

Madama Butterfly

by Giacomo Puccini

Cast

CIO-CIO SAN (Madama Butterfly) (soprano)
SUZUKI, her maid (mezzo-soprano)
B. F. PINKERTON, Lieutenant in the United States Navy (tenor)
SHARPLESS, United States consul at Nagasaki (baritone)
GORO, a matchmaker (tenor)
PRINCE YAMADORI (tenor)
THE BONZE, Cio-Cio San's uncle (bass)
YAKUSIDE, Cio-Cio San's uncle (bass)
THE IMPERIAL COMMISSIONER (bass)
THE OFFICIAL REGISTRAR (bass)
CIO-CIO SAN'S MOTHER (mezzo-soprano)
THE AUNT (soprano)
THE COUSIN (soprano)
KATE PINKERTON (mezzo-soprano)
DOLORE ('Sorrow'), Cio-Cio San's child
Cio-Cio San's relations and friends and servants

ACT ONE

A hill near Nagasaki

A Japanese house, with terraced garden. At back, below, the harbor and the city. Goro is showing the house to Pinkerton, who goes from one surprise to another.

PINKERTON
And ceiling and walls...

GORO
Go back and forth at will,
so that you can enjoy
from the same spot
different views to the usual ones.

PINKERTON
Where is
the nuptial nest?

GORO
Here, or there...depending...

PINKERTON
It has false ends, too!
And the living room?

GORO (*indicating the terrace*)
There it is!

PINKERTON
In the open air?

GORO
One side slides along...

PINKERTON
I understand!
Another one...

GORO
...glides along!

PINKERTON
And this ridiculous little place...

GORO

Solid as a tower,
from floor to ceiling.

PINKERTON

...is a concertina house.

GORO

(claps his hands and two men and a woman enter and kneel before Pinkerton.)

This is the maid
who was your bride's
faithful servant before.
The cook. The manservant. They are
embarrassed
by the great honour.

PINKERTON

Their names?

GORO

"Miss Light Cloud."
"Ray of the Rising Sun."
"The Aromatic One."

SUZUKI

Your Honor is smiling?
Laughter is fruit and flower.
The wise Ogunama has said:
"A smile breaks through
a web of trouble.
It opens the shell for the pearl,
to man it opens the gates
of Paradise.
Perfume of the gods...
fountain of life... "
The wise Ogunama has said:
"A smile breaks through a web of troubles."
*(Goro realizes that Pinkerton is bored. He
claps his hands. The three servants run back
into the house.)*

PINKERTON

By her chattering
she seems just like all woman the world
over.
What are you looking at?

GORO

To see if the bride's coming yet.

PINKERTON

Is everything ready?

GORO

Everything.

PINKERTON

Priceless pearl of a marriage-broker!

GORO

The Registrar,
the relations,
your Consul and the bride
will all come here.
You'll sign the documents here,
and you'll be married.

PINKERTON

And are there many relations?

GORO

The mother-in-law, the grandmother,
her uncle the Bonze (who won't
honor us with his presence),
and her male and female cousins...
Let's say, with ancestors
and contemporaries, about two dozen.
As for descendants...
Your Grace and the pretty Butterfly
will take good care of that.

PINKERTON

You priceless pearl of a marriage-broker!

VOICE OF SHARPLESS

You sweat and climb,
puff and stumble!

GORO

The Consul's coming up.

SHARPLESS *(appearing, out of breath)*

Those stones
have reduced me to a jelly!

PINKERTON
Welcome!

GORO
Welcome!

SHARPLESS
Uff!

PINKERTON
Quick, Goro,
some refreshments.

SHARPLESS
It's high up, here!

PINKERTON
But, it's beautiful!

SHARPLESS
Nagasaki, the sea, the harbor...

PINKERTON
And a little house
that works by magic.

SHARPLESS
Is it yours?

PINKERTON
I've bought it for nine hundred
and ninety-nine years,
with the right, every month,
to cancel the agreement.
In this country
houses and contracts
are equally elastic.

SHARPLESS
And the clever man makes the most of it.

PINKERTON
Certainly.
*(Goro hurries from the house, followed by
two servants bearing glasses, bottles, plates,
cutlery and two wicker chairs. They lay two
places at a little table, and return to the
house.)*
Everywhere in the world

the roving Yankee
takes his pleasure and his profit,
indifferent to all risks.
He drops anchor
at random...
(He breaks off to offer a drink to Sharpless.)
Milk punch or whisky?
...He drops anchor
at random
till a sudden squall wrecks
the ship, hawsers rigging and all...
He's not satisfied with life
unless he makes his own
the flowers of every shore...

SHARPLESS
It's an easy-going creed.

PINKERTON
...the love of every pretty girl.

SHARPLESS
...an easy-going creed
that makes life delightful
but saddens the heart.

PINKERTON
If beaten,
he tries his luck again.
He follows his bent
wherever he may be.
So I'm marrying
in Japanese fashion
for nine hundred and
ninety-nine years. With the right
to be freed every month!

SHARPLESS
It's an easy-going creed.

PINKERTON
"America forever!"

SHARPLESS
"America forever!"
And is the bride pretty?

GORO (*overhearing, comes forward.*)
A garland of fresh flowers,
a star with golden rays...

And for next to nothing: only a hundred yen.
If your Grace wishes
I have a good selection.

PINKERTON
Go and fetch her, Goro.

SHARPLESS
What madness has got hold of you!
Are you completely
infatuated?

