

EUGENE ONEGIN

BY

TSCHAIKOVSKY

English Version by Donald Pippin

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Eugene Onegin

Larina, a widowed landowner.

Tatiana, her dreamy, romantically inclined daughter.

Olga, her more down-to-earth daughter.

Filipyevna, an aged nurse-maid, not as sharp as she used to be.

Lenski, a young poet, passionately in love with Olga.

Prince Gremin, a decidedly middle-aged nobleman.

Triquet, a Frenchman, also a poet, stretching the term somewhat.

Guillot, Onegin's servant.

Zaretski

A Captain

Peasants, guests, landowners, officers.

The action takes place upon a landed estate in Western Russia, and later in St. Petersburg.

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ACT I ---- PART I

The scene is the garden of a modest country farmhouse, home of the Larins -- a widowed mother and her two daughters, Olga and Tatiana. An afternoon in late summer. Through an open window one hears from inside the house the two sisters doing what is expected of properly brought up young ladies -- practicing the harp and singing a favorite duet, a song about the sweetness and sadness of love, a subject about which they are presumed to have little first hand knowledge. Their mother and Nana, their old nurse, are seated outside enjoying the mild, pleasant weather while peeling apples for preserves. They listen with quiet satisfaction, but as so happens with many an informal audience, their attention soon wanders, and they drift off into a duet of their own -- no doubt oft-repeated reminiscences about the good old days whose promise of romance and adventure has given way to the less thrilling reality of routine and habit. And a good thing, too!

It is an afternoon for visitors -- first, a group of farm hands who drop by to celebrate the end of a grueling harvest. A visit of no particular consequence, quite unlike the next. Lenski arrives -- a young neighbor, a poet no less, a long-time family friend, much in love with Olga, the younger, most would say the prettier, certainly the more outgoing and cheerful of the two sisters. Lenski brings a friend along -- a newcomer to the area, a man frankly more at home in the social whirl of Paris than in this rustic environment where he is decidedly a fish out of water. His name is Eugene Onegin. This apparently casual visit is to alter completely the lives of everyone involved.

Scene: a garden on the Larina estate. Madame Larina is seated under a tree preparing fruit for preserves, assisted by Filipyevna. From inside the house, a sweet duet is heard. The ladies listen for a while, and gradually drift into their own conversation and reminiscences, while the duet inside continues.

OLGA & TATIANA

**Did you not hear
The lonely shepherd lad
Who sang of love,
Of longing and of sorrow
At break of day
When woods and fields were silent,
And filled the grove
With music sweet and sad?**

**Did you not hear at break of morn
The lonely song of love forlorn
That filled the grove
With plaintive music sweet and sad?**

**Did you not hear
The shepherd lad
That sang of love
In tune so sad?**

**Did you not sigh
When like the nightingale,
Alone and shy,
He sang of love and sorrow?
And when the youth
Stepped barefoot from the forest
With anguish in his eye,
His cheek so pale,
Did you not sigh?**

LARINA: **That song I know --- it's so familiar.
How many years have hurried by!
Do you recall? I sang it, too.**

FILIPYEVNA: **The good old days, indeed I do.**

LARINA: **Romantic novels were my passion.**

FILIPYEVNA: **The days we both were young and spry.**

LARINA: Of course, unfit for girls my age,
Though Princess Caroline, my cousin,
Who kept me up on current fashion,
Said Moscow found them all the rage.

FILIPYEVNA: I well remember
The summer you became a bride.
The suitor your parents wanted

LARINA: All so insane! All so absurd!

FILIPYEVNA: But in your heart, beyond a doubt,
A dashing captain had won out.

LARINA: Ah, not a doubt! Him I preferred!

FILIPYEVNA: For him alone you pined and panted.

LARINA: So handsome! So nonchalant!
A gambler, but a true gallant!

FILIPYEVNA: Indeed they were the good old days.

LARINA: I followed all the fads and follies

FILIPYEVNA: The queen of fashion!
So chic and smart, you set the pace.

LARINA: So chic and smart, I set the pace.
And then, my own desires unheeded....

FILIPYEVNA: To church, afraid to disobey!

LARINA: I wept as holy rites proceeded,
My only thought to run away.

FILIPYEVNA: But tears and heartbreak had to vanish
You got your own estate to manage.
In time you turned to house and home
Which gave the helping hand you needed.

LARINA: In time I turned to house and home
Which gave the helping hand I needed.

FILIPYEVNA: Yes, God be praised!

BOTH: (*alternately*) **Routine and habit soon enough
Replace romantic dreams of love.
How true indeed!**

LARINA: **The froth, the frills I blush to mention!
My furbelows, my book of verse
Were soon forgotten.**

FILIPYEVNA: **In their place,
A household clamored for attention.
As time went by, you settled down....**

LARINA: **To just a plain old dressing gown!
My husband, though, was so devoted.
So true and trusting, so good-hearted....**

BOTH: **Routine and habit soon enough
Replace romantic dreams,
Futile dreams of love.**

From offstage, a chorus of peasants is heard approaching.

LEADER: **At last! No more tiresome toil and sweat,
Our work is done.**

PEASANTS: **No more toil and sweat, our work is done.**

LEADER: **No more bending over rows of grain
In a broiling sun.**

PEASANTS: **No more we'll toil in a broiling sun.**

TOGETHER: **So now for rest and a day of fun.
We'll put dull care and worries away.
We'll put them away
For a carefree holiday.**

**Cheers to you and your family!
Health, long life and prosperity!
We bring you sheaves gay and garlanded.
All of our crops now are harvested.
Now is the harvest home!**

LARINA: **Friends, many thanks! Hearty welcome!
So glad you've come.**

Let's celebrate and have a merry song.

PEASANTS:

So let us celebrate!
Come, hurry up! Form a ring.
Here is a day for singing, for dancing!
All together! All together!

Leaves fall golden to the ground 'n
Berries ripen on the mountain.

Fields with harvest wheat are spread. Oh,
Sheep go grazing in the meadow.

On the bank beside the water
Lives the miller and his daughter.

