms me, but I understood that the honored place belongs to Father Bridaine. I would hate to displace one so firmly established.

(Bridaine freezes)

Baron

Nonsense! The place of honor goes to the guest. You are my guest. The Father has sat in that chair so long, he has practically become part of the décor.

Blazius

Well, perhaps a little redecorating is in order, then?

Baron

(Laughing)

Precisely! Father Bridaine, I trust you wouldn't object?

Bridaine

God's will be done, my lord.

(The Baron and Blazius exit laughing. Bridaine remains behind, Gazing lovingly at 'the chair.')

[song 06: *That Noble Chair*]

Father Bridaine

GIVING HIM THE CHAIR TO THE BARON'S RIGHT
MUST BE WRONG
I'VE SAT IN IT FOR SO LONG
THE BUTLER WILL POUR FOR HIM
THE FIRST GLASS OF WINE
AND BY THE TIME
THE DISHES REACH ME, THEY'LL BE COLD!

THE TUTOR HAD THAT PLACE OF HONOR YESTERDAY
THAT MADE PERFECT SENSE,
FOR FOUR LONG YEARS, HE'D BEEN AWAY

Father Bridaine *(cont'd)*

BUT TO CONTINUE THAT AFFRONT
IS MORE THAN I CAN BEAR
THIS IS SO UNFAIR
HOW I'LL MISS THAT NOBLE CHAIR

(Instrumental)

HE USURPED MY PLACE OF HONOR THERE
IT WAS MY CHAIR!
WHERE I THOUGHT I BELONGED

THE TUTOR CAUGHT ON FAST
HE LEARNED TO PLAY THE GAME
I KNEW THEN THAT THINGS COULD NEVER STAY THE SAME
BUT TO CONTINUE THAT AFFRONT
IS MORE THAN I CAN BEAR
LIFE IS SO UNFAIR
HOW I'LL MISS THAT NOBLE CHAIR!

(Spoken)

I must return to my humble home. I'd rather be first in the village than second in Rome.

(Father Bridaine walks off sadly. Song ends. Lights fade).

Act I Scene 8

(Night. Rosette's bedroom. She is sitting up in bed, the pale moonlight Coming in through the open window)

[SONG 07: He Comes to Me]

Rosette

I DON'T BELONG IN HIS WORLD
THOUGH I WOULDN'T MIND IT
I KNOW IF I EVER LOST MY WAY,
HE'D HELP ME FIND IT

OTHERS MAY HAVE THINGS
THE WORLD HAS TAUGHT HIM TO ADMIRE
BUT I BELIEVE I HAVE EVERYTHING
HIS HEART DESIRES

HE COMES TO ME
WHEN HE SEEKS THE QUIET INNOCENCE OF YOUTH
HE COMES TO ME
WHEN HE'S WEARY OF THE LIES
AND WANTS THE TRUTH

EVEN WHEN WE'RE FAR APART
HE ONLY HAS TO READ MY HEART
TO KNOW I'LL ALWAYS BE THERE WHEN HE COMES
HE COMES TO ME

THEY'RE BOTH A PART OF THE WORLD
I'M NOT SURE HOW TO LIVE IN
SO IF HE CHOSE HER INSTEAD OF ME
THEN I WOULD GIVE IN

IN MY ARMS, HE TELLS ME THINGS
HE DOESN'T DARE TO SAY TO OTHERS
I TELL HIM WHAT HE NEEDS TO HEAR
AND THE WORLD FALLS AWAY

HE COMES TO ME

Rosette *(cont'd)*

NO QUESTIONS ASKED
NO NEED TO PLAY A PART
HE COMES TO ME
WHEN HE CAN FORGET THE MAN
HE'S MEANT TO BE
HE'S DAZZLED BY HER ELEGANCE
CONSOLED BY HER SOFT, GENTLE VOICE
BUT IF HE HAS TO MAKE A CHOICE
HE COMES…HE COMES TO ME.

(Song ends. Lights fade)

Act I Scene 9

(*The garden. Morning.)*

Antoine

(Entering, reading a note)

"Be at the little fountain at noon." What does that mean? Yesterday, she refused me outright — coldly, proudly — and now a rendezvous? If she means only to speak of convents, why choose the fountain?

(Camille enters.)

Camille

Good day, cousin. I thought, rightly or wrongly, that you left me sadly yesterday. I refused you a kiss. Here it is for you.

(She kisses his cheek.)

Antoine

Am I dreaming?

Camille

You were surprised to receive my note?

Antoine

A little.

Camille

You said something true this morning: since we must part, let us part as friends. You asked why I am leaving.

(Beat)

I shall tell you.

(Quietly)

I intend to take the veil.

Antoine

You? A nun?!

Camille

Yes.

Antoine

No. I don't believe it.

Camille

It is true, just the same. I came here to say farewell to the world. And before I leave it, I wanted your opinion. Do you think I am wrong to turn nun?

Antoine

Don't ask me, for I shall never turn monk.

Camille

The women at the convent advised me never to marry.

Antoine

Then they have taken revenge on the world.

Camille

You dismiss them very quickly.

Antoine

No. I pity them.

(A step closer)

Most were wounded long before they entered those walls.

Camille

You are cruel.

Antoine

Am I wrong?

(Beat)

They have filled your head with grief and called it wisdom. If the men they mourn passed this garden now — would they turn away?

Camille

I have seen enough to know what misery love can bring.

Antoine

No. You have seen fear masquerading as experience.

Camille

And you? You speak as though you understand women perfectly.

Antoine

Hardly.

Camille

You, who kneel at the feet of women whose names you scarcely remember — you believe in eternal love?

Antoine

How beautiful you are when you are angry.

Camille

Compliments prove nothing.

