

Live, Laugh, Limerence

An Opera Buffa in four acts

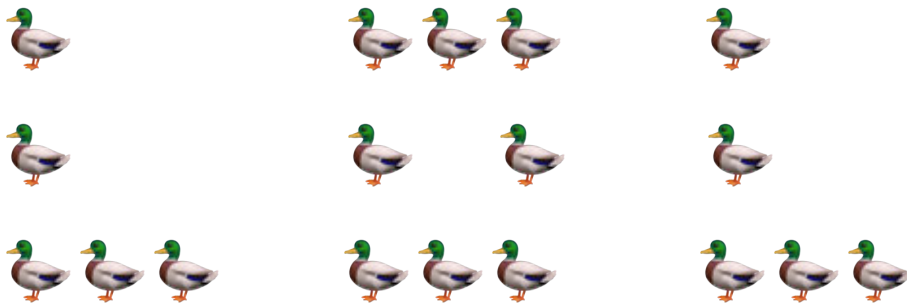
Libretto by
Marijke De Roover

2019

De Roover's introductory notes: The performance needs the naturalism of the text. All characters exist all at once all as one. The landscape in which the experience is set could be a metropolitan studio apartment, an AA meeting, a deep dream or a dead star (more chance of it being a karaoke booth tbh). The I in the text is collective, the time suggestive. The simultaneity of the four parts of the text can be portrayed any which way.

Me to me: You have a responsibility towards your audience. Please keep all the ducks in a row!

The ducks:



CAST OF CHARACTERS

When reading this story out loud, please use the following voices:

ELETTRA: fast-paced, sweet, melodic.

LOTTE (V.O.): distant but sensitive, straight forward.

*TURANDOT (V.O.): wild but judgemental (but their friendship is like this). → darlin', this kind of love is not viable (I can just see it with this fat american country accent lol)
Or (Marilyn is so sweet and Jane is much more rough/tough)*

NARRATOR (V.O.): voice of god (distant), ironic, calm.

SCENES

PROLOGUE: IN WHICH THE NARRATOR EXPRESSES HER DOUBTS

ACT ONE: THE DAY I STOPPED DRINKING I BECAME A PLAYWRIGHT THAT JUST SITS IN COFFEE BARS

Scene 1: *Which introduces us to the tragedy and its protagonist*

Scene 2: *A brief encounter*

Scene 3: *I took a deep breath and listened to the old bray of my heart. I am. I am. I am*

Scene 4: *A realistic portrayal of someone using love as an escapist drug*

ACT TWO: A KISS. (WHEN YOU SELL YOUR SOUL TO THE DEVIL DO NOT DARE TO ASK FOR IT BACK)

Scene 1: *I woke up so early this morning it was still yesterday and now I feel like tomorrow*

Scene 2: *And yes, a creature, a living creature, she is, though only a poet was her maker*

Scene 3: *"But now that the idea is suggested," said Elettra, with infantile intellectuality, "does it not raise the desire"?*

ACT THREE: HITHERTO NO LUCK THOUGH THERE'S A VAST DIFFERENCE, MY FRIEND, BETWEEN THE MELANCHOLY VIEW AND THE MISERABLE

Scene 1: Love is the message. The message is death.

Scene 2: 10 things I hate about you.

ACT FOUR – OPENING WITH A POETICAL EULOGY OF ROMANTIC FRIENDSHIP AND CONTINUING WITH TALK INSPIRED BY THE SAME

Scene 1: The Friend Zone is a very complex maze of traps

Scene 2: Neither speak any Japanese, but karaoke is the international language (Peace, Love and Understanding)

EPILOGUE: IN WHICH THE LAST SCENE OF THE LAST ACT IS MADE THE CENTRAL DISCOURSE, WHICH WILL BE SURE OF RECEIVING MORE OR LESS ATTENTION FROM THOSE IN THE AUDIENCE WHO ARE STILL AWAKE

DEDICATION

Wild nights - Wild nights!
Were I with thee
Wild nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile - the winds -
To a Heart in port -
Done with the Compass -
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden -
Ah - the Sea!
Might I but moor - tonight -
In thee!

Emily Dickinson

DISCLAIMER

THIS PERFORMANCE MAY INCLUDE LINES I READ ONCE IN AN ARTICLE,
ESSAY, POEM OR TWEET (...).