Striding down into the dell, oh
Here's a husky, handsome fellow.

Bright blue eyes and curly hair, he
Has lips tempting as a cherry.

When he calls upon the girl, he
Cries, "Wake up! It's nice and early!"

As they stroll along the lazy river,
Plover eggs he finds to give her.

She cries out, "Pray, what is this, sir?"
When her lover tries to kiss her.

"Tell me why we have to wait," he
Says, "till we are over eighty."

She replies, "We needn't linger
Were a ring upon my finger."

"If you want to marry," said he,
"Sweetheart, any time you're ready!"

In his manly arms he wrapped her.
That's all till another chapter.

During the song, Tatiana and Olga have appeared on the terrace, Tatiana with book in hand.

TATIANA: Oh, how I love their song so full of spirit!
I lose myself in listening
And want to wander,
To wander far away. . .

OLGA: Oh, Tanya! Tanya! You're way up in the clouds.
How different we are!
For when they sing I only think of dancing!

“Leaves fall golden to the ground 'n
Berries ripen on the mountain.”



I was not made for mel- an- cho- ly; no tears & far- off dreams for me,
Nor gazing from a darkened window
To sigh at cruel destiny.

What time for sorrow
When each tomorrow
A radiant dawn relights the sky?
Of even temper,
May or December
A fortune favored child am I.

My life is sweet, the days serene and fair.
To take in all, too short the hours,
For every seed of hope that flowers
My heart provides sunlight and air.

LARINA: Well now, my pretty lambkin!
So bright and full of song is my canary!
And ready any time of day for dancing.
Right, am I not?

FILIPYEVNA: Tatiana! Little pet! What is wrong?
Are you not well today?

TATIANA: Now Nana! Don't get worried.

LARINA: (to peasants) We so enjoyed the song,
Good friends and neighbors.
You go take care of them.
Filipyevna, see that they all get wine and cake.
Again we thank you.

LARINA: Now, now, Tatiana! Let's not be timid.
Mighty God! My hair is simply a disgrace!

OLGA: Have someone show them in.

LARINA: *(to servant)* Admit them! Hurry up!
Onegin and Lenski enter, mid great excitement.

LENSKI: Mesdames! My liberty you'll pardon.
I brought a guest along.
May I present to you Onegin, my good friend.

LARINA: A privilege! Do please sit down.
My daughters I'd like to introduce.

ONEGIN: My warmest compliments!

LARINA: So shall we go within? Or . . .
Or perhaps you'd rather
Remain outside here in the open.
I beg you ... don't stand on ceremony.
We are neighbors,
And you are both to feel at home.

LENSKI: Delightful spot! How much I love the garden,
Shady and secluded, and yet so homey.

LARINA: Then stay here.
But I must go inside to see about some supper.
My girls will entertain you. I'll return!

She leaves.

QUARTET: *(sung more or less simultaneously)*

TATIANA: Yes, all is true, my wait is over!
My shining knight I recognize.
The dreams that round my pillow hover
Stand gathered here before my eyes.

By day, by night, in ardent fever,
His face I'll see before me ever.
A vision bright to so inspire
My soul to glow in sacred fire.

OLGA: And so his friend Onegin comes a-calling!
These coming weeks it will be topic number one,
 Oh, so enthralling!
 And guaranteed to raise a smile,
For won't the neighbors start to chatter,
 Inventing where they find no matter,
 Till Tanya's marching down the aisle.

 The neighborhood will be diverted,
Cry, "Oh, my dear! The way she flirted!"
 They'll have her in a little while
 In white and marching down the aisle!

ONEGIN: (to Lenski) Which of the two would be Tatiana?

LENSKI: The quiet one with darker hair,
Reserved and silent, seems to suffer . . .

ONEGIN: She has a rather charming air.
But you're attracted to the other!
 Were I a fellow poet,
I'd surely choose the one less fair.
Your Olga I would not compare.

 Madonna-like and unawakened,
Her face is round and rather dull,
So like the moon when seen in full,
And shines serene, monotonous and vacant.
 Yes, I prefer the shy one . . .

LENSKI: Friends that we are, the way the way we differ!
The wave and cliff, or ice and flame,
 Or prose and poetry
 Are more alike than you and I.

Onegin and Tatiana, Lenski and Olga pair off.

LENSKI: What rapture! What radiance!
At last once more together!

OLGA: My dear, we parted only yesterday.

LENSKI: To think, so long ago!
One solid day of separation!
 An eternity!

OLGA: Eternity! But what a big and dreadful word,
All for a single day!

LENSKI: Not such a dreadful word
With our love to sweeten it.

ONEGIN: *(conversing separately with Tatiana)*
There must be times
When life is dull and days are long
In such a quiet place,
No doubt delightful, but secluded.
The countryside has little to provide
By way of pleasure.

TATIANA: Oh, I'm fond of reading.

ONEGIN: Reading! A book can feed the mind and spirit,
But that alone is not enough
To make a steady diet.

TATIANA: I daydream as I stroll around the garden.

ONEGIN: And what is it you're dreaming of?

TATIANA: I fear it's always been my nature,
A habit even as a child.

ONEGIN: Then I would guess that you were born a dreamer,
The way I used to be myself . . .

As Onegin and Tatiana withdraw, Lenski and Olga come back into focus.

LENSKI: *(with great warmth and passion)*
I adore you, my beloved Olga,
With a fire known only to the fevered poet,
A tortured soul that groans and sighs,
By day and night pursued and haunted,
By one delight, one sorrow taunted,
A flame that burns and never dies.

A child, already I was captured,
A stranger yet to love's despair.
At hide-and-seek I grew enraptured,
While you were blithe and unaware.

'Twas here within this very grove
That I became the slave of love.

You are life to me!
And I yearn for you with the fire and force
Known only to the poet.
By a single passion driven,
I descend to hell from heaven,
Now enchanted, now tormented.

You are life to me!
My desire for you a driving force,
A fervor none but poets recognize,
A faith that makes the mountains move,
A flame that purifies.
My heart and soul I hurl into the fire of love.

