

## FEDORA

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**Act I:** In the house of Count Vladimir Andreyevich, St. Petersburg, 1881. Desiré, valet to the Count (who is the son of the Chief of the Secret Police) and other servants are playing cards. They discuss the Count's marriage the next day to the Princess Fedora Romazov, whose wealth will help pay off his debts. The young groom Dimitri admits Fedora, who is looking for the Count. Dimitri leaves to fetch him, and Fedora wanders around the room, admiring a photograph of her beloved fiancé ("Ed ecco il suo ritratto"). The Count, wounded, is brought in on a stretcher, with Detective Grech and Dr. Lorek. The Count is taken to his room. The diplomat de Siriex arrives and introduces himself to Grech; Lorek warns Fedora that the wound is serious. Grech questions Fedora and the servants about the Count's enemies. The coachman Cirillo tells that he had driven the Count to a club. After fifteen minutes, he heard two shots, and then saw someone rush by, leaving a trail of blood in the snow. De Siriex relates that he had arrived at this moment and they had found the Count in a pool of blood, with a revolver that Desiré confirms the Count carried against potential enemies. Grech suspects that Nihilists are to blame. Desiré tells that an old woman had earlier in the day delivered a letter to the Count; then they realize that it has, in the meantime, been stolen by a stranger. Fedora cries impassionedly ("Dite, coraggio") that Grech seems unmoved to avenge her fiancé, and she swears on the cross she always wears to do so. Dimitri and the other servants try to remember if they had seen the stranger before; Michele the porter recalls that it was Loris Ipanov. Fedora watches through the windows as Grech leaves to arrest Ipanov in his house opposite the Count's. Lorek enters: the Count has died. As Grech returns to say that Loris has escaped, Fedora collapses.

**Act II:** At a reception in Fedora's mansion in Paris, some months later, her flirtatious friend Olga introduces an exiled Polish pianist, Boleslao Lazinski, to Baron Rouvel and Dr. Borov. They both flirt with her about the joys of being conspirators. Fedora introduces Loris to de Siriex. She privately tells de Siriex that she is looking for proof of Loris' guilt, but that she is also falling in love with him. Borov, meanwhile, warns Loris of Fedora's charms, but Loris admits that he has already fallen in love with her. Olga is still flirting with Rouvel, and teases de Siriex by proclaiming that he called her a Cossack. He answers the charge with a song ("La donna russa") about Russian women being Daughters of Eve, having every facet of womanhood - Olga as its very ideal. She responds ("Eccone un altro più somigliante ancor") that the Parisian gentleman has all the characteristics -- both golden and poisonous -- of the champagne Clicquot.

Loris tells Fedora not only that he loves her, but also ("Amor ti vieta") that she loves him. Borov and Fedora tell Loris that they are about to leave for Russia. Loris is in despair: he cannot follow her. Fedora says that she will appeal against the sentence that prevents him from returning to his homeland. As Lazinski plays a recital, Loris tells her that he was accused, falsely, of trapping the Count, but felt that he had to come to offer her his love. He forces her to confess that she loves him; only then does he confess that he killed the Count. Fedora admits that she knows nothing of the ambush, and that her initial disgust at his admission was made before her heart thought about it. He promises to return in an hour to tell her all the details. After he leaves, she vows that he will not escape her.

The recital finishes and, as couples start dancing, de Siriex reads a telegram about a Nihilist attack on the Czar. The party breaks up. In an anteroom, Fedora begins to write a letter, and summons Grech. She tells him that Loris will return to repeat his confession, so he should wait outside for her signal to arrest him. She sends with him a letter for the Chief of Police in Russia.

Loris denies Fedora's accusation that he is a Nihilist involved in the attack on the Czar, and explains why he shot her fiancé. The Count had been a witness at Loris' wedding to Wanda, a girl who worked for his mother. The Count and Wanda then fell in love. At Christmas Loris found out what was happening from Wanda's maid, so he took some incriminating letters from the Count's desk. He shows them to Fedora, thus proving that the Count still loved Wanda, and that his engagement to Fedora was only for money! Loris tells her how he had surprised the two lovers, shot the Count, and was himself wounded. The girl had fled past Cirillo, only to die later. Fedora lies to Loris, pretending that she does not know who is his accuser. He despairs of never again seeing his mother ("Vedi, io piango"). Fedora weeps for him (ashamed that it is she who has accused him), and promises that she will be like another mother to him. He is about to leave but she begs him to stay, in order to prevent him from fleeing into the arms of the police. In spite of his concerns for her reputation, he does so, and they declare their love for each other.

**Act III:** Some months later, in the garden of Fedora and Loris' villa in Switzerland, as peasants are singing in the distance. Loris and Fedora are deeply in love ("Te sola io guardo"). As they embrace, Olga enters and tells them she has renounced the world and is tired of the beauties of nature. She is even tired of bicycling ("Se amor ti allena") because it means that she must be alone. It would be better to walk everywhere. Loris suggests using a tandem and leaves to collect some letters from the post office. De Siriex arrives, tell them that he was just passing by and decided to visit for tea. Olga tells them -- amid merciless teasing -- that she had become bored with Lazinski. De Siriex suggests that Lazinski -- is she strong enough to hear this? -- might have been a secret agent! After a brief fainting spell, Olga leaves to change for bicycling. De Siriex admits to Fedora that he came to talk to her about Loris. The Count's father, the Chief of Police, heard about a Nihilist believed to be an accomplice in his son's death. Loris' brother was thrown into prison, where he died. On hearing this, Loris' mother died. Fedora realizes that it was her letter that brought about both of these deaths. Olga reappears and she and de Siriex go off bicycling.

As a peasant boy is heard singing, Fedora pleads with God not to save her ("Dio di giustizia"): she is unworthy, but He should save her beloved. Loris returns from the post office with a telegram from Borov announcing his imminent arrival, and which tells Loris that he had been pardoned and is now free to return to his country and mother. One of the other letters is also from Borov, but was sent earlier. It tells of a letter sent by a woman in Paris informing the Chief of Police of Loris' confession, which led to his brother's drowning in prison, and the death of his mother. Loris vows vengeance on this woman, and Fedora realizes what she has done. Loris is determined to unmask the woman in Paris, but Fedora tries to defend her -- perhaps she was in love with the Count? Perhaps she now regrets her deed? If she repented, would not Loris forgive her? Never! Not even if the woman were to be at Loris' feet, crying, at the brink of death, begging for forgiveness ("Se quel l'infelice")? Would he not even then be merciful? Would he not even then forgive her? Yes, after choking the life out of her! Fedora secretly pours poison from her cross into her tea, and begs forgiveness again. Loris suspects that Fedora knows the identity of the woman, and then realizes the truth. She begs that he pardon her for having caused the deaths of his brother and mother. In his fury, he is ready to kill her, but she drinks the poisoned tea. Borov enters as she collapses at Loris' feet. De Siriex and Olga return as Fedora begs once more for forgiveness. The peasant boy is heard again, as Loris hugs Fedora close to him. She dies in his arms.