(Gathering herself)

I want something that lasts. Something that does not betray. I want a love that endures.

Antoine

Then you want something no human being can promise.

Camille

Or something you have never known.

Antoine

Perhaps. But I would rather suffer for love than never feel at all.

Camille

You make suffering seem noble.

Antoine

No. Just unavoidable. People lie. They betray each other. Humans destroy whatever they touch. But there is still something sacred in loving someone.

(Even softer)

Even badly. Even once.

Camille

And be broken for it?

Antoine

Perhaps.

(Beat)

But at the end, to say: "I suffered…but I loved."

(A long silence.)

You are a proud creature, Camille. I feel sorry for you.

Camille

Why?

Antoine

Because you are eighteen…and already afraid to live.

(He turns to go, then stops.)

I, for one, cannot stand by and watch you bury yourself alive.

(He exits as lights fade)

Act I Scene 10

(The Drawing room of the chateau. Enter Master Blazius and the Baron)

Blazius

(Slightly inebriated)

My lord, I have a strange thing to tell you. A few minutes ago, I chanced to be in the wine cellar — I mean, in the kitchen — what should I be doing in the wine cellar? Well, I was in the kitchen. I happened to find a bottle of wine — I mean a jug of water. How was I to find a bottle of wine in the kitchen? Well, I was just drinking a drop of wine — I mean a glass of water — and I was looking out of the window between two flower vases that seemed to me to be in a modern style, though they are clearly copied from the Etruscan.

Baron

What an intolerable manner of speaking you have adopted, Blazius! Your utterances are incomprehensible!

Blazius

Listen to me, my lord; lend me a moment's attention.

Baron

Ugh, the odor of this fellow Blazius is beyond contemptible!

Blazius

It is Dame Pluche. She was crumpling up in her fingers a scrap of paper folded in four.

Baron

Upon my honor, my friend, I don’t understand a word of this. What reason would Dame Pluche have for crumpling up a piece of paper folded in four. It all seems to be a piece of ill-regulated conduct, but devoid of motive. What can it mean?

Blazius

It means, your lordship, that your niece has a clandestine correspondence.

Baron

What are you saying? Do you reflect to whom you are speaking? Weigh your words carefully, Abbé.

Blazius

I might weigh them in the heavenly scales that are to weigh my soul at the last judgment, without finding a single syllable of them that does not ring true. Your niece has a clandestine correspondence.

[song 08: It's All Over]

WHILE I WAS DRINKING WINE
OSTENSIBLY TO PASS THE TIME
BUT ALSO TO AID IN MY DIGESTION
I SAW DAME PLUCHE PASS
UNDER MY WINDOW SASH
ALL OUT OF BREATH
AND WITH A FACE ALL RED WAS CAMILLE

Baron

WHAT'S THAT YOU SAID?
WHOSE FACE WAS RED?
WAS IT MY NIECE OR DAME PLUCHE?

Blazius

IT WAS YOUR NIECE, MY LORD
SHE LOOKED AGITATED

Baron

PERHAPS SHE HAD BEEN CHASING BUTTERFLIES

Blazius

MY LORD, THAT MAY BE TRUE
AND NORMALLY, I'D DEFER TO YOU
BUT I HEARD HER TELL DAME PLUCHE:
"GO FIND HER NOW OR IT'S ALL OVER."

(Instrumental Interlude)

CAMILLE HIT HER ON THE HEAD
WITH HER FAN, THERE IN THE FLOWERBED
THEN I SAW DAME PLUCHE JUMP IN THE CLOVER

Baron

AND JUST HOW DID THE GOVERNESS REPLY?

Blazius

SHE SAID THAT SHE WOULD NOT GO.

Blazius

ANTOINE'S BEEN PRETTY BUSY
FLIRTING WITH THE PRETTY
GIRLS HE'S COME TO KNOW
WITH ALL THE FLIRTIN'
ONE THING'S FOR CERTAIN
HE'S SUNK TO A NEW LOW!

Baron

I DON'T PROFESS TO UNDERSTAND
WHY NOTHING'S GOING AS I PLANNED
SEDUCING ALL THOSE GOOSE GIRLS
AND JUMPING IN THE CLOVER
IT'S ALL OVER!

(Song ends)

Baron

No! No, no no. I still say that this is impossible.

Blazius

But then…why should Miss Camille have entrusted a letter to her governess? Why should she have said "Go find him" while the other sulked and pouted?

Baron

And to whom was this letter addressed?

Blazius

That is exactly the question, is it not? To whom was this letter addressed? Obviously, to a man who is flirting with a silly girl. Now, I suspect, personally, that such a man is likely a goose herder, or perhaps a keeper of swine.

Baron

Enough! Independently of your drunkenness, you are a worthless fellow, Master Blazius. My servants see you enter the wine cellar secretly; and when you are accused of having stolen my wine, in the most pitiable manner you think to justify yourself by accusing my niece of a clandestine correspondence.

Blazius

But, my lord, pray remember--!

Baron

Leave the house, abbé, and never appear before me again. It is unreasonable to act as you do, and my self-respect constrains me never to pardon you as long as I live.

(Master Blazius sadly exits as the lights fade).

Act I Scene 11

(Enter Antoine)

[Song 09: ***No Doubt About It]***

Antoine
I'D REALLY LIKE TO KNOW ONCE AND FOR ALL
WHAT LOVE MEANS

ON THE ONE HAND SHE PUSHES TOO HARD
FOR A GIRL OF EIGHTEEN
SAYS THINGS I DISAGREE WITH JUST TO GET A WORD IN
HOW CAN ANYONE WIN?