OLGA: In this protected spot it's true,
We both were born and here we grew,
And all along our parents knew
That one fine day I'd marry you ---
I and you.

LENSKI: I adore you, worship only you.

Larina and Filipyevna re-emerge from the house.

LARINA: So there you are! But have you seen Tatiana?

FILIPYEVNA: Together near the lake
The two were strolling.
I'll go and call this minute.

LARINA: Time to gather friends into the dining room.
Around the table we'll share the blessings God has given.
(to Lenski) Oh, please, sir! Do come inside.

LENSKI: I follow gladly.

Larina, Lenski and Olga go inside the house. Onegin and Tatiana re-enter.

ONEGIN: My uncle, stupid but respected,
From age and illness fell apart,
But would not stand to be neglected,
Which shows he was in some ways smart.

At least he set a good example,
But Lord! The way his mind would ramble!
A captive bedside slave was I,
While wond'ring would he never die.

They, too, enter the house. Filipyevna, who has been trying in vain to eavedrop, remains.

FILIPYEVNA: My little sparrow!
 With drooping winglet she tags along
 And dares not make a murmur.
 So shy and timid! Or perhaps
 She finds her guest
 A man with lots and lots to tell her . . .

She, too, goes inside side. The stage is empty and the scene ends.

ACT I --- SCENE II

It is night, several weeks later, a period in which little has been seen of Onegin, though he has been powerfully, blissfully, agonizingly present every single day, every single minute, to one person at least. Tatiana, restless, un-willing, unable to sleep, in her bedroom with Nana, her old nurse, can no longer keep her secret to herself.

Scene: Tatiana's bedroom. It is night, a few weeks later. Tatiana, in a white night dress, is with Filipyevna.

FILIPYEVNA: There! No more talk tonight.
 Long after bedtime.
Sleep, for tomorrow morning bright and early
 We're up for mass.

TATIANA: I'm wide awake!
 So hot and humid!
 Do raise the window,
 Then sit with me.

FILIPYEVNA: What is the matter, child?

TATIANA: It's nothing Tell more about the days of old.....

FILIPYEVNA: What can I tell you? I am thinking hard.

I once knew stories by the yard,
Of evil spirits, fair maidens, too,
And some made up, but some were true.
They've left me . . . Now my head is empty . . .
My stories I've forgotten.
Ah! How long, how long ago it seems!
A lifetime . . .

TATIANA: Do remember, Nana.
Back in those days so long ago,
Were you in love? Say yes or no!

FILIPYEVNA: Oh, mercy, Tanya! You are dreaming!
Lord! I'd not even heard of love.
My husband's mother, saints above!
She'd chase me out for so blaspheming.

TATIANA: But how then did you come to marry?

FILIPYEVNA: God willed it, so it had to be, dear.
It happened when I turned thirteen.
My Vanya I had never seen.
No fuss, no ceremony wasted.
The broker came, a bargain struck,
And everybody wished me luck.
That night, the bitter tears I tasted! . . .

Then were my long braids untied,
And at church next day I was the bride,
And then I went to live with strangers ---
You haven't heard a single word!

TATIANA: Ah, Nana! Nana! Can I say it?
I'm in torment!
I'm so afraid of what's to come,
I weep, and shall forever weep.

FILIPYEVNA: My dearest child! Lie down and sleep.
Have mercy on her, mighty Lord!
Lie down and let me sprinkle holy water.
You're all afire!

TATIANA: I am not ill . . . I've got to say it . . .
I . . . am in love!
Now go away . . . Be kind and go . . .
I am in love . . .

FILIPYEVNA: **My baby!**

TATIANA: **Now go and leave me to myself.
First give me pen and ink and paper . . .
My writing desk . . .
I'll go to sleep soon.
Good night.**

FILIPYEVNA: **Good night. God keep you, Tanya.**

She leaves, Tatiana remains for a long time deep in thought, then rises, agitated but resolved.

TATIANA:



**Oh, let me hope, however blindly!
Oh, let me taste the wine of rapture!**

**I down the fatal draft, sweet potion
That wakens longing and desire.
His face, his form I cannot flee;
Onward my tempter beckons me.
I follow where my tempter beckons me.**

She sits at the writing desk, writes a little, then stops.

**No not at all I'll start all over.
What agony! No, too insane!
I cannot even start . . .**

She resumes writing after tearing up what she had written previously.

**To you I write and why say more?
Does not the fact speak plain enough?
My heart I place within your power
To crush to bits with a rebuff.
Yet if you feel, however slight,
A drop of pity for my plight,
You'll not disdain this darkest hour.**

**In vain I've struggle at concealing,
Vowed never to confide**

The pain past hope of healing,
Bitter shame, loss of pride.
Within my heart until it turned to dust
My secret I would hide
Forever buried.

But ah! The tempest tears apart my very soul;
This raging fire has spread beyond control.
For good or ill, I must!
I must express my feeling.

Our distant door why did you choose to cross?
At peace, in quiet isolation,
I never would have felt the loss,
Nor shed a tear of thwarted passion.
Once past the years of green emotion,
I would be satisfied --- who knows? ---
In course of time to wed another,
To live content as wife and mother,
As tranquil as the river flows.

Absurd! No, none could have nor even claim
What I cannot call my own.
Decreed by fate, the will of heaven,
My heart and soul are yours alone.

No, all my life for you I've waited;
Since time first began have I been yours.
By God on high was I created
To love you as long as life endures.

Blessed in a dream did I rejoice,
For there I saw your image clear,
Warm eyes to me forever dear,
And heard the music of your voice.

A dream? No dream, I'll tell you why.
When you appeared I knew for certain
I recognized you.
I longed to cry aloud:
"There he is! There he is!"

My sorrows had you not befriended?
Were you not present in my prayer?
Were not to you my arms extended

When to the poor and sick I tended?
Were you not there?

Soft, from the limpid dark appearing,
Did not you whisper words endearing
To comfort me in time of need?
A dream enchanted, pure and golden,
Am I not much to you beholden,
My prince upon a snow-white steed?

