



CARMELITA

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**synopsis
for a large-scale
musical**

**by
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CARMELITA

SYNOPSIS

Carmelita is a new interpretation/adaptation of the Carmen story, set in the world of today. It is an audience favorite because of its timeless themes: desire, freedom, jealousy, obsession, and violence. However, it must not lean on Bizet and his music. It has original music, although the plot resonates with the story.

*This works for a large audience because it has the opportunity of presenting **big ensemble numbers** (club patrons, underground dancers, KK's fans), **a modern visual spectacle** (club with the pole dance, screens like in a rock concert, fight arena). Most captivating for the audience and the cast is the opportunity to stage **high-level choreography numbers** (pole, ballet, hip-hop).*

*Despite the large-scale stage, there is **constant emotional intimacy** between the characters.*

And... this is not a tragedy, though it has the elements of a good tragedy.

SPOILER ALERT:

Carmelita survives to dance and sing another day.

After the synopsis, there are some examples of song lyrics for the various key characters.

CHARACTERS

Carmelita is a pole dancer in a modern club. Beautiful, wild and unpredictable. She controls the room with her allure, her artistry, and her unapologetic freedom.

Donny Jones is an off-duty police officer who gigs at the club as a security guard. He is a religious prude and does not like what the girls do for a living, but he is happy to get the extra cash. His rigidity contrasts with Carmen's freedom.

KK Mills, an MMA fighter on his way up to wealth and fame. He is part of the "get rich or die trying" "winner-take-all" part of modern society. His flaw is that because of numerous injuries, he is hooked on pain killers.

Sugar Brown is a neighbor of Donny Jones. Sugar works as an emergency room nurse at a nearby hospital. She knows Donny's sick mother, who is a church-going woman dying of bone cancer. She knows Donny is conflicted and worried and tries to steer him back to his previous life.

THEMES

Freedom vs. Control: Carmelita dances for her freedom, and loves who she wants, man or woman. Donny, once he falls for her, wants to possess and control her. Tension. It resonates with today's woman vs. man controversies. Carmelita is shot not because she is immoral, but because she refuses to submit. [Spoiler alert: Carmelita is not killed.]

Toxic Relationships: Obsession, jealousy, and abuse.

Inner conflict: Donny is torn between his love for Carmelita — who he regards as being on the edge of immorality — and his duty as a son to his dying mother and to the law as a policeman.

Fame: KK Mills wants it all. He needs to be seen as powerful, handsome, the king of the ring, and Carmelita on his arm would make him look an all-around winner.

Art of the pole dance: Carmelita is a perfectionist and a magical pole dancer... as well as having skills in contemporary dance, which she is able to show off at certain times during the performance.

Modern music and choreography: Some subtle references to Bizet in the music and dance, but not so that it becomes a plundering of Bizet's musical ideas. It has to have the flavor of the exotic, but the sheen of today's music. Maybe some reggaeton, electronic dance – while retaining classical orchestration for grandeur.

Chorus/Ensemble: The other dancers, patrons of the club, street vendors, sometimes singing comments or involved in dance numbers, e.g.: the ER Nurses Dance led by Sugar Brown, the Cops Dance led by Donny Jones, the Fighters Dance led by KK Mills.

Stage/Visuals: The strip club is not "seedy", it is a high-end club visited by the likes of KK Mills, politicians, the rich and famous, as well as aficionados of the pole dance. The pole is a stage for Carmen's power. Her pole work is artistic, athletic, and commanding – not degrading.

Technology can play a role. People filming her on their phones, shown as live streaming projections on screens next to the stage, like at rock concerts. Carmelita is consumed as a spectacle by the people. And yet, she has no cell phone, no computer, no electronic devices herself. And she has no desire for fame, only to be a better artist and capture the audience.

STRUCTURE

ACT ONE – ANGEL'S FLIGHT

This is the nightclub where Carmelita works. It is colored lights, dancers on stage, customers, bouncers, bartenders, server staff. It's busy.

Opening number: The chorus, singing and dancing, introduces life in the club at night, a place with temptation, danger, and spectacle.

