

DVOŘÁK

His Music and Life in Pictures

Renáta Fučíková



Antonín Dvořák

His Life and Work in Pictures

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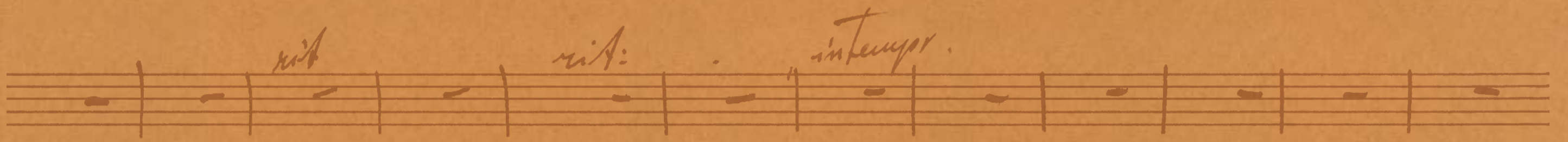
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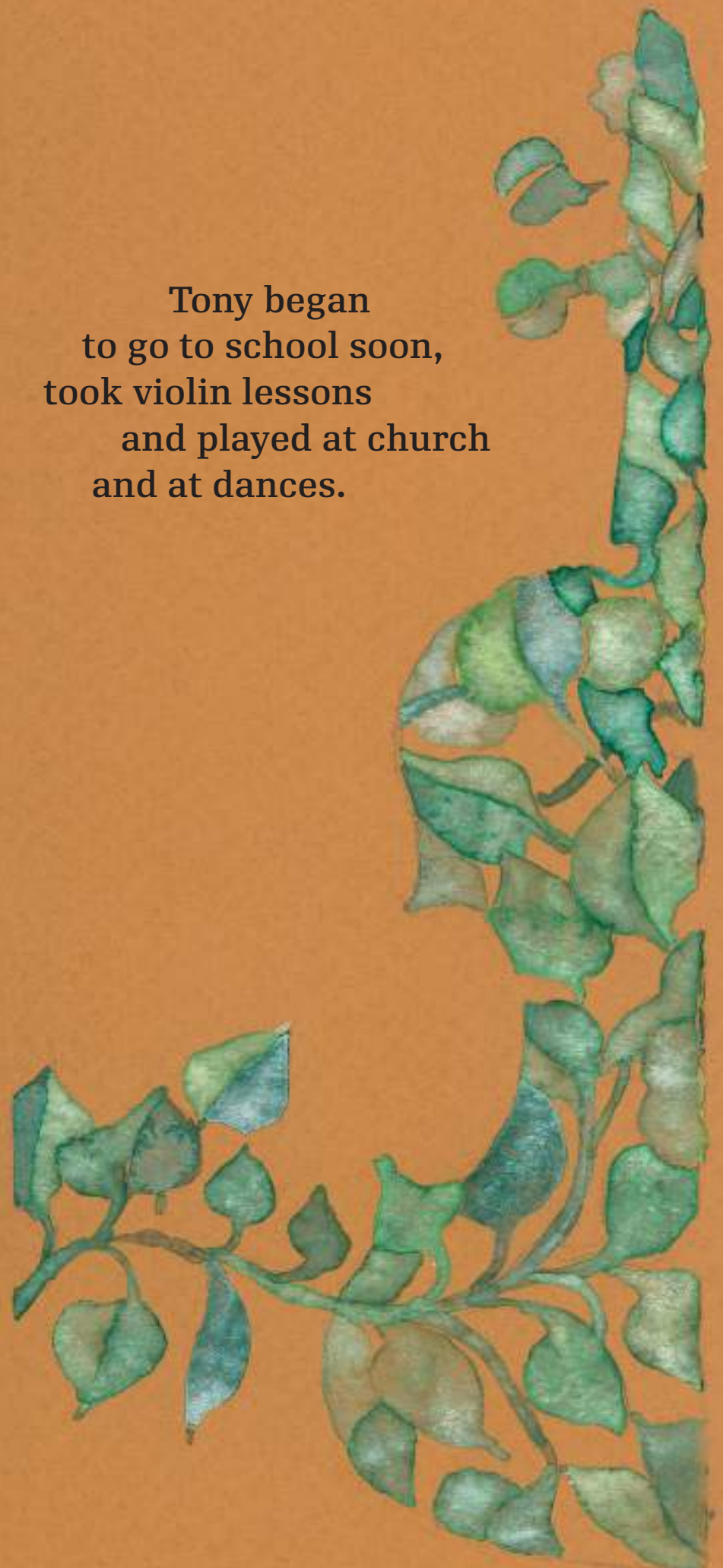
Pay attention, you're going to be a butcher, too.



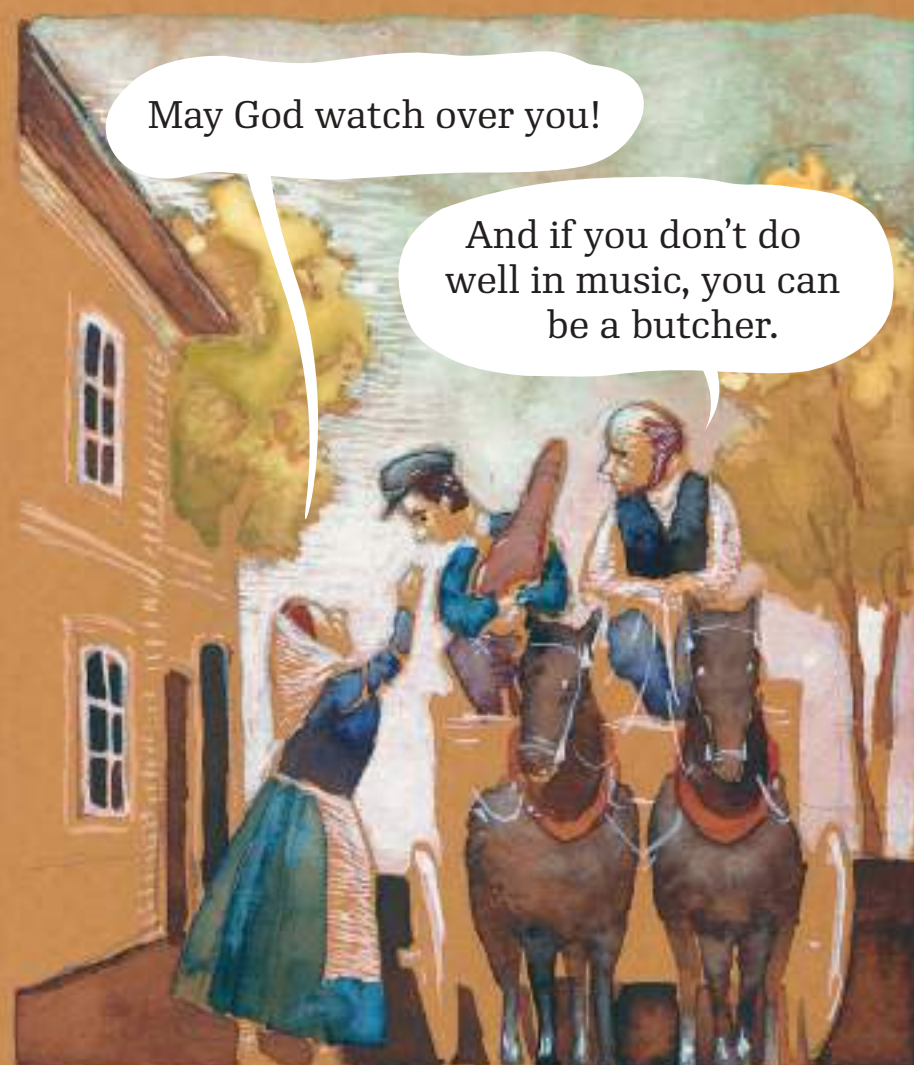
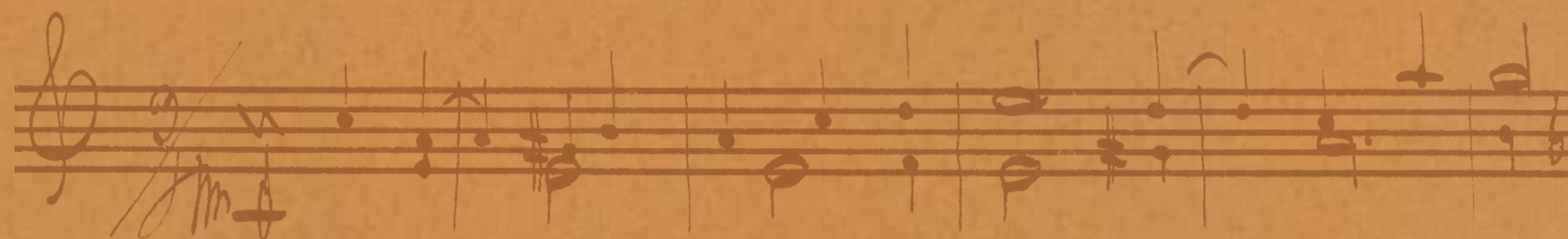
No! No! I don't want to!

He must be having a nightmare.

Tony began to go to school soon, took violin lessons and played at church and at dances.

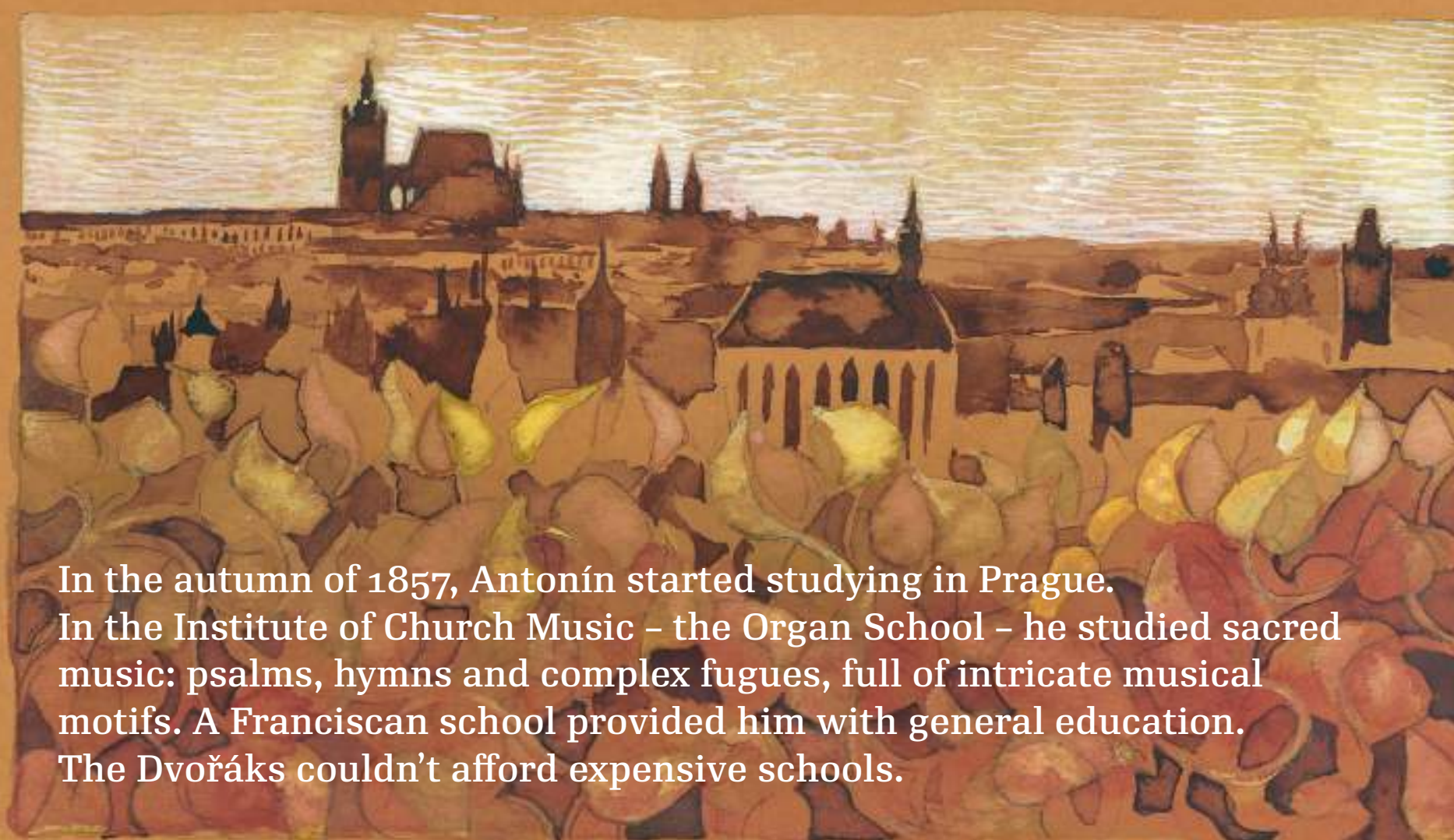


2. Harmony Assignment



May God watch over you!