PINKERTON
I don't know! It depends
on the degree of infatuation!
Love or passing fancy —
I couldn't say.
She's certainly bewitched me
with her innocent arts.
Delicate and fragile as blown glass,
in stature, in bearing
she resembles some figure on a painted
screen,
but as, from her background of glossy
lacquer,
with a sudden movement
she frees herself; like a butterfly
she flutters and settles
with such quiet grace
that a madness seizes me
to pursue her,
even though I might
damage her wings.

SHARPLESS
The day before yesterday she came
to visit the Consulate.

I didn't see her myself
but I heard her speak.
The mystery of her voice
touched me to the heart.
True love surely
speaks like that.

It would be a great sin
to strip off those delicate wings
and perhaps plunge a trusting heart into
despair.
That heavenly, meek, pretty, little voice
shouldn't utter a note of sadness!

PINKERTON
My dear Consul,
don't worry! It's usual
at your age to take a pessimistic view.
There's no great harm done
if I want those wings
to be spread in love's tender flight!
Whisky?

SHARPLESS
Another little glassful.
Here's to your family at home.

PINKERTON
And to the day when I shall get married
in real earnest
to a real American bride.

GORO (*re-enters at a run*)
Here they come! They've reached
the top of the hill.
You can already hear the swarm
of women rustling like
leaves in the wind!

GIRLS' VOICES
Ah! Ah!
What an expanse of sky!
What an expanse of sea!

VOICE OF BUTTERFLY
Just one more step now...

GIRLS' VOICES
How slow you are!

VOICE OF BUTTERFLY
Wait.

GIRLS' VOICES
Here we are at the summit!
Look, just look at all the flowers!

VOICE OF BUTTERFLY

Over land and sea there floats
a joyous breath of spring.

SHARPLESS

Oh, the gay chatter of youth!

VOICE OF BUTTERFLY

I am the happiest
girl in Japan,
or rather, in the whole world.
Friends, I have come
at the call of love...

I have come to the portals of love
where is gathered the happiness
of all who live and die.

GIRLS' VOICES

Joy to you, sweet friend,
but before crossing
the threshold which draws you,
turn and look at
the things which you hold dear,
look at all that sky,
all those flowers and all that sea!

BUTTERFLY

We have arrived.
*(She sees the group of men and recognizes
Pinkerton. She closes her parasol smartly,
and points Pinkerton out to her friends.)*
B. F. Pinkerton. Down.

GIRL FRIENDS

Down.

BUTTERFLY

Good luck attend you.

GIRL FRIENDS

Our respects.

PINKERTON

The climb is
rather difficult?

BUTTERFLY

To a court bride
impatience is more trying.

PINKERTON

A very rare complement.

BUTTERFLY

I know some even prettier ones.

PINKERTON

Real gems!

BUTTERFLY

If you like, this very instant...

PINKERTON

Thank you...no.

SHARPLESS

Miss Butterfly. A pretty name —
it suits you to perfection.
Do you come from Nagasaki?

BUTTERFLY

Yes, sir. From a family
which at one time was quite well-to-do.
(to her friends)
Isn't that so?

GIRLFRIENDS

It is!

BUTTERFLY

No one ever admits
he was born in poverty.
There's not a beggar
who, to hear him, doesn't
come of high lineage. All the same,
I have known riches.
But storms uproot
the sturdiest oaks...
and we became geishas
to support ourselves.
(to her friends)
That's so, isn't it?

GIRLFRIENDS

It is!

BUTTERFLY

I don't hide it,
neither do I feel hard done by.
Why do you laugh?
It's the way of the world.

PINKERTON

With those childlike ways,
when she talks she sets my blood on fire.

SHARPLESS

And have you any sisters?

BUTTERFLY

No, sir. I have my mother.

GORO

A noble lady.

BUTTERFLY

But without wronging her,
very poor, too.

SHARPLESS

And your father?

BUTTERFLY (*abruptly*)

Dead.

SHARPLESS

How old are you?

BUTTERFLY

Guess.

SHARPLESS

Ten.

BUTTERFLY

Make it more.

SHARPLESS

Twenty.

BUTTERFLY

Make it less.
Just exactly fifteen;
I'm already old.

SHARPLESS

Fifteen!

PINKERTON

Fifteen!

SHARPLESS

The age for games...

PINKERTON

...and wedding cake.

GORO

The Imperial Commissioner,
the Registrar,
the bride's family.

PINKERTON

Get on with it quickly.
(*Goro runs into the house. Pinkerton talks
apart to the Consul.*)
What a farce, this parade
of my new relations,

COUSIN and RELATIONS

He's not handsome, truly.
He's not handsome.

BUTTERFLY

He's so handsome
one just couldn't imagine anything better!

MOTHER and FRIENDS

He seems like a king to me.
He's worth a fortune.

COUSIN (*to Butterfly*)

Goro offered him to me too,
but he has got no for an answer!

BUTTERFLY

Of course, you would!

RELATIONS (*to cousin*)

Her looks have already faded.
He'll divorce her.

COUSIN and RELATIONS

I hope so.

UNCLE YAKUSIDE

Is there any wine here?
Let's have a look.
I've just seen some the color of tea,
and some red!

GORO

For goodness sake, keep quiet!
Sh! Sh! Sh!

SHARPLESS

My lucky young friend!
Lucky Pinkerton,
on whom Fate has bestowed
this newly opened flower!

PINKERTON

Yes, it's true, she's a flower, a flower!
Her exotic fragrance
has turned my head.

COUSIN and RELATIONS

He offered him to me too,
but I answered I don't want him!