Enter Carmelita: The announcer quiets everyone down. The second hand of the clock inches closer and closer to midnight. Midnight: Carmelita slides down a pole that has magically appeared from the ceiling... and her dance begins. She sings about personal freedom, desire, and never being tied down. The audience goes wild. She disappears back stage, avoiding the starstruck.

Donny Jones arrives on the scene to break up a commotion between a customer and a dancer who says she is owed some money by the customer. Nobody likes Donny, even the girl who is seeking justice, because of his attitude, his stiff discipline and his command to leave the customer alone.

Carmelita re-enters and runs directly into the fray, defending her dancer colleague, and under Donny's nose, hits the customer over the head with a champagne bottle. The customer falls and Donny immediately cuffs Carmelita and takes her away. The crowd laments.

Interrogation scene: Donny explains to Carmelita, that as a policeman who has witnessed an attack, he will have to take her in to the station after his shift at the club is over. And if the man she injured presses charges, she could end up going to jail. Carmelita is defiant. What she did was justified, and everyone in the club will testify that she was only defending herself from a violent man. Donny knows it is wrong, but as the interrogation continues, he slowly falls in love with Carmelita, unlocks her cuffs and she walks out of the room.

Enter Sugar Brown: Sugar has come from the hospital. Donny's mother has been readmitted. This time it looks like she will be staying longer. She is on her last legs. Donny worries about paying for her treatment, about what he has just done letting Carmelita escape justice. Sugar consoles him and they leave together for the hospital.

ACT TWO — THE BAT CAVE

An underground gathering place, with graffiti on the walls, electronic music, fusion... This is where Carmelita and her crew of dancers and hustlers relax, after hours, the songs are about the chaos of life, the dangers and the freedom from oppressive society.

Donny Jones arrives. Why is he here? The atmosphere is wrought with danger. He is in his police uniform, with his gun and taser. There are some characters in the room that seem to be packing their own weapons and their hands are getting close to those weapons. Donny finds Carmelita and tells her that his captain has reprimanded him and sent him to traffic duty for a month because he let Carmelita go.

Carmelita entices him with sweet words and explains how he has now been done wrong by the system, just like all of her friends have been done wrong. Carmelita gets Donny to relax, dance, and sing with her.

Donny gets a radio call: Sugar Brown has been trying to reach him. His mother is in a critical condition. He wants to leave, but he took off his gun belt when he started dancing and how he can't find it.

A squad of cops come barging in to "rescue" Donny and take him to the hospital. They get booed and insulted by the crowd. One of the cops grabs Carmelita who is the most obvious leader.

Donny hesitates and then, when someone in the crowd hands him his gun back, he fires into the air and everything stops. He tells his police colleagues to let go of Carmelita and leave The Bat Cave.

Suddenly, Donny is a hero. Carmelita kisses him. He puts his gun belt around her waist and she dances.

The act ends in celebration and happiness. Donny Jones has been accepted into the world of the underground. He has seemingly forgotten about his mother.

INTERMISSION

ACT THREE — THE CAGE

KK Mills is in the MMA cage with an opponent. The crowd watching the fight is the usual mix of rich, famous and the underground world, which of course includes Carmelita and Donny Jones.

The match is high profile. Cameras, commentators, paparazzi, music is appropriate for the event, a mix of orchestrated film music for the drama blended with the drum-heavy rap preferred by the rough crowd. The fight is a highly developed choreographed dance that is not as violent as it is dynamic and beautiful.

KK Mills wins. The crowd goes wild and Carmelita dances over to the cage to greet the winner with a display of her admiration for a fellow professional who is also handsome.

KK responds and their duet is bursting with sensuality and the promise of a night of endless physical romance.

Donny shows his jealous streak. Carmelita belongs to him. Carmelita and her friends respond that Carmelita belongs to herself, to no one else. KK jumps in to taunt Donny and says that Carmelita now belongs to him. This looks like it will end badly for Donny.

Sugar Brown arrives. She pushes her way through the crowd, gets to Donny and pleads with him to come with her to the hospital before it's too late.

