

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

an opera by Giacomo Puccini



Japan, early 20th century

Cio-Cio-San, a young Japanese woman, is engaged to marry the American naval officer Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton. Cio-Cio-San wants nothing more than to love and be loved. But when her new husband leaves her to return to America, she finds herself facing an impossible choice.

Main Characters

Cio-Cio-San
(Madame Butterfly)



Lieutenant Benjamin
Franklin Pinkerton



Sharpless



Kate



Suzuki



The American naval lieutenant Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton is marrying a young Japanese woman named Cio-Cio-San. He tells his friend, Sharpless, about his plans for the future . . .

CIO-CIO-SAN IS BEAUTIFUL, BUT THIS ISN'T A REAL MARRIAGE. LET'S DRINK A TOAST TO THE AMERICAN WIFE I'LL HAVE SOME DAY!

THAT DOESN'T SOUND FAIR . . .

CLINK



Cio-Cio-San arrives with her maid, Suzuki. She looks forward to a happy life with Pinkerton, even though she is nervous about marrying someone from a completely different culture.

YOU'RE AS BEAUTIFUL AS YOUR NICKNAME: BUTTERFLY!



Cio-Cio-San's relatives arrive to celebrate the wedding, but her uncle is furious that Cio-Cio-San has decided to marry a foreigner.

YOU HAVE LEFT YOUR CULTURE AND RELIGION TO MARRY THIS AMERICAN. I DISOWN YOU!



Cio-Cio-San is saddened by her uncle's anger, but she believes her marriage will be happy. She dresses in her wedding kimono, and she and Pinkerton exchange vows.

Three years have passed. Pinkerton has returned to America, and Cio-Cio-San has heard nothing from him.



AND WHEN HE DOES, I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR HIM: HIS SON!

BUT THE LETTER SAYS HE'S MARRIED ANOTHER WOMAN ...



Just then, a ship is spotted in Nagasaki harbor. Cio-Cio-San recognizes it as Pinkerton's. She is overjoyed.

MAYBE YOU SHOULD FORGET HIM ... HE'S BEEN GONE THREE YEARS.

NEVER! HE PROMISED HE WOULD RETURN IN THE SPRING. IN AMERICA, SPRING MUST SIMPLY COME LESS OFTEN.



I KNEW IT! I ALWAYS SAID THAT ONE DAY HE WOULD COME BACK FOR ME.

THIS WON'T BE GOOD ...



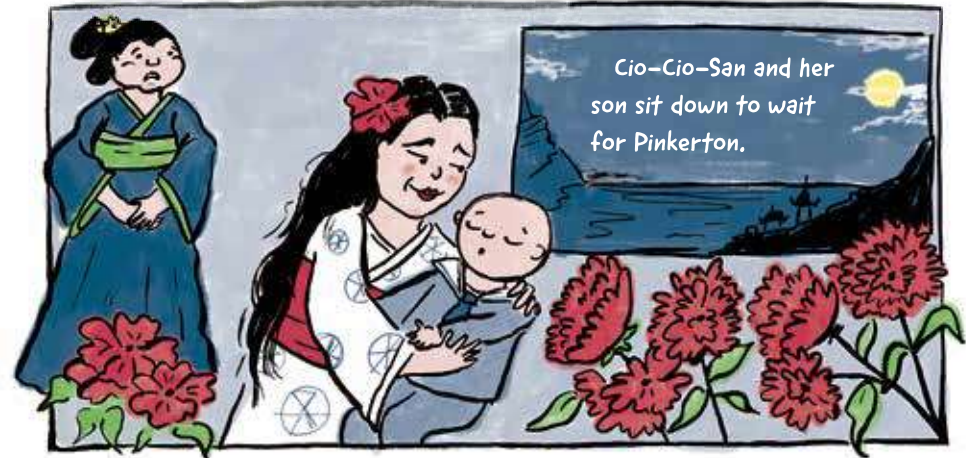
Sharpless receives a letter from Pinkerton, but he doesn't have the heart to tell Cio-Cio-San what it says.

IF YOU HAVE HEARD FROM PINKERTON, THAT MEANS HE'LL RETURN SOON.

BUT ...