I'M JEALOUS OF THOSE LINES AND WHISH I CAME UP WITH THEM MYSELF.
ALL CHARACTERS AND EVENTS -- EVEN THOSE BASED ON REAL PEOPLE --
ARE ENTIRELY FICTIONAL.

PROLOGUE: IN WHICH THE NARRATOR EXPRESSES HER DOUBTS

NARRATOR, ELLETRA.

THE STAGE AND AUDITORIUM ARE COMPLETELY LIT.

ELETTRA LIES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PYRAMID STAIRS.

MUSIC STARTS (ABBA - S.O.S. - ORCHESTRAL).

NARRATOR:

During rehearsal I was wondering what the director was trying to say.

From the start, the action revealed a poverty of poetic inspiration.

Forgive me, but this might be the definitive proof that theater is 50 years behind all other arts.

The script doesn't even have the merits of an 'avant garde' play, but it has all the shortcomings.

(ADAPTATION - SCREENPLAY CONFERENCE (SCENE))

... AND GOD HELP YOU IF YOU USE VOICE OVER IN YOUR WORK, MY FRIENDS. GOD HELP YOU! IT'S FLACCID, SLOPPY WRITING. ANY IDIOT CAN WRITE VOICE_OVER NARRATION TO EXPLAIN THE THOUGHTS OF A CHARACTER. OK ONE HOUR FOR LUNCH.

MUSIC TRANSITIONS (INTO SEMPRE LIBERA).

The Chemical Equation

ACT ONE: THE DAY I STOPPED DRINKING I BECAME A PLAYWRIGHT THAT JUST SITS IN COFFEE BARS

SCENE 1: WHICH INTRODUCES US TO THE TRAGEDY AND ITS PROTAGONIST

ELETTRA, NARRATOR.

(SEMPRE LIBERA - LA TRAVIATA - INSTRUMENTAL).

A DARK BLUE LIGHT SLOWLY COMES ON.

ELETTRA SITS ON TOP OF THE STAIRS.

ELETTRA (addressing the audience):

Focus.

Concentration.

*I'm trying to figure out whether I'm being constructively
disoriented or disastrously coherent.*

Or maybe it's listlessness, laziness, lustless longing.

*I can never really tell whether I'm actually working or doing
something just as important.*

*I can never tell why I'm still trying to divide everything into
fruitful and distracting.*

That's something I must have picked up somewhere.

*Anyway, I don't think I know what I'm doing and I haven't for a
very long time.*

*The more I worked on this today, the more unhappy I started to
feel. It's interesting because I've recently made a connection
between my habit of not really making anything, and the
realisation that I so seldom let my own interests lead my life.
Instead, I focus on the interests of others.*

*I decide to do something because I have an interest, and then I
talk about it and then the attention from others sort of takes
over and eclipses the original interest and destroys it.*

Eventually I get so exhausted by returning to my historic destructive interest – the attention of other people – that I give up on whatever it was I was doing, and it just feels like a relief.

So I've already been working on trying to remember why I enjoy what I'm doing here, and asking myself if indeed I am, and what I might enjoy doing next.

ELETTRA PICKS UP THE
GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE.

MUSIC TRANSITION (MINIMISM #1. II - ANDANTEN AGAGIO, III -
VIVACE - MOONDOG)

NARRATOR:

Isolated in an almost empty room, the protagonist, a young woman, stands up. (ELETTRA STANDS UP) After a pause, she points a finger into space. (ELETTRA POINTING AT THE GREEN STOOL) It's a decision to direct one's gaze onto one particular thing, and therefore not onto anything else. Pointing towards the audience. (ELETTRA POINTING AT THE AUDIENCE) You sit quietly and stare raptly at the stage.

ELETTRA WALKS TOWARDS PYRAMID STAIRS, PUTTING HER GLASS
DOWN, LEANING.

(ADAPTATION - LOVE (V.O.))

I NEED TO TURN MY LIFE AROUND. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO? I NEED TO FALL IN LOVE. I NEED TO HAVE A GIRLFRIEND. I NEED TO READ MORE, IMPROVE MYSELF. WHAT IF I LEARNED RUSSIAN OR SOMETHING?

ELETTRA:

All other things lose their charm in the face of love.

And love is exactly where I expect to find the kind of sensible hindrance that interests me.

I know I can find it if I just surrender to a regime of attentiveness.

