

DIE FLEDERMAUS – Story of the Opera

TIME: 1870
PLACE: Vienna

ACT ONE

The home of Rosalinde and Gabriel von Eisenstein

Intermission

ACT TWO

Prince Orlofsky's mansion

Intermission

ACT THREE

A jail

ACT ONE

A serenade is heard from outside a window of the Eisensteins' home. The couple's chambermaid, Adele, receives a letter from her sister, Ida, inviting her to a party that night at Prince Orlofsky's palace. Adele worries about asking her mistress for the evening off.

The maid is startled to hear the serenader address his song to "darling Rosalinde." Rosalinde von Eisenstein herself enters in near-hysteria, for the voice belongs to Alfred, her former lover – and a *tenor!* Adele pleads for a free evening, to no avail. When Alfred bursts in Rosalinde is horrified, since her husband, Gabriel von Eisenstein, is expected at any moment. Alfred departs only on the condition that he may return after Eisenstein has left for jail.

Eisenstein enters, raving at his lawyer, Dr. Blind (Trio: *Nein, mit solchen Advokaten*), whose ineptitude has resulted in Eisenstein's term being extended from five days to eight. Blind vainly attempts to defend himself before Eisenstein throws him out.

Dr. Falke arrives and, once alone with Eisenstein, invites his friend to Orlofsky's party. Eisenstein relishes the chance to once again use his watch, which has previously seduced countless ladies. He gleefully reminds Falke of a practical joke from years before: after a costume ball Eisenstein, disguised as a butterfly, left Falke asleep on a park bench disguised as a bat, and Falke awoke to everyone's ridicule. Because of his jail sentence, Eisenstein feels obligated

to decline the invitation to Orlofsky's, but Falke persuades him to delay jail until the next morning (Duet: *Komm mit mir zum Souper*).

Rosalinde finds her husband in an unexpectedly lighthearted mood. While he readies himself for jail, Rosalinde grants Adele the evening off. Eisenstein now astonishes his wife by appearing in evening dress. Adele commiserates as her master bids his wife a melodramatic farewell (Trio: *So muß allein ich bleiben*). When Alfred arrives, he dons Eisenstein's dressing gown and sings a toast to love (Finale: *Trinke Liebchen, trinke schnell*). A sudden knock brings Frank, the prison warden. Yielding to Rosalinde's urgent pleas, Alfred impersonates her husband and lets himself be carted off to jail in Eisenstein's place.

ACT TWO

Prince Orlofsky's guests are thrilled to be attending a party at his mansion (Chorus: *Ein Souper heut' uns winkt*). When Adele arrives, dressed in one of Rosalinde's gowns, she discovers that the invitation didn't come from her sister at all. Ida suggests that Adele disguise her true identity by claiming to be an actress.

Falke explains to his host that he has arranged a diversion, "The Revenge of the Bat." When Orlofsky complains of constant boredom, Falke assures him that he'll find the evening's joke delightful. Falke introduces Ida and Adele, referring to the latter as "Fräulein Olga." Orlofsky hands the young women a wallet full of cash for the gambling tables. Eisenstein is then introduced to Orlofsky as "Marquis Renard," and Orlofsky welcomes him (Couplets: *Ich lade gern mir Gäste ein*). When the sisters return, having lost all the money in the wallet, Eisenstein is thunderstruck that "Olga" closely resembles his chambermaid. Adele pretends to find this highly amusing (Laughing Song: *Mein Herr Marquis*).

The next guests to arrive are Frank – announced as "Chevalier Chagrin" – and the masked Rosalinde, impersonating a Hungarian countess. Falke points out her husband, who stops flirting with other women at the party to pay court to this unknown, exotic-looking lady. Rosalinde seduces her husband into yielding his watch (Duet: *Dieser Anstand*). Adele suspects the "countess" of being a fraud, but Rosalinde sings a passionate *csárdás* that

silences all doubts (Csárdás: *Klänge der Heimat*).

Orlofsky, Adele, and Eisenstein join the guests in praising champagne (Trio with Chorus: *Im Feuerstrom der Reben*). After Falke leads a toast to friendship (Ensemble: *Brüderlein und Schwesterlein*), Orlofsky calls for a waltz. Eisenstein continually fails to persuade the "countess" to unmask. When the clock strikes six, Frank and Eisenstein both realize they are terribly late and rush away separately.

ACT THREE

Frosch, the jailer, is increasingly annoyed by the singing of the prisoner in cell No. 12. Frank staggers in, still drunk from the party. After falling asleep at his desk, he is awakened by Frosch, who informs him that two ladies are asking for "Chevalier Chagrin." Frosch admits Ida and Adele, whom Frank had invited to visit. Adele reveals her true profession, but asks for Frank's help in establishing a theatrical career. She demonstrates her acting talent (Aria: *Spiel' ich die Unschuld vom Lande*).

Hearing the bell, Frank has Frosch escort the girls to No. 13. When Eisenstein enters, he and Frank are amazed to see each other in this establishment. Once they have identified themselves properly, Frank is perplexed, since he had previously escorted Eisenstein to jail. He describes the tearful farewell scene, leaving the real Eisenstein raging with jealousy. Summoned by Frosch, Dr. Blind arrives – supposedly on behalf of his client. Having hatched a plan for revenge, Eisenstein insists that Blind hand over his robe, glasses, wig, and legal folder.

Alfred is brought in from his cell and ecstatically greets the appearance of Rosalinde. Now eager to divorce her husband, she joins Alfred in seeking Dr. Blind's help (Trio: *Ich stehe voll Zagen*). The two are appalled when the lawyer pulls off his disguise – it's Eisenstein! His wife triumphantly pulls out the watch, thus revealing that *she* was the Hungarian countess. Frosch brings in Adele and Ida, clearing up the remaining confusion. Orlofsky appears with his guests (Finale: *O Fledermaus*), who witness Eisenstein begging for his wife's forgiveness.