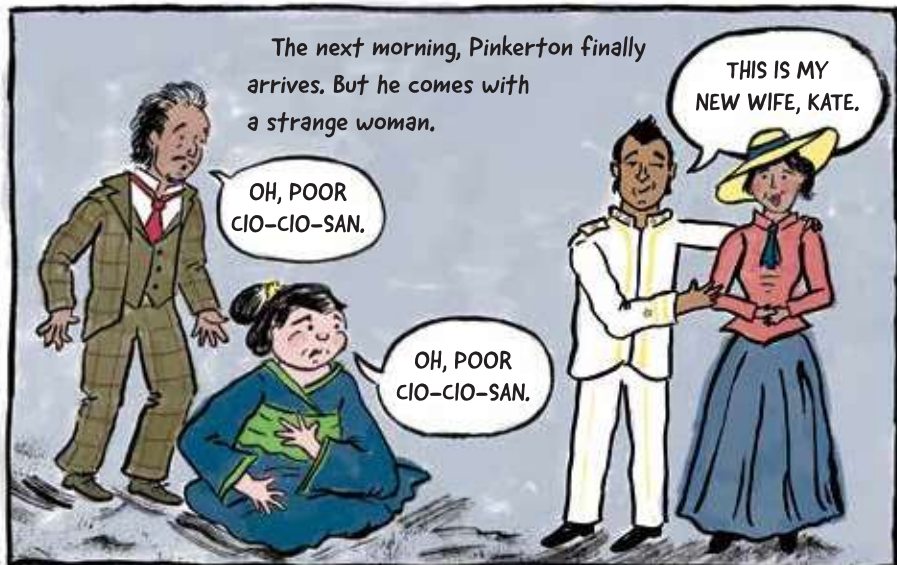


Cio-Cio-San and her son sit down to wait for Pinkerton.





They wait all night.



The next morning, Pinkerton finally arrives. But he comes with a strange woman.

OH, POOR CIO-CIO-SAN.

THIS IS MY NEW WIFE, KATE.

OH, POOR CIO-CIO-SAN.



When Cio-Cio-San finds out who the woman is, she is understandably upset. Then she finds out the real reason for Pinkerton's visit . . .

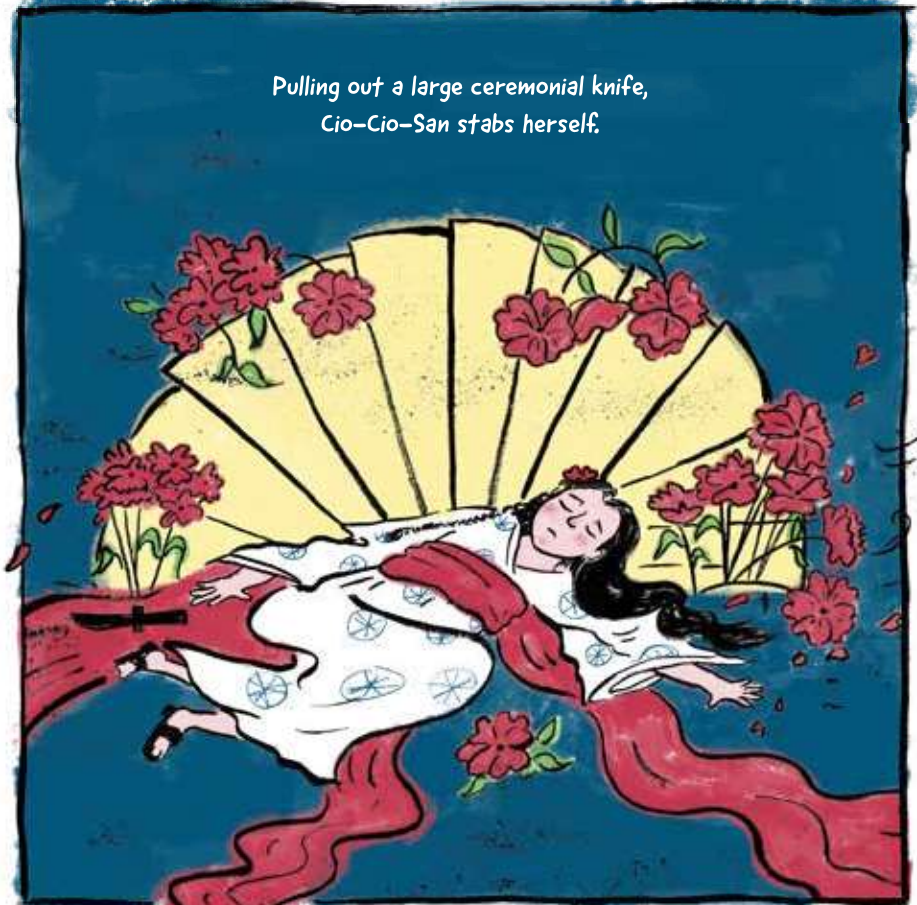
WHO IS THIS WOMAN? IT CAN'T BE . . . HE HAS ANOTHER WIFE?!

WE'VE COME TO TAKE YOUR CHILD, TO RAISE HIM IN AMERICA.



Cio-Cio-San would rather die than live with this humiliation and grief. She kisses her son goodbye then sends him into the yard to play.

FORGET YOUR GRIEF-STRICKEN MOTHER. YOU WILL HAVE A NEW LIFE, FULL OF JOY.



Pulling out a large ceremonial knife, Cio-Cio-San stabs herself.