ELETTRA (addressing the audience):

Tell me, what does it mean to really look at something?

GLASS SOUND EFFECT.

STAGE GOES DARK.

Meet Cute

ACT ONE

SCENE 2: A BRIEF ENCOUNTER

NARRATOR, ELETTRA.

ELETTRA WALK TO FRONT STAGE.

NARRATOR:

Enter Lotte.

A LIGHTER BLUE COMES ON (INSTANTLY).

NARRATOR:

Her eyes were blue, glacier-like, ice cold with almost no expression when they looked at you. You guessed they knew no warmth and never shared love. Then you remembered the hottest fires always burn blue.

But, cold start.

Tough love.

Is this a recurrent theme? Time will tell.

(STEP BROTHERS - SWEET CHILD OF MINE (SCENE))

ELETTRA (sung):

*She's got a smile it seems to me
Reminds me of childhood memories
Where everything
Was as fresh as the bright blue sky*

*She's got eyes of the bluest skies
As if they thought of rain
I hate to look into those eyes
And see an ounce of pain*

MUSIC TRANSITION INTO (DOMINIQUE GUIOT - WIND SURF BALLAD)
STAGE GOES DARK.
CURTAIN CLOSING SOUND EFFECT.

ELETTRA (addressing the audience) :

Our first dialogue scene takes place behind the curtain, which is a metaphor. You see, because it refers to what is happening in real time and that effectively breaks the fourth wall just as we expect post modern theater to do, so yes...

Lotte and I hit it off due to both being crazy but in a different way.

Lotte is demanding and unstable while I am insane and delusional.

The curtain parts (CURTAIN PARTING SOUND EFFECT) (LIGHT COMES ON VERY BRIGHT BLUE) and that which has never been seen is devoured by the eyes. The scene consecrates the object I am going to love.

(JERRY MAGUIRE - YOU HAD ME AT HELLO (SCENE)
YOU HAD ME AT HELLO.

NARRATOR:

*Love at first sight is always spoken in the past tense.
The scene is perfectly adapted to this temporal phenomenon.*

Distinct.

Abrupt.

Framed.

It is already a memory.

ELETTRA:

*This scene has all the magnificence of an accident.
I cannot get over the fact I was this lucky.*

To meet what matches my desire.

PEOPLE TALKING SOUND EFFECT.

MUSIC STARTS (DAG VREEMDE MAN).

ELETTRA (sung):

*A case of lost self-confidence
My writing losing all it's sense
My tongue is tied, I haven't slept
My thoughts are racing through my head*

*Behold! It's clear that I can't think.
So let's get out of here and drink
I need you drunk so i can say
let's fall in love and do it my way*

*Love lover love
love love love love
come take my hand
and lead me the way
Love lover love
love lover love
It turned out so right
For strangers in the niiiight*

MUSIC STOPS.

STAGE GOES DARK.

ACT ONE

**SCENE 3: I TOOK A DEEP BREATH AND LISTENED TO THE OLD
BRAY OF MY HEART. I AM. I AM. I AM.**

ELETTRA, NARRATOR, LOTTE.

THE STAGE IS LIT IN A DARK RED. ELETTRA IS STANDING FRONT
STAGE.

MUSIC STARTS (QUEEN - SOMEBODY TO LOVE - INTRO)

ELETTRA (addressing the audience):

*Who would I even be if I wasn't hustling to make some person,
real or imagined, fall in love with me?*

*Honestly, I would always choose heartbreak over boredom.
My impressions of the world preferably arranged in the shape of
a fixation. Every experience serving as a cosmic confirmation of
shared lives and destinies. Just as all roads lead to Rome.*

NARRATOR:

*About a decade before she killed herself, Sylvia Plath told her
love interest, I like people too much or not at all. I've got to
go down deep, to fall into people, to really know them.
Her crush replied...*

LOTTE:

...nobody knows me.

NARRATOR:

So that was it. The end.

ELETTRA:

*All or nothing darling.
I'm either living my best life or crying in a corner.
This unbalanced attachment to extremes makes me not only
unpredictable in everyday life but also crazily chasing
concocted crushes.*

MUSIC STARTS (FOLLIES - LOSING MY MIND).