MOTHER and FRIENDS

He's too handsome, he seems like a king to
me!
I wouldn't have answered no,
I would never have said no!

SHARPLESS

No lovelier girl have I ever seen
than this Butterfly.
And if you don't take this contract
and her trust seriously...

COUSIN and RELATIONS

Without looking too hard
I've found better,
and I shall roundly tell him no!

MOTHER and FRIENDS

No, my dears, I didn't think so,
he's a real gentleman,
and I would not say no!

BUTTERFLY

Attention, listen to me.

PINKERTON

Yes, it's true, she's a flower, a flower,
and, upon my honor, I've plucked her!

SHARPLESS

...Beware! She believes in them!

BUTTERFLY

Mother, come here.
Listen to me:
attention, come now,
one, two, three,
and everybody down.
*(They all bow low in front of Pinkerton and
Sharpless. Pinkerton takes Butterfly's hand.)*

PINKERTON

Come, my love,
do you like our little house?

BUTTERFLY

Mr. B. F. Pinkerton, excuse me...
I would like... a few woman's possessions...

PINKERTON

Where are they?

BUTTERFLY

They're here...you don't mind?
*(She produces various small objects from
the capacious sleeves of her kimono.)*

PINKERTON

Why ever should I, my pretty Butterfly?

BUTTERFLY

Handkerchiefs. Pipe.
A sash. A little clasp.
A mirror. A fan.

PINKERTON

What's that pot?

BUTTERFLY

A jar of rouge.

PINKERTON

Oh dear!

BUTTERFLY
 Don't you like it?
(She throws it away.)
 A way with it!

PINKERTON
 And that?

BUTTERFLY
 My most sacred possession.

PINKERTON
 And mayn't one see it?

BUTTERFLY
 There are too many people.
 Forgive me.

GORO *(whispering to Pinkerton)*
 It's a present from the Mikado
 to her father...inviting him to...
(He imitates the gesture of hara-kiri.)

PINKERTON
 And her father?

GORO
 Obeyed.

BUTTERFLY
(taking some statuettes from her sleeve)
 My Otoko.

PINKERTON
 These puppets? You said?

BUTTERFLY
 They are the spirits of my ancestors.

PINKERTON
 Oh! My respects.

BUTTERFLY
 Yesterday I went, alone
 and in secret, to the Mission.
 With my new life
 I can adopt a new religion.
 My uncle, the Bonze, doesn't know,
 neither do my people.

I follow my destiny
 and, filled with humility,
 I kneel before
 Mr. Pinkerton's God.
 It is my fate.
 In the same little church,
 beside you on my knees,
 I will pray to the same God,
 and to please you I may perhaps be able
 to forget my own people.
 My dearest love!

GORO
 Quiet, everybody!

COMMISSIONER
 It is permitted to the herein named
 Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton,
 Lieutenant in the warship *Lincoln*,

United States Navy,
 North America,
 and to Miss Butterfly
 of the Omara district of Nagasaki,
 to be united in matrimony,
 the first by right
 of his own wish
 and she by consent of her relations
 here witness to the contract.

GORO *(with ceremony)*
 The bridegroom.
 Then the bride.
 And everything's concluded.

FRIENDS
 Madam Butterfly!

BUTTERFLY
 Madam B. F. Pinkerton.

COMMISSIONER
 My best wishes.

PINKERTON
 Many thanks.

COMMISSIONER
 Are you going, sir?

SHARPLESS

I'll go along with you.

(to Pinkerton)

See you tomorrow.

PINKERTON

Capital.

OFFICIAL REGISTRAR

May you have many descendants.

PINKERTON

I'll try.

SHARPLESS *(going, to Pinkerton)*

Have a care!

(Sharpless, the Registrar and the Commissioner leave.)

PINKERTON *(to himself)*

And here we are in the family circle!

Let's get rid of all these people

as soon as we decently can.

(He raises his glass.)

Hip! Hip!

RELATIONS

O Kami! O Kami!

PINKERTON

Let's drink to the new ties.

(Suddenly a terrifying character appears. It is the Bonze, who comes forward in a rage; holding his hand out towards Butterfly, he threatens her.)

BONZE

Cho-Cho-San! Abomination!

BUTTERFLY and RELATIONS

Our uncle the Bonze!

GORO

Confound the spoilsport!

Who will rid us

of such nuisances?

BONZE

Cho-Cho-San! What were you up to at the Mission?

ALL

Answer, Cho-Cho-San!

PINKERTON

What's that madman shouting about?

BONZE

Answer, what were you about?

What, can your eyes be dry!

So then, these are the fruits?

She has renounced us all.

ALL

Oh, Cho-Cho-San!

BONZE

I tell you she has renounced our ancient faith.

ALL

Oh! Cho-Cho-San!

BONZE

Kami sarundasico!

What torments

threaten your lost soul!

PINKERTON

Hey, that's enough, I say!

BONZE

Come, everybody!

Let us go!

You have renounced us and we renounce you!

PINKERTON

Get out of here at once.

I'll have no shindy in my house and none of this bonzing!

ALL *(leaving)*

Oh! Cho-Cho-San! Kami sarundasico!

Oh! Cho-Cho-San! We renounce you!

PINKERTON

Dear child, don't cry
over that croaking of frogs.

RELATIONS (*far off*)

Oh! Cho-Cho-San!

BUTTERFLY

They're still howling!

PINKERTON

The whole tribe of them
and all the bonzes in Japan
aren't worth a tear
from your sweet, pretty eyes!

