

Die Fledermaus Plot Synopsis or the Bat's Revenge

Act I

Defaulted fines, disguises, descriptive fake identities, revenge and jealous lovers – they are all part of the delicious concoction of Strauss' opera. *Die Fledermaus* held a mirror to the society of Vienna at the time, exposing the greed, the sexual mores and the unleashed emotions of nouveau riche. It is the reality television show of 1874, set to the music of the most popular composer.

Before the curtain rises, the famous Fledermaus waltz is played with other popular tunes from the final act, all with Strauss' trademark Viennese sparkle.

We meet Eisenstein in his home when the maid Adele presents an invitation to a masked ball from Prince Orlofsky. Eisenstein is supposed to go to jail for driving his horse the wrong way down a one way street, but his friend Dr. Falke helps devise a plan to let him party first. The doctor has his own agenda, wanting revenge for humiliation at a previous party he attended in a bat (fledermaus) costume.

Meanwhile, Eisenstein's wife Roslinde is being wooed in secret by her former lover Alfred. Eisenstein leaves to "serve" his jail sentence. Frank, the prison warden, arrives and mistakes Alfred for Eisenstein. Rather than give away their tryst, Alfred allows himself to be taken away to prison.

Act II

With the characters in place for Falke's practical joke, he joins the revelers at Orlofsky's masked ball. The prince's character is based on a known Russian playboy of the time. The music swirls through dances from many of Strauss' favourites.

Adele is in costume as Rosalinde, but Eisenstein, dressed as foxy Marquis Renard recognizes his wife's maid. However, he doesn't recognize his wife: Rosalinde who arrives as a Hungarian countess. Her husband is bewitched by her mysterious charms and woos her with a beautiful pocket watch.

Before he can persuade her to unmask, the clock strikes six, and Eisenstein must hurry off to jail.

Act III

At the jail, confusion is about to take control. Frosch the jailer has been drinking. Adele and her sister Ida arrive, sent by Dr. Falke, to enlist help in launching her acting career. Eisenstein, still as the Marquis, comes to serve his sentence, and is surprised to find Chevalier Chagrin (Frank) from the ball, and Alfred locked up. Frank tries to explain he found Alfred, whom he still thinks is Eisenstein, kissing Rosalinde.

The lawyer, Dr. Blind, is summoned for Alfred, but intercepted by Eisenstein. Swapping wigs, switching identities and interrogations ensue. Rosalinde comes to bail out Alfred and avoid a scandal. Eisenstein is mad with jealousy. Falke and the prince arrive. Revenge and revelations – or was it all just too much champagne?