

# THE STORY

## ACT I

### **In a dark forest, far away...**

In a mysterious wood, Prince Tamino flees from a monstrous serpent. As he loses strength and faints, three ladies, who serve The Queen of the Night, appear and defeat the serpent. The ladies are charmed by the Prince and depart to tell The Queen of their deed. Tamino regains consciousness and sees the bird catcher Papageno, who he believes has saved him. Papageno pretends that he has indeed dispatched the serpent, but the three ladies return and punish Papageno for this lie by rendering him mute. They then show Tamino an image of Pamina, The Queen's daughter. Tamino instantly falls in love with her image. The Queen of the Night then appears, telling Tamino that her daughter has been kidnapped by the evil Sarastro. She commands him to rescue her, and Tamino beseeches the gods to help him find her. The three ladies return, giving Papageno his voice back; they then give a magic flute to Tamino and magic bells to Papageno to ensure their safety as they attempt to rescue Pamina. They also reveal three genies who will guide them on their journey.

Near Sarastro's temple, his servant Monostatos pursues Pamina, but the appearance of Papageno frightens Monostatos away. Papageno tells Pamina that Tamino loves her and is on his way to save her. Papageno also admits that he hasn't yet found a love of his own, and Pamina comforts him. The three genies lead Tamino to Sarastro's temple, where a high priest informs Tamino that it is the Queen, not Sarastro, who is the actual villain. Overjoyed that Pamina is still alive, Tamino plays his flute, enchanting nature with his music. He hears Papageno's pipes

in the distance and rushes off in pursuit. Meanwhile, Papageno and Pamina try to flee the temple, but they are caught by Monostatos and his henchmen. Papageno plays his magic bells, which render the pursuers helpless. Sarastro enters with great ceremony. He punishes Monostatos and tells Pamina that he will eventually set her free. Pamina and Tamino get a brief glimpse of each other, but Sarastro keeps them separate. He orders that they must now face a series of trials.

## INTERMISSION

## ACT II

### **The Trial of Silence**

Sarastro begins initiation rites with Tamino and Pamina, but Papageno is unable to complete them. Sarastro's priests tell Tamino and Papageno that their first trial is about to begin: they must remain silent. The three ladies appear and attempt to persuade them to abandon their quest, challenging the pair's resolve. Tamino remains silent and steadfast, but the distraught Papageno immediately begins to chatter. Meanwhile, Monostatos again tries to get close to the sleeping Pamina. The Queen of the Night appears to Pamina as she awakens and orders her to kill Sarastro. Pamina despairs at the thought, and Sarastro sings to Pamina that in his temple one forswears thoughts of revenge.

### **The Trial of Temptation**

Tamino and Papageno must resist any temptation: no conversation, no women, no food! The three genies appear to bring Tamino and Papageno food, which Tamino steadfastly resists and Papageno unsuccessfully tries to corral. As Pamina arrives beseeching Tamino to speak with

her, he still keeps his pledge of silence, which she interprets as rejection. She is heartbroken at Tamino's seeming lack of love for her. Sarastro brings Pamina and Tamino together in order to bid farewell before the final trial. Papageno does not want to take part in any further trials; he now wishes only for wine, and he dreams of one day finding his true love. Pamina believes that she has lost Tamino forever; in her despair, she contemplates ending her life, but the three genies stop her. They assure her that Tamino still loves her, and guide her off to see Tamino again. As Sarastro's priests accompany Tamino to his last trial, Pamina finds them in the depths of the temple. Finally united, Tamino and Pamina undergo the trial together.

### **The Trial of Fire and Water**

The music of the magic flute and the strength of their love allow Tamino and Pamina to overcome the dangers of the trial of fire and water. Voices of Sarastro's followers rejoice at their triumph. However, Papageno has still not found his true love, despite dreaming about her. Despairing, he seeks to end his life, but the three genies once again intervene and stop him. Papageno's dream finally comes true: Papagena appears and joins him. They imagine a future with many children together. Meanwhile, The Queen of the Night, the three ladies, and Monostatos sneak into the temple together, intending to attack Sarastro and marry Monostatos to Pamina. However, their attack is repelled, and they find themselves caught in never-ending darkness. Tamino and Pamina are lauded by Sarastro's followers, who are transformed by the new couple. They sing thanks to the gods, celebrating that they will be eternally crowned with beauty and wisdom.