And if you don't do well in music, you can be a butcher.



In the autumn of 1857, Antonín started studying in Prague. In the Institute of Church Music – the Organ School – he studied sacred music: psalms, hymns and complex fugues, full of intricate musical motifs. A Franciscan school provided him with general education. The Dvořáks couldn't afford expensive schools.



He'd play pieces of true giants, works by Händel, Mozart, Beethoven. He even met Liszt in person.



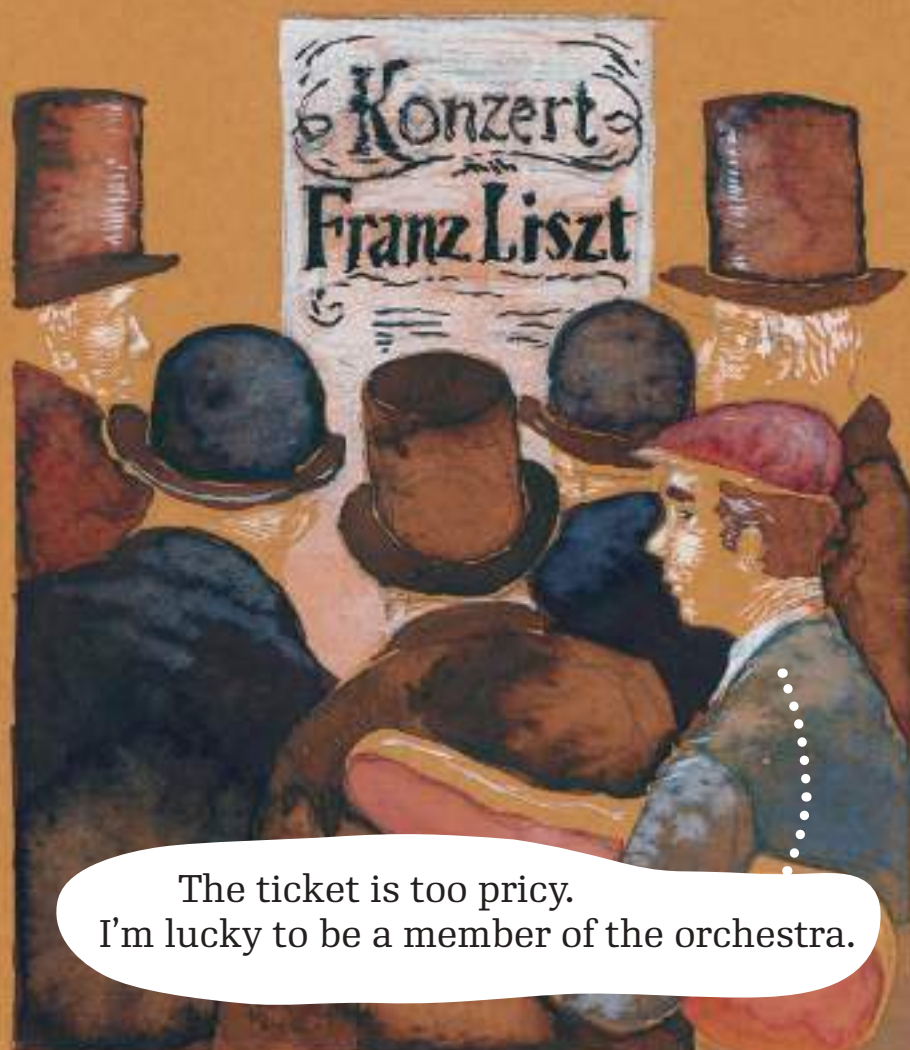
The symphony has such a lovely tune...

Antonín, can you repeat what I've said?

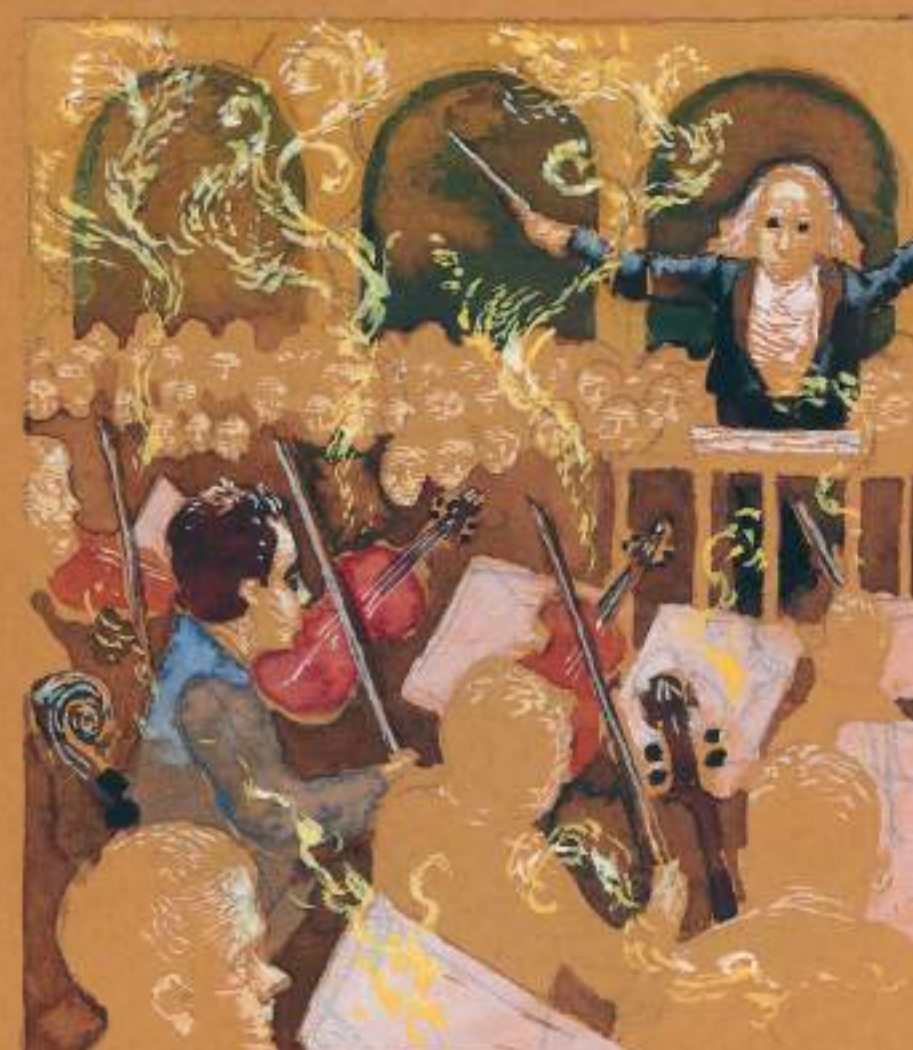


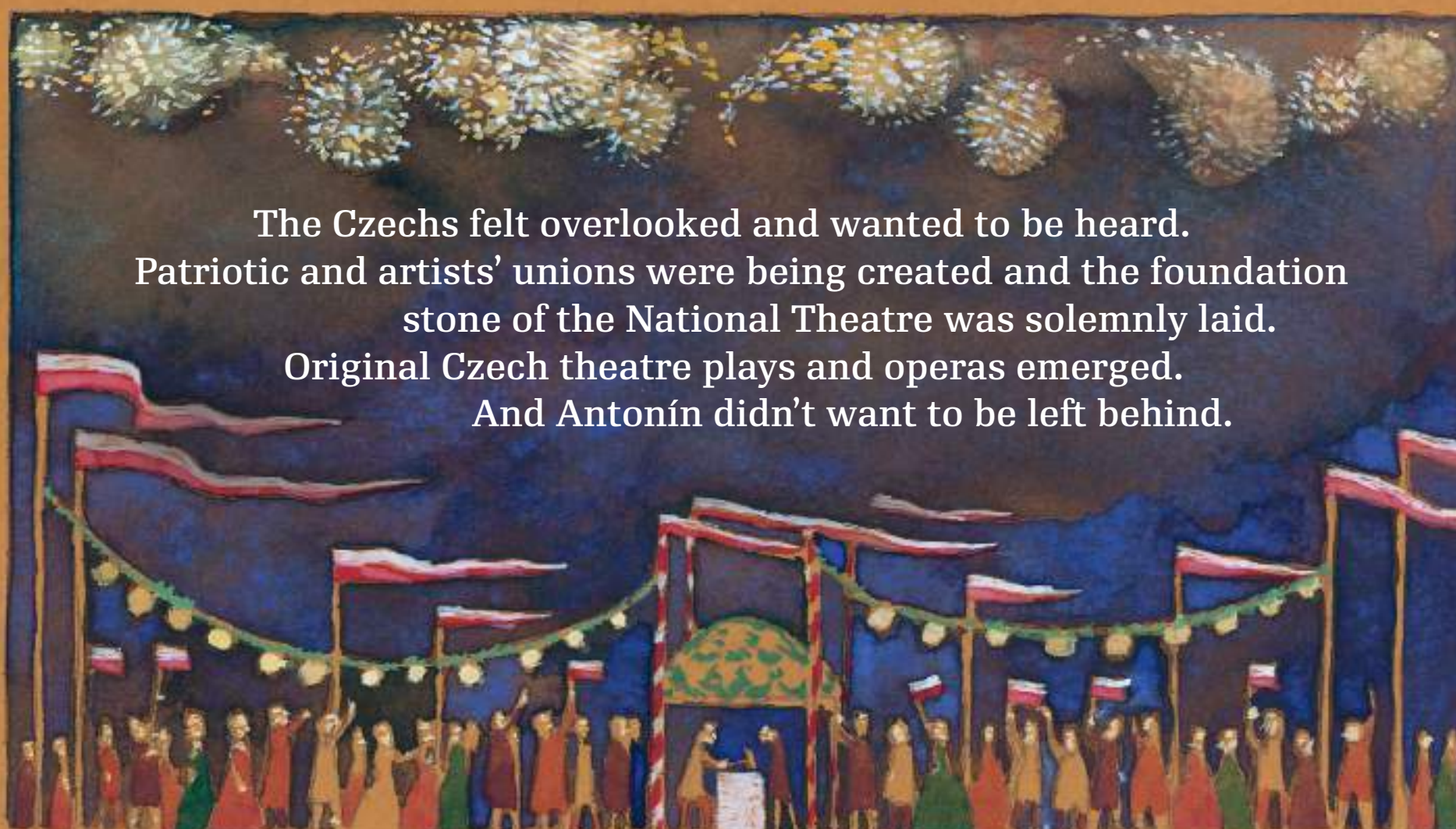
I'm counting on you. You'll play the viola part.

He joined the orchestra of The Unity of St. Cecilia.



The ticket is too pricy. I'm lucky to be a member of the orchestra.





The Czechs felt overlooked and wanted to be heard.
Patriotic and artists' unions were being created and the foundation
stone of the National Theatre was solemnly laid.
Original Czech theatre plays and operas emerged.
And Antonín didn't want to be left behind.



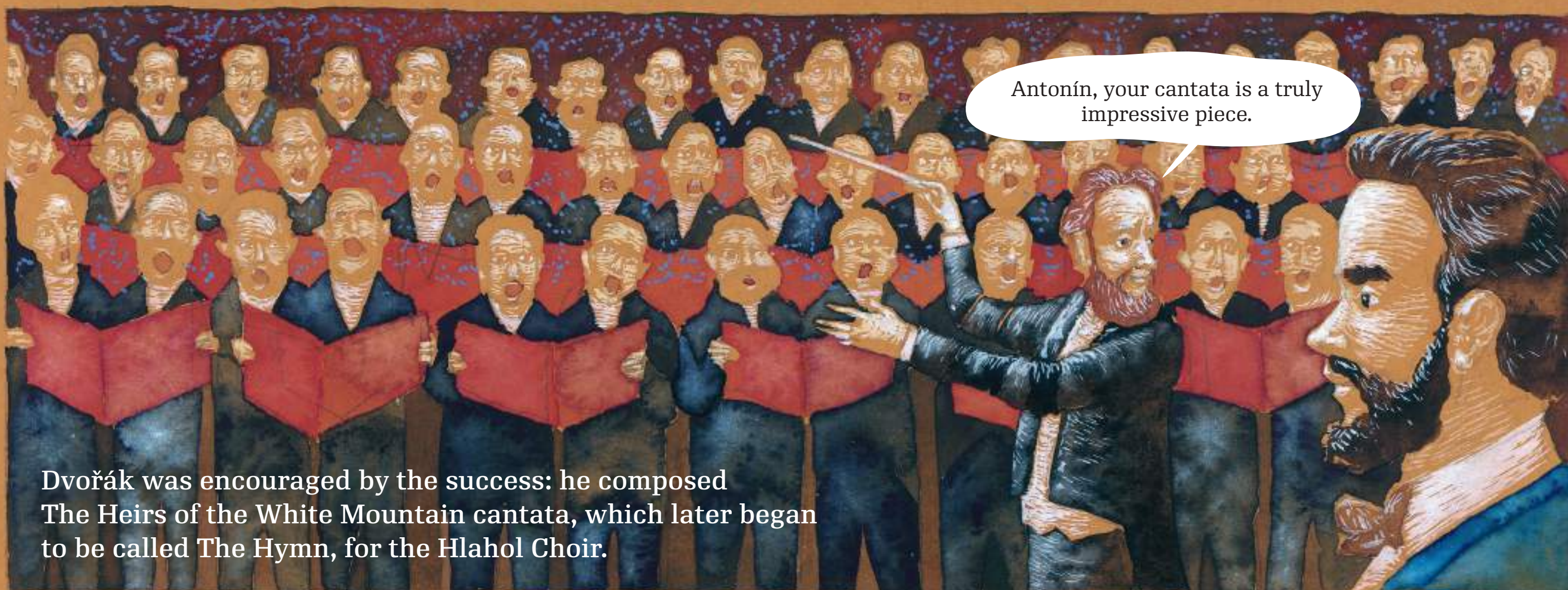
Alfred. The King of England,
who overthrew the Danish rule.
I'll compose an opera about him!

