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In 1904 an American naval officer, Pinkerton, rents a house on a hill overlooking the city of Nagasaki. He has procured the house for himself and his new Japanese fiancé, a 15-year-old girl known as Madame Butterfly. Because Japanese marriage laws are relatively lax, Pinkerton plans to marry his bride until he goes back to the United States to marry an American. In the process of the wedding, it becomes clear that Butterfly is much more invested in the wedding than Pinkerton, having converted to Christianity for her new husband. In the middle of the ceremony, Butterfly's uncle, a Buddhist priest, arrives and places a curse on Butterfly. The other guests, her family members, renounce her and leave. Pinkerton tells Butterfly that he will take care of her. Pinkerton leaves for three years and Butterfly's maid, Suzuki, tries to convince her that he is never coming back, but Butterfly is convinced that he will return to her. The American consul, Sharpless, comes to see Butterfly, to read a letter to her from Pinkerton that says he is coming back to Japan, but that they are no longer married. Butterfly is so excited to hear from him that she does not let the Consul finish reading the letter, content to live in a delusion that she will soon be reunited with her love. Butterfly then reveals to Sharpless that she had a son with Pinkerton, but that Pinkerton does not know. In the morning, when Butterfly is sleeping, Pinkerton arrives at the house with Sharpless and his new American wife, Kate. Kate has agreed to raise Butterfly's child as her own. Pinkerton cannot bring himself to break this news to Butterfly and leaves it to Kate and Sharpless to do so. When Butterfly awakens and learns the news, she says that she will hand over her son only if Pinkerton comes to her himself. She says goodbye to her son then ties a blindfold around his eyes so that he cannot see her kill herself. Devastated at losing both Pinkerton and her son, Butterfly commits ritual suicide with a knife of her father's. When Pinkerton rushes into the room he realizes that he is too late to save her, and Butterfly has died. In order to continue enjoying our site, we ask that you confirm your identity as a human. Thank you very much for your cooperation. 1904 poster for the Puccini opera Madama Butterfly by Leopoldo Metlicovitz. "Madame Butterfly" is a short story by the American writer John Luther Long. It was first published in the Century Magazine in January 1898. The story was loosely based on a real-life story Long's sister Sara Jane Correll had heard while staying in Nagasaki, Japan with her missionary husband. The title character is a young Japanese girl who is married off by her family to an American sailor named Pinkerton. Although Pinkerton's ignorance of Japanese culture causes her to become an outcast, Butterfly remains devoted to her husband. Even after he sails away, she refuses to remarry, believing that he will return one day. Madame Butterfly: A Tragedy of Japan by David Belasco, a one-act play adapted from the story, premiered in New York in 1900. The famous Italian opera Madama Butterfly (1904) by Giacomo Puccini is based on the Belasco play as the original short story. The opera has itself inspired a number of other works. Plot[] Lieutenant Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton, a sailor in the United States Navy, is unhappy. He has just been reassigned from the Mediterranean to the Nagasaki station in Japanese. His friend Sayre who had previously served in Japan comforts him and suggests he finds himself a Japanese wife as other sailors have done. Pinkerton hires a marriage broker to find a wife and a house in Japan. He tells his young wife Cho-Cho-San[] that the house is leased for 999 years, giving her the impression that he means to stay with her forever. He does not bother to tell her that he has the option to cancel the lease at any time. Pinkerton does not understand Japanese culture and, being of a whimsical nature, does not seriously think about the consequences of his actions. First he has locks installed on doors, which is unusual in Japan. He then tells Cho-Cho-San that she cannot have her relatives come visiting, which is quite unheard of in Japan. Cho-Cho-San is distressed at first, but she quickly develops a liking for Pinkerton and his American lifestyle. Florence Easton and Francis MacLennan as Cho-Cho-San and Pinkerton (1990). Pinkerton finds Cho-Cho-San beautiful, charming, and amusing, and he enjoys Westernizing the young and impressionable girl. He does not realize how attentively she listens and how seriously she takes everything he says. She even goes to a missionary, secretly in order not to offend her family, to learn about Christianity. Cho-Cho-San's family appeals