Are you my hope and preservation,
Or evil serpent of temptation?
Resolve my doubt, oh love, reply!
Oh, tell me if I go misguided,
My dream a fair but phantom lie,
If we must tread on paths divided . . .

Be as it may, my hopes and fears,
My life entire I've here imparted.
Do not betray these burning tears.
On you I now rely
To keep my secret guarded.

Consider how alone am I,
So far from human understanding.
From sheer fatigue I'm nearly fainting;
Condemned to silence, I would die.
I can but wait for your reply,
Some indication . . .

A word from you decides my fate;
That single word I now await,
The hope that heals my heart,
Or ends my dream in desolation.
I close, but dare not even read.
Oh, be not angry or disgusted!
In fear, and yet in faith, I plead:
Receive the heart I've here entrusted.

Ah! Dawn is breaking.
The morning sun dispels the stormy night.
There pipes the shepherd
All else at rest,
Except inside me!

Filipyevna returns.

FILIPYEVNA: My sweet, it's time to rise, wake up!
Why, bless my soul, she's up already!
My bright and chipper turtle dove!
Last night you seemed unwell, my love.
Now, God be thanked, you're looking calm and steady.
Of chill or fever not a trace.
The poppies bloom upon your face.

TATIANA: Ah, nurse! I ask a special favor.

FILIPYEVNA: I'm happy, child, to be of use.

TATIANA: If only, only I were braver!
Now listen Please do not refuse.

FILIPYEVNA: Speak out, my dear, I'm flattered by it.

TATIANA: Then send your grandson on the quiet,
And have him take this note to O.
To him, our neighbor, have him go,
But not a soul on earth must know it.
He's not to say from whom or where it came.

FILIPYEVNA: My dear, you haven't told his name!
I'm old; my wits begin to show it.
So many neighbors live around
I couldn't even start to count.
Who is it? Who is it?

TATIANA: Speak out and say his name.
Are you so dull you cannot guess it?

FILIPYEVNA: My dear, I'm old and such a dunce.
I'm not so bright, I must confess it,
No, not so sharp as I was once.
When master commanded
I never kept him waiting.

TATIANA: Dear Nana! Please, no more debating!
But little wit's required, God knows,
To figure out to whom my letter goes.

FILIPYEVNA: Perhaps it could be
Be sweet, my child, and do not frown or scold;
It's all a part of growing old.

TATIANA: Oh, send him, send him to Onegin's house,
Onegin's house, Onegin's house!
Oh, send him to Onegin with my letter.

FILIPYEVNA: I shall attend.
But why's your cheek again so pallid?

TATIANA: No matter, nurse, of no concern.
I await your grandson's swift return!

Tatiana finally succeeds in getting the nurse to leave. She herself remains, pensive and anxious.

ACT I --- PART III

Another part of the garden. Country girls are gathering blackberries, while Tatiana anxiously, fearfully, timidly awaits Onegin's response to her passionate, all too revealing letter.

Scene: another part of the garden. Country girls in the background are gathering berries among the bushes.

COUNTRY GIRLS: Gather, maidens! Beauties all!
Come when pipe and fiddle call.
Come to frolic, sport and play.
Chase youth's golden hours away.

Sing the merry song again
Till its echoes fill the plain,
Lure the farmer lad, perchance
Lead him on to join our dance.

Having caught him in our snare,
Open war we'll then declare.
We'll surround him, show our stripe,
Pelter him with cherries ripe,
Huckleberries, currants red,

Nuts and acorns on his head.

Teach the lad a thing or two,
Not to spy on what we do.
Back he goes the way he came,
Not so prone to spoil a game.

Tatians enters in great haste, then stops to listen.

TATIANA: He comes! He! Onegin!
 I tremble! I shudder!
 I am fire and ice!
 What can he think?

 Why did I yield.
 Give way to cry of heart and soul,
 Release the reins of self-control?
 Why did I send that dreadful letter?
 Too well I know, silence were better.

 He comes to mock my naked pain.
 He loves me not; I wrote in vain.
 Help, kindly God! My tempter beckons.
 Forsake me not!

 The time draws closer
 I hear his step He comes!

Onegin enters. He speaks with dignity, calmly but coldly.

ONEGIN: You wrote to me wherefore deny it?
 A sincere, naive and innocent confession
 Of idealistic youthful passion.
 Your letter gratefully I read,
 In fact with feelings long thought dead,
 Emotions that were merely sleeping.

 But pretty praise is not my aim;
 As you were frank, I'll be the same,
 With perfect candor quite in keeping.
 Without reserve I'll speak my mind;
 You then may judge, if so inclined.

TATIANA: (So frosty! Such an answer! So degrading!)

ACT II --- PART I

Act II opens with great festivity -- a party to celebrate Tatiana's birthday. A gala event, though sophisticated city dwellers may think it less sumptuous than the guests would have us believe, one of whom is ill humored and out of sorts, fretfully wishing that he were elsewhere. Onegin has evidently found life in the country even more boring, even less to his liking than he had expected. What on earth does he have in common with these roughhewn simple-minded yokels? Why has he allowed himself to be dragged to this backwoods ball? It was Lenski who did it, and it would serve him right to suffer the consequences. At any rate, teasing him a bit might serve as a mild diversion. Onegin should be warned that he is playing with fire.

Scene: the Larina living room. A birthday party for Tatiana is in progress.

GUESTS:
Joy and delight!
A true feast out of fable!
And dancing for the young and able.
What a night! A brilliant ball!
Rich, bountiful table.
A splendid sight! Complete delight!
Come, ladies, gather all!
What a banquet! What a table!
Come sing, come dance!
Hearty cheers for the brilliant ball!

MEN:
Here in the country we seldom encounter
Such a magnificent festive affair.
I'm for the simple delights of the hunter;
Give me the horses, the hounds and the hare.

WOMEN:
Fine thing! The sport that they find so delightful!
This dashing through forest of thicket and thorn.
Exhausted and weary, it's homeward by nightfall,
With only a shrug for us ladies forlorn.

YOUNGER GIRLS:
Dear Captain Petrovich.
Such danceable music!
Professional orchestra!