This shall be better. A Czech tale.
King and Charcoal Burner!



Mr. Conductor,
the theatre can have my opera.

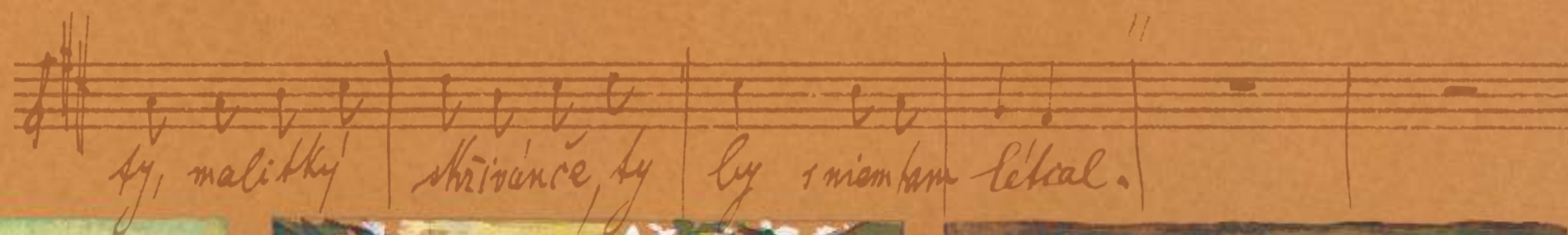
It's too difficult for our ensemble,
but we'll play the prelude at least.



Antonín, your cantata is a truly impressive piece.

Dvořák was encouraged by the success: he composed The Heirs of the White Mountain cantata, which later began to be called The Hymn, for the Hlahol Choir.

6. The Lark



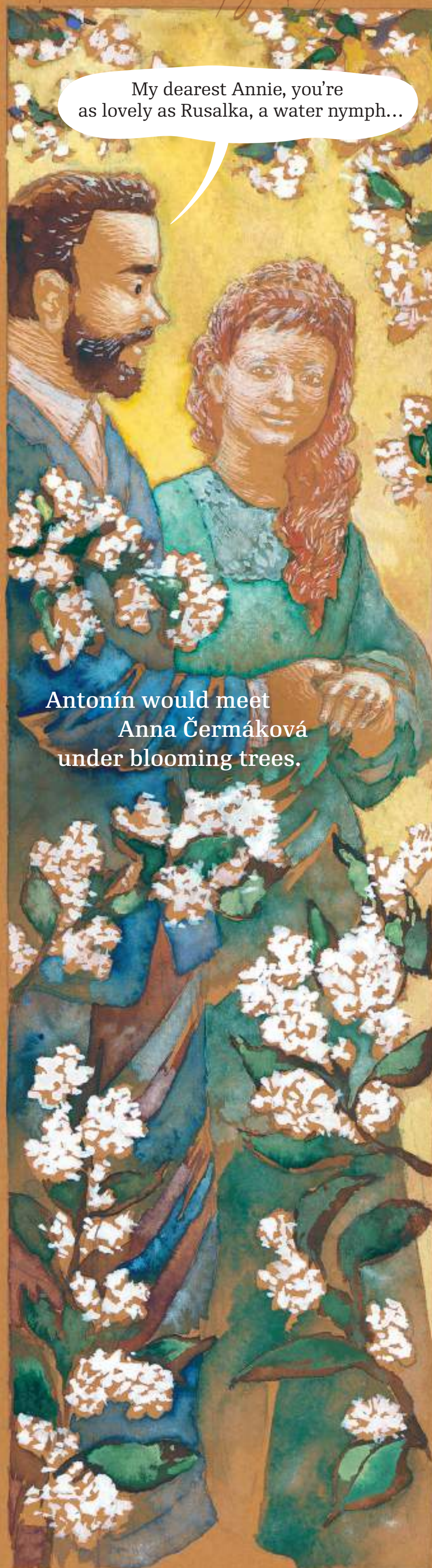
With success came also public recognition from the Czechs.



Antonín's little piece – a song called The Lark – was published. Everybody could sing it at the piano. Larks would thus chirrup both in parlours and in the fields.

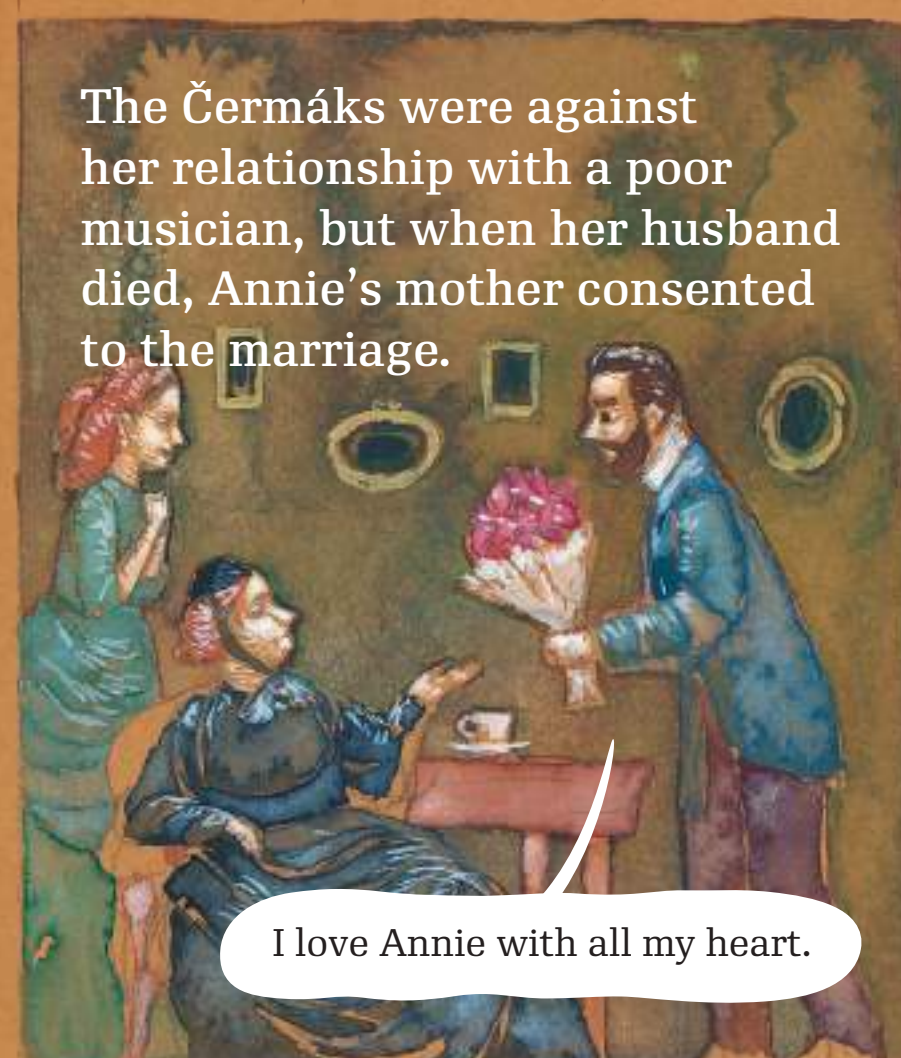


My dearest Annie, you're as lovely as Rusalka, a water nymph...



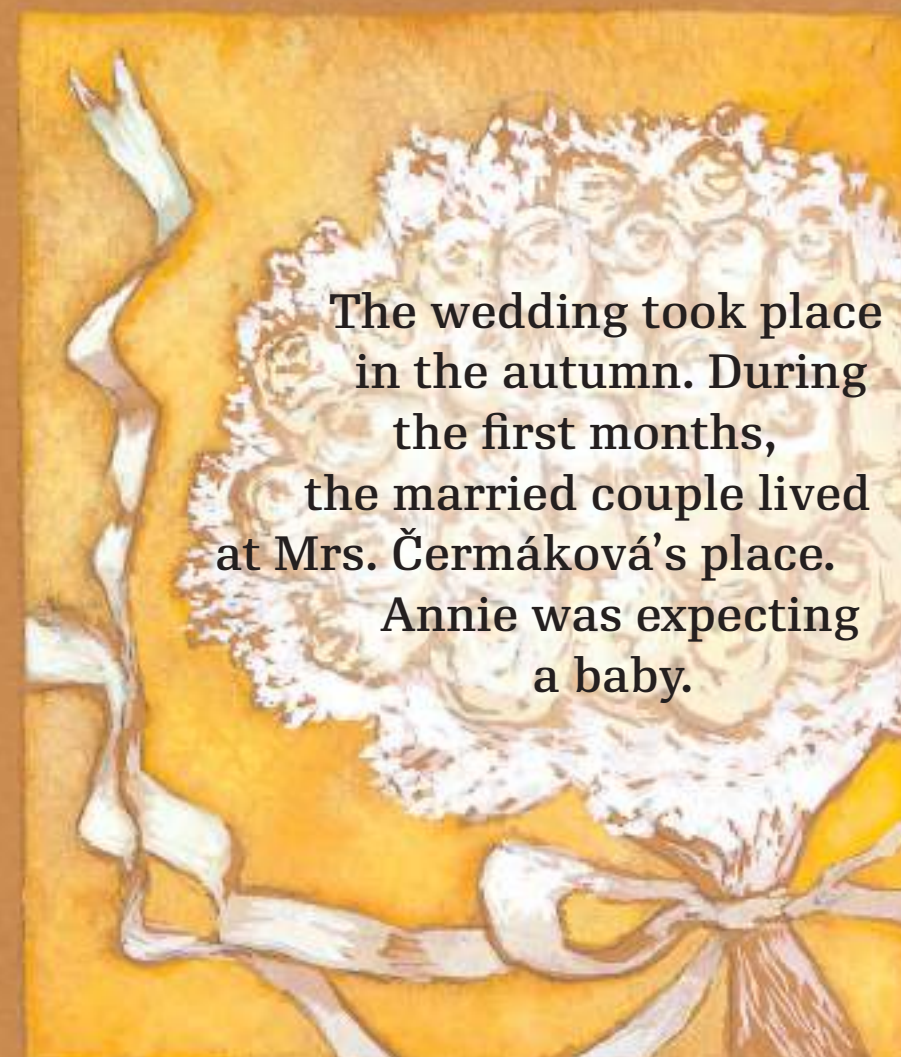
Antonín would meet Anna Čermáková under blooming trees.

The Čermáks were against her relationship with a poor musician, but when her husband died, Annie's mother consented to the marriage.



I love Annie with all my heart.

The wedding took place in the autumn. During the first months, the married couple lived at Mrs. Čermáková's place. Annie was expecting a baby.

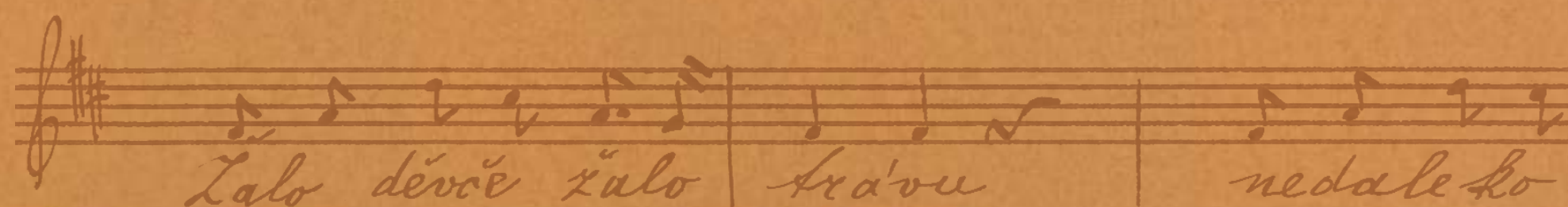


Tony, what is it going to be?

A new symphony.