to Pinkerton but he refuses to change his ways. Consequently, they decide to disown Cho-Cho-San. Although she is now an outcast, Cho-Cho-San is not bothered by her isolation because, cut off from the old "backward" traditions, she is now considered modernized and "up-to-date" by her husband. She declares herself the happiest woman in Japan. Pinkerton is pleased by her enlightenment. The newlyweds live whimsically and happily for a little while, but then Pinkerton's ship is ordered away. After he sails off, unbeknownst to him, Cho-Cho-San gives birth to a blonde, blue-eyed baby boy. She calls the boy Trouble, a temporary name until Pinkerton returns to give him a permanent name. Pinkerton had told her as he was leaving that he would return "when the robins nest again," and she has taken it literally. Spring has come, and Cho-Cho-San is looking forward to Pinkerton's return. She speaks to her maid Suzuki in English in order to keep him in practice as she waits for her husband. She hopes he will take them all to the United States with him. They are running out of the money he had left them. Cho-Cho-San jokes that her husband may return to find them playing shamisen[] and singing on the street to make money. Cho-Cho-San and Suzuki with the baby, illustration by C. Yarnall Abbott from the 1903 Grosset and Dunlap edition. Suzuki thinks Cho-Cho-San should remarry because abandonment is considered a divorce in Japan. Since her husband has been gone for some time, the marriage broker has been trying to get the beautiful Cho-Cho-San to marry a Japanese husband. Cho-Cho-San is uninterested. She explains that husbands do not abandon wives in America. She says, repeating what Pinkerton had told her, that American marriages last forever, and a man wanting a divorce must go to court and risk getting jailed. She assures Suzuki that Pinkerton will return since he left them a lot of money and a house to live in for 999 years. Cho-Cho-San then tells Suzuki her plan. They will watch for his ship from the house which is on a hill overlooking the harbor. They will decorate the house with flowers. When they see him coming up the hill, they will hide behind the shoji,[3] making holes in the paper screen for peeping. They will make him believe they had left, then rush out to surprise him. The two women act out the plan and have a good laugh. Goro the marriage broker comes to talk to Cho-Cho-San. Cho-Cho-San insists she is still married. Goro explains to her that Japanese law will prevail because the marriage took place in Japan. Cho-Cho-San shows him the baby boy and says Pinkertion will surely be back to see their child. Goro thinks Pinkerton is more likely to take the baby away from her. He asks if she will at least consent to meeting his client, Yamadori. Cho-Cho-San agrees to do so to help Goro earn his commission. Madame Butterfly - 'Exit Yamadori', by the British painter Byam Shaw (1910). Yamadori, a rich prince, has been married and divorced twice. Cho-Cho-San acts her part perfectly, sitting still and looking emotionless and beautiful, to be inspected by her suitor. She allows Yamadori to discuss her with Goro as if she were not present. Then she serves tea and plays the charming hostess, subtly teasing Yamadori. Yamadori is enchanted and declares he will give her a thousand servants. Cho-Cho-San asks Goro in a whisper if they have earned the commission. Soon, however, Yamadori makes a mistake. He tells Cho-Cho-San that a sailor has a girl in every port, and that neither the title of a "wife" nor having a child will mean anything serious to him. He talks of children deserted and orphaned in America. Cho-Cho-San quickly dismisses him. Yamadori's stories of abandoned children has put a doubt in Madame Butterfly's mind. She goes to the American consul. The vice consul recognizes her. She first asks him when robins nest in America. She thinks they must nest later there than in Japan. The consul, who does not know much about birds, agrees with her. She then asks if people stay married in America. He tells her that they do, and also confirms that divorces go through courts and can take a long time. She asks if people like having nice babies. The vice consul, a proud young father, tells her that he likes having his fine boy. Cho-Cho-San is delighted to have all her beliefs confirmed. The consul knows Cho-Cho-San has been outcast. He advises her to mend her relationship with her family. She explains that her family has disowned her for being married to an American. She says her family is poor because her father killed himself. She had become a dancer to earn money, but it was not enough so the family married her off for Pinkerton's money. They came to scorn him afterwards, but she loves her husband and has chosen him above them. Cho-Cho-San tells the vice consul