ACT I Leonora plans to elope with Alvaro against her father’s wishes. Alvaro arrives. The marquis storms in, and Alvaro attempts to make peace by throwing down his pistol. The weapon goes off, killing the marquis.

ACT II Leonora is in flight from her brother, Carlo. Preziosilla sings a hymn to war, and Carlo tells his own story. Leonora seeks refuge at a monastery. Padre Guardiano offers her sanctuary, and Leonora goes off to a hermitage.

INTERMISSION

ACT III Alvaro rescues Carlo from a brawl. Giving false names, they pledge undying friendship. Alvaro is wounded in battle. When Carlo tells him he has won the Cross of Calatrava, Alvaro shudders at the name. Alvaro entrusts to him a letter, saying that it is to be burned unopened at his death. In Alvaro’s possessions, Carlo discovers Leonora’s portrait and realizes that his friend is in fact his enemy. When he learns that Alvaro will survive, he rejoices at the thought of being able to triumph over his enemy. Preziosilla, soldiers, and local peasants sing of the war. Carlo reveals his identity to Alvaro and challenges him to a duel. A patrol separates them, and Alvaro resolves to enter a monastery.

INTERMISSION

ACT IV Carlo arrives at the monastery and goads Alvaro into a duel. Leonora hides when she hears fighting. Alvaro deals Carlo a fatal blow. Alvaro is reunited with Leonora. She tends Carlo, who stabs her. As she dies, Leonora urges Alvaro to seek salvation in God.

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