Carmelita makes the decision for Donny. She dances away with KK and the crowd follows them.

Donny and Sugar have a sad duet where it is now also obvious that Sugar would like to be with Donny and live a normal life like a married couple with kids, etc., even if they are not rich and just a working couple.

Donny goes with her but it is clear that he hasn't let go of his anger and is somehow planning his revenge.

ACT FOUR — ANGEL'S FLIGHT

It's getting close to midnight and time for Carmelita to appear and perform her pole dance. The crowd is excited because KK Mills is there with his entourage and he's boasting about how great he is as a fighter and a lover and how nobody can defeat him.

Donny is in the crowd, trying to stay hidden. He is spotted by one of KK's entourage and together the entourage taunts Donny as a loser and a coward. KK, steps up to confront Donny.

Midnight strikes and Carmelita appears, but no one is paying attention to her. All eyes are on KK and Donny, who are trading barbs and circling each other like two roosters ready to fight.

Carmelita slides down from the ceiling, lands and rushes over to confront the two men. They are fools to think she belongs to either of them. And they have no feeling for art, no sensitivity, no aesthetic sensibility. She insults KK by describing his petty form of combat as beastly, a slave performing for the crowd who actually wishes him dead.

KK hits Carmelita and she falls. KK sings about his dominance. Donny, unable to stand Carmelita being knocked over, draws his gun. KK is defiant. Quiet. The crowd recedes in a circle around the combatants.

Sugar Brown arrives on the scene. She brings bad news. Donny's mother has died, and Donny wasn't there. KK laughs and threatens Donny, telling him he should go join his dead mother or KK will make him join her.

Carmelita has now recovered and is angrily approaching KK from behind when Donny, blind with rage shoots KK.

The bullet goes straight through KK and hits Carmelita in the abdomen.

Sugar Brown intervenes. She is now the competent ER nurse. KK is pronounced dead on the spot. Carmelita is seriously wounded but Sugar is attending to her.

Donny is devastated. He drops the gun. Wanders in circles, recognizes that he has been a fool to chase Carmelita, that he has been a bad son to his mother and that Sugar is the woman he should be with. The Police come, arrest Donny and take him away. Medics come to take Carmelita away on a stretcher.

Sugar, level headed as always, understands Donny's predicament and will stand by his side.

Lights dim and the club empties.

EPILOG

The big clock that usually tells us it is midnight, goes fast forward and time passes... days, weeks... the crowd slowly filters back in and the pole is lowered once again from the ceiling.

Carmelita appears and performs her freedom song and makes it clear that though she is a person with passion, she cannot accept the obsession and control of others because **her art is her love**. She will not give her art away to be with a man or a woman or anyone. **Her art is what sets her free to be Carmelita.**

SOME SONG LYRIC POSSIBILITIES FOR THE VARIOUS KEY CHARACTERS

Carmelita

Carmelita's Freedom Song

[at the beginning, in the middle before Intermission
and at the end]

I'm Not The One for You

[warning Donny]

The Little Devil in Me

[in the Bat Cave]

Donny Jones

Now I'm Living in Your World

[after he falls in love with Carmelita]

Nothing More I'll Ever Have to Know

[after the shooting scene]

KK Mills

This is for Me

[pre-fight and can be modified
for repeat after he wins]

Sugar Brown

If You Trust Me

[a kind of love song to Donny]

CARMELITA
Carmelita's Freedom Song

You can't have me in chains and call it love
With your iron hand in a velvet glove

If I try to run away — you pull be back in
No matter what I say — I can never win

You act like a King, with me as your slave
To serve and obey you
from the cradle to the grave

I can see through all your lies
When I look into your eyes

Every morning I wake up and say:
This is my day!

And I am free!
I am free!
I am free!
I am free!

How do you like me now?
How do you like me now?
How do you like me now that I am free?

If you want to make history
Take a good look at me
No one's gonna hold me back
Watch me now!
Here I go!
I'm right on track!

Every morning I wake up and say:
This is my day!

And I am free!
I am free!
I am free!
I am free!