ELETTRA (sung):

*The sun comes up
I think about her
The coffee cup
I think about her
I want her so
It's like I'm losing my mind*

*The morning ends
I think about her
I talk to friends
I think about her
And do they know
It's like I'm losing my mind*

*All afternoon doing every little chore
The thought of her stays bright
Sometimes I stand in the middle of the floor
Not going left
Not going right*

MUSIC STOPS.

STAGE GOES DARK.

ACT ONE

SCENE 4: A REALISTIC PORTRAYAL OF SOMEONE USING LOVE AS AN ESCAPIST DRUG

ELETTRA, TURANDOT, NARRATOR.

STAGE IS LIT IN ORANGE.

ELETTRA SITTING ON THE STAIRS.

THE SCREEN IS YELLOW/ORANGE.

MUSIC STARTS (GREEN DAY - WORKING CLASS HERO).

TURANDOT:

Elettra, how are you, dear?

ELETTRA:

I'm obsessed, thank you very much.

TURANDOT:

Unrequited love?

In this economy???

There is no time for fanatical intimacies.

No time for obsessions other than capitalist productivity, disciplined subjectivity, and neoliberal self-improvement.

MUSIC STARTS (TALK TALK - SUCH A SHAME).

NARRATOR:

Not only do we give corporations our time, but also our physical, mental and emotional energy. We have sex at the end of the day, when exhaustion has piled up and we're in a rush to get it done quickly so as to get our seven or eight hours of sleep. Capitalism doesn't care that you are drunk on love, horny, euphoric, worried, anguished, desperate, sad, anxious, or upset. The production chain can't stop for your feelings, and it suits capitalism that we aren't too happy. Our permanent dissatisfaction and pain makes us more vulnerable.

MUSIC STOPS.

STAGE GOES DARK.

**ACT TWO: A KISS. (WHEN YOU SELL YOUR SOUL TO THE DEVIL
DO NOT DARE TO ASK FOR IT BACK)**

***SCENE 1: I WOKE UP SO EARLY THIS MORNING IT WAS STILL
YESTERDAY AND NOW I FEEL LIKE TOMORROW***

TURANDOT, ELETTRA, NARRATOR.

ELETTRA SITS IN THE CENTRE OF THE STAIRS.

RED LIGHT.

MUSIC STARTS (HANDEL - SARABANDE).

TURANDOT:

*Red flags can look beautiful like skies sliding into blue,
blossoms into bloom or xoxo texts and heart emojis.
But remember, when you sell your soul to the devil do not dare
to ask for it back.*

ELETTRA:

*Well, obsession is my first language.
I've pined insatiably and repeatedly.
Crushes are like little treadmills of hope in the abyss.
I might be going nowhere but there is the sensation of forward
motion.
Something to anticipate.*

*MUSIC TRANSITIONS INTO (KENNY RODGERS - JUST DROPPED IN (TO
SEE WHAT CONDITION MY CONDITION IS IN)).*

YEAH, YEAH, YEAH

WHAT CONDITION MY CONDITION WAS IN

ELETTRA:

*I went to a shrink to analyze my dreams. She said it's either
lack of sex or exercise that's driving me wild. But I know it's
just that I'm consumed by thoughts of you. My head filled with
memories yet to make and when I close my eyes I can feel the
fire racing under my skin. I'm quite sure this is love.*

*I am so hungry with my love for you it is the fuel with which I
fuck everyone else.*

I have been having wild realisations all week: that when your weird is compatible with another person's weird, you both become normal again. And I realised that if I was a character in a play I would be the vital and sexually charged, fearlessly free, operatic heroine Carmen. We just have the same taste for vulgar fatality.

MUSIC STOPS.

STAGE GOES DARK.

ACT TWO

SCENE 2: AND YES, A CREATURE, A LIVING CREATURE, SHE IS, THOUGH ONLY A POET WAS HER MAKER

NARRATOR, LOTTE, ELLETRA.

LIGHT SLOWLY TURNS DARK RED.

ELETTRA IS SITTING ON TOP OF THE STAIRS.

MUSIC STARTS (PROKOVIEF - PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 IN G MINOR, Op. 16)

ELETTRA (to audience):

Then I look into her eyes and I feel all this stuff that is definitely uncalled for and probably makes her feel incredibly uncomfortable. I get emotional. I don't know. I tend to cry.

LOTTE:

Let's do it. Let's do it right now. Let's have a holy moment.

ELETTRA:

Okay.

