

## Synopsis :

# II TROVATORE

**Place:** Biscay and Aragon (Spain) **Time:** *Fifteenth century*

## Act I: The Duel

*Scene 1: The guard room in the castle of Luna (The Palace of Aljaferia, Zaragoza, Spain)* Ferrando, the captain of the guards, orders his men to keep watch while Count di Luna wanders restlessly beneath the windows of Leonora, lady-in-waiting to the Princess. Di Luna loves Leonora, and is jealous of his successful rival, the troubadour Manrico. In order to keep the guards awake, Ferrando narrates the history of the count to the guard. (Aria: "Di due figli vivea padre beato") It appears that a gypsy had once bewitched the little brother of the count, making the child weak and ill, and for this had been burnt alive as a witch. Dying, she had commanded her daughter Azucena to avenge her, which she did by carrying off the younger brother. Although the burnt bones of a child were found in the ashes of the pyre, the father refused to believe in his son's death; dying, he commanded Count di Luna to seek the gypsy's daughter.

*Scene 2: Garden in the palace of the princess*

Leonora confesses her love for Manrico to her confidante, Ines. ("Tacea la notte placida"... "Di tale amor"). When they have gone, Count di Luna hears the voice of his rival (Manrico, behind the scenes: "Deserto sulla terra"). While Leonora in the darkness mistakes the count for her lover, Manrico himself enters the garden, and she rushes to his arms. The count recognises Manrico as his enemy, who has been condemned to death, and compels him to fight. Leonora tries to intervene, but cannot stop them from fighting (Trio: "Di geloso amor sprezzato").

## Act 2: The Gypsy Woman

*Scene 1: The gypsies' camp* While Manrico sits at the bedside of his mother, Azucena, the gypsies sing the famous Anvil Chorus (Chorus: "Vedi le fosche notturne"). She is the daughter of the Gypsy burnt by the count and, although old, still nurses her vengeance. (Aria: "Stride la vampa") The Gypsies break camp while Azucena confesses to Manrico that after stealing him she had intended to burn the count's little son, but had thrown her own child into the flames instead (Aria: "Condotta ell'era in ceppi"). Manrico realises that he is not the son of Azucena, but loves her as if she were indeed his mother, as she has always been faithful and loving to him. Manrico tells Azucena that he defeated Di Luna in their duel, but was held back from killing him by a mysterious power (Duet: "Mal reggendo") A messenger arrives and reports that Leonora, who believes Manrico dead, is about to enter a convent and take the veil that night. Manrico rushes away to prevent her from carrying out this purpose.

*Scene 2: In front of the convent* Di Luna and his attendants intend to abduct Leonora and the Count sings of his love for her (Aria: "Il balen del suo sorriso" ... "Per me ora fatale"). Leonora and the nuns appear in procession, but Manrico prevents Di Luna from carrying out his plans and instead, takes Leonora away with him.

## Act 3: The Son of the Gypsy Woman

*Scene 1: Di Luna's camp* (Chorus: "Or co' dadi ma fra poco") Ferrando brings in the captured Azucena. She is recognised by Di Luna and sentenced to be burnt.

*Scene 2: A chamber in the castle* Leonora and Manrico live only for each other. (Aria, Manrico: "Ah si, ben mio coll'essere") Ruiz, Manrico's comrade, reports that Azucena is to be burned at the stake. Manrico rushes to her aid (Stretta: "Di quella pira l'orrendo foco"). Leonora faints.

## Act 4: The Punishment

*Scene 1: Before the dungeon keep* Leonora attempts to free Manrico, who has been captured by Di Luna (Aria: "D'amor sull'ali rosee", Chorus & Duet: "Miserere"). Leonora begs Di Luna for mercy and offers herself in place of her lover. She promises to give herself to the count, but secretly intends die first by taking poison (Duet: "Mira, d'acerbe lagrime").

*Scene 2: In the dungeon* Manrico and Azucena are awaiting their execution. Manrico attempts to soothe Azucena, whose mind wanders (Duet: "Ai nostri monti ritorneremo") At last the gypsy slumbers. Leonora comes to Manrico and tells him that he is saved, begging him to escape. When he discovers she cannot accompany him, he refuses to leave his prison. He believes Leonora has betrayed him until he realizes that she has taken poison to remain true to him. As she dies in agony in Manrico's arms she confesses (Aria: "Tu vedrai che amore in terra") that she prefers to die with him than to marry another. (Quartet: "Prima che d'altri vivere") The count enters to find Leonora dead in his rival's arms and orders Manrico to be led to execution. Azucena arises from her couch and when Di Luna, dragging her to a window, shows her the dying Manrico, she cries in triumph: "He was your brother. You are avenged, oh mother!" The opera ends with the count screaming in despair, at the same time as Azucena, "E vivo ancor!" ("And yet I am still alive!")