How do you like me now?
How do you like me now?
How do you like me now that I am free?

CARMELITA
I'm Not The One for You

If you're searching for someone to love
You won't find her in me
I've seen more than enough of love
To last an eternity
If you need someone to be faithful
To make your dreams come true
Go find somebody else
I'm not the one for you

If you're looking for that Promised Land
No way I'll take you there
I can't promise you anything
I have nothing to share
If you need someone to be grateful
For everything you do
Go find somebody else
I'm not the one for you

I'm not the one for you
I'm not the one who will help you
When you are most in need
I'm not the one you can turn to
When you grieve
I'm not the one for you
I'm not the one for you

If you want somebody
To spend her life with you
Go find somebody else
That's not something I can do

I'm not the one for you
I'm not the one who will help you
When you are most in need
I'm not the one you can turn to
When you grieve
I'm not the one for you
I'm not the one for you

CARMELITA
The Little Devil in Me

It's way past midnight
My eyes ain't ready to shut
Welcome to The Bat Cave
Where the red hot demons strut

They drink gasoline
Smoke dynamite
If you do something wrong in here
It'll feel right tonight

Once the party gets started
It never stops
Get anything you want here
There ain't no cops

Hide your gun and your knife
Or you might get hurt
Don't threaten anyone
They'll put you in the dirt

The little devil in me
Sees the devil in you
Let's raise some hell
Before the night is through
Play with fire
Burn a bridge or two
The little devil in me
Wants the devil in you

DONNY JONES
Now I'm Living in Your World

I've been going to dark places
I don't want to punish you
I can't erase all the traces
Of the bad things I thought about you
It was a mistake and I paid the price
I lost you once, I can't lose you twice

I pushed the thought of you away
But I want you
I need you in my life each day
I want you to stay

Now I'm living in your world
It's paradise for me
My love for you
Has set this poor slave free
Now I'm living in your world
Now I'm living in your world

All those sleepless nights
All those empty days
I was always trying not to see
Wishing I could run away

Now I'm living in your world
It's paradise for me
My love for you
Has set this poor slave free
Now I'm living in your world
Now I'm living in your world

DONNY JONES
Nothing More I'll Ever Have To Know

I was waiting for tomorrow
So I forgot about today
Now like a thief
Time steals away

Carmelita won't show her face
She turned her back on me
Night swallowed the sun
I can't see

Please take me to the river
So I can sail far away
To that place
Where only wanderers go
Where they say time will stop
And the sun will always shine
And there's nothing more
I'll ever have to know

I don't need to pack a suitcase
I don't need a change of clothes
I don't need gold or silver
To weigh me down
A copper penny for the boatman
When I get to the other shore
Where I'll walk and talk
And never make a sound

Please take me to the river
So I can sail far away
To that place
Where only wanderers go
Where they say time will stop
And the sun will always shine
And there's nothing more
I'll ever have to know

KK MILLS
This Is for Me

[The song could open with the Refrain]
There is no place except the top
Fighting and winning is what I do
You can believe me when I say
This is for me – not for you
This is for me – not for you
This is for me!

Of course I'm in it for the money
And I'm not shy about the fame
I love to see my picture everywhere
And all those headlines with my name

I been a nobody all my life
I come from nowhere just like you
It's been a long hard road to travel
It's my turn now – I paid my dues

There is no place except the top
Fighting and winning is what I do
You can believe me when I say
This is for me – not for you
This is for me – not for you
This is for me!

I've got a big ego, that's no lie
Women love this superman
Sure, sometimes I'll get high
When I party with my fans

I'm that crazy son-of-a-bitch
Who breaks the rules if they don't bend
I make enemies along the way
Because I never pretend

My life is stranger than fiction
My pain has always been real
I'll break your bones – that's the truth
I don't care what you feel

Some of my fights were with assholes
Some of them even gave me a scar
Maybe deep down inside I'm evil
Maybe that's why I'm gonna be a star

There is no place except the top
Fighting and winning is what I do
You can believe me when I say
This is for me – not for you
This is for me – not for you
This is for me!