BUTTERFLY

Really? Then I won't cry any more.
And I scarcely mind
their repudiation
because of your words
which echo so sweetly in my heart.
(*She kisses his hand.*)

PINKERTON

What are you doing? My hand?

BUTTERFLY

I've been told that over there
among well-bred people
it's a sign
of the greatest respect.

SUZUKI (*from inside the house*)

Izaghi, Izanami sarundasico,
Kami, Izaghi,
Izanami sarundasico, Kami.

PINKERTON

Who's that muttering in there?

BUTTERFLY

It's Suzuki saying
her evening prayers.

PINKERTON

Night is falling.

BUTTERFLY

And darkness and peace.

PINKERTON

And you are here alone.

BUTTERFLY

Alone and renounced!
Renounced and happy!

PINKERTON

(*claps; the servants run out.*)
Come here and close up the house.

BUTTERFLY

Yes, yes, we are all alone...
and the world shut outside...

PINKERTON

And the furious Bonze.

BUTTERFLY

Suzuki, my clothes.
(*Suzuki goes to a chest and gives Butterfly
her night
clothes.*)

SUZUKI

Good night.

BUTTERFLY

I long to take off
this ceremonial sash,
let the bride be dressed
in pure white.
Whispering to himself
he smiles and watches me.

If I could only hide!

It makes me blush so!
And still the angry voice
is cursing me...
Butterfly renounced,
renounced... and happy.

PINKERTON

With squirrel-like movements
she shakes the knots loose and undoes them!
To think that this little toy

is my wife! My wife!
 But she displays such grace
 that I am consumed
 by a fever
 of sudden desire!
*(Pinkerton approaches Butterfly, who has
 finished dressing.)*

Dear child, with eyes full of witchery,
 now you are all mine.
 You're dressed all in lily-white.
 I love your dark tresses
 amid the white of your veils.

BUTTERFLY

I am like the moon-goddess,
 the little goddess of the moon,
 who comes down at night
 from the bridge of heaven.

PINKERTON

And captivates all hearts...

BUTTERFLY

...and takes them and folds them
 in a white cloak.
 And carries them away
 to the higher regions.

PINKERTON

But meanwhile, you haven't told me yet,
 you haven't told me you love me.
 Does that goddess know the words
 that satisfy burning desire?

BUTTERFLY

She does. Maybe she's unwilling
 to say them for fear of dying of it,
 for fear of dying of it!

PINKERTON

Foolish fear —
 love does not kill,
 but gives life and smiles
 for heavenly joy,
 as it does now
 in your almond eyes.

BUTTERFLY

For me you are now

the eye of heaven.
 And I liked you from the first moment
 I set eyes on you.
 You are tall and strong.
 You laugh out so heartily.
 And you say things
 I've never heard in my life before.
 I'm happy now, so happy.

Love me with a little love,
 a child-like love,
 the kind that suits me.
 Love me, please...
 We are a people used to small,
 modest, quiet things,
 to a tenderness gently caressing,
 yet vast as the sky
 and as the waves of the sea.

PINKERTON

Give me your dear hands
 and let me kiss them!
 My Butterfly!
 How aptly you were named,
 fragile butterfly!

BUTTERFLY

They say that overseas
 if it should fall into the hands of man
 a butterfly is stuck through
 with a pin
 and fixed to a board!

PINKERTON

There's some truth in that;
 and do you know why?
 So that it shouldn't fly away again.
 I've caught you...
 Quivering, I press you to me.

You're mine.

BUTTERFLY

Yes, for life.

PINKERTON

Come along, come...
 Cast all sad fears
 out of your heart!
 The night is clear! See,

all things sleep!
 You are mine! Oh, come!
 BUTTERFLY
 Oh, lovely night! What a lot of stars!
 Never have I seen them so beautiful!
 Every spark twinkles and shines
 with the brilliance of an eye.
 Oh! What a lot of eyes fixed and staring,
 looking at us from all sides!
 In the sky, along the shore,
 out to sea...the sky is smiling!
 Oh, lovely night!
 In an ecstasy of love
 the sky is smiling!

ACT TWO

Inside Butterfly's house

(Suzuki is praying in front of a statue of Buddha, occasionally ringing the prayer-bell. Butterfly is standing, erect and immobile, by a screen.)

SUZUKI
 Izaghi, Izanami,
 sarundasico Kami...
 Oh, my head!
 And thou, Ten-Sjoo-daj,
 don't let Butterfly
 cry any more, anymore.

BUTTERFLY
 Fat and lazy
 are the gods of Japan.
 The American God,
 I'm sure,
 is much quicker in answering
 those who pray to him.
 But I'm afraid he may not know
 we have our home here.
 Suzuki...
 how long will it be before we run out of
 money?
*(Suzuki opens a little table, takes out a few
 coins and shows them to Butterfly.)*

SUZUKI
 This is all we have left.

BUTTERFLY
 This? Oh! We've been too extravagant!

SUZUKI
 If he doesn't come back, and soon,
 we shall be in a bad way.

BUTTERFLY
 But he will come back!

SUZUKI
 He will come back?

BUTTERFLY
 Why does he arrange for the Consul
 to look after the rent?
 Tell me, quick!
 Why did he take such care to have
 the house fitted with locks
 if he didn't mean to come back again?

SUZUKI
 I don't know.

BUTTERFLY
 You don't know?
 I'll tell you then:
 in order to keep mosquitos,
 relations and troubles outside,
 and inside, jealously guarded,
 his bride —
 his bride — me — Butterfly!

