

**BEDŘICH SMETANA**  
(1824–1884)

***The Secret***

**A comic opera in three acts from 1878**

**Act One**

Threshers are celebrating a good harvest. Boniface, a retired soldier, pays his compliments to the maid Rosa, but she doesn't fancy him. He reminds her of the shame that when Kalina proposed to her twenty years ago, her family rejected him because he was poor. Hurt, Kalina then married the poorest girl in the village. Boniface accuses Rosa of still loving Kalina. Upset, Rosa proclaims Kalina as the traitor of their love.

Aldermen come in. A bricklayer master is handing over a new house to Kalina, wishing him all the best. Kalina and Malina's supporters meet in the pub, where the atmosphere of mutual entanglement gradually grows. A singer named Skrivanek comes in and both rivals ask for a song. But the lyrics show the true spirit of their problems and help in solving them. Malina is moved and willing to reconcile with Kalina. However, he mentions the debt that Kalina has because of his new house and that makes Kalina angry again. Rosa blames Kalina that he didn't do anything to save their relationship, although Friar Barnabas had left him a secret that should reunite them again. Their dispute is interrupted by a song of a piper, who invites other people to come dancing. Angry Kalina throws the piper to the ground, distracting Malina. Only Kalina's son Vit and Malina's daughter Blaženka can calm down their fathers and take them home. Then they decide to arrange a secret meeting.

Boniface finds a letter in the fight addressed to Kalina, and Kalina finds out that it is the letter from the deceased Barnabas that tells Vit and Boniface about a secret treasure. Vit and Boniface must promise him that they won't tell anyone else about it. As soon as they leave, Boniface tells the bricklayer master about it. He then tells an innkeeper, other neighbours and the bellman Jirik.

Vit and Blaženka meet on a bench. Jirik the bellman tells the secret of alderman Kalina to singer Skrivanek, using the speaking trumpet. And then the whole town learns about it.

**Act Two**

Kalina comes under Bezděz to seek the treasure. He wonders about his faith, desire for gold and Rosa. Exhausted, he falls asleep and dreams about Barnabas, the friar, who is followed by ghosts. They urge him to keep looking for the treasure although he might lose his soul and end up in hell. The ghosts disappear as a procession celebrating the Virgin Mary approaches him. Kalina wakes up and starts praying.

Vit and Blaženka meet and she wants to keep their love a secret. Vit is of a different opinion and gets upset. Boniface sees them and calls on the whole procession to come

to them. Everyone learns about the secret young love, and the fathers reject the happiness of their children after Vit stands up for it. He loves Blaženka and wants to marry her despite everything. The procession leaves, only Rosa stays deeply touched by Vit's decision. She thinks about her life and admits that she still loves Kalina. Boniface surprises her and clumsily expresses his love to her. But Rosa refuses him again. Then they all see Kalina digging underground, still looking for the treasure. Rosa tries to stop him.

### **Act Three**

In Malina's house, the servants chop the hops. They ask a sad Blaženka to sing for them. But she sings a heartbreaking song and bursts into tears. No one can see Blaženka like this, so they try to convince Malina to let Vit marry her anyway. In the end, he agrees but under the condition that Kalina comes to beg for his son himself. Boniface says that Kalina can never come, as he is already lost for good. He then tells them all about the secret treasure, but they all must promise not to tell anyone about it. Vit comes to say goodbye before he goes away in the hope to come back in a year with some money to ask Blaženka to marry him again. Malina assures him he will bless their marriage, but only if Kalina begs him. As Vit's uncle, Boniface wants to step in instead of the father and at the same time again ask Rosa for her hand, but he is rejected.

Something starts to bang in the oven, which at first makes everyone laugh, but after a while it becomes frightening so they flee from the house. Only Rosa stays watching as the oven door bursts open and Kalina comes out. He realizes that the secret of the treasure he was looking for was Rosa's love. Everyone comes back to the house. Kalina begs Malina to let Vit marry Blaženka and him to marry Rosa. He finally agrees and in the end the victory of wondrous love is celebrated.