8. Moravian Duets



The scholarship committee met in Vienna. Johannes Brahms, the famous composer, was one of its members and he immediately recognised how talented Antonín was.

We have to support that Dvorak.

I've been offered a scholarship of 400 florins. It's nearly three times as much as I earn at St. Adalbert's!

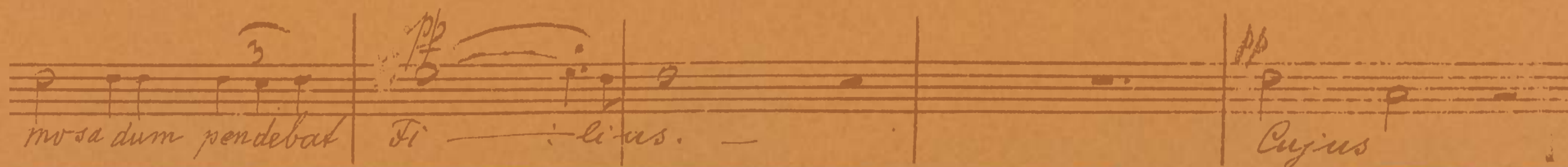
High quality music was performed at St. Adalbert's.

One of those who would listen to Antonín there was Leoš Janáček; a young organ playing school student and later a world famous composer.

...you have to tell me more about Moravian folk songs. Let's go for a beer.

With pleasure! I admire your work!

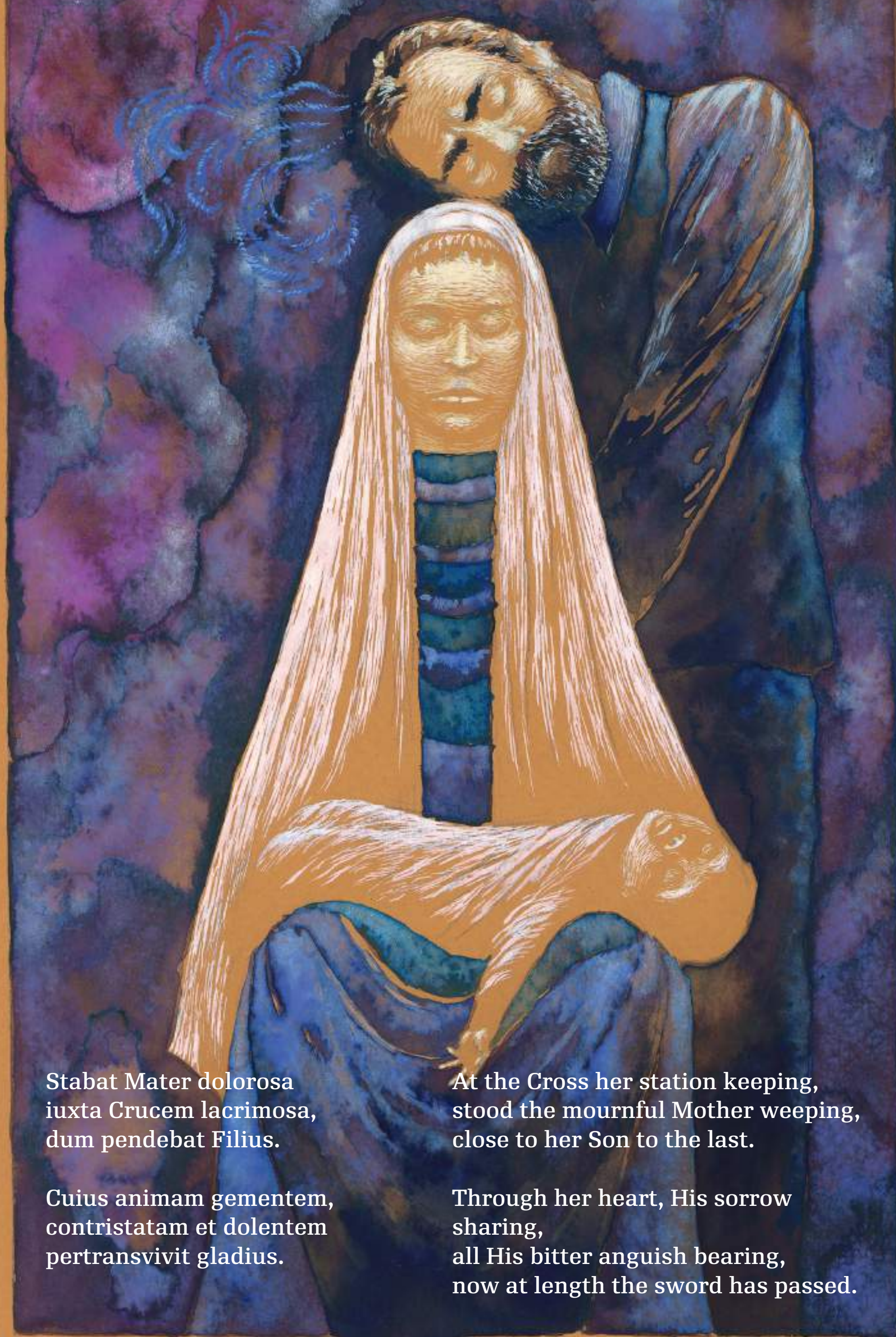
Antonín started teaching music in the family of Jan Neff, a wealthy entrepreneur. To give variety to their homemade concert, he composed a series of songs for two women's voices - Moravian Duets.



Early September dealt a tragic blow: the death of 3-year old Otakar.

Dvořák suddenly stood at the bottom of a gloomy abyss – the only thing that kept him alive was his wife and faith in God. He returned to a piece he had started composing earlier: Stabat Mater, a mournful choral composition about Mother of God, Mary, lamenting for her son, Jesus.

Antonín put all his grief into the music. The result of this was a composition that touches everybody's heart.



Stabat Mater dolorosa
iuxta Crucem lacrimosa,
dum pendebat Filius.

Cuius animam gementem,
contristatam et dolentem
pertransvivit gladius.

At the Cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful Mother weeping,
close to her Son to the last.

Through her heart, His sorrow
sharing,
all His bitter anguish bearing,
now at length the sword has passed.



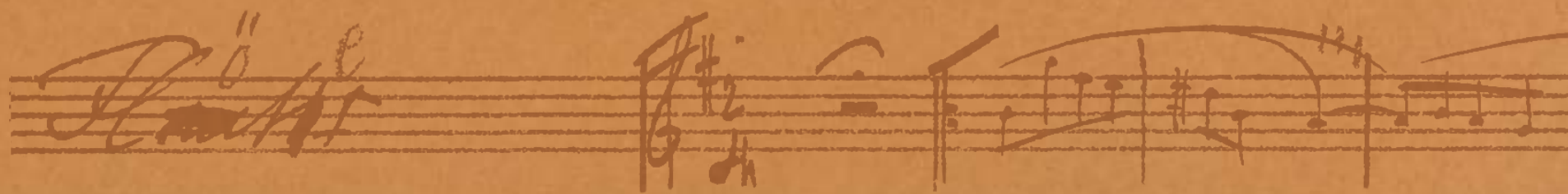
The Dvořáks left their old flat,
which was fraught with the
tragedy they'd experienced.



The end of the year was lit up
with good news: Annie
was pregnant.

and an important letter arrived
from Vienna...

12. Slavonic Dances



Antonín's music was popular all over Europe. It was played for the most demanding audiences of large cities: in Vienna, Hamburg, even in the capital of the then world's superpower – London. His music reached even the New World – the United States.

...we've heard Anton Dvorak's Slavonic Dances. Are there going to be more such brilliant pieces?

Who is that Dworzak? Is he Polish?

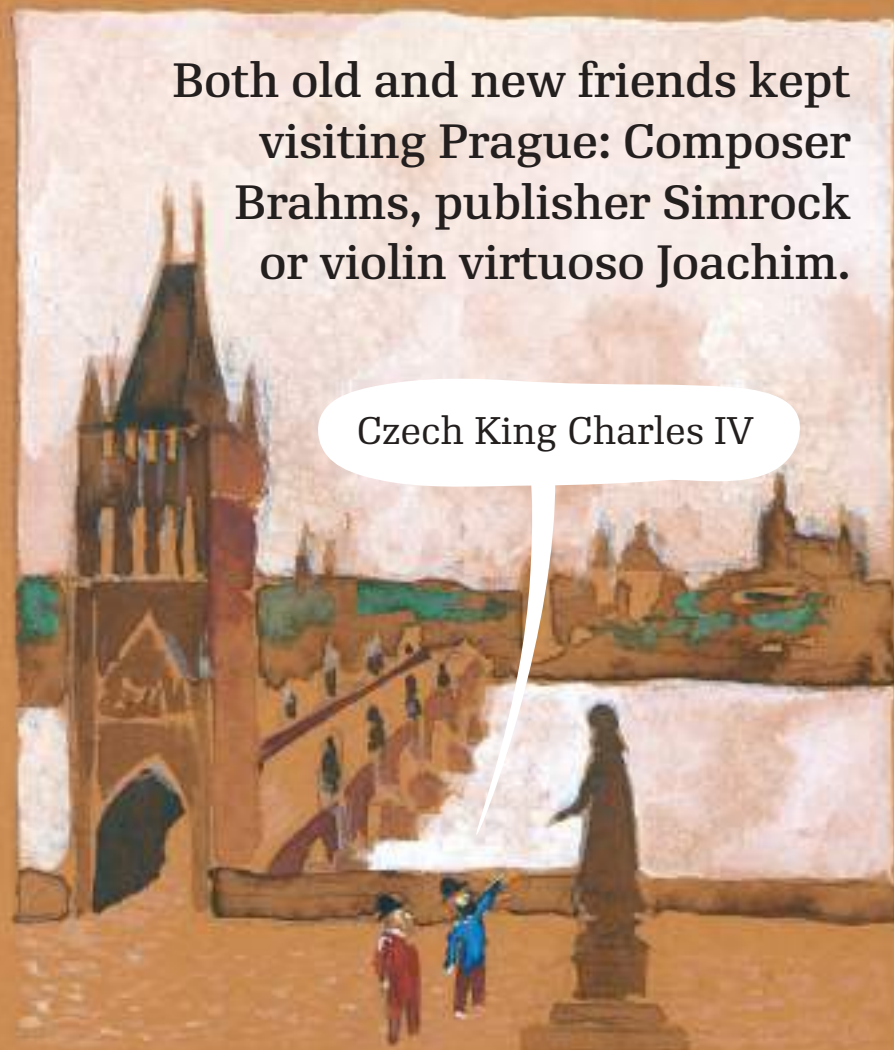
Austrian.

No, Czech. It was like fireworks of musical ideas.

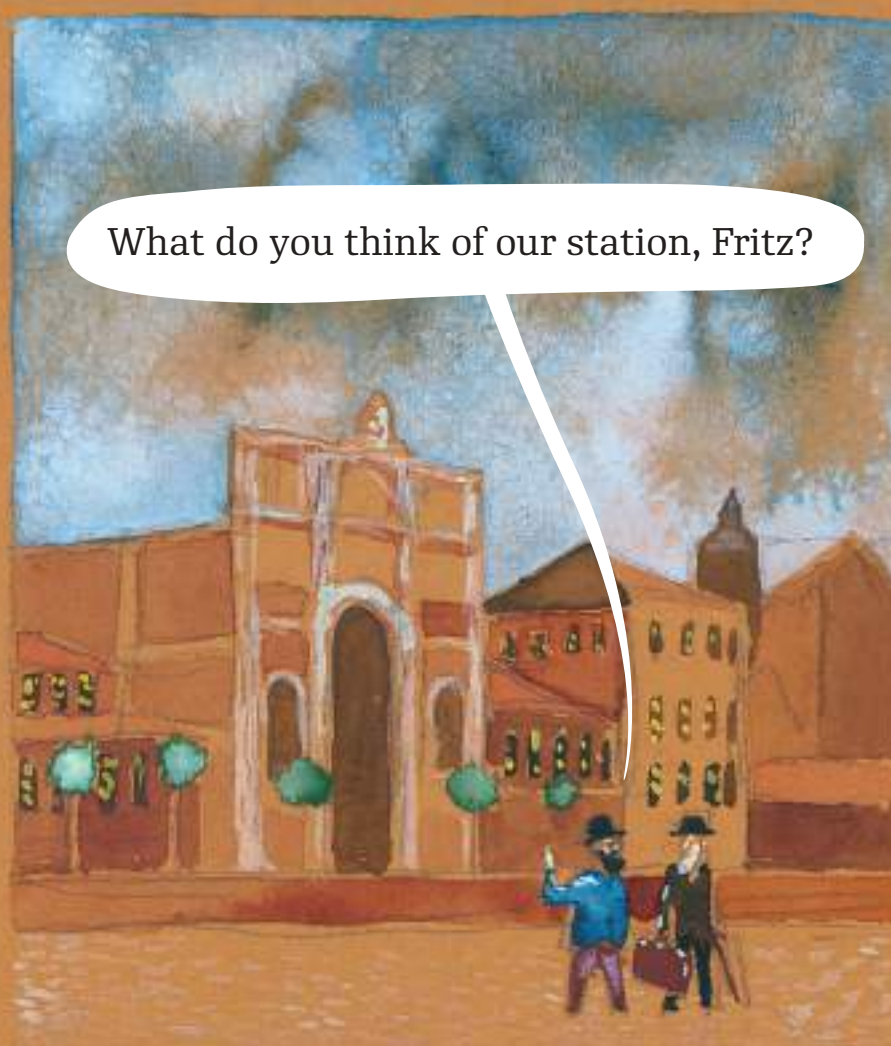


Both old and new friends kept visiting Prague: Composer Brahms, publisher Simrock or violin virtuoso Joachim.