SUZUKI
 No one has ever heard
 of a foreign husband
 returning to his home.

BUTTERFLY
 Be quiet, or I'll kill you!
 On that last morning,
 "Are you coming back, sir?"
 I asked him.
 With a heavy heart,
 trying to hide his unhappiness from me,
 smiling he replied:
 "Oh, Butterfly,
 my dear sweet little wife,

I'll return with the roses
in that happy season
when the robin
builds his nest."
He'll come back.

SUZUKI
Let us hope so.

BUTTERFLY
Say it with me.
He'll come back.

SUZUKI
He'll come back.

BUTTERFLY
You're crying? Whatever for?
Oh, you are lacking in faith!
Listen.
One fine day we'll see
a wisp of smoke arising
over the extreme verge of the sea's horizon,
and afterwards the ship will appear.
Then the white ship
will enter the harbor, will thunder
a salute. You see?
He's arrived!
I shan't go down to meet him.
No, I shall stand there
on the brow of the hill and wait,
and wait a long time,
and I shan't find
the long wait wearisome.

And from the midst of the city crowd
a man — a tiny speck —
will make his way up the hill.
Who can it be?
And when he arrives —
what, what will he say?
He'll call, "Butterfly!"
from the distance.
Not answering, I'll
remain hidden,
partly to tease,
and partly so as not to die
at the first meeting.

And, a trifle worried,
he'll call, he'll call
"My dear little wife,
fragrance of verbena!" —
the names he used to call me
when he came here.
And this will happen,
I promise you.
Keep your fears;
with unalterable faith I shall wait for him.
(*She dismisses Suzuki, who leaves. Sharpless
and Goro can be seen entering the garden.*)

GORO
She's there. Go in.

SHARPLESS
Excuse me...Madam Butterfly...

BUTTERFLY
Madam Pinkerton, please.
(*She turns round.*)

Oh! My dear consul,
my dear sir!

SHARPLESS
You remember me?

BUTTERFLY
Welcome to an American house.

SHARPLESS
Thank you.

BUTTERFLY
Your grandparents and ancestors are quite
well?

SHARPLESS
I sincerely hope so.

BUTTERFLY
Will you smoke?
(*She beckons to Suzuki to prepare the pipe.*)

SHARPLESS
Thank you. I have here...

BUTTERFLY

Sir, I see the skies are blue.

SHARPLESS

No thank you. I have...

BUTTERFLY

Perhaps you would prefer American cigarettes?

SHARPLESS

Thank you. I have to show you...

BUTTERFLY (*offering Sharpless a light*)

Here you are.

SHARPLESS

Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton has written to me...

BUTTERFLY

Really! Is he quite well?

SHARPLESS

Perfectly.

BUTTERFLY

I am the happiest woman in Japan.
May I ask you a question?

SHARPLESS

Certainly.

BUTTERFLY

When do the robins make their nests in America?

SHARPLESS

What did you say?

BUTTERFLY

Yes...before or after they do here?

SHARPLESS

But...why?

SHARPLESS

My husband promised to return in that happy season

when the robin builds his nest again.

Here, it has done so three times already, but it may be that over there it doesn't nest so often.

Who's that laughing?

Oh, it's the marriage-broker.

A bad man.

GORO

I am enjoying...

BUTTERFLY

Be quiet.

(*to Sharpless*)

He dared...

No, first answer my question.

SHARPLESS

I'm sorry, but I don't know.
I haven't studied ornithology.

BUTTERFLY

Orni...

SHARPLESS

...thology.

BUTTERFLY

So you don't know, then.

SHARPLESS

No. We were saying...

BUTTERFLY

Ah, yes... Goro, as soon as B. F. Pinkerton was at sea, he came annoying me with gossip and presents, offering me first this one, then that one in second marriage. Now he's promising me riches from a silly idiot.

GORO

The rich Yamadori.

She hasn't a penny.

Her relations

have all renounced her.

(*Beyond the terrace Yamadori can be seen*)

approaching on a palanquin, surrounded by servants.)

BUTTERFLY

There he is. Look.

Yamadori...

aren't you disillusioned

with love's pains yet?

Do you still intend to cut your veins

if I refuse you a kiss?

YAMADORI

One of the most annoying things

is hopeless sighing.

BUTTERFLY

You've had so many wives by now

you must be used to it.

YAMADORI

I married them, one and all,

and divorce has set me free.

BUTTERFLY

Most obliged.

YAMADORI

But to you I would vow

to be faithful.

SHARPLESS

I'm afraid I shan't succeed

in delivering the message...

GORO

Villas, servants, gold, and at Omara
a princely palace!

BUTTERFLY

My troth is plighted already.

GORO and YAMADORI *(to Sharpless)*

She thinks she's married.

BUTTERFLY

I don't think so — I am. I am.

GORO

But the law...

BUTTERFLY

I don't know anything about that.

GORO

...for the wife has made desertion
equivalent to divorce.

BUTTERFLY

The Japanese law...

not that of my country now.

GORO

Which country?

BUTTERFLY

The United States.

SHARPLESS

Poor thing!

BUTTERFLY

We're quite aware that to open the door
and chase out the wife

with no further ado

is called divorce here.

But in America you can't do that.

(to Sharpless)

Can you?

SHARPLESS

No. But...

BUTTERFLY

There, a good judge, grave

and upright, says to the husband:

"You want to go away?

Let us hear why?"

"I'm bored

with married life!"

And the magistrate:

"You rascal,

into prison with you, quick!"

Tea, Suzuki.

YAMADORI

You heard?

