

# **Manon Lescaut Daniel François Esprit Auber | Synopsis**

## **ACT ONE**

The Marquis d'Hérigny, helped by Lescaut, is trying to find a young girl whom his carriage has knocked down. She is living in an attic with the Chevalier Des Grieux. Lescaut learns from a neighbour, Marguerite, that she is called Manon, and is his cousin; that means he can't take her away, and d'Hérigny accepts this. Despite Marguerite's remonstrations - she wants her to get a job - Manon dreams only of luxury and pleasure. Des Grieux arrives, with a large sum of money. They decide to go and eat at the Bancelins', on the Boulevard du Temple. Lescaut has returned and accompanies them. At the café the merry group have had a good time, and now it is time to pay. But Manon has given the money to Lescaut, who has gambled it all away. The Bancelins are about to call the police. Although Manon sings and takes a collection, Lescaut persuades Des Grieux to sign on in the army, which will give him enough to pay the bill. Hérigny, colonel of the regiment, who still hankers after Manon, refuses to allow the young woman to buy her boyfriend out, and he is marched off to the barracks.

## **ACT TWO**

The marquis has not given up hope of seducing Manon, who wants him to give her a pass to visit her lover. But events take over: Des Grieux has struck a superior. D'Hérigny, who has not yet finalised the enlistment papers, is willing to intervene - provided Manon will completely break off with Des Grieux and become his mistress.

Love on one side, money on the other. Des Grieux, warned that his lady-love has gone to live with his rival, goes to try and reclaim her. About to flee, the two of them are beginning a meal. The marquis surprises them, and the two men fight.

D'Hérigny is wounded, and Des Grieux arrested by the guard.

## **ACT THREE**

Marguerite and Gervais are seeking their fortunes in Louisiana. It is their wedding day. A cart passes, carrying women deportees. Among them, in chains, is Manon. Reprieved, Des Grieux has travelled on the same boat. Aided by Marguerite, he helps his companion to flee, dressed in the bride's clothes. But in the middle of the desert, the exhausted Manon gives up the ghost in the arms of her desperate lover, just as their friends catch up with them.