about Pinkerton's promise to return when the robins nest again. Because Pinkerton is always joking around, she thinks it will be funny if the consul told him that she grew tired of waiting and married Yamadori. The consul realizes the harm Pinkerton has done. He wants to have nothing to do with this business, but he finds Cho-Cho-San's innocent enthusiasm and absolute trust very charming. He tells her that Pinkerton's ship is expected in Nagasaki in early September. Cho-Cho-San is overjoyed. She asks the consul if he believes Pinkerton will come to see the baby and take them all to America. The consul, angry with Pinkerton now, advises her to consider marrying Yamadori. Cho-Cho-San is offended at first. Seeing the sincere regret in his face, however, she grasps his hands and calls him the nicest man in the whole world. Waiting for Pinkerton's arrival behind the shoji screen, illustration by C. Yarnall Abbott from the 1903 Grosset and Dunlap edition. Cho-Cho-San watches every ship coming into the harbor with her telescope from the house on the hill. Finally on the seventeenth of September, Pinkerton's ship arrives. With Suzuki's help, Cho-Cho-San dresses up and decorates the house with all the flowers from the garden. They then dress up the baby and hide behind the shoji screen, making deep holes in the paper. Hours pass with no sign of Pinkerton. Night falls and Suzuki lights the lanterns. They watch and wait in silence all night. They continue to wait all day the next day, then for days afterwards, eating and sleeping very little and doing nothing but watch for Pinkerton. They spend the last of their money replacing flowers and candles each day. A week later, a passenger ship arrives. The following day, Cho-Cho-San spots Pinkerton on the deck with a blonde woman. By the next morning, Pinkerton's ship has gone. Hoping that he had remained behind, Cho-Cho-San goes to see the consul, leaving her son behind with Suzuki. Cho-Cho-San looks very ill, and the consul looks at her with pity. He tries to give her the money Pinkerton left for her "in remembrance of the past" but Cho-Cho-San will not take it. He tells her that Pinkerton wishes her happiness, hoping she will understand that her husband does not intend to return. She does not understand him. She believes that the consul told Pinkerton she married Yamadori. Seeing her desperation, the consul decides to lie. He tells her that Pinkerton was upset as she had thought he would be. He says that Pinkerton wanted to rush back to the house, but he was not allowed to leave due to navy business before his ship was ordered away suddenly. He then tells Cho-Cho-San that Pinkerton will be back one day. Finally relieved, Cho-Cho-San staggers. The consul helps her into a chair. The consul hears someone coming and draws a screen to give Cho-Cho-San some privacy. A blonde woman enters and asks for Mr. Sharpless the consul. The woman wishes to send a telegraph to her husband in Kobe. Sharpless asks for her husband's name. She answers "Lieutenant Pinkerton." Horrified, the consul looks over and sees Cho-Cho-San shake her head to signal silence. The blonde woman, Adelaide Pinkerton, dictates her message: she has seen the baby and wants to talk to the mother about taking it at once. Moving further up towards the consul's desk, Adelaide finally sees Cho-Cho-San. She openly admires the lovely girl and calls her a "pretty plaything." Clearly unaware of any feelings on the part of Cho-Cho-San, she says she does not blame the men for falling in love with her then hurries off. Cho-Cho-San with her father's sword, illustration by C. Yarnall Abbott from the 1903 Grosset and Dunlap edition. Cho-Cho-San rises and staggers towards Sharpless. She hands him a few coins, the last of the money Pinkerton had given her, and asks him to tell Pinkerton she wishes him happiness. She thanks the consul and once again calls him the nicest man in the whole world. Suzuki knows right away that her mistress has seen the woman. Cho-Cho-San comforts the crying maid and asks her to leave so she can rest. Knowing her mistress too well, Suzuki hesitates. Cho-Cho-San gently leads her out, bidding farewell to her faithful companion. Cho-Cho-San waits till dark then lights a lantern. She sits down with her father's sword in her lap. Its blade is inscribed "To die with honor when one can no longer live with honor." She puts makeup on herself then presses the blade against her neck, watching the blood run down. Quietly, Suzuki puts the baby into the room. Cho-Cho-San drops the sword and begins to pray and weep. The baby crawls into her lap. Suzuki enters and dresses the wound. The following day, Adelaide Pinkerton comes to the house and finds it deserted. Adaptations[] "Madame Butterfly" was adapted by David Belasco as a one-act play, Madame Butterfly: A Tragedy of Japan which premiered in New York City on March 5, 1900. The play opens two years after Pinkerton's departure, and all scenes take place at the house. Cho-Cho-San meets Sharpless for the first time when he visits her and tries unsuccessfully to break the news of Pinkerton's marriage to an American named Kate. Pinkerton makes his appearance later having been sent by his wife to ask Cho-Cho-San for her permission to take the child. Unable to face Cho-Cho-San, however, he entrusts Sharpless with his money. Sharpless is trying to soften the blow to Cho-Cho-San when Kate enters and the truth is revealed. Cho-Cho-San agrees to hand over the child if Kate will return in 15 minutes. Unlike in the original story, Cho-Cho-San's suicide attempt is not interrupted. She dies in Pinkerton's arms when he returns with Kate for the child. Set design for the 1906 production of Madame Butterfly by Alexandre Bailly and Marcel Jambon. Belasco's play opened in London a few months after its New York premier. The famous Italian opera composer Giacomo Puccini attended the London production. Inspired by the play, in particular by the scene of the vigil in which lighting was used to denote the passage of time while the women and the child waited in silence, Puccini composed the opera Madama Butterfly. The opera, with libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, is based on both the play and the original short story. The original version of the opera in two acts had a disastrous premiere at La Scala in Milan on February 17, 1904. After extensive revisions, a new three-act version of the opera opened on May 28, 1904 in Brescia. It was a great success. The opera was revised a few more times before reaching the "standard" version usually performed today. In Act 1 of the Puccini opera, Pinkerton and Sharpless wait for the arrival of the wedding party at the house on the hill overlooking the harbor. Sharpless warns Pinkerton about his frivolous attitude towards the marriage, but the warning falls on deaf ears. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Cho-Cho-San's uncle who is a priest arrives and denounces the bride for having visited the Christian missionary. Cho-Cho-San becomes an outcast immediately strictly because of her religious choice. Unlike the original short story, the opera does not deal with her Westernization, and portrays her attachment to Pinkerton as purely romantic. Un bel di, vedremo (One fine day, we will see), the famous soprano aria from the Puccini opera. Act 2 of the opera takes place 3 years later, with Cho-Cho-San still waiting for Pinkerton's return. She sings "Un bel di" ("One fine day"), which is one of the most famous and popular operatic arias, to her maid Suzuki, describing the day when they will see Pinkerton's ship come into the harbor. After Cho-Cho-San rejects her suitor Yamadori's offer, Sharpless tries to read Pinkerton's letter to her. After seeing the child, he is unable to continue and promises to speak to Pinkerton. The act ends with the vigil scene similar to the one from Belasco's play in which Cho-Cho-San, having seen the ship's arrival, stays up all night waiting for her husband while Suzuki and the child fall asleep beside her. The last act of the opera, which takes place the following day, retains many of the changes made for the play including its dramatic ending. Pinkerton makes his remorseful return with Sharpless and Kate. After he leaves, Cho-Cho-San sees Kate and agrees to give up her child. In the opera, Cho-Cho-San does not ask Kate to return but instead asks her to have Pinkerton come himself for the child. She dies as Pinkerton arrives calling for her. Several other works have been inspired by Long's short story, Belasco's play, Puccini's opera or a combination of them. The Broadway musical Miss Saigon is based on the Puccini opera. Set in the 1970s, the musical tells the story of a Vietnamese girl named Kim and an American soldier named Chris who meet in the last days of the Vietnam War. Three years after they are separated by the fall of Saigon, Chris, who is now married to Ellen, learns that Kim is alive and they have a son named Tam. Ellen refuses to take the child, but Kim kills herself to ensure Chris will take Tam and give him a better future in America. A scene from the animated Japanese short film Madame Butterfly's Illusion (1940). Films inspired by the "Madame Butterfly" story include Madama Butterfly (USA 1915), Harakiri (Germany 1919), Le ménage moderne de Madame Butterfly (France 1920), The Toll of the Sea (USA 1922), Madama Butterfly (USA 1932), Madame Butterfly's Illusion (Japanese: お蝶夫人の幻想; Ochōfujin no gensō, Japan 1940), Madame Butterfly (Italian: Madama Butterfly, Italy/Japan 1954), M. Butterfly (USA 1993) and Madame Butterfly (France/Germany/UK 1995). [] 1 Cho-Cho (or Cho) means Butterfly in Japanese. "San" is an honorific. The name is likely a stage name taken by the girl when she worked as a geisha. The real-life girl about whom Loti's sister had heard, a teamoon entertainer named Maki Kaga, had used the stage name of Cho-San. 1 Shamisen is a three-stringed, long-necked traditional Japanese lute. 1 Shoji is a sliding door with translucent paper in place of glass. External links[] Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Madam Butterfly is the English adaptation of the tragic Italian opera Madama Butterfly by Giacomo Puccini. It opened in Milan in 1904, and the orchestral score was first published in 1906 by Giulio Ricordi. Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa wrote the libretto (text of the opera). Puccini based his opera on the play by David Belasco and story by John Luther Long, as well as the novel Madama Chrysanthème by Pierre Loti. These sources, and Puccini's work, were part of the Japonisme artistic movement of 19th-century Western Europe.The original version of the opera was poorly received, but Puccini's work has seen many adaptations since its debut. Notable adaptations include several English and Japanese direct adaptations of the opera to film, including Fritz Lang's Harakiri and Marion Gerling's Madame Butterfly in the early 20th century. Other adaptations take the same basic story but change the location from Japan to a different colonial space, such as Vietnam in the West End musical adaptation Miss Saigon, or Colonial China in David Henry Hwang's Broadway musical M. Butterfly. This guide cites the 1848 edition of English National Opera Guide 26, edited by Nicholas John, based on the translation by R. H. Elkin. This edition includes both the 1904 and 1906 versions of the opera in English and in Italian. Madama Butterfly includes the themes of Infidelity in Love and Faith, The Power of Love and Fate, and Cultural Conflict and Enlightenment.Content Warning: The source text contains marriage of a minor to an adult and self-harm. Additionally, there are several outdated, offensive, and derogatory descriptions of Japanese people (Orientalism in the source text).Plot SummaryMadama Butterfly takes place in and around the Nagasaki house purchased by US Navy Lieutenant Pinkerton in 1904. Goro, a marriage broker, shows Pinkerton around the house, which contains sliding screens, and briefly introduces Pinkerton to three servants, including Suzuki, his fiancée's servants. As Goro and Pinkerton discuss his fiancée, Butterfly, the US Consul, Sharpless, arrives. Pinkerton tells Sharpless that he plans to marry not only Butterfly, but also other women in other countries. Sharpless advises against this, arguing that Butterfly deserves a faithful husband. Pinkerton says he will eventually settle down with one woman—an American. Butterfly and her friends arrive. She tells Sharpless that her family was once wealthy, but they lost their fortune and the women had to become geishas to survive. Butterfly also tells Sharpless that her father is dead and whispers her age—15—to him. The High Commissioner, Registrar, and Butterfly's family arrive. Butterfly shows Pinkerton her possessions, including a dagger. Goro explains that Butterfly's father used the dagger to die by suicide. Butterfly throws away her Otoko (religious statues), saying she is converting to Pinkerton's religion. The couple is officially married. Sharpless, the Commissioner, and the Registrar leave. At the reception, as Pinkerton proposes a toast, Butterfly's uncle, the Bonze, arrives. He reveals to all the guests that she converted to Pinkerton's religion and curses her. Pinkerton tells the guests to leave, and Butterfly's family members renounce her and storm off with the Bonze. When everyone has left, Butterfly kisses Pinkerton's hand while Suzuki can be heard praying in another room. Butterfly has Suzuki put up a screen and help her get ready for bed. Pinkerton watches. After Suzuki leaves, Butterfly and Pinkerton discuss her love and his possessiveness. They talk about the stars and go to bed. Three years later, Suzuki and Butterfly discuss how Pinknton has not returned, as he left shortly after their wedding. Butterfly believes he will come back, and Suzuki thinks he has abandoned them. Butterfly describes what his homecoming will be like. Goro and Sharpless arrive. Butterfly offers Sharpless a pipe and a cigarette while he tries to tell her about a letter from Pinkerton. Goro laughs at Butterfly when she admits that she believes Pinkerton will return. Yamadori, Butterfly's new suitor, arrives with flowers. Despite Goro encouraging Butterfly to seek divorce for abandonment and to marry the rich Prince Yamadori, she refuses. After Yamadori leaves, Sharpless tries to read Pinkerton's letter to