CAPTAIN:
Excellent! One should take advantage.

GIRLS: Were partners available

CAPTAIN: You need look no further!
Let's give it a whirl.

Onegin dances with Tatiana. Others observe.

WOMEN: Look at them! Look at them!
The lovebirds are dancing.
The sweet bridal couple!
She's not hard to suit.
Too bad for poor Tanya!
He's smooth on the surface
A monster beneath it.
A gambler to boot!

Onegin passes near the women, to overhear their conversation.

A boor! Ill-mannered, haughty, *and*
He disdains to kiss a lady's hand.
A liberal, too; prefers red wine.
Thank God, the man's no friend of mine!

ONEGIN: Such admiration! Such flattery!
The barnyard cackle of public opinion!
I deserve it for coming, but who inveigled me
To such a backwoods ball?
My friend, it's thanks to you!
Your little service, Lenski, I'll repay!
I shall play up to his Olga
And drive him to the brink.

Olga approaches, closely followed by Lenski.

Here she comes Allow me!

LENSKI: You promised me this dance, my dear.

ONEGIN: That is what you think!

He sweeps off with Olga, leaving Lenski flabbergasted.

LENSKI: Incredible! My eyes deceive me!
Olga! This I can't believe!

GUESTS: All for pleasure! Hail to the host!

Let's be merry! Fabulous feast!
Night we'll long remember.
A feast we'll not forget,
By far the finest yet.
A night we'll long remember with delight!
All for pleasure!

Lenski approaches Olga, who has just finished dancing with Onegin.

LENSKI: Do I deserve to bear the brunt of mockery?
Oh, Olga! How you taunt and torture me!
What have I done?

OLGA: And what have I,
That you find to criticize?

LENSKI: You dance the waltzes, mazurkas, the ecossaises
All with Onegin.
When I come begging, I get the brush off.

OLGA: You're simply being childish.
You have no cause to feel upset.

LENSKI: No! Not the slightest cause!
Am I supposed to watch, never bat an eye,
While you proceed to laugh and flirt and play coquette?
I saw his arm around you,
I saw him press your hand.
I'm not so blind!

OLGA: Blinded by foolish jealousy!
A mountain from a molehill.
A harmless bit of fun ... He's rather nice.

LENSKI: Rather nice!
Oh, Olga, you no longer love me.

OLGA: Stop talking nonsense.

LENSKI: No, you never loved me.

Onegin approaches.

But the next one won't you dance with me?

ONEGIN: No, with me!

You gave your word and now must keep it.

OLGA: I intend to keep it!
Serves him right to suffer --- so unreasonable!

LENSKI: Olga!

OLGA: Not on your life!
But look, the ladies step this way
To bring Monsieur Triquet.

ONEGIN: Bring who?

OLGA: A Frenchman, now become a neighbor.

WOMEN: Monsieur Triquet! Monsieur Triquet!
Oh, sing us, please, your couplet.

TRIQUET: A small couplet? Oh, very well.
But where be charming Mademoiselle?
For I insist she stand by me.
I dedicate my song to she.

Tatiana, reluctantly, and with great embarrassment, becomes the center of a circle.

WOMEN: Over here! Over here!

TRIQUET: Aha! Voila! Here be today ze queen.
Mesdames, two verses now I sing.
No interrupt, except between.

He sings the first verse in French, with much emotion.

GUESTS: Translate! Translate, Monsieur Triquet.
We want to know the meaning
Of your enchanting roundelay.

TRIQUET: Queen of our hearts this happy day,
Fairest of flowers on display,
Contemplate her beauty while you may.

Star that illuminates the night,
May your soft glow continue bright.
Sending forth a gentle ray of light.

A ray! A ray!
Forever shine on us, Tatiana!
A ray! A ray!

GUESTS: Forever shine, Tatiana!
 Bravo! Bravo, Monsieur Triquet!
 For now we know the meaning
 Of your enchanting roundelay.

CAPTAIN: Messieurs! Mesdames!
 Your places if you please!
 The cotillion is about to start.
 Your places, please!

After dancing a turn with Olga, Onegin seats her, then pretends to have just noticed Lenski.

ONEGIN: So you're not dancing, Lenski?
 There you brood like a tragic Hamlet.
 What's the rub?

LENSKI: You ask! I'm all right.
 Indeed, I much admire
 Your fine display of friendship.

ONEGIN: Now come, come! Your bitter tone
 Is truly quite uncalled for.
 Have I offended you?

LENSKI: Offended? Not a particle!
 I merely doff my hat to such finesse,
 Your gallant flow of words that stirs the frail sex,
 That sweeps them off their feet
 With no jot of scruple.

 No, not satisfied to see Tatiana suffer,
 Out of loyal friendship
 Now you try to lure away my bride.
 You play upon her trust,
 Intending only to scoff at her.
 What a noble friend!

ONEGIN: I? You can't be serious.

LENSKI: Oh, can't I?
 So now you would insult me?
 From robbery you turn to ridicule!

GUESTS: What's the trouble? What's the trouble?

LENSKI: **Onegin! You are no friend of mine!**
 The tie that bound us
 Consider torn to ribbons.
 Sir! You are beneath contempt!

GUESTS: **Born out of nothing,**
 Their dispute grows by the minute.
 From a trickle it enlarges
 To become a raging torrent.

ONEGIN: **You're much mistaken**
 And your charge does me wrong.
 It's too absurd.
 Furthermore, we're stirring up attention.
 I never tried to steal
 Or sweep away a girlish heart,
 Nor shall I in the future,
 So that is that.

LENSKI: **Then what about the way you stroked her hand,**
 The way you whispered
 That brought blushes to her cheek?
 What scheme were you concocting?

ONEGIN: **Do stop it! Raving madness!**
 And people listening!

LenSKI by now is completely beside himself.

LENSKI: **What is that to me?**
 Insult I do not take,
 And satisfaction I insist upon!

GUESTS: **Come, tell us what is brewing.**
 Why this loud and ugly quarrel?