10 SECONDS OF SILENCE.

NARRATOR:

In the deep connection that we call intimacy we feel this overflowing engagement with the world. In this we recognize an experience of extending ourselves, not just as opening up but as fusion, a merging with others in a world that is no longer 'social'.

(WAKING LIFE - SECOND PART OF LANGUAGE (SCENE)).

AND SO MUCH OF OUR EXPERIENCE IS INTANGIBLE. SO MUCH OF WHAT WE PERCEIVE CANNOT BE EXPRESSED. IT'S UNSPEAKABLE. AND YET, YOU KNOW, WHEN WE COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER AND WE FEEL THAT WE HAVE CONNECTED AND WE THINK THAT WE ARE BEING UNDERSTOOD, I THINK WE HAVE A FEELING OF ALMOST SPIRITUAL COMMUNION. AND THAT FEELING MAY BE TRANSIENT, BUT I THINK IT'S WHAT WE LIVE FOR.

MUSIC STOPS.
STAGE GOES DARK

The Hook

ACT TWO

SCENE 3: "BUT NOW THAT THE IDEA IS SUGGESTED", SAID ELETTRA, WITH INFANTILE INTELLECTUALITY, "DOES IT NOT RAISE THE DESIRE?"

NARRATOR, LOTTE, ELETTRA.

ELETTRA LIES ON THE STAIRS.

THE LIGHT IS PINK.

MUSIC STARTS (BIZET - HABANERA - INSTRUMENTAL).

LOTTE:

Open your eyes and look at me. No, I don't think I will kiss you although you need kissing badly. That's what's wrong with you. You should be kissed, and often. And by someone who knows how.

ELETTRA:

Oh, and I suppose you think you're not the right person.

LOTTE:

I might be, if the right moment ever came.

(MOONSTRUCK - SNAP OUT OF IT (SCENE)).

SNAP OUT OF IT!

I CAN'T!

ELETTRA (to audience - exaggerated):

I am too much, my love is too much for the unfortunate object of my affection. A tidal wave. An avalanche.

(JERRY MAGUIRE - WHAT DO YOU WANT? MY SOUL? (SCENE)).

WHAT DO YOU WANT? MY SOUL?

WHY NOT? I DESERVE THAT.

(NOTTING HILL - CAN I JUST SAY "NO" (SCENE).
CAN I JUST SAY "NO". KIND REQUEST.

NARRATOR:

A kiss.

ELETTRA:

Close your eyes in the beginning, while you stroke her, and imagine she initiated this. You want to be touched the way you had touched, delicately, but with great passion.

Remember, you are objectively attractive. You have years left in your prime.

List all of the things you will do the rest of the week. Keep listing more and more and more until her tongue is no longer warm and wet in your mouth. Maybe this kiss isn't the beginning of the end of something that didn't even start.

ELETTRA (addressing the audience):

I have withdrawn from all finality.

I live according to chance.

Flouted in my enterprise, as it happens, I emerge from it neither victor nor vanquished.

I am tragic!

(MOONRISE KINGDOM - I LOVE YOU (V.O.))

I LOVE YOU, BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

(RUSHMORE - AND THEN HE KISSES HER (SCENE))

ALRIGHT, AND THEN HE KISSES HER AND WE'RE OUT. OKAY.

MUSIC STOPS.

STAGE GOES DARK.

SOUND OF CURTAIN CLOSING.

APPLAUSE EFFECT.

A Sexy Complication

ACT THREE: HITHERTO NO LUCK THOUGH THERE'S A VAST DIFFERENCE, MY FRIEND, BETWEEN THE MELANCHOLY VIEW AND THE MISERABLE

SCENE 1: LOVE IS THE MESSAGE. THE MESSAGE IS DEATH.

TURANDOT, ELETTRA, NARRATOR, LOTTE.

STAGE IS LIT RED.

MUSIC STARTS (ORCHESTRAL DESPACITO).

STAGE IS DARK.

TURANDOT:

Focus. Come here.

Look at me. You here? Are you here with me?

This kind of love is not viable.

ELETTRA:

But how can you evaluate viability?

Why is the viable a good thing?

Why is it better to last than to burn?

TURANDOT

Sometimes we look at someone and think we are in love with them.

But we are not.

We want to be saved and be saviors all the same.

We look into a mirror and we fall together bounding over our scars, licking tears from each others faces. Patting each other on the back for overcoming obstacles that we ourselves have met.