(Lights up on Camille on the opposite side of the stage)

Camille
NOBODY CARES WHAT IS IN ALL THE BOOKS THAT HE'S READ
HEAR HIM RECITE POETRY, YOU'LL GO OUT OF YOUR HEAD!
DESPITE HIS DEGREES
HE IS QUITE ILL-AT-EASE
AROUND WOMEN
ESPECIALLY ME!

Both
I DON'T LOVE HIM/HER
THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT

Camille
SOMETHING IN ME SAYS THAT I
SHOULD BE FRIGHTENED, WONDER WHY
WANT TO RUN BUT WHERE WOULD I GO?

Antoine
SHE'S SO WISE
HOW HER EYES
SEE THROUGH EVERY DISGUISE

Camille
HOW CAVALIER HE CAN BE
WHEN HE'S SPEAKING OF MARRIAGE
JUST ONE MORE SACRED TRADITION
HE LOVES TO DISPARAGE

Antoine
MARRIAGE INVARIABLY WILL TURN LOVE INTO HATE
A MOST MISERABLE FATE!

Both
I DON'T LOVE HIM/HER
THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.

Antoine
SHE'S SO WISE
HOW HER EYES
SEE THROUGH EVERY DISGUISE

SHE REVEALS
EVERY TRUTH
THAT I TRY TO HIDE

Camille
SOMETHING IN ME SAYS THAT I
SHOULD BE FRIGHTENED
WONDER WHY
WANT TO RUN
BUT WHERE WOULD I HIDE?
THERE'S A BRILLIANCE IN THE WAY
HE SAYS THE THINGS I LONG TO SAY
AND IN THE TRUTH
HE TRIES SO HARD TO HIDE

Antoine
THE NUNS HAVE ALL STUFFED THEIR IDEAS
ABOUT LOVE IN HER HEAD
TOLD LIES ABOUT MEN WHO'VE WRONGED THEM
AND FILLED HER WITH DREAD
AND IF SHE IS ONLY REPEATING
THE WORDS THEY HAVE SAID
SHE'S BEEN GRAVELY MISLED

Camille
TOMORROW I'VE GOT TO STOP THINKING
ABOUT ALL OF THIS

Antoine
STILL I CAN'T HELP WONDER WHY SHE'D REFUSE ME A KISS

Camille
WHY OBSESS OVER THE THINGS ABOUT HIM THAT I'LL MISS?

Both
I'VE GOT TO RESIST!
I DON'T LOVE HIM/HER
THERE'S NO DOUBT…
WELL, THERE'S SOME DOUBT…
THERE'S POSITIVELY QUITE A LOT OF DOUBT…
ABOUT IT

(Lights out. End of Act I)

Act II Scene 1

[entr'acte]

As the last haunting notes of the cello die away, a dim red light begins to rise. The manor is still there, but it is no longer quite the manor we knew. Trees and tangled foliage seem to have encroached upon it, dissolving its familiar outlines. The ordinary world has given way to something strange and suspended—a landscape that is at once real and imagined.

Antoine and Camille emerge from the shadows. Their clothes, too, belong to another world: they are dressed in the fashion of the eighteenth century, nearly a hundred years earlier. The effect should not suggest a literal journey into the past, but something less definable—as though memory, longing, and imagination have momentarily overtaken reality.

The red deepens, catching their faces and the surrounding foliage in fleeting pools of light and shadow. Antoine carries a lighted torch.

Then, quietly, the classical guitar begins.

[Song 10: Dream of the Suitor]

Antoine

I WILL HURRY BEFORE THE STEPS OF THE DAY
TO THE MOUNTAINTOP TO SEEK OUT MY LONELY DOVE
MY LOVE HAS THE EYES OF AN ERMINE
HER HAIR IS LIKE A FIELD OF RICE
HER MOUTH IS A PINK SHELL, LINED WITH PEARLS

(On another part of the stage, Camille appears)

Camille

HE WILL SEEK OUT HIS LONELY DOVE
AMONG THE OAKS OF THE FOREST
HE HAS HUNG ABOUT ME A NECKLACE OF BEADS

Antoine *(overlapping)*

NINE COLORED BEADS

Camille

THERE ARE THREE RED BEADS FOR OUR LOVE
THREE VIOLET ONES FOR OUR FEARS

Camille and Antoine
THREE BLUE ONES FOR OUR HOPES

(Guitar solo)

Antoine
MAY MY LOVE BLOW OUT THIS TORCH
AND SAY SHE IS MINE!

Camille
WILL MY TRUE LOVE FIND ME HERE
AMONG THE OAKS OF THE FOREST?

Antoine
WILL SHE BLOW OUT THIS TORCH
AND SAY SHE LOVES ME?

Camille *(overlapping)*
WILL HE LOVE ME?

Antoine and Camille
AND A LIFETIME OF TOMORROWS
WILL BE OURS TO SHARE

Antoine
AND I WILL SMOKE MY PIPE OF PEACE

Antoine and Camille
BY THE CRADLE OF OUR CHILD!

(End of song. Lights fade)

Act II Scene 2

(A road outside the chateau. Enter Father Bridaine)

[Song 11: Unforeseen Disgrace]

Father Bridaine
HOW WERE MY PRIDE AND HONOR ABLE
TO REMOVE ME FROM THAT TABLE
ALL I HAD TO DO WAS EAT AND GET FAT
WHAT DID IT MATTER WHERE I SAT?

(From the opposite side enters Master Blazius. The two do not yet see each other)

Master Blazius
WRETCHED FATE CAME TO ME
WHEN I SUCCUMBED TO MY CURIOSITY
ALL I DID WAS TELL THE BARON WHAT I HEARD
NOW I'M LEFT DREAMING
OF EATING A SUCCULENT BIRD!