LENSKI: **Just this: I merely ask my former friend**
 To clarify and explain his gross behavior,
 And he replies with flippancy.
 I'm now demanding

LARINA: **That he accept my challenge.**
 A challenge! Heaven spare us!
 And in my house of all places!

ENSEMBLE

LENSKI:

**In your own house I remember
It was here that my childhood unfolded,
Where the hours flowed swift on a stream.
It was here as a man I exulted
In a love that was rapture supreme.**

**But today to my grief I am learning
That real life is no fond make-believe,
Faith and honor mere words without meaning,
And true friendship a mask to deceive;**

**That a maiden as fair as an angel,
Pure and sweet as a morning in May,
Bears inside her the soul of a demon
That entices, then snatches away.**

**My darling, a fool was I for doubting!
My angel so blameless!
The scoundrel, he only will suffer.**

ONEGIN:

**I do regret, when all is weighed,
The shabby role I have played.
His youthful passion, tortured, tender,
Unfeelingly I've torn asunder.**

**To a foolish man I yet hold dear
I should have been far less free and cavalier.
Such falsity to one who trusted!
I stand dishonored, that is clear.
Too far his temper I have tested.
Affection and friendship I have betrayed.**

**Comes my repentance all to late,
For satisfaction I may have to render.**

TATIANA:

**I am bewildered, wildly jealous
At his behavior so cruel and callous.
A fire of yearning burns deep inside me despite.
Brutal fate with a fiendish delight
Has placed an icy hand upon my fevered heart.**

**Ah! So lost am I!
Yet I cannot complain.**

On his account my life I'd offer.
Sweet on his account to die.

Devoured by furies that spare not,
I falter, I perish, yet care not.
Ah, to die for love is blessedness,
To end forever my dire distress.

OLGA & LARINA: I fear that so enflamed a lover
Will come to grief before it's over.
So hot and hasty, oh these men!
Quick-tempered as they've always been,
Abrupt and ever prone to quarrel,
So prone to fight.

OLGA: By jealous pangs is he assaulted,
But not for this should I be faulted, not I!

OLGA & LARINA: For be it remembered,
He's hasty, hot-tempered.
Like all men, he's hasty, hot-tempered.

GUESTS: Ah, poor Lenski! Too impetuous!
In flow of blood must it be ended?
Or can their quarrel yet be mended?
(With pistols and bullets the quarrel may end.)

Hasty and hot! Young, foolish men!
But thus blind youth has always been.
For be it remembered,
They're hasty, hot-tempered.
Like all men, they're hasty, hot-tempered.

ONEGIN: You need but give the word. I'm ready.
I have heard you out.
Oh, blinded fool! Oh, blinded fool!
A lesson might enlighten you a little.

LENSKI: Tomorrow morning!
We'll then find out who learns the lesson.
A fool I well may be,
But you are a scoundrel and a traitor!

ONEGIN: Another word, sir, and I will kill you.

GUESTS: **Scandal and crime!
Headlong to bloodshed and horror!
Can no one prevent it?
We're angry, dumbfounded, revolted!
No fighting! No killing!
Have exits all bolted.
Truce to bloodshed! Truce to horror!
Stop them! Somebody!**

OLGA: **Oh, Lenski! Oh, I beg you! I implore you!**

LENSKI: **My Olga! Olga! Goodby, goodby!**

GUESTS: **Bound for bloodshed!**

ACT II --- PART II

The following morning, the dawn of a bleak winter day. The scene is the bank of a frozen stream, near an old abandoned water mill.

Scene: a winter landscape at daybreak. Lenski, seated on the ground, waits reflectively while Zaretski paces impatiently

ZARETSKI: **Well, Lenski, has your opponent overslept?
Or retracted?**

LENSKI: **We can count on him.**

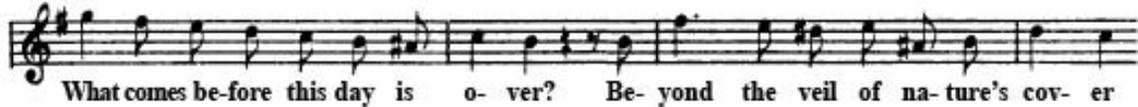
ZARETSKI: **I think it rather rude to keep us waiting.
It's after six, the hour agreed.
For death, a man should not be late.**

Zaretski goes out to investigate. Lenski remains seated.

LENSKI: **My hope, my youth,**

So soon have you departed!
Oh, warmth of spring, forever gone!

He rises and comes forward.



In vain I seek the mystery.
No matter! What's to be will be.

Should death enfold me in his keeping,
Or should the bullet pass me by,
God wills it --- thus to live or die,
A time for waking and for sleeping.
He sends the dawning ray of light;
He sends the shrouded dark of night.

The morning star in sparkling splendor
Again will crown the plains beneath;
Perhaps by nightfall I shall enter
The cold and solemn halls of death
Wherein the youthful poet's lyric
Outlives him but a meager hour,
So soon the world forgets.
But you, you, Olga? . . .

If to my grave you come to lay a flower.
To shed a tear or pay a duty,
Remember: one who loved here lies,
Whose song forever glorifies
The wonder of your mortal beauty.

Remember then the love I bear,
My hope, my blessing and reward!
Oh, crystal light! Oh, breath of air!
Exalted, cherished and adored!

Oh, come to me, and here abide
Forevermore!

I call to you, my darling and my bride!
Oh, come! Oh, come!
Turn not away but here my call:
My sacred bride, my life, my all!

Oh, hope! Oh, youth!
Oh, where have you departed?

Oh, warmth of spring,
Forever and forever gone!

Zaretski approaches, as Onegin appears, accompanied by his servant, Guillot.

ZARETSKI: Ah, finally! But who's the fellow with him?
He's new to me.

ONEGIN: I hope I've not detained you.
My negligence you'll pardon.

ZARETSKI: Your second? Who, sir, have you picked?
These matters have to be correct.
On form I take the firm position;
It can't be done just anyhow.
The slack approach we can't allow.
We'll stick to custom and tradition ---
The proper way to kill a friend.