Czech King Charles IV

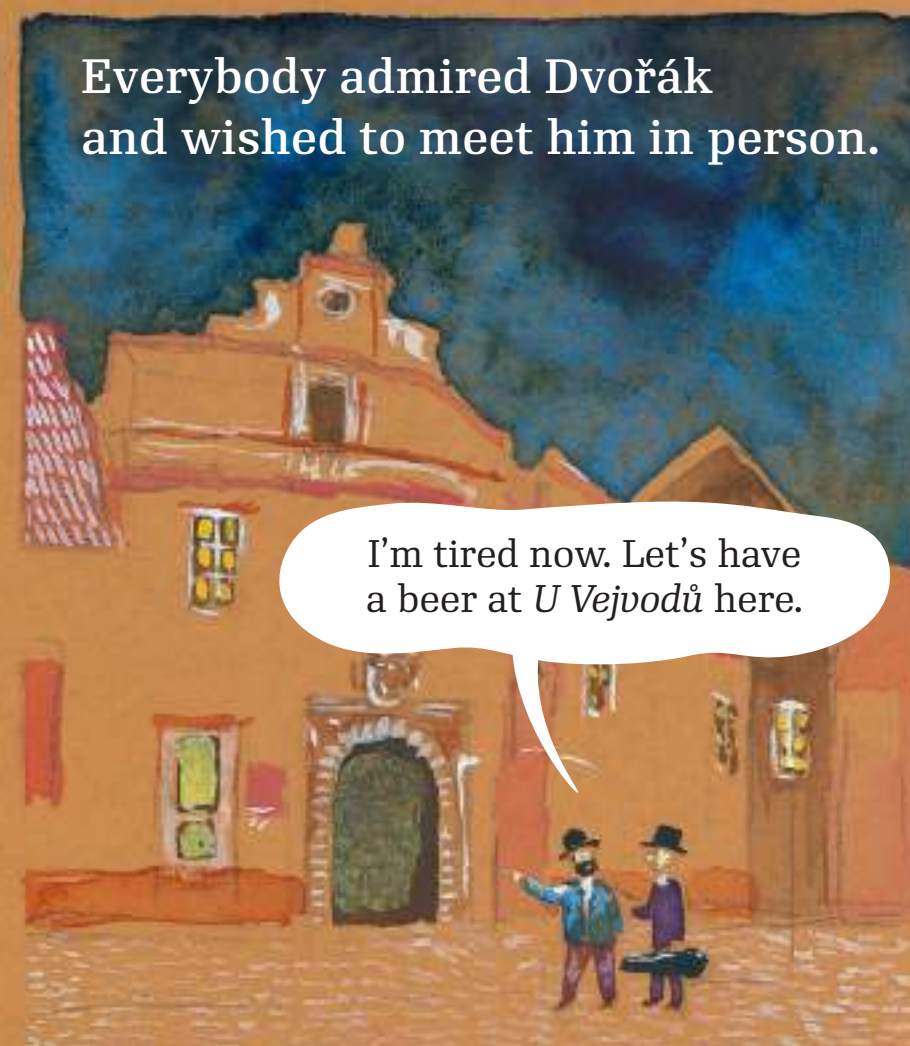


What do you think of our station, Fritz?



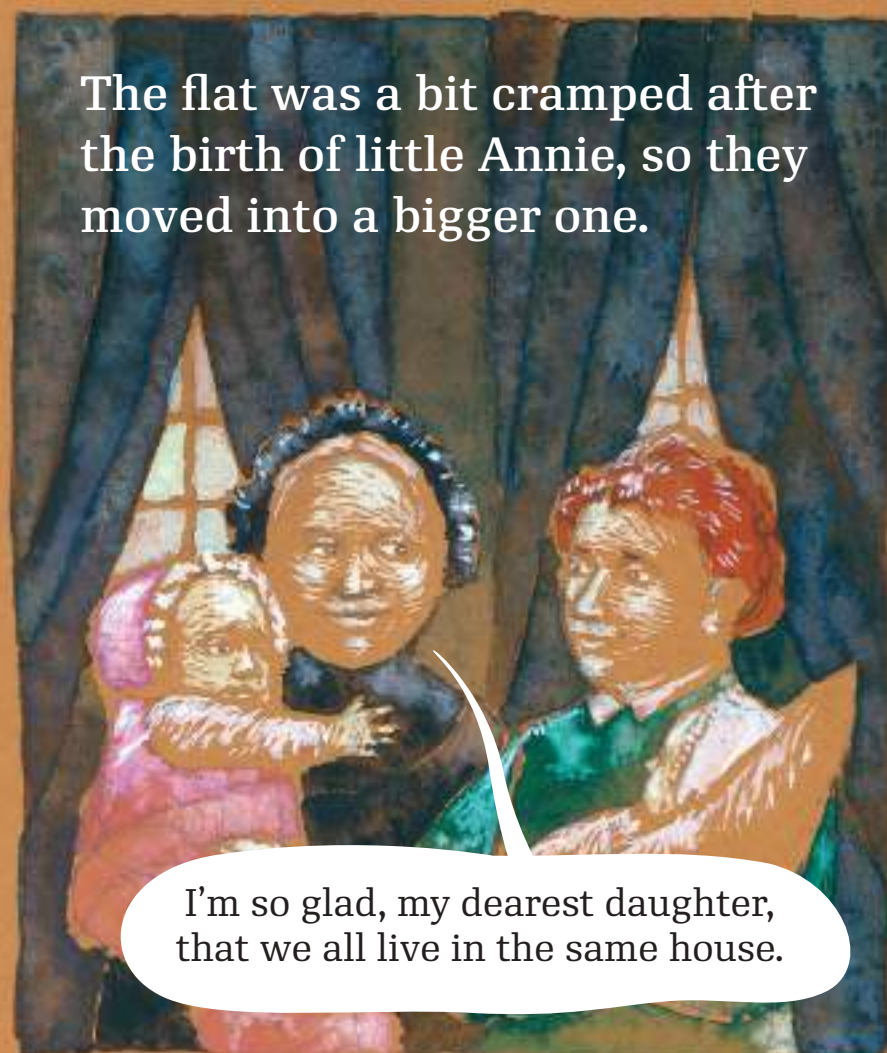
Everybody admired Dvořák and wished to meet him in person.

I'm tired now. Let's have a beer at U Vejvodů here.



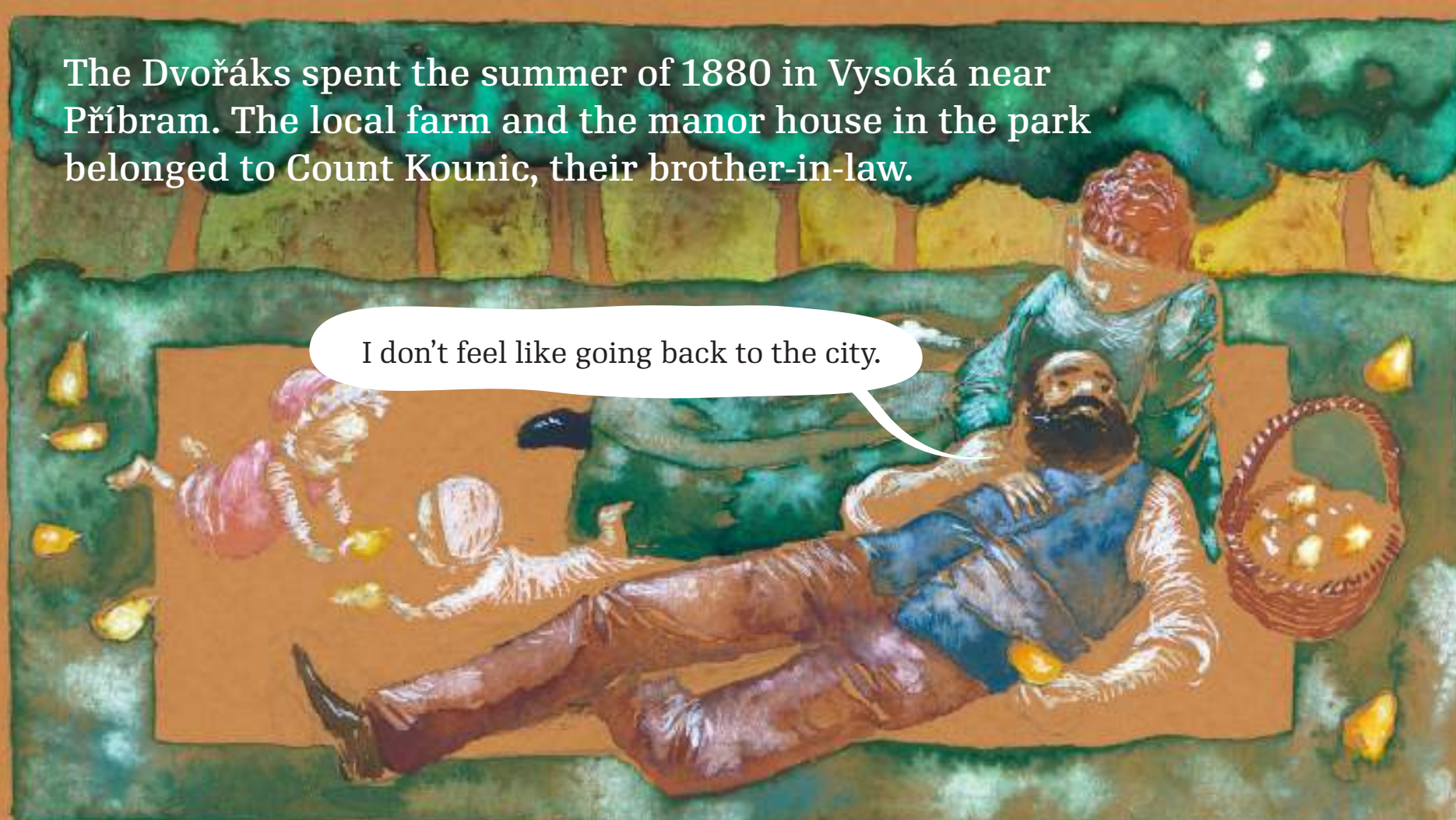
The flat was a bit cramped after the birth of little Annie, so they moved into a bigger one.

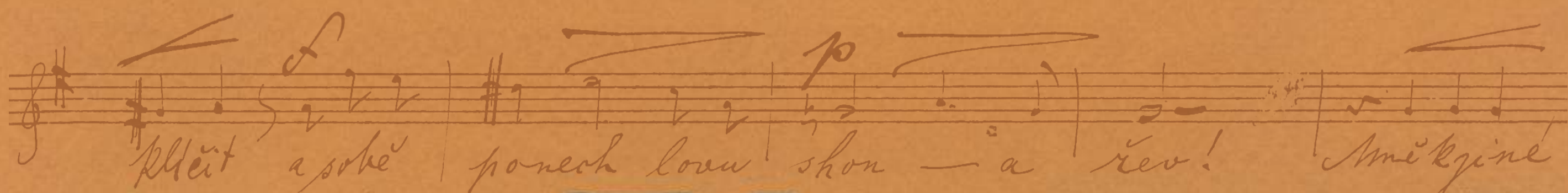
I'm so glad, my dearest daughter, that we all live in the same house.