Both
OH, UNFORESEEN DISGRACE
TO BE BANISHED FROM THAT NOBLE PLACE
HOW I MISS THOSE JUICY DISHES

Father Bridaine
WHAT ARE THEY DOING NOW?
IT'S TWELVE O'CLOCK, THEY'RE LIKELY AT THE TABLE
A TRAVESTY!
TWO HONEYED HAMS
A LEG OF LAMB
ALL ROASTED TO PERFECTION ON THE HEARTH!

Master Blazius
BANISHED FROM THE BARON'S PLACE
HOW CAN I FACE
A LIFE OUTSIDE THE DINING HALL FOR ALL TIME?
I DID SOMETHING WRONG
AND NOW I LONG
TO DRINK ALL THAT DELICIOUS BOTTLED WINE!

Both

OH, UNFORESEEN DISGRACE
TO BE BANISHED FROM THAT NOBLE PLACE
HOW I MISS THOSE JUICY DISHES

(The two see each other for the first time. The following Dialogue is underscored by music):

Master Blazius

Father Bridaine!

Father Bridaine

Master Blazius! What are you doing here?

Master Blazius

Alas, Father! The Baron has dismissed me!

Father Bridaine

Can it be true?

Master Blazius

I mistakenly accused Miss Camille of having a secret correspondence, and yet, I swear, I saw, or thought I saw Dame Pluche jumping in the clover!

Father Bridaine

What are you saying?

Master Blazius

The truth! I am in disgrace for stealing a bottle of wine!

Father Bridaine

What does all this talk of stolen bottles have to do with secret letters and jumps in the clover?!

Master Blazius

FATHER BRIDAINE, PLEASE INTERCEDE
I AM IN NEED
OF AN INTERMEDIARY

Father Bridaine

(Aside)
IT'S THE ANSWER TO MY PRAYERS
THE LORD SAW FIT TO SEAT ME IN THAT BLESSED CHAIR!

Master Blazius

I'D BE GRATEFUL IF YOU'D TAKE THE TIME
AND LISTEN TO MY STORY

Father Bridaine

I'M IN A RUSH
AND BESIDES
IT'S NEVER WISE
TO BE CONSORTING IN BROAD DAYLIGHT WITH A LUSH!

(Spoken while exiting)

Fly to the feast! Swell my stomach!

Blazius

Wretched Dame Pluche. It is to you I owe my disgrace. Holy University of Paris! I am called a sot! A miscreant. A nefarious deceiver! I am undone if I cannot prove to the baron that his niece has a clandestine correspondence.

(Dame Pluche enters, carrying a letter)

Wait! Here comes the wicked cow now! No doubt off to mail Camille's letter.

[song 12: The Letter]

Master Blazius

MOST VILE GO-BETWEEN
THAT I HAVE EVER SEEN
YOU ARE THE CAUSE OF MY RUIN
DAME PLUCHE, GIVE ME THAT LETTER

Dame Pluche

I DON'T THINK SO, I KNOW BETTER
THIS LETTER SURELY WILL BE MAILED

Master Blazius

I'LL BE IN DISGRACE NOW
MUST FIND ANOTHER PLACE NOW
I AM CALLED A LUSH
THROWN INTO THE UNDERBRUSH
IF I DON'T GET THAT LETTER, I'M UNDONE
GIVE IT TO ME OR YOU'RE DEAD!

Dame Pluche

I? DEAD?

Master Blazius

THAT'S WHAT I SAID

Pluche
CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE OF THIS ABUSE

(Enter Antoine)

Antoine
WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?
BLAZIUS, WHY ARE YOU SHOUTING?

Master Blazius
SHE'S A GO-BETWEEN, MY LORD

Dame Pluche
I SWEAR MY HANDS ARE CLEAN, MY LORD
CAMILLE WROTE THAT LETTER
SOMETHING MUST HAVE REALLY UPSET HER
SHE TOLD ME TO MAIL IT RIGHT AWAY

Master Blazius
IT'S A LETTER TO A SNAKE CHARMER
NOTHING BUT A PIG FARMER

Dame Pluche
YOU ARE FULL OF WELL-RIPENED MANURE

Antoine
DAME PLUCHE, GIVE ME THE LETTER
I WILL MAIL IT FOR YOU
I THINK THAT IS THE BEST WAY

All
AFTER ALL, (YOU'RE) I'M HER FIANCÉ
(Antoine takes the letter and exits).

Master Blazius
NOW LOOK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE
YOU MAY THINK THAT YOU HAVE WON

Blazius and Pluche
WAIT UNTIL THE BARON HEARS ABOUT YOU!

Dame Pluche
I knew something like this would happen! Misfortune follows you like the Black Death! You, sir, are no gentleman!

(Song ends. Blackout)

Act II Scene 3

Antoine

(Alone)

I know it would be a crime to open this letter … but what can Camille be saying to this nun? Could I be in love after all? What power does this strange girl have over me that the mere sight of her handwriting should make me tremble?

(Looks down, curious)

That's funny; Blazius, while struggling with Dame Pluche, has burst the seal. Is it a crime to unfold it? No matter, I will put everything just as it was.

(Opens the letter and reads.)

> I am leaving tomorrow, my dear, and all has happened as I had foreseen. It is a terrible thing; but that poor young man has a dagger in his heart; he will never be consoled for having lost me. God will pardon me for having reduced him to despair by my refusal. Alas! my dear, what could I do? Pray for me; we shall meet again soon, and forever. Yours with my whole soul, Camille

Is it possible? That is how Camille writes!? That is how she speaks of me? I in despair at her refusal? I have a dagger in my heart? What reason can she have to invent such a romance? Poor Camille gives herself to God with a willing heart, but she has resolved to leave me in despair. It is so interesting for a young girl to sacrifice to God the happiness of a cousin! No, no, Camille, I do not love you, I am not in despair, I do not have a dagger in my heart, and I will prove it to you. Yes, before you leave the chateau, you shall know that I love another.

