

# The libretto in brief

Traduzione di Rodney Stringer

## Act I (The departure)

*Front hall at Ravenswood Castle.*

In 16th-century Scotland, torn by political strife, the side to which the Ashtons belong is about to succumb to that of the Ravenswoods. Normanno, head of the armigers in the service of the Ashtons, orders his men to collect information, because he suspects that a secret attachment exists between Lucia, Lord Enrico Ashton's sister, and Edgardo of Ravenswood, the last surviving member of the enemy family. Enrico, who is worried about the Ashtons' fortunes, confides to Normanno that to save the situation he would like to get Lucia married to Lord Arturo Bucklaw, but he fears his sister's refusal. Raimondo, Lucia's chaplain and confidant, reminds Enrico that the girl is grief-stricken by the recent death of her mother. But Normanno reveals that the real reason for her sadness is her love of a young man, who saved her life one day when she was charged by a fierce bull; he suspects that the young man in question is none other than Edgardo of Ravenswood. Enrico flies into a rage, and vows to avenge himself.

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*A park.*

Near the siren's fountain, at dusk. Lucia is deeply upset and confides her worries to her companion Alisa. While waiting for Edgardo, she tells Alisa that she has seen the ghost of a lady, who was murdered out of jealousy by an ancestor of Edgardo's and cast into the fountain. Alisa urges Lucia to break off her relationship, but the girl resolutely refuses. Edgardo appears, and tells Lucia that he will be sailing for France at dawn. Before leaving Scotland, however, he wishes to be reconciled with the Ashtons, and intends to request Lucia's hand in marriage as a sign of peace. Informed that Enrico still hates him, Edgardo reflects on the wrongs suffered by his family at the hands of the Ashtons. He declares that only his love for Lucia has stopped the

vengeance which, on his father's tomb, he had sworn to wreak. Lucia implores him to forget his old hatred, while Edgardo asks her to swear eternal faithfulness to him. They exchange rings and part.

## Act II (The marriage contract)

*A study in Lord Ashton's apartments.*

Enrico, who is waiting for Lucia, talks to Normanno. Numerous relatives have arrived at the castle for the marriage of Lucia to Lord Arturo, but Enrico still fears his sister's refusal. Normanno reassures him: Edgardo has been away a long time, and the false rumours artfully put about have it that he is married to another woman. Lucia arrives, looking pale and expressionless. Enrico shows her a false letter proving Edgardo's betrayal. He then insists that his sister marry Arturo, thereby saving the family fortunes. With a sinking heart, Lucia seeks comfort from Raimondo, who exhorts her to accept the proposed marriage. At last, in despair, she submits to her brother's wishes.

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*A magnificent hall pompously adorned.*

Arturo promises his political support to Enrico. The wedding ceremony begins. Lucia has just signed the marriage register when, to everyone's astonishment, Edgardo suddenly appears, still wearing the clothes he has travelled in. Raimondo shows him the marriage contract. Edgardo returns the ring he had received from Lucia, who is prostrate and incapable of any reaction. He asks her to give him back his own ring, which he flings onto the floor, cursing the Ashtons. He then offers himself, furious and unarmed, to his enemies.

## Act III

*A ground-floor hall in the Wolferag tower.*

It is night, and a fierce storm is raging. Edgardo is in a gloomy mood. Enrico enters, announcing the completion of Lucia's marriage and challenging him to a duel. They agree to meet outside the castle, at the Ravenswood graveyard.

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*A gallery in Ravenswood Castle.*

At the castle, in the meantime, the wedding celebrations continue (chorus "D'immenso giubilo"). But Raimondo interrupts the revelry with news that Lucia has gone mad and stabbed the bridegroom to death. The bride herself now comes onto the scene, dressed in white, dishevelled and looking like a ghost. She talks deliriously, recalling her encounters with Edgardo in the belief that he is her husband. Finally she faints into Alisa's arms. While Enrico bemoans her wretched state, Raimondo accuses Normanno of having brought about these misfortunes and prophesies that the blame for the blood spilt will fall upon him.

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*Outside the castle.*

At night, in the Ravenswood graveyard, Edgardo awaits Enrico, having decided to let himself be killed in the duel. He is obsessed by visions of Lucia happy with her newly-wedded husband, but he hears the sound of voices from the castle, announcing Lucia's death. In desperation, Edgardo stabs himself.