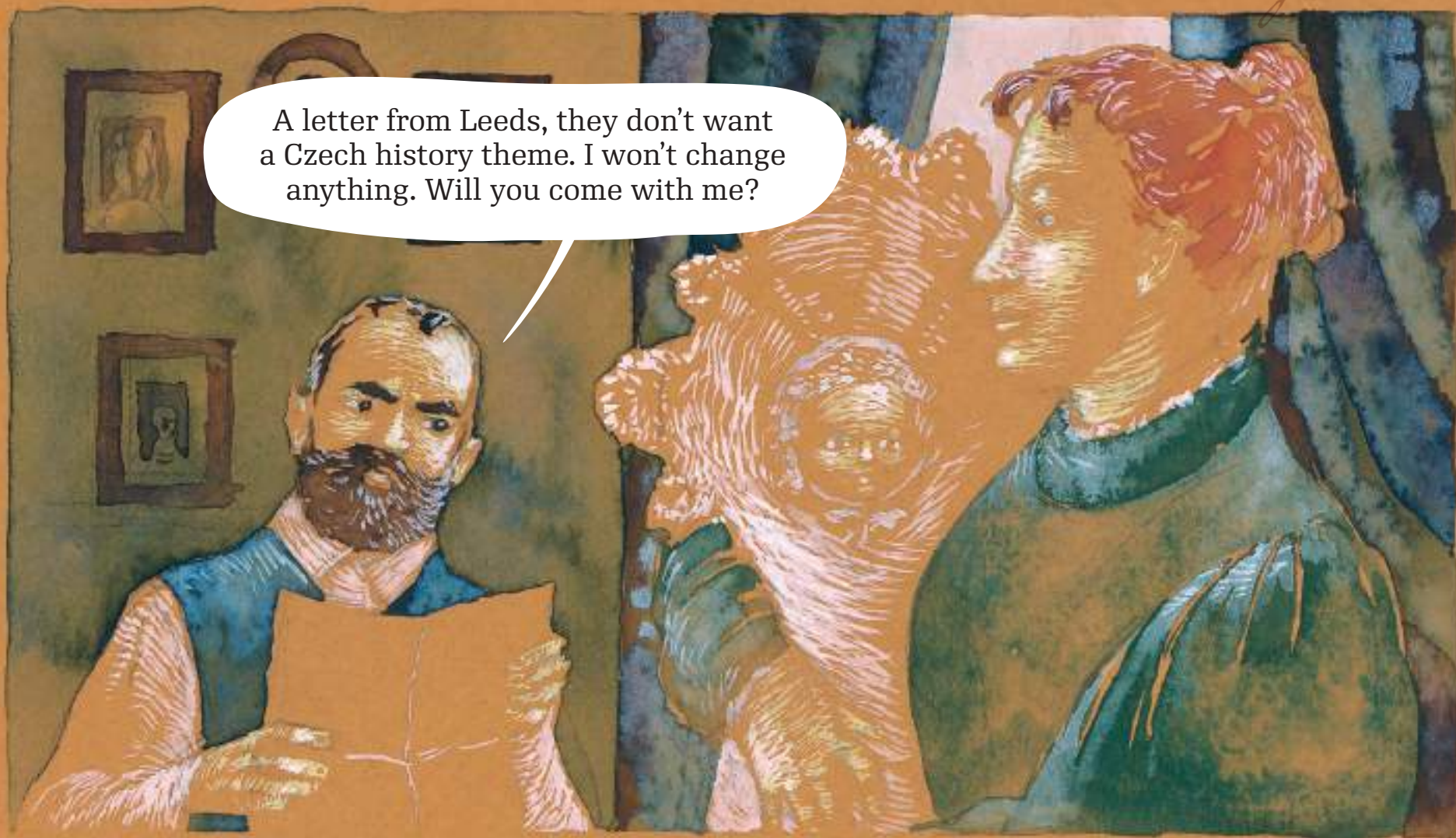
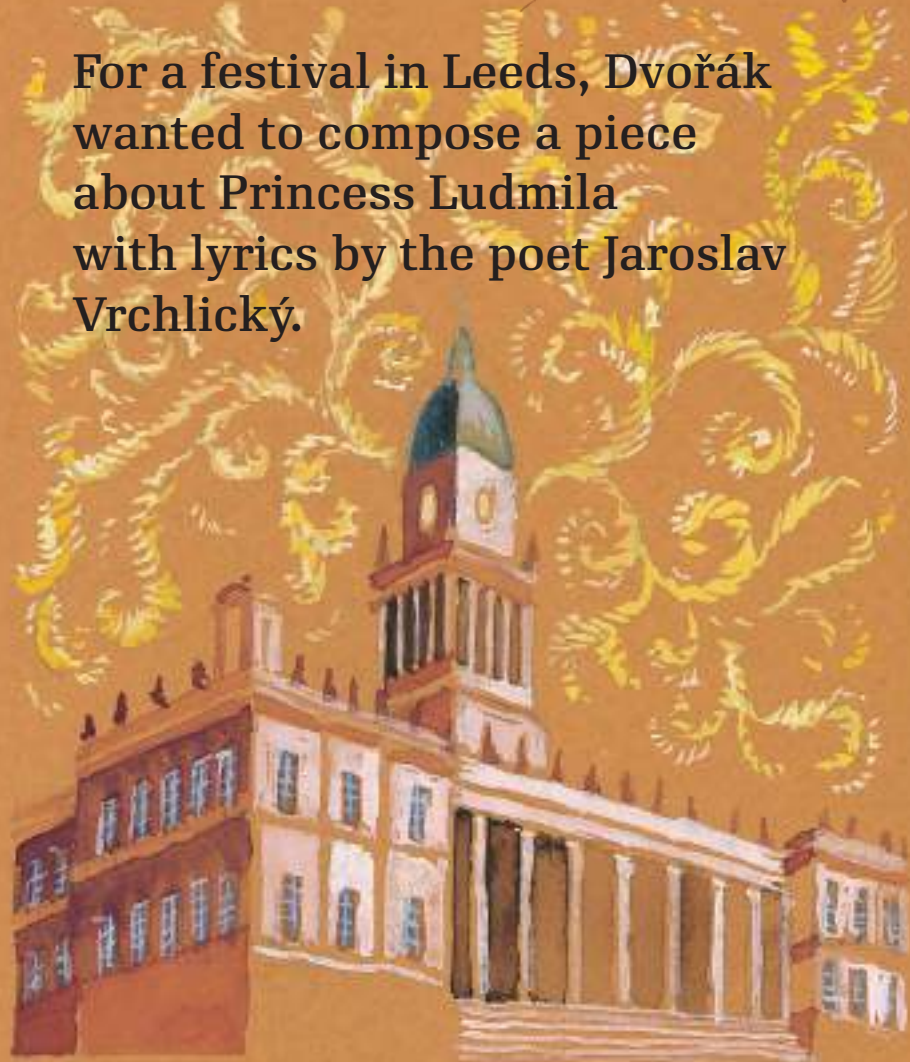
The Dvořáks spent the summer of 1880 in Vysoká near Příbram. The local farm and the manor house in the park belonged to Count Kounic, their brother-in-law.

I don't feel like going back to the city.

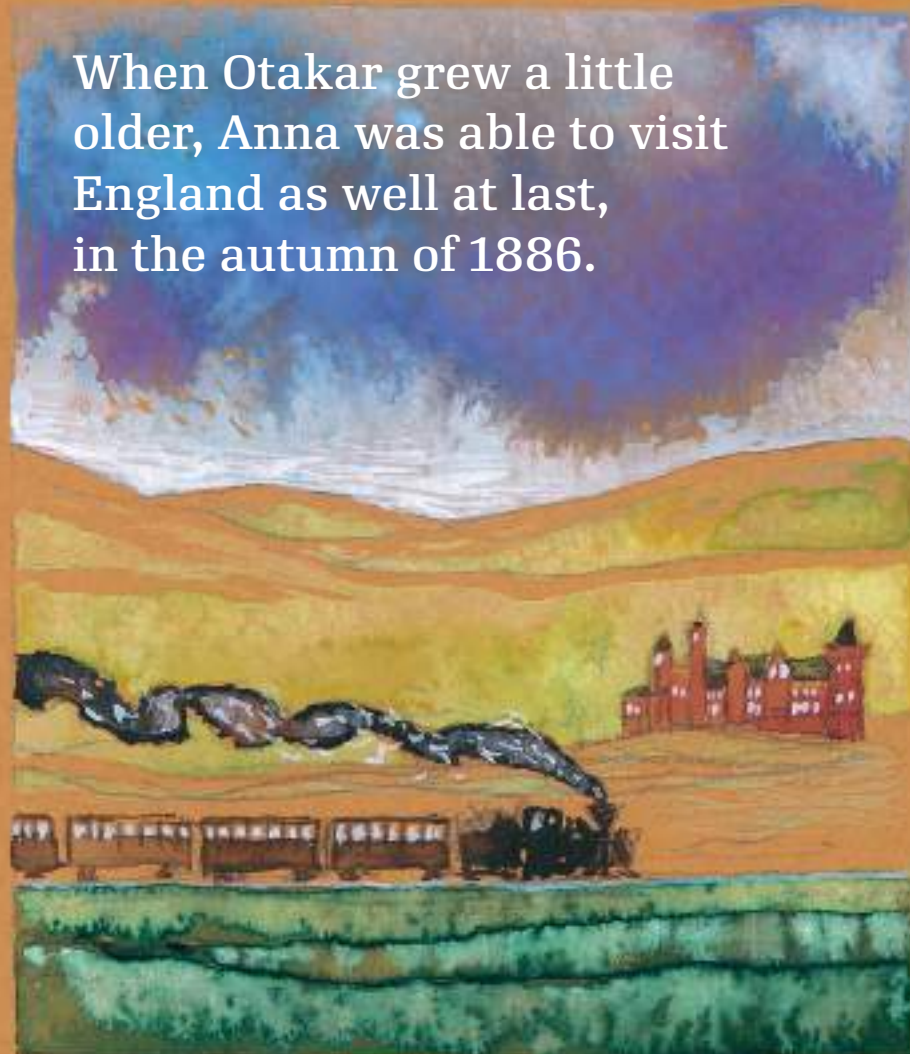




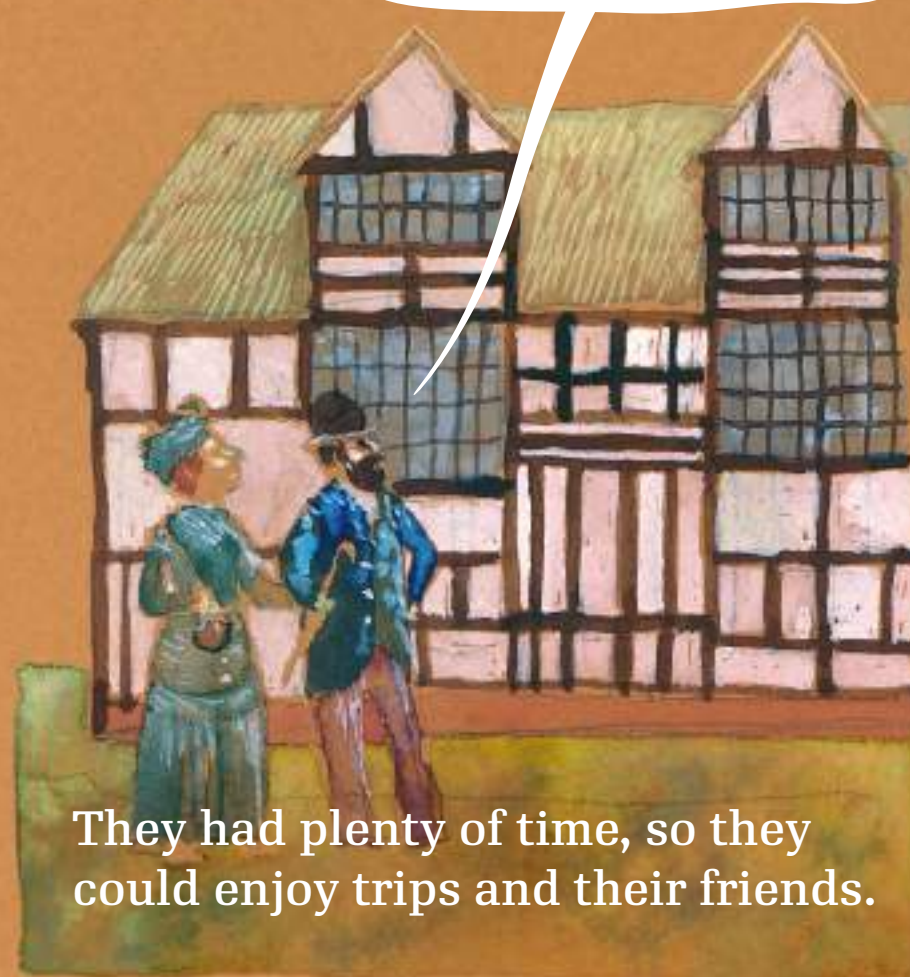
For a festival in Leeds, Dvořák wanted to compose a piece about Princess Ludmila with lyrics by the poet Jaroslav Vrchlický.



When Otakar grew a little older, Anna was able to visit England as well at last, in the autumn of 1886.