But you mustn't think this is love.

It's merely emotional masturbation.

PLUS.

Have you met her?

She's crazy.

And have you met you.

You are terrifying!

MUSIC STOPS.

CURTAIN CLOSING SOUND EFFECT.

STAGE GOES DARK.

ELETTRA (addressing the audience)

This night, my desire feels so giant, so true, that I am convinced it exists beyond me. Some cosmic tug must be occurring. She must feel it too.

DIAL TONE.

LOTTE:

Hello?

ELETTRA:

Hi. It's me.

LOTTE:

Are you joking?

ELETTRA:

That would be a bad joke.

NARRATOR:

Silence. Then nervous breathing.

LOTTE:

Now is not a good time.

NARRATOR:

After some sobbing and a second sleeping pill, Elettra knocks out just before daylight. In the morning, her moral inventory produces the usual mixture of horror, embarrassment, and self-pity. She resolves never to pull this sort of stunt again.

Swivel

ACT TWO

SCENE 2: 10 THINGS I HATE ABOUT YOU.

LOTTE, NARRATOR, ELETTRA.
STAGE IS BRIGHT PINK.
ELETTRA IS WALKING AROUND.

(10 THINGS I HATE ABOUT YOU - CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OF YOU
SCENE)

*I LOVE YOU, BABY, AND IF IT'S QUITE ALRIGHT
I NEED YOU, BABY, TO WARM A LONELY NIGHT
I LOVE YOU, BABY, TRUST IN ME WHEN I SAY:*

MUSIC STARTS (DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH - WALTZ NO. 2).
(my heart will go on?)

NARRATOR:

Question. In light of our tremendous gains in the political and professional sphere, Why is it that most contemporary films aimed at women still focus almost exclusively on their pursuit of a disgustingly sappy, and you will see, equally shitty, heterosexual romantic relationship?

ELETTRA:

Love. Actually...

ELETTRA WALKS TO THE STAIRS AND SITS DOWN.

I, quite quixotically, decided to wrestle myself, kicking and screaming, through the romantic web of love and goo that are rom-coms but even with movie characters' flaws and story conflicts I still feel like hurling my empty bottle at the screen.

NARRATOR:

Romantic movies have this reliable, known set of conventions that sort of mythologizes the redemptive qualities of love and the heterosexual couple. And in the last forty years or so this ever prominent girl-woman character created a false division between sexuality and romance.

ELETTRA:

That naïve, girly, cute but clumsy woman who acts like a teenager when she's around men. It's this type of representation like that serves to appease the cultural anxiety about sexually empowered women and is used to undermine female agency and authority.

NARRATOR:

Surely the de-eroticization of women helps to guarantee that the movie appeals to a broad audience. The portrayal of women as active sexual beings tends to occur in R-rated films, which feature plots that turn dark and murderous.

ELETTRA:

The message seems to be that women who remain innocent and sexually unaware will be rewarded with a man and long-lasting happiness, but those who actively pursue their sexual desires will be punished.

ELETTRA (addressing the audience):

You know, for once I'd like to see the truly cynical, independent woman tamed in a sweaty bed of roses and angst only to succumb to crippling anxiety and doubt and end up alone or in a relationship with battery-operated devices.

*- i won't believe it
music comes faster*

*(NOTTING HILL - DON'T TELL (V.O.)
PROBABLY BEST NOT TO TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS.
RIGHT, NO ONE. I MEAN, I'LL TELL MYSELF SOMETIMES BUT -
DON'T WORRY - I WON'T BELIEVE IT.*

MUSIC STARTS (FOLLIES - COULD I LEAVE THIS).

ELETTRA (sung):

*Leave this?
Leave this?
How could I leave this?
What would I do with my time?
Can I wave the pain away
telling you goodbye?
Should I wipe my tears away?
When I just love to cry?
Sweetheart
Lover
Could I recover?
Give up the joys I have known?
Not to wait for texts again
Or for you to arrive
Not attend those dinners where ten
Cute younger men fight for your hand.
How could I survive?
Could I leave this
And your shelves of the World's Best Books
And the evenings of furtive looks
Cryptic sighs
Sullen glares from those shuttered eyes?
Leave the quips with a flirt
laughs so sincere
Loving duet singing once a year?
Trauma hides, heart's unsealed
And my wounds never healed
In this game there's no winning
But wait!
I'm just beginning!
What
Leave this?
Leave this?
How could I leave this?
What would I do with my time?
Putting thoughts of you aside*

