

Synopsis

ACT I - A storage room between the bedroom of the Count and the boudoir of the Countess.

Figaro and Susanna, engaged to be married suspect their employer, Count Almaviva to have designs upon Susanna. To further complicate matters, Figaro owes money to Marcellina, Dr. Bartolo's former housekeeper and must marry her if he cannot repay the debt. Cherubino, the adolescent pageboy visits Susanna on the morning of her wedding and extols his admiration of all the women on the estate, particularly the Countess. Hearing the approach of the Count, Cherubino hides and thus hears the Count's overtures to Susanna. The intrusion of Basilio, the music master, causes the Count to conceal himself as well. Before long, all are exposed to each other's secrets. Figaro brings a group of villagers to remind the Count of his vow to abolish the feudal right of claiming a bride on her wedding night. Annoyed, the Count announces that he will abolish the custom at a time of his own choosing.

ACT II - The boudoir of the Countess Almaviva

The Countess mourns her husband's fading affections. She is not convinced of Figaro's plan against the Count which would necessitate Cherubino masquerading as Susanna. Hearing the Count approach, Cherubino hides. Certain that his wife is concealing a lover in her locked dressing room, the Count takes her with him to fetch tools to force the door. While they are away, Susanna frees Cherubino, who jumps through the window. The Count and the Countess return and to the embarrassment of the Count, find only Susanna. Antonio, the gardener bursts in, angered by trampled flowers caused by Cherubino's jump. Figaro attempts to explain it all away but is interrupted by the entrance of Marcellina, Bartolo, and Basilio who have come to support Marcellina's claim of marriage to Figaro.

INTERMISSION

ACT III - The Count's study

Susanna tells the Count she will submit to him in return for a generous dowry that would pay Figaro's debt to Marcellina but Don Curzio, the Count's lawyer has ruled in support of Marcellina's claim to Figaro's hand in marriage. However, an unexpected discovery changes that plan, to the delight of all but the Count. A group of peasant girls, coming to pay tribute to the Countess, proves to have a familiar face in the crowd: Cherubino, disguised as a girl to avoid detection. Festivities ensue, and a spurious note is passed to the Count.

ACT IV - The gardens of the estate

Barbarina bewails that she has lost the token pin the Count had asked her to deliver to Susanna confirming their assignation in the garden that evening. This news leaves Figaro lamenting the faithlessness of all women. Disguised as each other, Susanna and the Countess lead much of the male population of the estate into confusion. Gradually realizing the game, Figaro takes the opportunity to tease Susanna and they are soon reconciled but the Count is slower to catch on. When all is revealed, the Count begs forgiveness of the Countess and the evening ends in celebration.