SHARPLESS

Such utter
blindness grieves me deeply.

GORO

Pinkerton's ship
is already signaled.

YAMADORI

When she sees him again...

SHARPLESS

He doesn't wish to show himself.
I have come expressly
to relieve her of any illusions on that score.

BUTTERFLY

If your Grace will allow...
What tiresome people!

YAMADORI

Farewell. I leave you
with my heart full of grief,
but I still hope...

BUTTERFLY

Please yourself.

YAMADORI

Oh, if only you would...

BUTTERFLY

The trouble is, I don't want to.
(Yamadori leaves. Goro follows him.)

SHARPLESS

Our turn now.
Sit down here.
Will you read
this letter with me?

BUTTERFLY

Give it to me.
*(She takes it and kisses it, then gives it back
to the Consul.)*
To my lips, on my heart...
You're the kindest man in the whole world.
Please begin.

SHARPLESS

"My dear friend, will you go and see
that pretty flower of a girl..."

BUTTERFLY

Does he really say that?

SHARPLESS

Yes, he does,
but if every moment...

BUTTERFLY

I'll keep quiet, I'll keep quiet.
I won't interrupt any more.

SHARPLESS

"Since that happy time
three years have gone by..."

BUTTERFLY

He's counted them, too!

SHARPLESS

"And perhaps Butterfly
does not remember me anymore."

BUTTERFLY

Not remember him?
— Suzuki, tell him.
"Does not remember me any more..."

SHARPLESS

Patience!
"If she still loves me,
if she expects me..."

BUTTERFLY

Oh, what sweet words!
You blessed, blessed letter!

SHARPLESS

"I beg you to be so good as,
with tact, to prepare her gently..."

BUTTERFLY

He's coming.

SHARPLESS

"... for the blow."

BUTTERFLY
When? Quick! Quick!

SHARPLESS *(to himself)*
This is fine, I must say!
I must break it to her without more ado.
That devil of a Pinkerton!
(to Butterfly)
Well now, what would you do,
Madam Butterfly,
if he were never
to return?

BUTTERFLY
I could do one of two things:
go back to entertaining people
with my songs;
or better, die.

SHARPLESS
It grieves me deeply to rob you
of your illusions.
Accept the proposal
of the wealthy Yamadori.

BUTTERFLY
You! You, sir, tell me this! You!

SHARPLESS
Great God, what am I to do?

BUTTERFLY
Come here quickly, Suzuki.
His Grace is going.

SHARPLESS
Are you turning me out?

BUTTERFLY
Please,
forget what I said.

SHARPLESS
I was brutal,
I don't deny it.

BUTTERFLY
Oh, you hurt me so much,
so much, so very much!

It's nothing, nothing!
I thought I was going to die,
but it soon passes like
clouds over the sea...
Has he forgotten me, then?
*(Going into the inner room, she returns with
a child in her arms.)*
And this? And this?
Can he forget this as well?

SHARPLESS
It is his?

BUTTERFLY
Whoever saw a
Japanese child with blue eyes?
And his mouth?
And his curls of pure gold?

SHARPLESS
It's obvious. And does Pinkerton know?

BUTTERFLY
No, no. The child was born
after he'd gone back
to that great country of his. But you
will write him
that a son without equal
is waiting for him here!
And then you'll see
if he doesn't come hurrying
over the land and sea!
Do you know what that gentleman
had the heart to think?
That your mother would have
to take you in her arms
and in all weathers
walk the city streets
to earn you
food and clothing,
and to the pitying crowd
stretch out a trembling hand,
crying, "Listen, listen
to my sad tale.
Charity for an unhappy mother!
Have pity!"
And Butterfly — oh, horrible fate —
will dance for you!

And as she used to do,
the geisha will sing!
And the gay and merry song
will end in a sob!
Oh no, no, never!
Not that profession
which leads to dishonor!
Rather let me die! To dance no more!
I will cut my life short rather!
Oh, let me die!

SHARPLESS (*to himself*)
How pitiful!
(*to Butterfly*)
I must go back now.
Will you forgive me?

BUTTERFLY
You... give him your hand.

SHARPLESS
What pretty fair curls!
What is your name, darling?

BUTTERFLY
Answer:
My name is Sorrow now.
But when you write
to Daddy tell him
that the day he comes back
I shall be called Joy, Joy!

SHARPLESS
Your father shall know it. I promise you.
(*He leaves hurriedly.*)

SUZUKI (*shouting outside*)
Serpent! Accursed toad!
(*She comes in, dragging Goro by the ear.*)

BUTTERFLY
What's happened?

SUZUKI
He buzzes round us,
the vampire! And every day
to the four winds he spreads abroad
that nobody knows
who the baby's father is!

GORO
I only said
that over there in America
when a child is born so unfortunate
he will always be an outcast
among people!

BUTTERFLY
Ah! You lie! You lie! You lie!
Say it again and I'll kill you!

SUZUKI
No!

BUTTERFLY
Get out!
You'll see, my little love,
my sorrow and my comfort,
my little love,
oh, you will see, your avenger will

take us far, far away
to his own country...he'll take us far away.
(*A cannon is heard.*)

SUZUKI
The harbor gun!
A warship!

BUTTERFLY
It's white... white... the American flag!
with the stars...
Now it's maneuvering to drop anchor.
(*She takes the telescope.*)
Steady my hand
so that I can see the name...
the name, the name...
There it is: Abraham Lincoln!
They all lied! The lot of them!
I alone knew...
Only I who love him.
Do you see how foolish your doubts were?
He's come! He's come! He's come!
Just at the very moment
when everybody said:
weep and despair!
My love triumphs, yes, triumphs!
My faith is completely vindicated!