ONEGIN: Sir, your concern I commend.
My second here, allow me: Monsieur Guillot.
I trust that you have no objection;
An honest chap as people go,
Though frankly not of rank and title ---
A point I don't consider vital.

Guillot bows with utmost formality; Zaretski responds coldly.

ONEGIN: (to Lenski) So shall we start?
LENSKI: If you are ready.

Guillot and Zaretski withdraw to discuss arrangements. Onegin and Lenski sing alternately, not looking at each other..

LENSKI & ONEGIN: My foe!
Our friendly ties all sundered,
Affection torn up by the roots.
Till now have we not shared a hundred
Fond pastimes, pleasures and pursuits?

No longer loving, roused in anger,
Opposed, we meet as foe and stranger,
Life's precious blood prepared to shed,
So death might claim one or the other's.

Ah, could we not laugh it off instead,
Before our hands are stained in red,
In solid friendship part as brothers?

No! No! No! No!

Zaretski and Guillot have measured the distances and loaded the pistols. The principals are positioned and handed the pistols. All is done in silence.

ZARETSKI: And now step forward.

Zaretski claps his hands three times. The adversaries step forward without aiming. They raise their pistols, a shot is fired. Lenski staggers and falls. Onegin and Zaretski rush forward.

ONEGIN: Dead?

ZARETSKI: Dead!

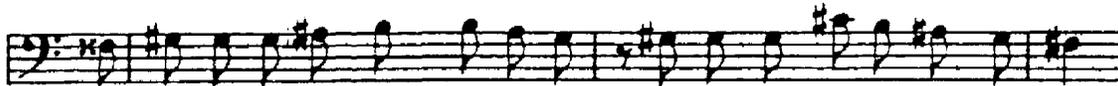
Onegin in despair covers his face with his hands.

ACT III --- PART I

From this cold, desolate, tragic landscape we move to one of utter contrast -- the glittering ballroom of one of the most elegant palaces in St. Petersburg, the scene of a most unlikely encounter between two people that we may recognize. Several years have gone by, years that have taken them in opposite directions.

Scene, an elegant ballroom in St. Petersburg, several years later. After a grand Polonaise, Onegin is seen standing apart, brooding.

ONEGIN: Eternal boredom!
Social glitter, bustle and excitement
Only enflame still further
The past I can't forget.



Since hav-ing killed the friend I treas-ured, I floun-der aim-less-ly a- skew.

At twenty six, I still pursue
A shallow life that's all too leisured.

Uprooted, minus wife and home,

Abroad in foreign towns I roam,
Aimless, but pausing not to ponder,
My stabs at work a total loss.
Possessed by a constant urge to wander,
I bear a strange and lonely cross.

It drove me on. My native land and
My own estate I soon abandoned.
From each familiar hedge and tree
A bleeding corpse stared back at me.

In travel, searching and exploring
In vain for solace and relief,
I soon discovered to my grief
That novelty is just as boring.

Homeward returning, here I skip
To a ballroom, barely off the ship.

Another dance, a lively schottische, follows. Prince Gremin then enters, Tatiana holding his arm.

CHORUS: The Princess Gremina!
 A pleasure! An honor!

Do point her out.
You can't mistake her.
She's standing by the table there.
Has she not elegance to spare?

ONEGIN: Is that Tatiana? Truly? No!
How? From the dreary backwoods county,
 Can this be she?
 The girl I knew?
The regal air! The graceful manner!
 The refinement!
 A queen with royal retinue!

TATIANA: *(to some of the party)*

Who is that man beside my husband
Whose back is turned?

CHORUS: An idle dreamer!
 A man of eccentricities.
 A foreign traveller

Now back from overseas,
The name's Onegin.

TATIANA: Onegin?

CHORUS: Someone known to you?

TATIANA: A neighbor that I barely knew.
(Oh, heaven! Bolster up my heart
And help me conquer this commotion!)

ONEGIN: (to Gremin) Oh, tell me, Prince, what woman's that?
The one with air of such distinction
Who entertains the diplomat?

GREMIN: Aha! You must be fresh from travel!
Perhaps you lead a sheltered life.

ONEGIN: Pray tell me who?

GREMIN: In short, my wife.

ONEGIN: I'd never guessed! I'd no idea!
Long married?

GREMIN: Two years or so.

ONEGIN: She was? . . .

GREMIN: The Larin girl, Tatiana.
You knew her once?

ONEGIN: Quite long ago.

GREMIN:



Ill-starred, my ship had run aground.
My dearest Tanya then I found.
The sun emerged, the clouds retreated;
In her, my purpose and my goal I saw completed.

Mid worldly cunning, affectation,
Mid smiles intended to deceive,
The promises of short duration,
The hearts worn lightly on the sleeve;

Mid hypocrites that pass for pious,
Mid solemn bores that petrify us,
Mid flirts that vie for the response
Of rich and elderly gallants;

Mid verdicts callous, cold and cruel,
Of ugly vanity and spleen.
Mid rancors hid behind a screen
Of shallow talk and verbal duel,

Tatiana's virtues shine the more,
A star refulgent, ever glowing,
A star I worship and adore.
Toward her and paradise
I bear a cup that's overflowing.

The touch of love, though light and tender,
Compels all mortals to surrender.
It takes the young in summer's rage
And taps alike on ripened age.

Those who know not its full extent
Are robbed of life's most fragrant scent.
The range and depth of my devotion
Are wider, deeper than the ocean.

Ill-starred, my ship had run aground.
My dearest Tanya then I found.
The sun emerged, the clouds retreated;
In her, my purpose and my goal I saw completed.

So do come over and be introduced.

He takes Onegin over to Tatiana.

My love, allow me to present you

To a distant relative and friend, Onegin.

TATIANA: (*with apparent composure*)

Indeed a pleasure.
But then, of course, we've met before.

ONEGIN: In the country, years ago.

TATIANA: And meanwhile, did you remain and settle down?

ONEGIN: Oh, no. I'm just returning
From years of travel.

TATIANA: You arrived? . . .

ONEGIN: This morning.