(Calling to a peasant)

You there! Go to the chateau; tell them in the kitchen to send a servant to take this note to Mademoiselle Camille at once.

(He hurriedly scribbles a note and hands it to a peasant offstage)

Now for the other. Here! Rosette, Rosette!

(He knocks at the door to her cottage)

Rosette

(Opening it)

Is it you, Antoine? I mean, my lord. Come in.

Antoine

Put on your prettiest hat, Rosette, and come with me.

Rosette

Where?

Antoine

I will tell you. Hurry!

Rosette

Yes, Antoine.

(She goes into the house)

Antoine

I have asked Camille for another rendezvous, and I am sure she will come; but, by heaven, she will not find what she expects there. I mean to whisper words of love to Rosette—before Camille herself.

Lights fade

Act II Scene 4

(The woods at night. Moonlight shines through the trees. We See the ornate chateau in the background. A fountain is nearby)

Camille

(Entering, reading)

Antoine asks me to say good-bye to him before leaving, near the little fountain where I brought him yesterday. What can he have to say to me? Why, here is the fountain, and I am on the spot. Ought I to grant this second rendezvous? Ah! There is Antoine coming this way with my sister, I suppose he will leave her. I am glad that I won't seem to be the first to arrive.

(She hides behind a tree. Antoine and Rosette enter, and sit down)

Camille

(Hidden, aside)

What is the meaning of this? He is making her sit down beside him. Does he ask me for a rendezvous only to come here and talk with another girl? I am curious to know what he says to her.

[Song 13: The Rendezvous]

Antoine

AT THIS HOUR, THE WORLD IS STILL ENOUGH
TO HEAR MY HEART SPEAK
I CAN'T CONFESS IN DAYLIGHT

Camille

WHY DOES THIS SOUND SO FAMILIAR?

Antoine

SOME TRUTHS JUST CAN'T WAIT TO BE DISCOVERED

Rosette

LORD, HOW STRANGE, THIS WAY YOU SPEAK TO ME

Antoine

WOULD YOU PREFER
I SPEAK WITH LESS SINCERITY!

Rosette

I DON'T QUITE KNOW HOW TO ANSWER YOU!

Camille

JUST KEEP SILENT!
IT'S THE BEST THING TO DO

Rosette
I TRUST YOUR HEART
AND I BELIEVE IN YOU
IS THIS THE BEGINNING OR THE END?

Camille
THERE'S NO REASON TO PRETEND

Antoine
DECEIT IS HARDLY A MORTAL SIN
LET IT ALL BEGIN!

Rosette
CLEVER WORDS ARE NOT WHAT I WAS MEANT FOR

Antoine
YOUR SILENCE TELLS ME MORE
THAN WORDS COULD EVER DO
YOU HESITATE, BUT I SEE THAT YOU FEEL IT, TOO

Rosette
MY LORD…YOU EXPRESS YOURSELF SO PERFECTLY

Camille
…WITH WORDS OF LOVE THAT WERE ONCE MEANT FOR ME

Antoine
(Places his gold necklace on Rosette)
COME, ROSETTE, AND SHARE YOUR LIFE WITH ME
(He throws a ring into the fountain)

Camille
HE HAS THROWN AWAY MY RING
AS IF IT DOESN'T MEAN A THING.
WHAT'S MORE, SHE'S WEARING HIS GOLDEN CHAIN
THIS IS NOT A GAME

Rosette
MY LORD, I'LL TRY TO LOVE YOU AS BEST I CAN

Antoine *(laughing)*
AS BEST YOU CAN IS QUITE GOOD ENOUGH FOR NOW

All
THINGS WILL ALL WORK OUT…SOMEHOW.
(lights fade)

Act II Scene 5

(The Drawing Room of the Chateau)

Father Bridaine
My lord, I must speak to you in private. Your son is making advances to a village girl.

Baron
That is an absurd accusation, my friend.

Father Bridaine
I distinctly saw him pass through the heather with her on his arm. He was bending his head to her ear and promising to marry her.

Baron
This is monstrous!

Father Bridaine
You may be convinced of the veracity. He gave her a considerable present.

Baron
Heavens, Bridaine, considerable? In what way considerable?

Father Bridaine
Both in monetary value and in sentimentality. It was the gold chain he used to wear in his cap.

Baron
This does sound serious, indeed. Please retire to my study, Father. I shall join you there momentarily.

(Bridaine exits to one side. Camille enters from the opposite side as music starts).

I don't know what to make of all this.

[song 14: The Baron Declines]

Camille
MY LORD, A WORD WITH YOU

Baron
CAMILLE? NOT YOU, TOO!

Camille
YOUR SON IS GETTING MARRIED TO ROSETTE

Baron

AND SO IT'S TRUE!
WHAT TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES
THIS ILL-CONCEIVED ROMANCE IS

Camille

YOU CAN PUT A STOP TO THIS!

Baron

I WONDER WHAT THE CHANCE IS
THIS SHALL BE
A CALAMITY!
I SEE THE CURTAIN FALLING!
I SCARCELY KNOW
WHAT TO SAY
MARRYING THE YOUNGER SISTER
OF ONE'S FORMER FIANCÉE!
I'LL HIDE MYSELF AWAY
WAIT FOR A MORE AUSPICIOUS DAY
REEMERGING WHEN I FIND THE AMBIENCE LESS DAUNTING

Camille

MY LORD, YOU REALLY OUGHT TO
SOMEHOW CALL A HALT TO
THIS MISERABLE DISGRACE

Baron

I DARE NOT SHOW MY FACE!

Both

HOW SAD

Baron

I THINK I SHALL GO MAD

Camille and Baron

TOO BAD

Camille

THOUGHT YOU ALREADY HAD!