He has come back and he loves me!
 Shake that branch of the cherry tree
 and rain down
 blooms on me.
 I want to plunge
 my burning brow in its fragrant rain.

SUZUKI
 Madam, calm yourself...those tears...

BUTTERFLY
 No, no, I'm laughing!
 How long shall we have to wait for him?
 What do you think? An hour?

SUZUKI
 Longer.

BUTTERFLY
 Two hours, maybe.
 Everywhere
 must be full of flowers,
 as the night is of stars.
 Go and pick the flowers!

SUZUKI
 All of them?

BUTTERFLY
 All of them, all.
 Peach blossom, violets, jasmine —
 every bush, plant
 and tree that's in flower!

SUZUKI
 The whole garden will be
 as desolate as winter.

BUTTERFLY
 I want all the perfume
 of spring in here.

SUZUKI
 The whole garden will be
 as desolate as winter.
 Here you are, Madam.

BUTTERFLY
 Pick some more.

SUZUKI
 You used to come to this hedge
 so often to gaze in tears,
 far out over the empty expanse.

BUTTERFLY
 The long-awaited one has come,
 I ask nothing more of the sea,
 I gave tears to the soil,
 it gives its flowers to me!

SUZUKI
 The garden's bare.

BUTTERFLY
 Is it? Then come
 and help me.

SUZUKI
 Roses at the entrance to the threshold.

BUTTERFLY
 I want all the perfume of spring
 in here.

BUTTERFLY and SUZUKI
 Let us sow April all about us.

SUZUKI
 Lilies? Violets?

BUTTERFLY
 Scatter lilies and violets all about us!
 His chair let us twine
 with flower garlands!

BUTTERFLY and SUZUKI
 By the handful let's scatter
 violets and tuberoses,
 blossoms of verbena,
 petals of every flower!

BUTTERFLY
 Now, come and dress me.
 But no! First bring me the baby.
 I'm no longer what I was.
 These lips have breathed too many sighs...
 and these eyes have gazed
 too hard into the distance.

Give my face
a touch of rouge...
and you too, little one,
so that the long wait
won't leave your cheeks
pale and hollow.

SUZUKI
Keep still,
I have to do your hair.

BUTTERFLY
What will they say now?
And my uncle, the Bonze?

All of them so glad
at my sad plight!
And Yamadori, with his languishing!
Ridiculed, disgraced,
shown up, the unkind creatures!

SUZUKI
I've finished.

BUTTERFLY
The sash I wore as a bride.
Bring it here for me to put on.
I want him to see me dressed
as I was that first day.
And a red poppy
in my hair... like that.
Now we'll make three little holes
in the paper screen to look through,
and we'll stay quiet as mice,
waiting.

(Butterfly leads the baby to the soshi and makes three holes in it; Suzuki sits on her haunches and looks out. Butterfly places herself in front of the biggest hole, and looking outside remains motionless and rigid as a statue. The baby is between his mother and Suzuki, and looks outside curiously. Night has fallen. Moon beams light up the soshi from outside. From far away voices can be heard humming.)

Humming Chorus

It is dawn. Butterfly still stands watching, motionless. The baby and Susuki are asleep. Sailor's voices are heard from the harbor below.

SAILORS VOICES *(from afar)*
Oh eh! Oh eh! Oh eh!

SUZUKI
The sun's up already!
Cho-Cho-San!

BUTTERFLY
He'll come... he'll come, you'll see.

SUZUKI
Go and rest, you're tired out...
When he arrives I'll call you.

BUTTERFLY
Sleep, my love,
sleep on my heart.
You are with God,
and I'm with my sorrow.
On you shine the rays
of the golden stars...
Sleep, my child.

SUZUKI
Poor Butterfly!

BUTTERFLY
Sleep, my love,
sleep on my heart.

You are with god,
and I'm with my sorrow.

SUZUKI
Poor Butterfly!
Who can that be?
Oh!
(Pinkerton and Sharpless enter.)

PINKERTON
Hush! Hush! Don't wake her.

SUZUKI
She was quite worn out!

She has been standing waiting for you
all night long with the baby.

PINKERTON
How did she know?

SUZUKI
For three years now
no ship has put into the harbor
without Butterfly scrutinizing
its color and flag from afar.

SHARPLESS (*to Pinkerton*)
I told you, didn't I?

SUZUKI
I'll call her...

PINKERTON
No, not yet.

SUZUKI
You see, last night
she insisted on strewing
flowers all over the room.

SHARPLESS
I told you, didn't I?

PINKERTON
This is dreadful!

SUZUKI
Who's that out there in the garden?
It's a woman!

PINKERTON
Hush!

SUZUKI
Who is it? Who is it?

SHARPLESS
Best tell her everything.

SUZUKI
Who is it? Who is it?

PINKERTON
She has come with me.

SUZUKI
Who is it? Who is it?

SHARPLESS
His wife.

SUZUKI
Holy spirits of my ancestors!
For the little one
the sun has gone out!

SHARPLESS
We chose this early hour
in order to find you alone, Suzuki,
and in this hour of trial
to seek some means of consolation
and support with you.

SUZUKI
What's the use? What's the use?

SHARPLESS
I know that for her deep distress
there is no consolation.
But it is necessary to provide
for the child's future.

PINKERTON
Oh, the bitter perfume
of these flowers
is poison to the heart!
The room where we loved
is unchanged...