*In the south of France
Would I think of suicide?
Darling, there's a chance.
Could I live through the pain
On a terrace in Spain?
Would it pass?
It might pass
Could I bury my rage
With a girl half your age
In the grass?
Think I'll pass.
But you know this already
But still want my love, no?
Tell me, how could I leave
When you're not letting go, love?
Could I leave this?
No, the point is, could you leave it?
Well, I guess you could leave me to be
Leave the chit-chat
Leave out the calls and the gifts and all that
You could leave with a smile
For sentiment's sake
And take all the favors and tributes I made
And the hugs
And the looks
Darling, you keep the kisses
and you keep the books
Honey, I'll take the vision
And you keep the limit
And all of your nays
And just wait a goddamn minute!
Leave this?
Leave this?
How could I leave this?
Sweetheart, I have to confess
Could I leave this?
Yes
Will I leave this?
Will I leave this?*

Guess!

MUSIC STOPS.
STAGE GOES DARK.

Dark Moment

ACT FOUR: OPENING WITH A POETICAL EULOGY OF ROMANTIC FRIENDSHIP AND CONTINUING WITH TALK INSPIRED BY THE SAME

SCENE 1: THE FRIENDZONE IS A COMPLEX MAZE OF TRAPS

ELETTRA, NARRATOR, LOTTE.

STAGE STAYS DARK.

MUSIC STARTS (YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME).

MUSIC STOPS.

ELETTRA:

And then we should say something about how we're interested in unlearning the definitions of love and romance and binary thinking to reveal a much more complex but exciting wirework of emotional, erotical, and intellectual togetherness.

PINK LIGHT COMES ON.

MUSIC START (CAN YOU FEEL THE LOVE TONIGHT).

NARRATOR:

Because under the romantic ideal of love, we've come to expect that every great romance should also contain within itself, in addition to erotic passion, a robust friendship. But we hold with deep suspicion the opposite. A platonic friendship colored with the emotional hues of romantic love is so often killed by the label of plain friendship.

(WHEN HARRY MET SALLY - WE ARE JUST GOING TO BE FRIENDS SCENE).

WE ARE JUST GOING TO BE FRIENDS, OKAY?

GREAT. FRIENDS. IT'S THE BEST THING.

ELETTRA:

Perhaps we shouldn't categorize these kaleidoscopic emotional universes. Perhaps resisting the urge to classify and contain is the only way to do justice to their iridescent richness of sentiment and feeling.

NARRATOR:

And so the great modern enemy of friendship turned out to be love. The romantic love that is celebrated in every particle of our popular culture. The love that is institutionalized in marriage and tax breaks.

We now live in a world in which respect and support for eros has acquired the hallmarks of a cult.

ELETTRA:

And love is not necessarily any more peaceful than revolutionary politics!

You know, people say the personal is political a lot but it doesn't just mean that our individual personal issues are political negotiations. The personal is political because personhood is political. Who gets to be a person and how?

NARRATOR:

This is determined by operations of power. And so it is with our sexual desires. We think we just have them, as if centuries of power operations had not determined not only our desiring tendencies, but the very terrain of what gets to be a choice.

STAGE GOES DARK.

MUSIC STOPS.

ACT FOUR

SCENE 2: NEITHER SPEAK ANY JAPANESE, BUT KARAOKE IS THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE (PEACE, LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING)

NARRATOR, ELETTRA, LOTTE.

DARK BLUE AND PINK LIGHTS.

(LOST IN TRANSLATION - BILL MURRAY SINGS PEACE, LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING (SCENE)).

ELETTRA (sung):

*As I walk through
This wicked world
Searchin' for light in the darkness of insanity
I ask myself
Is all hope lost?
Is there only pain and hatred, and misery?
And each time I feel like this inside
There's one thing I wanna know:
What's so funny 'bout peace love and understanding? Ohhhh
What's so funny 'bout peace love and understanding?*

NARRATOR:

In a typical Hollywood film, this would be an unusually blunt shot. Showing the words that Elettra is singing to highlight the meaning.

ELETTRA:

I usually don't smile that much when wondering if life is filled with only pain, hatred and misery.