Both

THIS PASSES ALL BOUNDS OF REASON
THIS IMPORTANT DAY
SOMEHOW'S GONE ASTRAY

Baron

I'LL BE WEARING BLACK FOR THE DURATION OF
THE CURRENT SEASON

(The Baron exits)

Camille

AM I NOT TO FIND
A MAN WITH MORE THAN HALF A MIND?

(A pause in the music as Camille speaks the last line)

Upon my word, when you look for one…the solitude becomes appalling!

(Musical flourish. Song ends).

(Enter Antoine.)

Camille

Well, cousin, when is the wedding to be?

Antoine

As soon as possible. I have mentioned it already to the notary, the priest, and all the peasants.

Camille

You really think, then, that you will marry Rosette?

Antoine

Most assuredly.

Camille

And what will your father say?

Antoine

Whatever he pleases. I choose to marry this girl. It is an idea for which I am indebted to you, by the way. Whether she has brains or not, I might have found worse. People may object. I wash my hands of them.

Camille

This is no laughing matter. You do well to marry her, but people will say you married her out of spite.

Antoine

Let them say what they please. It's all the same to me.

Camille

But you do not mean it. She is nobody.

Antoine

She will be somebody, then, when she is my wife.

Camille

You will tire of her before the notary has put on his best coat and shoes.

Antoine

When a woman is gentle and affectionate, fresh, kind and beautiful, I can be contented. Even if she does not speak Latin!

Camille

It's a pity so much money was spent on teaching it to you.

Antoine

I agree. It would have been better to give it to the poor.

Camille

Just how long will this sport of yours last?

Antoine

What sport?

Camille

Your marriage to Rosette.

Antoine

Oh, not long. God has not made man a lasting piece of work. Forty or fifty years at most.

Camille

I look forward to dancing at your wedding.

(Lights fade)

Act II Scene 6

(Camille's room. Enter Camille and Dame Pluche.)

Camille

He took my letter, you say?

Dame Pluche

Yes, my child. He mailed it this morning.

Camille

Go to the drawing room, Dame Pluche, and tell Antoine I wish to see him.

(Dame Pluche exits.)

He read my letter. That is certain. The scene in the woods...his sudden love for Rosette...all of it was retaliation. He wanted me to believe he had forgotten me.

(Beat)

Rosette? Are you there?

Rosette

(Entering timidly)

Yes. May I come in?

Camille

Come here, child.

(Looking closely at her)

Camille

Last night, at the fountain…what did Antoine say to you?

Rosette

(Startled)

At the fountain?

Camille

Do not feign innocence. I know he spoke to you there.

Rosette

You saw us?

Camille

No.

(Beat)

But I know Antoine. He made you promises, did he not?

Rosette *(Softly)*

Yes.

Camille

Marriage?

Rosette

How did you know that?

Camille

What does it matter?

(Softening slightly)

Do you believe him?

Rosette

Why should I not? He has always been kind to me.

Camille

Poor child.

Rosette

(Realization creeping over her)

You think he deceived me?

Camille

I think Antoine scarcely knows his own heart.

Rosette

But...he said...

Camille

Yes. I know what he said.

(Beat)

Rosette...listen to me carefully. If Antoine truly loves you, you shall hear it from his own lips. If he does not...better to learn it now.

Lights fade

Act II Scene 7

(Courtyard)

Pluche

(In full fluster)

Is there no one left in this house with the least shred of competence?

(Blazius, drink in hand, is lounging under the shade of a tree.)

Where are the servants? I must have the animals saddled at once! Is there no one here with any sense of integrity? Must everything fall to me?

Blazius

If everything falls to you, madam, then I fear for the world's inhabitants.

Pluche

(She turns around quickly, surprised to find someone there)

Ugh! It's *you*! Well, never mind, never mind. Come here.

Blazius

I *am* here, madam.

Pluche

Don't be impertinent. Come *usefully* here. You've got two arms. You'll do. I am leaving this horrid place. I shall not die here!

Blazius

No, certainly not. Die far away from here, my dear lady, I beg of you, in some cavern far removed from decent society.

[song 15: Saddle My Ass]

Dame Pluche

YOU SHALL SADDLE MY ASS

Master Blazius

WHOA, MADAM! NOT SO FAST
I'VE NOT SADDLED ANYTHING IN YEARS!

Dame Pluche

SO THEN, YOU REFUSE?

Master Blazius

NO, MA'AM, YOU'RE CONFUSED
I DECLINE

Blazius *(Cont'd)*
FOR I MUST HAVE ANOTHER BOTTLE OF WINE

Dame Pluche
I CAN REMAIN NO MORE
EVERYTHING'S IN DISARRAY
ALL NEGLECTED AND IMMORAL
I REFUSE TO STAY ANOTHER DAY!

Pluche
MY ASS IS NOT YET SADDLED!

Blazius
(Blazius looks her over. Takes another sip.)
THAT'S A THING NOT EASILY STRADDLED
A FEAT OF EPIC MAGNITUDE

Pluche
THE MASTERS HAVE ALL PROVED TO BE LIARS
EVEN LIVESTOCK SEEM TO CONSPIRE

Blazius
SO THIS IS WHAT'S COME TO PASS
YOU CAN'T EVEN TRUST YOUR OWN ASS!

Pluche
GOD, WHY DID YOU SEND ME HERE?
AMONG THE LEWD AND THE DECEITFUL?
WHERE TUTORS DRINK, AND SCHOLARS CHEAT

Blazius
AND YET WE CAN BE QUITE DISCREET
AMONG THE SO-CALLED ELITE!

