

## Synopsis of *Rockland the Opera*

In about 1960, the elderly Alfred Laakso leads a bus tour of tourists to the town of Rockland, where he lived in 1906. It is almost a ghost town, but he tells them about when it was a booming place. The action reverts to 1906.

**Scene 1** A Fourth of July party at the temperance hall. Johanna and her husband, Puna-Pekka (Red Pete) are there. Pastor Rantanen introduces a union organizer whose speech mixes patriotism with a call for a strike.

**Scene 2** Accident in the mine. Otto is killed and Alfred is injured. Otto's new widow, Rauha, grieves.

**Scene 3** Miner Puna-Pekka agonizes about whether he should have spoken up about safety lapses. He flirts with getting drunk, but his wife, Johanna, has hidden the bottles. He swears off drinking.

**Scene 4** Otto's funeral. Pastor Rantanen suggests a ruse whereby the widow Rauha and her children can stay in their home.

**Scene 5** In the tavern, miners talk about the strike. Breaking the tension, barber Pete Casavino sings "I'm my own barber."

**Scene 6** Johanna visited by William Jackson, underground foreman, who tells her she deserves better than Puna-Pekka.

**Scene 7** In church, as strike date nears.

**Scene 8** In mine office the night before the strike. Mine superintendent Thomas Morton maneuvers William Jackson to name strike leaders.

**Scene 9** At home, Puna-Pekka tells Johanna he must participate in the strike for the sake of the children.

**Scene 10** The strike. Miners confront sheriff's deputies. Chaos, shouting and gunfire; Puna-Pekka killed on the spot, Kova Kivi dies later.

**Scene 11** Crowd of miners in jail. Most are released on bail, but 12 are charged.

**Scene 12** The trial. The elderly Alfred Laakso continues his tale, describing how two of the miners were tried and acquitted, and the rest were freed.

**Scene 13** William meets Johanna for last time; Johanna returning to Finland, while William hopes for relationship.

**Scene 14** Finale. Back in 1960, and Alfred Laakso concludes the story.