



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

The Barber of Seville for Families
Synopsis

ACT I

Figaro, the barber of Seville (in Spain), introduces himself in his famous entrance song as a "factotum," a clever chap who does just about everything and whose talents are much in demand. He encounters his friend and former employer, the wealthy Count Almaviva. The Count has fallen in love with a young lady named Rosina, but she is closely watched by her guardian, old Doctor Bartolo, who hopes to marry her. Wishing to be loved for himself alone, rather than for his wealth and position, the Count has been serenading Rosina pretending to be a penniless young fellow named "Lindoro." Since he is Bartolo's barber, Figaro assures the Count that he can help him sneak into the doctor's house to see Rosina. He proposes to disguise the Count as a drunken soldier with orders to be lodged in Bartolo's home, and the Count promises Figaro a generous reward if the plan succeeds.

Won over by Lindoro's serenading, Rosina declares her determination to defy Doctor Bartolo and marry her young suitor. Bartolo's friend Don Basilio, Rosina's music teacher, promises to help Bartolo marry the young lady. Basilio suspects that the mysterious serenader is actually Count Almaviva, who is said to be in Seville. Basilio loves vicious gossip and proposes to Bartolo that they ruin the Count's reputation with a slanderous rumor, but Bartolo rejects this plan as too slow—he will thwart the Count by marrying Rosina that very day.

Finding a moment alone with Rosina, Figaro learns that she returns Lindoro's love, and she gives Figaro a letter to deliver to him. When the suspicious Bartolo finds evidence that Rosina has written the note, he rejects her excuses and furiously demands that she obey his wishes. Carrying out Figaro's scheme, the Count performs the drunken soldier routine while trying to catch a glimpse of Rosina. But Bartolo has an official exemption from having to house soldiers and threatens to have the intruder arrested. The Count pulls the arresting officer aside and flashes proof he is a Spanish nobleman. The officer's respectful reaction to the disguised Count stuns everyone, especially Bartolo, and all the characters become caught up in the confused situation like pieces of a machine spinning out of control.

ACT II

Despite the failure of his first scheme, Figaro has a new plan. The Count presents himself to Bartolo disguised as "Don Alonso," a music teacher substituting for the supposedly ailing Don Basilio to give Rosina her singing lesson. To make his ploy seem more convincing and prove he is an ally of the gossipy Basilio, "Alonso" shows Bartolo Rosina's love letter, saying he obtained it from one of Count Almaviva's lovers, to whom the Count passed it along as a joke. "Alonso" suggests that Bartolo use it to slander the Count and poison Rosina's heart toward him. The Count hopes to be able to tell Rosina the truth in secret during their lesson, so as not to lose her confidence.

Meanwhile, in order to give Rosina and the Count some time alone, Figaro distracts Bartolo by giving him a shave. Basilio's unexpected arrival requires artful conspiring to get rid of him before he spoils the plan, but the lovers and Figaro manage. While the barber shaves Doctor Bartolo, the Count whispers to Rosina that he and Figaro will come for her at midnight.

He tries to explain that he used her letter only as a way of getting into the house to see her, but Bartolo overhears and chases him out of the house. Doctor Bartolo's old housekeeper Berta, who thinks she'd make him a good wife, takes a dim view of all this confusion.

Basilio is sent off to get a notary so that Bartolo can Rosina marry immediately. To persuade the girl to consent, Bartolo tells her that "Lindoro" is really an agent of the lecherous Count Almaviva, and is planning to kidnap her and deliver her to the notorious nobleman. As proof, he shows her the love letter. Taken in by this slanderous trick, she confesses the planned elopement. Bartolo leaves Rosina to stand guard and runs off to get the police. As a storm rages, the Count and Figaro arrive with a ladder to rescue Rosina. Her anger at Lindoro's supposed deceit turns to amazement when he reveals that he is in fact Count Almaviva himself. But the lovers' rejoicing ends abruptly when they notice that the escape ladder has disappeared.

Don Basilio arrives with the notary to marry Rosina and Bartolo, but he finds Figaro and the Count in the house instead. The Count takes advantage of the notary's presence and bribes the unscrupulous Basilio into witnessing his marriage to Rosina. Bartolo arrives with the magistrate and police to arrest Rosina's kidnappers, but he is too late. The Count reveals his identity to all.