Pluche
SERVANTS VANISH, NOBLES QUARREL
ENGAGED IN EVERYTHING IMMORAL
COMING HERE WAS QUITE A GRAVE MISTAKE!
MUST I SADDLE MY OWN ASS?

Blazius
I'M AFRAID THAT I MUST PASS
THAT'S A TASK
NO MORTAL MAN SHOULD EVER UNDERTAKE.

(Camille enters, upset)

Pluche

AH, CAMILLE, ALL IS NOW READY
WE ARE LEAVING AT LAST.

Camille

NO, WE SHALL NOT START TODAY.

Pluche

I INSIST, WE MUST BE ON OUR WAY!

(The following dialogue is spoken with musical underscoring)

Camille

(Snaps)

Go to the devil—you and your ass, too.

(She exits).

(Blazius watches, then quietly:)

Blazius

(Murmuring)

Where one goes…the other inevitably follows.

(Beat. Then, louder:)

Well.

(He studies Pluche.)

Dame Pluche is pale with rage…her wig sits askew…her fingers tremble…her chest — ah —

(Leans in)

…convulses with moral indignation.

(Beat)

An exceedingly rare condition.

Dame Pluche

Lord God of heaven — Camille…swore!

(To Blazius)

Saddle it! Saddle the beast at once! I will not remain among savages!

(She storms off.)

Blazius

(Blazius raises his glass.)

And just like that…the village is exponentially enhanced.

Blackout

Act II Scene 8

(As lights come up, we see Camille and Rosette, inside the chateau)

Camille

All right, now, Rosette. Go behind this curtain and remember — keep quiet. Remain there until I call you.

(Rosette slowly exits behind the tapestry.)

Camille

(Alone)

What began as vengeance begins to resemble mercy. The poor girl loves him.

(Antoine enters.)

Antoine

Oh, my, Camille! You are dressed to kill! Just whose head are you after?

Camille

I don't know. Yours, perhaps. I am sorry I could not come to the rendezvous last night. Had you anything important to say to me?

Antoine

(aside)

A good-sized fib for such a spotless lamb. I saw her hiding behind a tree.

(to Camille)

I have nothing to say but farewell, Camille. I thought you were starting off, but it doesn't look as if you're dressed for travel.

Camille

I like conversation. I may even wish to quarrel with you again.

Antoine

What's the use in quarreling when it is impossible to make up? The pleasure of disputes is in making peace?

Camille

Are you convinced I don't want it?

Antoine

Please! No more. I am no match for you.

Camille

I should like a flirtation. You proposed going to the village. Let us go. I am ready. We can picnic on the grass or stroll through the forest

(she takes his hands)

That is odd. You're not wearing the ring I gave you.

Antoine

Oh! I, uh….lost it.

Camille

Ah, don't worry. I have found it.

(she shows him the ring)

Antoine

Where did you--?!

Camille

You are looking at my hands to see if they are wet. Indeed, I ruined my convent dress trying to fish the plaything out of the fountain. That's why I have put on another

(she places the ring on his finger).

Antoine

Why are you giving me back the ring, this sad pledge of a happiness that exists no more? Why is it that you change color, like the stone of this ring, with every passing moment?

(music softly underscores dialogue)

Camille

Do you know the heart of women, Antoine? Do you think that their thoughts change when their words are different? Quite candidly, I must tell you that women sometimes have to play a part, to lie even, and who knows if we don't sometimes derive some pleasure from the deceit?

[Song 16: The Reckoning]

Camille

IT'S TRUE, DECEIT FOR WOMEN SOMETIMES
HOLDS A KIND OF MYSTICAL ALLURE
BUT HAVE YOU REFLECTED ON THE JUDGMENT
THAT ALL WOMEN MUST ENDURE?

Antoine

I DON'T UNDERSTAND A THING,
I JUST KNOW I LOVE YOU.

Camille

YOU LOVE ME?

Antoine

I'VE NEVER BEEN MORE SINCERE
IN ALL MY LIFE, BELIEVE ME
YOU KNOW I'D NEVER LIE!

Camille

YET I KNOW SOMEONE WHO
MAY DISAGREE WITH YOU
ONE YOU HAVE MADE A PROMISE TO

(Rosette comes out from behind the curtain)

Antoine *(spoken)*

Rosette!

Rosette (spoken)

You…never lie, my lord?

(Rosette runs off)

Antoine

WHAT HAVE I DONE?
CAMILLE, WILL YOU FORGIVE ME?

Camille

I AM NOT THE ONE
WHOM YOU SHOULD ASK FORGIVENESS OF
YOU OWE ME NOTHING
BUT ROSETTE DESERVES THE TRUTH
YOU NEVER LOVED HER…
AND I DON'T LOVE YOU.
AS GOD IS MY WITNESS
I WOULD NEVER HAVE ACTED AS YOU HAVE DONE!

I KNOW YOU LOVE ME
I ALWAYS HAVE KNOWN IT
BUT LOVE'S NOT ENOUGH NOW
CONSIDERING ALL YOU'VE DONE
PRIDE MAKES US CRUEL
AND LOVE MAKES US BLIND
WE CAN HURT THOSE WE CHERISH
AND LEAVE ALL THE TRUTH BEHIND.

Antoine	**Camille** *(Cont'd)*
	I'D WRITTEN THAT I HAD INSPIRED
YOU'VE ALWAYS INSPIRED ME	SOME LOVE IN YOU
	I WAS FLATTERED BY IT
	IT MAY HAVE BEEN VANITY
	STILL, I ENJOYED THE THOUGHT
I DON'T DENY IT	I DON'T DENY IT
	BUT THOUGH YOU LOVE ME…
	YOU WILL MARRY HER

Antoine
YES, I WILL MARRY ROSETTE

Camille
AND YOU WILL DO WELL

Antoine
YES, QUITE WELL, AND FAR BETTER OFF
THAN IF I'D MARRIED YOU.

