

In 18<sup>th</sup> century Spain, prison governor Don Pizarro has locked up political prisoner Florestan for the last two years. With an official investigation looming, Pizarro realizes he'll need to have Florestan quietly executed. Luckily for justice, freedom and a successful plot, Florestan is saved by his wife Leonore: disguising herself as a man (named "Fidelio"), she obtains a job at the prison and foils Pizarro at the last moment. The married couple reunited, Pizarro is arrested and led away, and all sing in praise of Leonore's dedication: an alternate title for the opera is *Leonore, or the Triumph of Married Love*.

Fidelio is Beethoven's only opera, but he revised it several times to fix what he felt were problems with the piece. The *Leonore Overture I*, performed today, was composed in 1807, a few of years after the first and second versions, possibly for a revival. (In 1807, Beethoven also composed the Fourth and Fifth symphonies, the Shakespearean overture *Coriolanus*, and the Mass in C.)