

**the** DONIZETTI'S  
**ELIXIR**  
**of LOVE**  
L'ELISIR D'AMORE

### **Act One**

The story plays out in an idyllic north Italian village. Nemorino, a simple peasant, loves Adina, who comes from a wealthy family. As the curtain rises, Adina reads the story of Tristan and Isolde to a group of peasants who are taking a break from the harvest. The sounds of a march interrupt this pastoral episode. Sergeant Belcore swaggers onto the scene at the head of a platoon of soldiers and is instantly drawn to Adina. He gives her flowers and proposes marriage, but Adina is not so easily wooed. The whole scene upsets Nemorino, who tries to persuade Adina to love him instead, but she would rather stay unattached.

Dr. Dulcamara, a traveling huckster, enters the square and begins peddling his cure-all. Impressed, Nemorino asks if he happens to be selling any of Isolde's legendary love potion. Nemorino listened to the story and remembers what the potion did for Tristan, perhaps it might do the same for him. The doctor obliges with a bottle full of "elixir" which is really just wine, promising it will take effect in twenty-four hours. Nemorino takes a swig, and his confidence increases immeasurably. Adina, irritated at Nemorino's new self-assurance, spites him by promising to marry Belcore in six days. Of course, that doesn't faze Nemorino; the elixir will have worked by then. A soldier arrives with orders calling the platoon to the front the next day, and, faced with Belcore's departure, Adina agrees to push the wedding forward to today. This throws Nemorino into a panic. How can he win Adina without the help of the elixir?

### **Act Two**

The wedding celebration is going full steam. Dulcamara and Adina perform a duet about a dirty old Venetian Senator lusting after a gondolier girl to amuse the guests. The notary arrives, but Adina tries to stall. She doesn't see Nemorino, and, since she's only marrying to torment him, why bother until he's there to see it?

Everyone heads off to continue celebrating, but Dulcamara stays behind to pick over the remnants of the feast. Nemorino enters, heart-broken, and asks the doctor what to do. Dulcamara naturally recommends another dose of elixir, but Nemorino has no money. That puts things in a different light, so Nemorino decides to enlist in Belcore's platoon to raise the price of another bottle.

But Nemorino's wealthy uncle has died and left a fortune to the boy, and news has reached the village girls, who rush to throw themselves at him. Clueless about his inheritance, Nemorino thinks that the second dose has done the trick. Adina can't believe what she's seeing.

Her interest piqued, she asks Dulcamara if he knows what's going on, and he tells her about how Nemorino enlisted to buy the elixir and win her love. Touched that he would go to such lengths to win her, Adina realizes that she's loved Nemorino all along. She buys his enlistment back from Belcore and confesses her true feelings to Nemorino. Everyone in the village celebrates their happiness and, of course, the power of Dulcamara's elixir.