The hunchbacked Rigoletto: a curse fulfilled

"Rigoletto" is set in Mantua, Italy, in the 16th century. Following is the storyline from which you will hear selected songs in the Met's June 25 performance at Van Cortlandt Park.

The Duke boasts of his way with women. While the Duke sports his treasured trousseau to the bedroom, Rigoletto, the hunchbacked Rigoletto, follows the woman's husband. The courtesan's hunchbacked Rigoletto is suspected of keeping a mistress. Rigoletto's treasured trousseau is stolen. Including Monterone, a nobleman who has come to settle a score with the Duke for the death of his daughter, Monterone is smeared and placed "on the list." He is driven from the hunchbacked Rigoletto's house and is left with nowhere else to go but to Rigoletto's house. Rigoletto agrees to look after the woman. He is asked to help hide a daughter in the house. Rigoletto agrees and is talked into wearing a blindfold to pull off the caper. The group tricks Rigoletto by holding a ladder up to his head. The Duke rushes in and is shocked to see the body, which he believes to be the Duke. Monterone swears his vengeance on everyone who witnessed the murder.

The Duke in the palace hears about Gilda's kidnapping and in turn, Counters rush into the Duke's bedroom expecting to find Monterone's daughter, who is suspected of being kept mistress. Instead, they find Rigoletto's daughter. Gilda recounts to Rigoletto the events that led her to the bedroom. Rigoletto swears his vengeance on everyone.

On his way home that evening, Rigoletto encounters the nobleman's wife. At the hunchbacked Rigoletto's house, his daughter, Gilda, is about to be married to Counters. She is being kept mistress. Rigoletto reveals his plan to kill Counters. He tricks Counters into cutting the knot to free Gilda. The Duke returns to the inn and is found by Gilda's father. He kills Counters and frees Gilda. Rigoletto swears his vengeance on everyone who witnessed the murder.

At an end to the edge of town, Gilda and Rigoletto watch while the Duke walks with Medallia, the sister of Sparafucile. Rigoletto arranges his daughter away and hires Sparafucile to murder the Duke. Gilda returns to the inn. She hears Sparafucile's plan and then instructs him to kill the next visitor to the inn instead of the Duke. Disguised in the clothes of a boy, Gilda is killed. Her body is put into a sack. Rigoletto comes to the inn to claim the body, which he believes to be Gilda. He hears the Duke singing in the distance and cuts open the sack. Only to discover his daughter's corpse. Monterone's curse on Rigoletto is thus fulfilled.