TATIANA: (*to Gremin*) Dearest, if you are ready

Taking Gremin's arm, she leaves, returning the salutations of the guests. Onegin follows her with his eyes.

ONEGIN: Is this indeed the same Tatiana?
The awkward child I deigned to scold,
To give advice, correct but cold?
The country girl I was chastizing
With bits of pompous moralizing?

She wrote to me, cast off disguise;
And what she offered I rejected.
But now can I believe my eyes?
A transformation! Such a prize!

What captures me? A waking dream!
What feeling stirs within my breast,
Till now withdrawn and self-possessed?
Impatience? Jealousy? Remorse?
Or is it love that runs full force?

No, not a doubt of it! I love her
With all the ecstasy of youthful fire!
Oh, let me hope, however blindly!
Oh, let me taste the wine of rapture!

I down the fatal draft, sweet potion

That wakens longing and desire.
Her face, her form I ever see.
Onward, my angel beckons me!
I follow where my angel beckons me!

He rushes off as the dance begins anew.

ACT III --- PART II

It is morning, a few weeks later, in the drawing room of Prince Gremin's house. Tatiana, now Princess Gremina, holds in her hand a letter -- one that could hardly fail to bring back excruciating memories of a letter that she herself once wrote, so impetuously, so unwisely.

Scene, a reception room in the Gremin house. A few days later. Tatiana enters, a letter in her hand.

TATIANA: Oh, why did he return?
 Again Onegin has crossed my path
 Like some relentless apparition.
Oh, how that look of his disturbs my inner soul!
 There passions long asleep
 Reawaken live and whole.

 I am again that child naive and candid,
 The girl in love that long ago he reprimanded.

Onegin appears, stands motionless for a moment, then hurries over to Tatiana and kneels at her feet. She looks at him, with neither surprise nor anger, then motions him to rise.

TATIANA: I beg you Please do rise.
 As once before, I shall speak frankly.
 Onegin, can you still recall
 That dreaded hour
 I came to meet my destiny
 And meekly swallowed the gall
 Of your aloof reply?

ONEGIN: Oh, spare me! Show a little mercy!
 Then I was stupid,
 But now repentant.

TATIANA:

**A girl, I came to you unguarded;
My heart I made an open book.
With what return was I rewarded?
Only a cold and frosty look.**

**For you, my love had no attraction,
Too lowly for your satisfaction.
Perhaps you found it nothing new
I shudder even to review
Those chilling words, the formal manner,
That solemn reprimand.
Yet what should I expect?
Kind, though severe,
You were a perfect man of honor
And your behavior quite correct.**

**You found me little to your liking;
To a rustic world you never warmed.
But why the turn-about so striking?
Am I so wondrously transformed?**

**Or does the pride of high position,
The social status that I scorn,
Appeal perhaps to your ambition?
Because my husband, battle-torn,**

**Has thereby gained in courtly favor?
Or that the rumor of my fall
Would circulate to one and all
And lend your game a spicy flavor?**

**Because my name might fill a gap,
Add one more feather to your cap?**

ONEGIN:

**Ah! Have mercy!
Deny that in my agony and fever
Your scornful eyes can only find
The cunning of a cold deceiver!
To suffering are you so blind?**

**Oh, raging torrent of emotion
That bears the heart upon the flood,
With naught but reason, pale and frozen,
To tame the tempest of the blood!**

I come before you humbly kneeling,

To pour my passionate desire,
Unto your tender heart revealing
A love that you alone inspire.

TATIANA: You move me.

ONEGIN: Tears . . . Precious pearls!
This earth contains no greater treasure.

BOTH: Ah! Happiness was ours so nearly.
So nearly! So nearly!
Ah, so near!

TATIANA: But my fate is sealed; I am not free.
I have a husband, and know my duty,
Also yours. Yes, you must go!
I beg you, leave me.

ONEGIN: The moment I've found you
Am I to leave you? No!

Ah! Hand in hand on golden rays,
I find in you my destination.
Your lovely smile, your tender gaze
To watch in melting adoration.

To catch the magic of your eyes,
The grandeur of your soul to learn,
Upon your breast to lie, to freeze and burn,
To perish there in paradise.
Ah, pure paradise and blissful peace eternal!

TATIANA: Onegin, show yourself the man of honor
That you are inside.
I appeal to dignity and manly pride:
This must be final.

ONEGIN: No, I shall never part from you.
No, never!

TATIANA: Why should I lie? Why still conceal it?
Ah! I love you still!

ONEGIN: You love me still!
Can you suppose that now I'll leave you?
Oh, rapture! Ecstasy!

Again Tatiana's former glory!

TATIANA: No, no! There's no return; we are too late.
In Gremin's hand resides my fate.
To him alone I swore a vow,
And I shall not forswear it now.

ONEGIN: Banish me not, for I adore you;
Take not away the enchanted wine;
Savor the feast I spread before you;
Heaven decrees that you are mine!

Toward love our lives have ever pointed;
My own I promise now in pledge.
Made one, by destiny annointed,
We must not tremble on the edge.

Too far we've come for backward turning;
Too fierce the fire within us burning.
All hated bonds I tear apart
To offer you a lover's heart.

TATIANA: Onegin, I shall not surrender.
With someone else I've cast my lot.
Although my heart remains still tender,
I shall be firm and fail him not.

(From my resolve I must not waver,
However torn by his appeal.
Yes, I must stifle what I feel.
My honor, my duty are sacred.
No, I shall not waver.)

ONEGIN: Oh, turn not from a tortured plea!
You love me, you love me,
And by heavenly decree
You're mine forevermore!

TATIANA: Eugene, I leave you.
I implore you!

ONEGIN: No! No! No! No!
Ah, Tatiana, come with me.

TATIANA: No, no, I shall not waver.

ONEGIN: **I worship you, I live for you!**

TATIANA: **No more, Eugene.**

ONEGIN: **I worship you!**

TATIANA: **Goodbye forever!**

ONEGIN: **You are mine!**

With final determination, she leaves the room.

ONEGIN: **Alone! I've lost!**
Only the dark is left!

He rushes off.

Fine