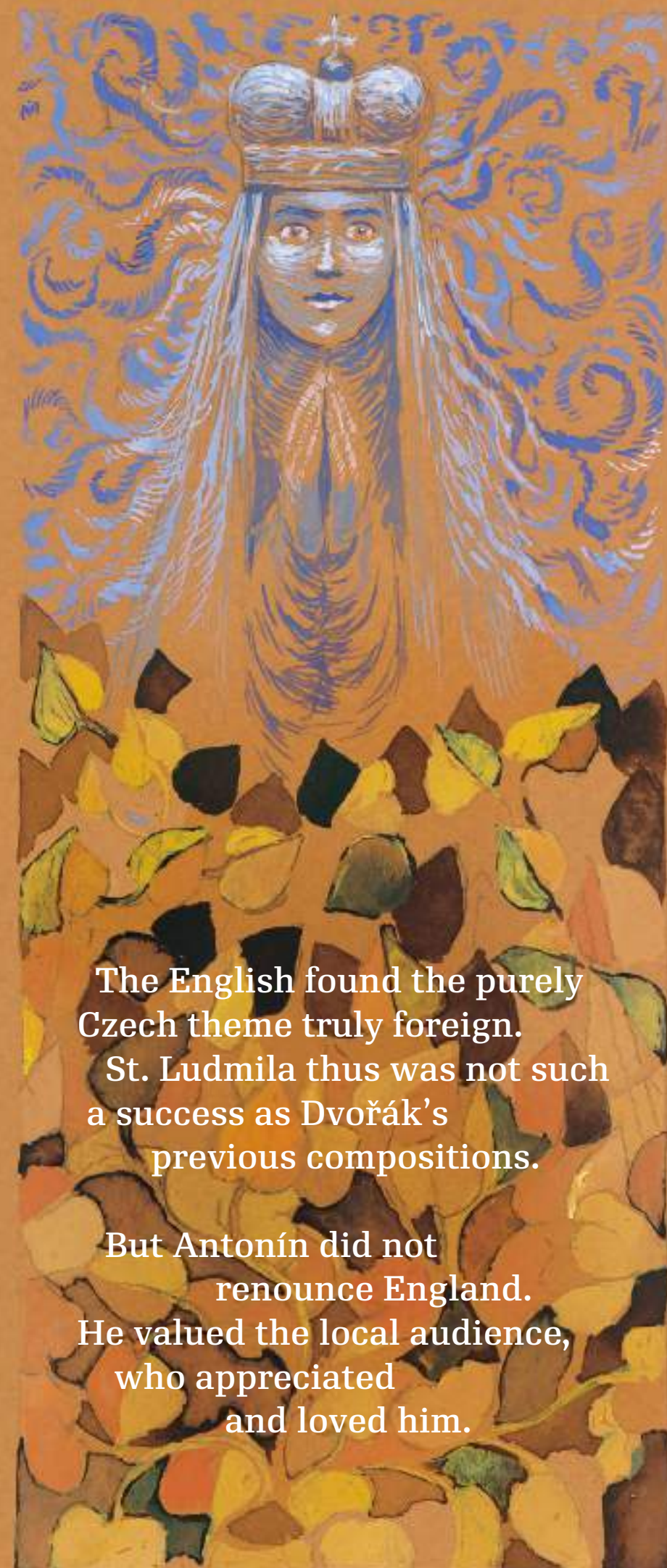
Shakespeare's Birthplace!



They had plenty of time, so they could enjoy trips and their friends.

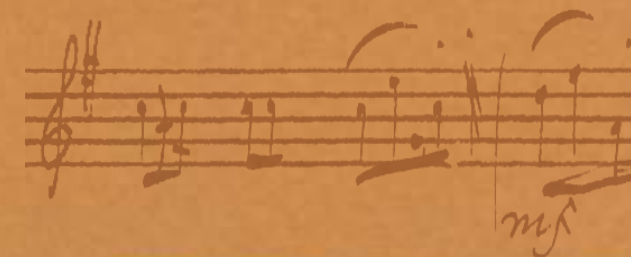


Famous Scottish composer Alexander Mackenzie enjoyed spending time with Antonín in silence.

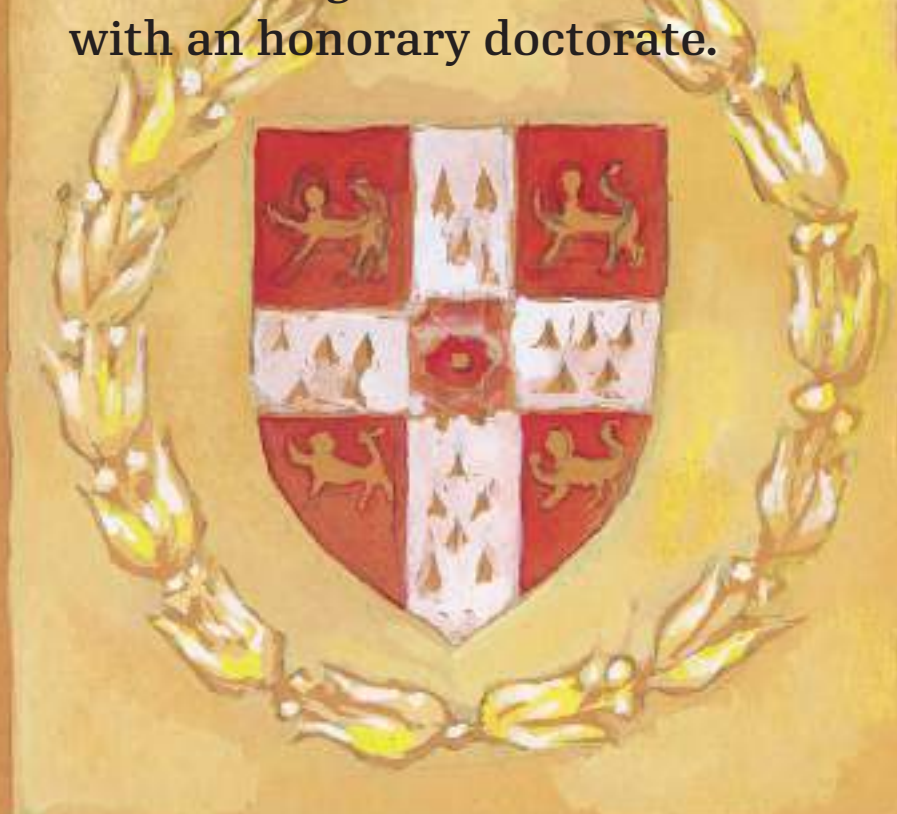


The English found the purely Czech theme truly foreign. St. Ludmila thus was not such a success as Dvořák's previous compositions. But Antonín did not renounce England. He valued the local audience, who appreciated and loved him.

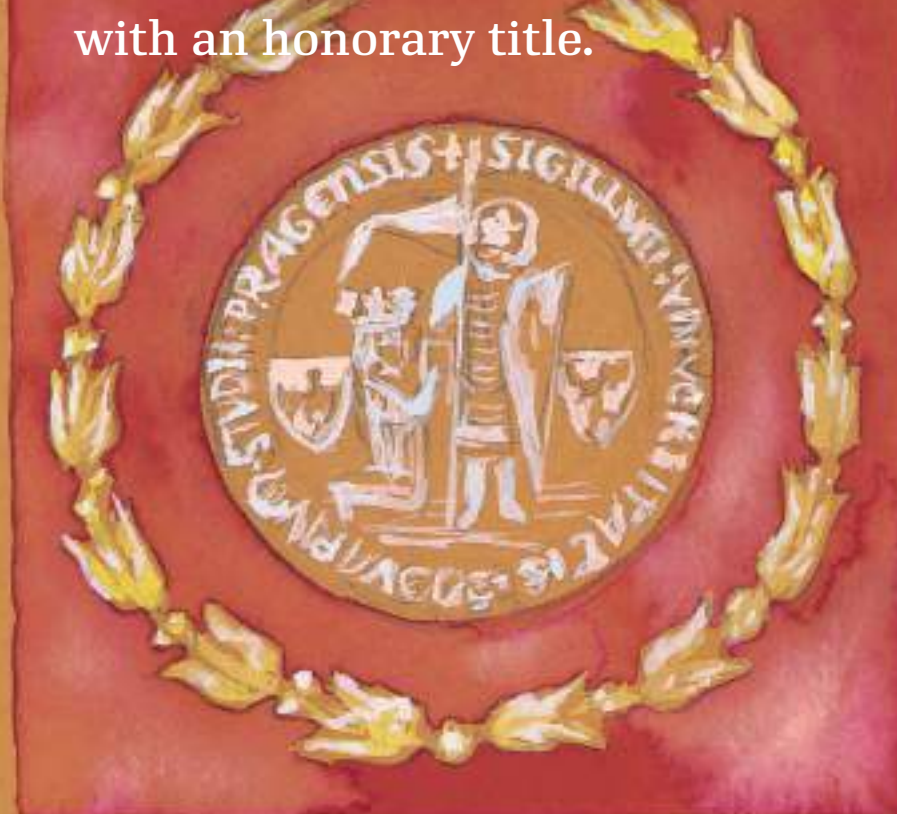
21. Symphony no. 8 in G major ('English Symphony')



In 1891, the academic senate of the famous University of Cambridge awarded Antonín with an honorary doctorate.

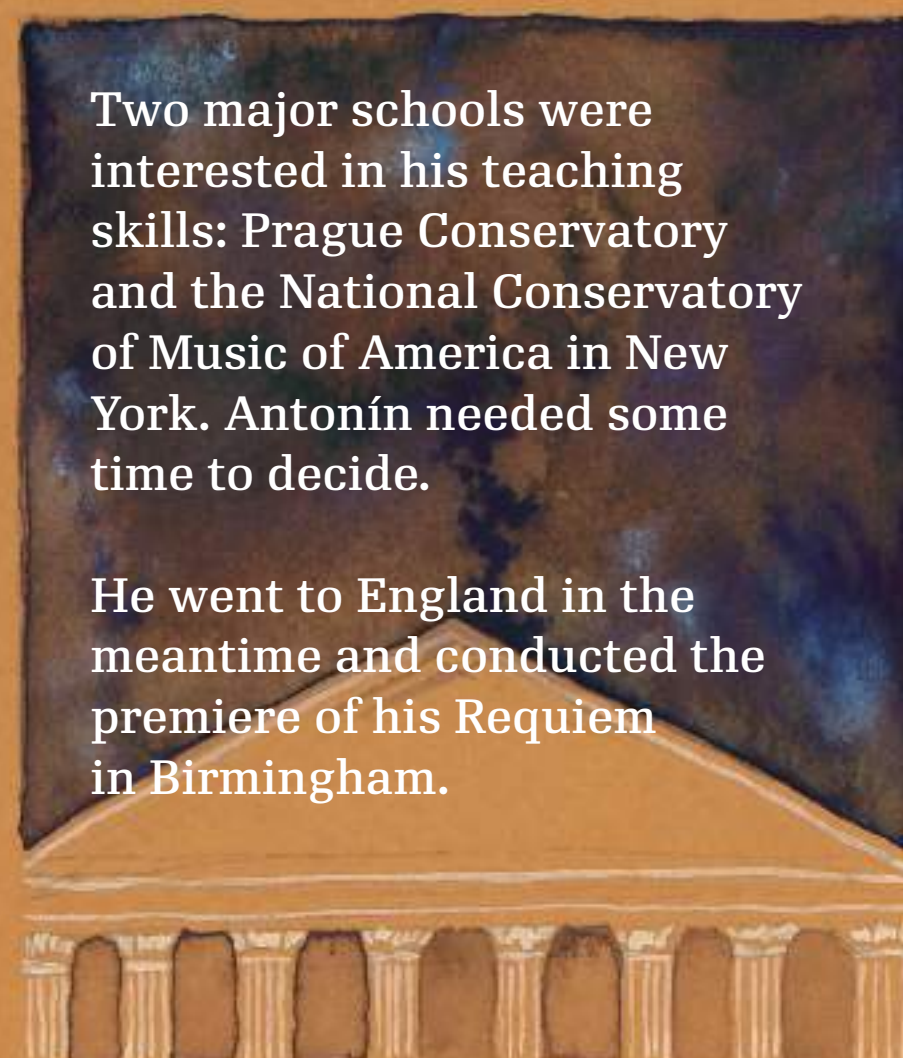


The Czechs were not behind for long and Charles University awarded Dvořák's contribution with an honorary title.



Two major schools were interested in his teaching skills: Prague Conservatory and the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York. Antonín needed some time to decide.

He went to England in the meantime and conducted the premiere of his Requiem in Birmingham.