Butterfly, but she continually interrupts him. Then, he asks what she would do if Pinkerton didn't return. She says she would work as a geisha or die by suicide. Sharpless encourages her to marry Yamadori. Butfly tells Suzuki to show Sharpless out but relents and allows him to stay. Then, Butterfly introduces Sharpless to her and Pinkerton's son. She asks Sharpless to tell Pinkerton about the child and declares that it would be better to die than work as a geisha again. Sharpless embraces the child, agrees to tell Pinkerton, and leaves. Suzuki finds Goro sneaking around outside. When he tells Butterfly that the child will be treated poorly in America, she threatens him with her dagger. After Goro leaves, Suzuki and Butterfly see Pinkerton's ship in the harbor. Butterfly has Suzuki put all the flowers from the garden in the house. After they scatter the flowers all around, Butterfly has Suzuki help her with her hair and makeup. Butterfly changes into her wedding clothes. Suzuki, Butterfly, and the baby watch for Pinkerton's arrival all night, but he does not come.In the morning, while Butterfly is upstairs with the child, Pinkerton and Sharpless arrive. Pinkerton tells Suzuki to not tell Butterfly that he has arrived. Suzuki sees Pinkerton's American wife, Kate, in the garden. Sharpless tells Suzuki that Pinkerton wants to take his son from Butterfly and have him raised by Kate. The flowers upset Pinkerton, and, after giving Sharpless some money for Butterfly, Pinkerton leaves.Butterfly comes downstairs and becomes upset when she sees Sharpless and Kate. She learns that the woman is Pinkerton's new wife and wants to take her son to America. Butterfly eventually agrees to give up her son but refuses to take Pinkerton's money. After Sharpless and Kate leave, Suzuki does not want to leave Butterfly alone. Butterfly holds her son, tells him she is making a sacrifice for him, blindfolds him, and goes behind a screen. After mortally wounding herself with her father's dagger, Butterfly holds her child. Pinkerton and Sharpless return to pick up the child and witness Butterfly's death. We're working hard on a new website with enhanced features for our audiences. For any ticketing enquiries, our Box Office team are available by phone on 020 7845 9300 (10.00 – 18.00) or email (email protected) Please use the link below to book opera tickets while we put the final pieces in place. For all other enquiries including recruitment please do come back in a day or so to see our lovely new site. Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton, a young US Navy lieutenant stationed in Japan, has arranged with Goro, a marriage broker, to acquire a 15-year-old Japanese bride, Cio-Cio-San(also known as Butterfly). Pinkerton has taken a 999-year lease on a home overlooking Nagasaki harbour; this lease, as well as his marriage, can conveniently be cancelled at a month's notice. Sharpless, the American Consuland Pinkerton's friend, arrives to witness the signing of the wedding contract. He warns Pinkerton not to treat the marriage lightly, as his bride-to-be is truly in love with him. Pinkerton claims to be smitten with Butterfly, but he then proposes a toast to the American woman he will one day wed. Butterfly arrives. She tells Sharpless that her family was once wealthy, but hard times forced her to become a geisha. After Butterfly admits that her father is dead, Goro tells Pinkerton that he committed ritual suicide at the Emperor's command. Butterfly's relatives arrive and the formalities proceed. The festivities are interrupted when the Bonze, Butterfly's uncle, enters to denounce her for forsaking their ancestral religion. Pinkerton angrily orders the guests to leave. He comforts the distraught Butterfly, and the newlyweds proclaim their love. Pinkerton has been gone from Nagasaki for three years. Suzuki, Butterfly's companion, fears that he will not keep his promise to return, yet Butterfly is sure that he will. Sharpless arrives to read Butterfly a letter he has received from Pinkerton, who has since taken an American wife. Goro interrupts, ushering in Prince Yamadori, a potential suitor for Butterfly who she dismisses. When Sharpless finally reads Pinkerton's letter to Butterfly, she gradually realises that she has been abandoned. She sends for her young son, Sorrow, certain that Pinkerton will return when he learns that he has a son. Butterfly insists that she would rather die than be a geisha again. Suddenly, a cannon booms in the harbour, signaling the arrival of Pinkerton's ship. Butterfly and Suzuki decorate the house and await Pinkerton's return him on all-night vigil. Early in the morning, Pinkerton, his American wife Kate, and Sharpless arrive at Butterfly's house. Butterfly is asleep, so they ask Suzuki to tell her that they wish to take Sorrow away