NARRATOR:

*But yes, the gratuitous karaoke scene!
I don't mean just regular old karaoke.
I mean the weirdly specific moment found in movies in which the protagonists sing in public to help establish their dynamic.*

MUSIC STARTS (SK8TER BOI).

HE WAS A BOY, SHE WAS A GIRL. CAN I MAKE IT ANYMORE
OBVIOUS.

ELETTRA:

Pop music fuels heteronormativity and love songs are propaganda for compulsory heterosexuality. How would we experience love if pop culture didn't exist?

(HIGH FIDELITY - WHAT CAME FIRST, THE MUSIC OR THE MISERY (SCENE)).

WHAT CAME FIRST, THE MUSIC OR THE MISERY? PEOPLE WORRY ABOUT KIDS PLAYING WITH GUNS? OR WATCHING VIOLENT VIDEOS, THAT SOME SORT OF CULTURE OF VIOLENCE WILL TAKE THEM OVER. NOBODY WORRIES ABOUT KIDS LISTENING TO THOUSANDS, LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF SONGS ABOUT HEARTBREAK, REJECTION, PAIN, MISERY AND LOSS. DID I LISTEN TO POP MUSIC BECAUSE I WAS MISERABLE? OR WAS I MISERABLE BECAUSE I LISTENED TO POP MUSIC?

(BRIDGET JONES' DIARY - ALL BY MYSELF SCENE).

*ALL BY MYSELF
DON'T WANNA BE
ALL BY MYSELF
ANYMORE
...
ALL BY MYSELF
DON'T WANNA BE
ALL BY MYSELF
ANYMORE*

ELETTRA:

Take that pain and rejection! I have Celine Dion on my side, and she knows exactly how to sing about loneliness.

*Singing isn't just an expression of feelings.
It's a performance of an expression of feelings.
It's an opportunity to try feelings on for size without having to own them.*

What did people, unlucky in love, do before the pop song? Did they get all their talented buddies round who could play Mozart or Bach and make them repeat until fade Symphony No.40, whilst lying around feeling sorry for themselves?

STAGE GOES DARK.

Joyful Defeat

EPILOGUE: IN WHICH THE LAST SCENE OF THE LAST ACT IS MADE THE CENTRAL DISCOURSE, WHICH WILL BE SURE OF RECEIVING MORE OR LESS ATTENTION FROM THOSE IN THE AUDIENCE WHO ARE STILL AWAKE

ELETTRA, NARRATOR, LOTTE.

STAGE AND AUDITORIUM ARE COMPLETELY LIT.

ELETTRA WALKS TO THE FRONT, BOWING, THEN WALKING TOWARDS STAIRS, LEANING ON THEM, POURING ANOTHER GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE (don't worry, it's fake).

MUSIC STARTS (QUANDO, QUANDO, QUANDO, QUANDO).

MUSIC STOPS.

NARRATOR:

The lover prefers to wait for one more proof that the love story is effectively finished. Of course, if what already happened didn't convince her enough, nothing will ever do.

ELETTRA SIPS FROM HER GLASS.

ELETTRA (sung):

*Guess mine is not the first heart broken
My eyes are not the first to cry
I'm not the first to know there's
Just no getting over you
I'm hopelessly devoted to you.*

ELETTRA:

As I wait for one more evidence, I don't have to fully die into desperateness.

On-off sorrow is fine.

Miserable, but hopeful.

MUSIC STARTS (SHIRLEY BASSEY - TONIGHT I GAVE THE GREATEST

PERFORMANCE OF MY LIFE).

ELETTRA (sung) :

*Tonight I gave the greatest performance of my life
I never lost control, I played the part so well
That not a single soul could tell that I was lying
But love if you had been behind the curtain when it fell
When all the lights were out and I was all alone
You would have seen this actress crying*

*Tonight I gave the greatest performance of my life
I never lost control, I played the part so well
That not a single soul could tell that I was lying
But love if you had been behind the curtain when it fell
When all the lights were out and I was all alone
You would have seen this actress crying*

MUSIC STOPS.

ELETTRA :

*You won't forget me, will you?
Promise you won't.*

STAGE GOES DARK.

- THE END -

END CREDITS PLAY (KARAOKE VIDEO STYLE) TO THE TUNE OF I
WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR LOVE ON TOP OF THE ORIGINAL VIDEO
CLIP.

STAGE AND AUDITORIUM LIGHTS TURN ON.