

## **Synopsis of the Ballet *Carmen***

(Based on public performances; school performances may vary)

### **Scene I: A City Square in Seville**

Carmen, a gypsy woman working in a cigar factory, enchants and bewitches the soldier Don José. Although he is already engaged to marry Micaela, a country girl from his hometown, he cannot resist the attraction of Carmen. Carmen is arrested after causing a fight in the factory, and Don José is told to take her to jail. Left alone, Carmen turns her charms on the innocent Don José. He agrees to let her escape if she promises to love him. Carmen flees and it is Don José who is arrested.

### **Scene I: The Tavern of Lillas Pastia**

Carmen and her gypsy friends are entertaining officers in a local tavern. During the dancing the great toreador Escamillo enters and immediately sets his eyes on Carmen. They are each attracted by the sense of conquest over the other, and they become lovers.

### **Scene III: A Gypsy Camp in the Mountains**

Released from jail, Don José comes looking for Carmen. Though she still loves him, she has also been attracted by the handsome bullfighter. Don José's desire to possess her makes her grow tired of him. When Escamillo arrives at the camp and invites Carmen to his next bullfight, Don José confronts him but Carmen intervenes. Micaela slips into camp to tell him that his mother is dying and that he must return home. Don José vows to Carmen that he will return and that she will never leave him. Severing her relationship finally, a cold and dispassionate Carmen urges him to go. Her friend Mercedes foretells death for her in the cards of Fate, but Carmen is not afraid.

### **Scene IV: Outside the Bullring**

A crowd has gathered to watch Escamillo enter the arena. Mercedes warns Carmen that Don José has returned and has been told of her affair with the handsome toreador. Unafraid, Carmen waits for him; he appears and desperately pleads with her to return to him, but Carmen will not be possessed. As she tries to enter the arena, Don José stabs and kills her in a jealous rage, just as the crowd cheers Escamillo's conquest of the bull in the ring.