[song ends. Rosette enters]

Rosette
My lord...
(She holds out the necklace.)
I came to return this. This morning the village already knew. They laughed when I passed them. At first I thought they were cruel. Now I think...perhaps only they knew the truth.
(Camille lowers her eyes.)
I do not think love is shameful...even when it ends badly. Keep your necklace, Antoine. I should not like to remember this as something ugly.
(She gently places it into his hand.)
I know now where your heart has always belonged.
(Camille and Antoine finally embrace, just as the Baron and Bridaine enter. They see the young couple and are elated)

Baron
Father Bridaine! You have worked wonders! How on earth did you do it?

Bridaine
What?
(Caught off guard, then he sees Antoine and Camille in an embrace)
The uh… oh, the children are back together? Well, I must confess. I cannot—in all honesty—take credit for this transformation.

Baron
Oh?

Bridaine

(Sensing an opportunity)

Well, not *all* the credit. Not *completely*. I prefer to think that arranging for this happy reunion is merely a modest display of gifts bestowed upon me by Providence.

Baron

Such an exercise in modesty must be exhausting work.

Bridaine

It certainly does give one an appetite! Has anyone seen my leg of lamb?

(Bridaine walks around in search of food. Blazius enters, cautiously)

Baron

Blazius? Did I not forbid you from returning to the chateau?

Blazius

Did you, my Lord? Whatever could I have done to deserve such an unimaginable fate?

Baron

Uh….well……I...don't recall…precisely…but…

Blazius

Then surely the offense could not have been very serious.

Baron

That…sounds reasonable.

Blazius

…and a gentleman of your magnanimity would never banish a loyal friend without just cause.

Baron

Certainly not.

Blazius

Then, since I am here, you must never have said it.

Baron

My thoughts exactly. So good to see you again, my friend!

(Baron warmly shakes Blazius' hand. Dame Pluche enters, exhausted, wig askew, covered in dust)

Pluche

Hear me, everyone! I am in utter despair! Has *anyone* seen my ill-mannered *ass*!?

Blazius

I had hoped we'd all be spared from viewing such a calamity!

Pluche

After riding all morning, the beast willfully started on his way back toward the chateau, with me, jolted about as its unwitting companion. When I dismounted, for a drink of water, the despicable animal lurched ahead toward the chateau without me! That animal possesses a thoroughly malicious disposition.

Blazius

That's odd. I've always considered him unusually benevolent.

Pluche

The pathetic beast *bit* me.

Blazius

…and an excellent judge of character!

(All laugh — except Dame Pluche — as the orchestra begins to play)

[Song 17: No Trifling with Love]

Baron

ALL HAS GONE PRECISELY AS I PLANNED IT!
I KNEW WE'D HAVE THIS WEDDING DAY AT LAST

Antoine & Camille

WE NEARLY LET OUR PRIDE DEFEAT US

Rosette

BUT NOW THE WORST IS FINALLY PAST

Bridaine

YOUNG COUPLES ARE SO EASILY ENTICED THESE DAYS!
DESIRE IS THEIR MORTAL ENEMY!

Pluche

TWO UNCHAPERONED YOUNG LOVERS

Bridaine & Pluche

MOST OFTEN ENGAGE IN IMPROPRIETIES!

(The music pauses momentarily)

Blazius

(Spoken)

I rather thought that was the point!

(Dame Pluche glares at him)

All

THERE IS JUST ONE THING
WE MUST REMEMBER
DON'T EVER MEDDLE
WITH A BUDDING ROMANCE
DON'T BLAME IT ALL ON CIRCUMSTANCES
YOU MAY GET ONLY ONE CHANCE
DON'T THROW IT ALL AWAY
LOVE'S NOT A GAME TO PLAY

Rosette

I THOUGHT SO, TOO
I'VE WAITED FOR YOU
TO COME TO YOUR SENSES**!**
I JUST HOPE THIS HASN'T
RUINED ME FOR MARRIAGE

Blazius

MY DEAR, THAT ONLY HEIGHTENS YOUR ALLURE
A TOUCH OF DANGER STIMULATES THE SENSES

Pluche

SHE NEEDS NO STIMULATION FROM YOU!!

Rosette

FINALLY, YOUR FACADES HAVE ALL BEEN STRIPPED AWAY

Bridaine

IT'S DANGEROUS TO LIVE A LIFE OF DECEIT!

Camille

I WAS AFRAID

Antoine

I WAS CARELESS

Rosette

I WAS HONEST!

Blazius

WHAT'S THE POINT OF LOVE IF IT ISN'T TO CHEAT?

Camille

I HID THE TRUTH FROM YOU

All

SO REGRETFUL!

Blazius

AND I ADMIT STEALING A DOZEN BOTTLES OF WINE

Baron

(Taken aback; spoken)

I *knew* that was you!

Antoine

I MAY HAVE BEEN…A TAD UNTRUTHFUL

Rosette

DAME PLUCHE, WHAT DO YOU REGRET MOST?

Dame Pluche

I'VE RIDDEN ALL DAY ON MY ASS!
I SHOULD HAVE TRAVELED FIRST CLASS
THAT DONKEY'S AN UNDIGNIFIED ASSAULT
ON MY CONSTITUTION!

Baron

NOW THAT ALL IS RIGHT, SHALL WE BEGIN AGAIN?

All

…THOUGH THIS TRAVESTY WAS QUITE MISGUIDED.

Blazius

SHALL WE DRINK TO OVERCOMING MISFORTUNE?

All

WHAT WERE WE EVER THINKING OF?
NO TRIFLING WITH LOVE!

(Song ends abruptly)

Blackout

END OF PLAY