SHARPLESS
That kind woman
who dares not enter
will care like a mother
for the child.

SUZUKI
Oh, I'm so miserable!
And you want me
to ask a mother...

SHARPLESS

Come, speak to that kind lady
and bring her in here.
Even if Butterfly should see her,
no matter... On the contrary,
better if she should realize
the truth through seeing her.
Come, Suzuki, come...

PINKERTON

But the coldness of death is in here.
My picture!...
Three years have passed,
and she has counted the days
and the hours!
I can't stay here...
Sharpless, I'll wait for you
on the way back...

SHARPLESS

Didn't I tell you so?

PINKERTON

You give her some help...
I am completely crushed by remorse.

SHARPLESS

I told you! Do you remember?
When she gave you her hand,

“Beware!” I said, “She believes in all this!”
And my words were prophetic then!
Deaf to advice,
deaf to all doubts, a victim of scorn,
obstinately waiting,
she fortified her heart.

PINKERTON

Yes, all in an instant
I see how I have sinned
and realize I shall never
find respite from this torture.
Never!

SHARPLESS

Go.
The sad truth
she'll learn alone.

PINKERTON

Farewell, flowery refuge
of happiness and love...
Her sweet face will haunt me ever,
torturing me agonizingly.

SHARPLESS

But by now the faithful heart
maybe half suspects. I told you, *etc.*

PINKERTON

Farewell, flowery refuge...
I can't bear your desolation...
I must fly! I'm beneath contempt!

SHARPLESS

Go, she will learn the sad truth.
(*Pinkerton hurries away as Kate and Suzuki
come in from the garden.*)

KATE

Will you tell her that?

SUZUKI

I promise.

KATE

And you'll advise her
to trust me?

SUZUKI

Yes.

KATE

I'll care for him like my own son.

SUZUKI

I believe you. But I must
be quite alone with her...
quite alone in this hour of crisis!
She'll cry so bitterly!

BUTTERFLY

Suzuki! Suzuki! Where are you?
Suzuki!

SUZUKI

Here I am...
I was praying tidying up...

No... No... No...
Don't come in... No... No...

BUTTERFLY
He's here, he's here...
where's he hidden?
He's here... he's here...
There's the Consul...
and where?... Where?
He isn't here!
That woman?
What does she want at my house?
Nobody speaks!
Why are you crying?
No, don't tell me anything...
I might fall dead on the spot.
You, Suzuki, who are so good,
don't cry!
You love me so much —
yes or no — whisper...
Is he alive?

SUZUKI
Yes.

BUTTERFLY
But he won't come back any more.
They've told you?
Serpent! Will you answer me?

SUZUKI
Never again.

BUTTERFLY
But he arrived yesterday?

SUZUKI
Yes.

BUTTERFLY
Oh, that woman makes
me feel so afraid,
so afraid!

SHARPLESS
She is the innocent cause
of all your misfortunes.
Forgive her.

BUTTERFLY
Ah! She's his wife!
Everything is finished for me!
Everything is over! Oh!

SHARPLESS
Be brave.

BUTTERFLY
They want to take everything
away from me! My son!

SHARPLESS
Make the sacrifice for his sake.

BUTTERFLY
Oh, unhappy mother!
To be obliged to give up my son!
Very well then!
I must obey him in everything.

KATE
Can you ever forgive me, Butterfly?

BUTTERFLY
Under the great dome of heaven,
there isn't a happier woman than you.
May you always be so...
Don't upset yourself about me...

KATE
Poor little thing!

SHARPLESS
It's a terrible shame!

KATE
And will she give up the child?

BUTTERFLY
I'll be able to give up the child to him,
if he'll come and fetch him.
Return up the hill
in half-an-hour's time.

SUZUKI
Like the wings of a captive fly
her little heart is beating!

BUTTERFLY

There's too much light outside,
and too much spring.
Close the screens to.
Where's the baby?

SUZUKI

He's playing...Shall I call him?

BUTTERFLY

Let him play...
Go and keep him company.

SUZUKI

I'll stay with you.

BUTTERFLY

Go along, I order you to.
(Suzuki goes out, crying. Butterfly lights a taper in front of the sanctuary, and bows. Then she takes her father's knife from the wall, kisses it, and slowly reads the inscription on the blade.)
"He dies with honor
who cannot live with honor."
(As she places the blade against her throat, the door opens and Suzuki's arm pushes the child towards his mother. Butterfly drops the knife and rushes to the child, which she seizes up and kisses passionately.)
You? You? You?
Little idol of my heart.
My Love, my love,
flower of the lily and rose.
Never know that, for you,
for your innocent eyes,
Butterfly is about to die...
so that you may go
away beyond the sea
without being subject to remorse
in later years
for your mother's desertion.
Oh, you who have come down to me
from high heaven,
look well, well
on your mother's face,
that you may keep a faint memory of it,
look well!

Little love, farewell!

Farewell, my little love!

Go and play.

(She picks up the child and sets him down on a mat; she gives him an American flag and a doll to play with and gently blindfolds his eyes. Picking up the knife she goes behind the screen. Then appearing from behind the screen with the white veil clasped round her throat, Butterfly staggers across the room towards the baby, and collapses beside him.)

VOICE OF PINKERTON

Butterfly! Butterfly! Butterfly!

(Pinkerton and Sharpless burst into the room, and run to her side. With a weak gesture Butterfly points to her child and dies. Pinkerton kneels down beside her, while Sharpless goes to pick up the child.)

Curtain