

The story of Carmen

That's love comes from an opera called *Carmen*. An opera is a play set to music where the words are sung rather than spoken. *Carmen* is a very famous opera by a French composer named Georges Bizet. It is based on a story by the French writer Prosper Mérimée.

Carmen is a Spanish gypsy girl who is working in a factory when the story opens. She sees the soldier Don José one lunchtime and decides to make him fall in love with her even though he already has a girlfriend. At first he isn't interested, but Carmen has a way with her and soon she captures his heart.

Don José deserts the army and leaves his girlfriend Micaela to be with Carmen, but Carmen soon gets tired of him and instead takes up with Escamillo, the hunky bullfighter who she thinks is much more glamorous than Don José. José is desperately unhappy at this

and tries very hard to persuade Carmen to come back to him. She refuses and instead goes to watch Escamillo in a major bullfight.

José waits for Carmen outside the ring and gives her one last chance to come back to him, but she only laughs at him. Then José says that if he can't have her, no one will. He takes out a knife and stabs her. Carmen dies as José is arrested and led away, while inside the ring the crowd cheers as Escamillo wins the bullfight.

That's love is sung by Carmen when she first appears on stage. The words tell the audience about her character, that she is fickle and faithless and just out for what she can get.

Carmen is one of the most popular and famous operas in the world. It is performed many times each year. If you are able to listen to it, you will probably find that you already know several of the tunes because they are played so often.

Answer Questions

1. What is an opera?
2. Who composed Carmen?
3. Who are Carmen and Don Jose?
4. Why does Don Jose leave the army?
5. Who does Carmen fall in love with?
6. Why is the bullfight important?
7. Create a cartoon photo story of Carmen.