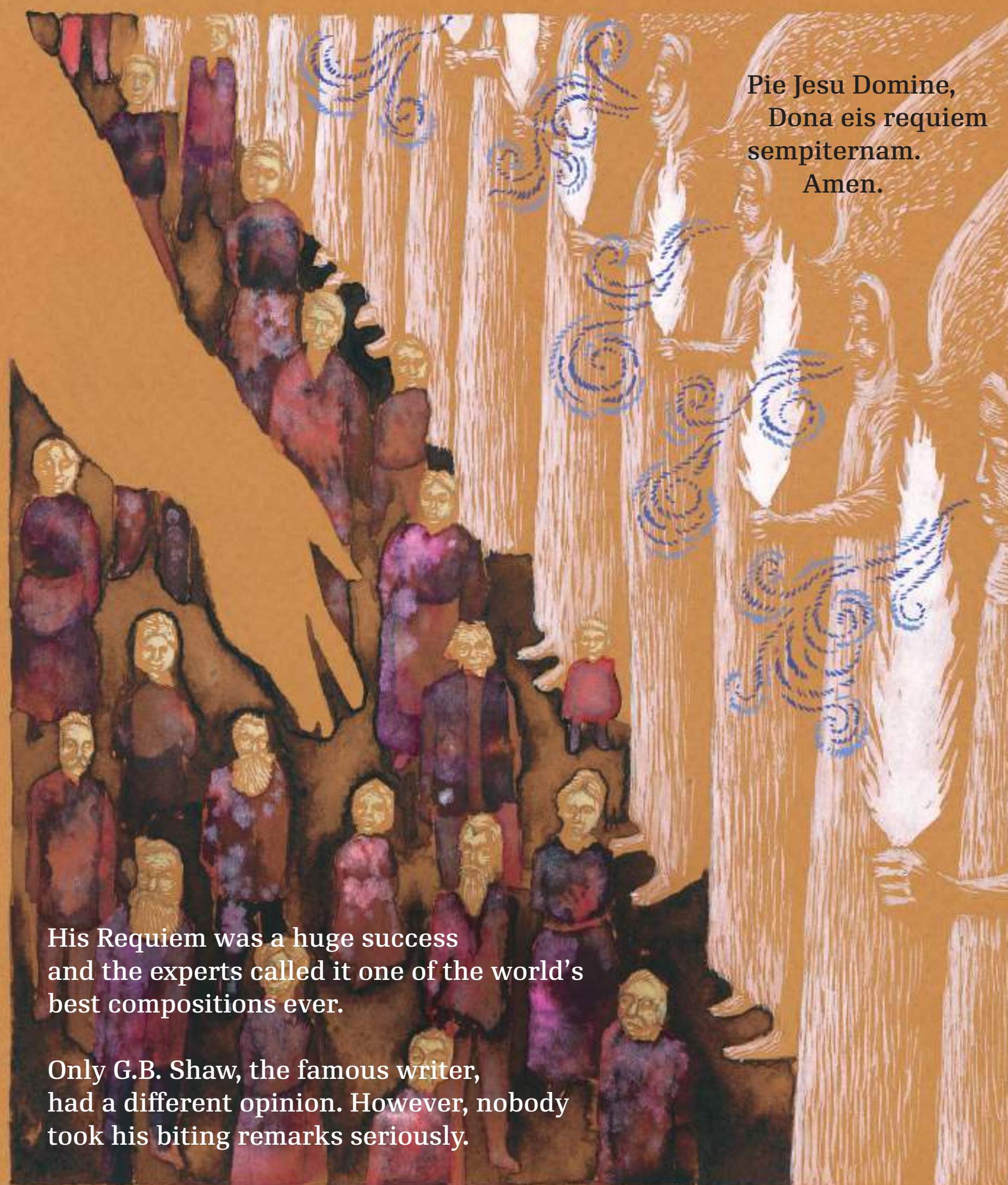
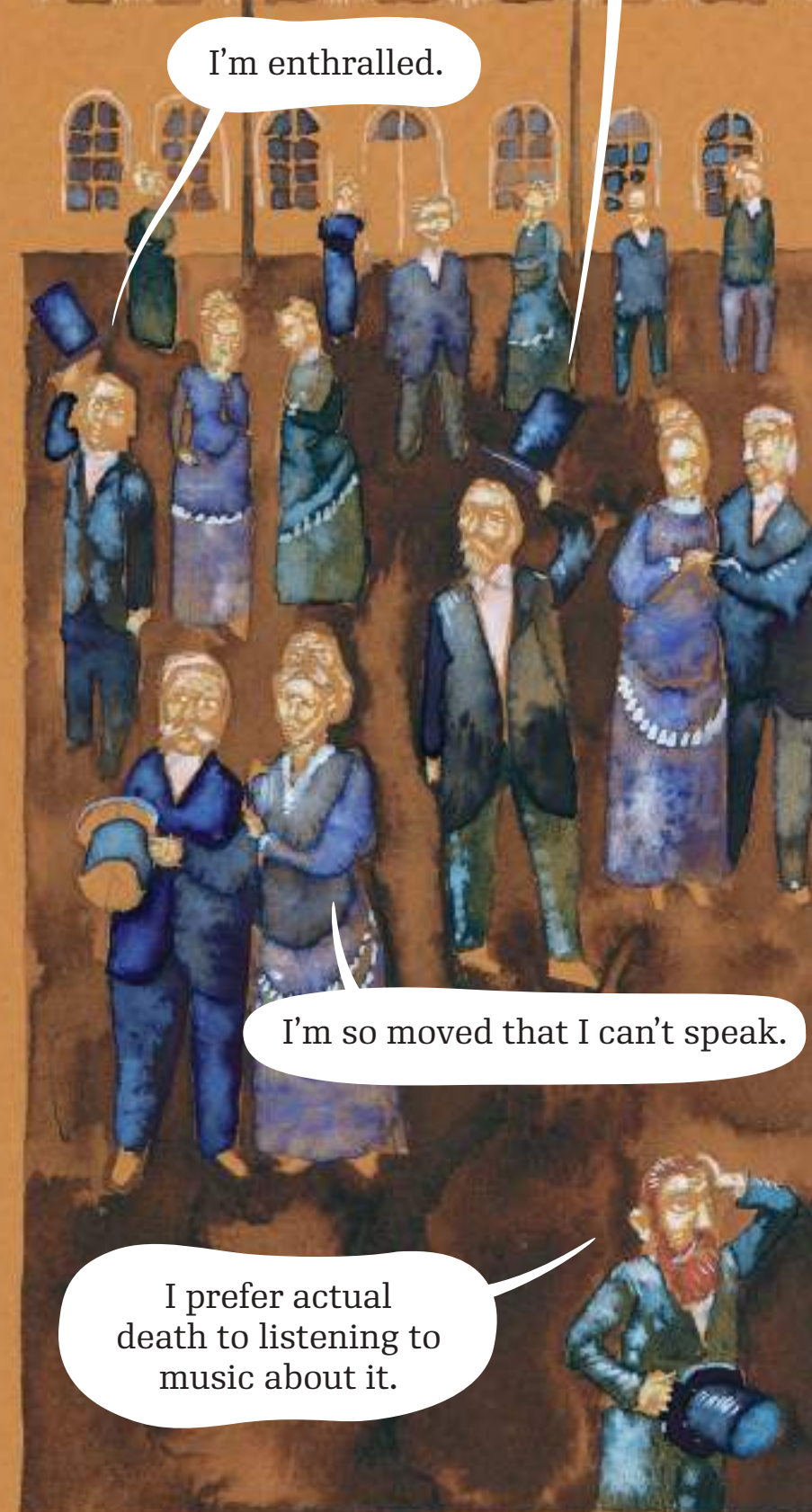


An amazing rendition of a religious text.

I'm enthralled.

I'm so moved that I can't speak.

I prefer actual death to listening to music about it.

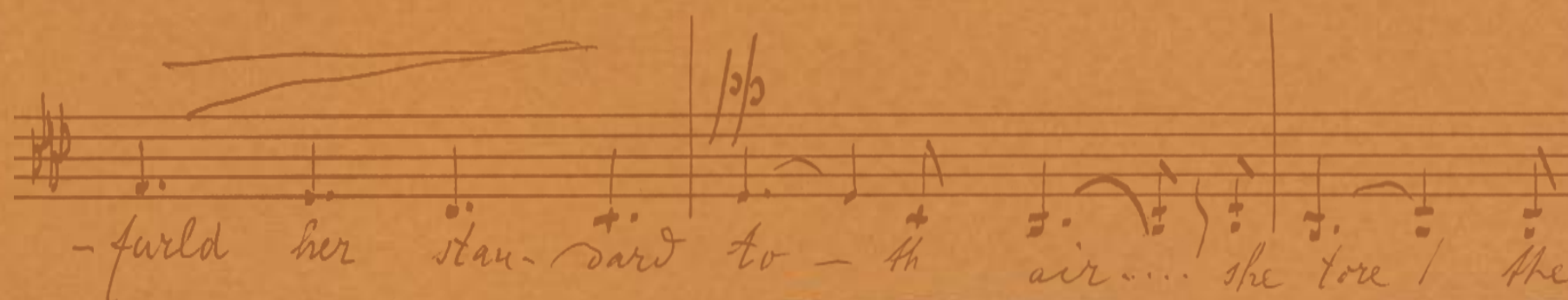


Pie Jesu Domine,
Dona eis requiem
sempiternam.
Amen.

His Requiem was a huge success and the experts called it one of the world's best compositions ever.

Only G.B. Shaw, the famous writer, had a different opinion. However, nobody took his biting remarks seriously.

23. The American Flag



The Dvořáks travelled over the ocean exactly 400 years after the voyage of Christopher Columbus. Antonín was the only family member who coped well with the rough sea. They reached America in ten days.



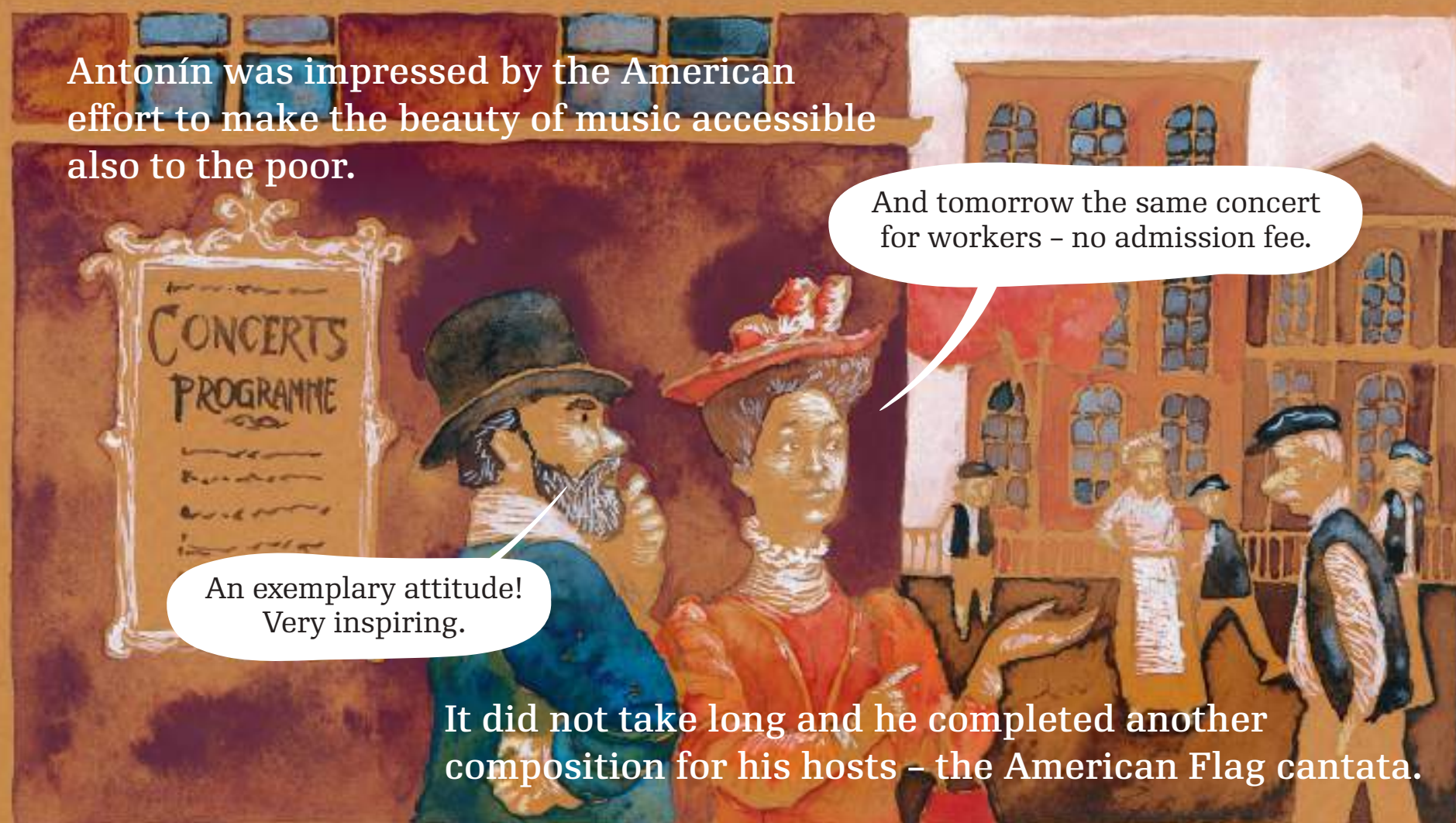
New York welcomed the Dvořáks in a magnificent manner: parades, banquets, concerts. It was Columbus, of course, who was being celebrated.



Dear Annie, Dad was in the newspapers...
...he starts teaching on Monday.
His students are talented,
but awfully unkempt...

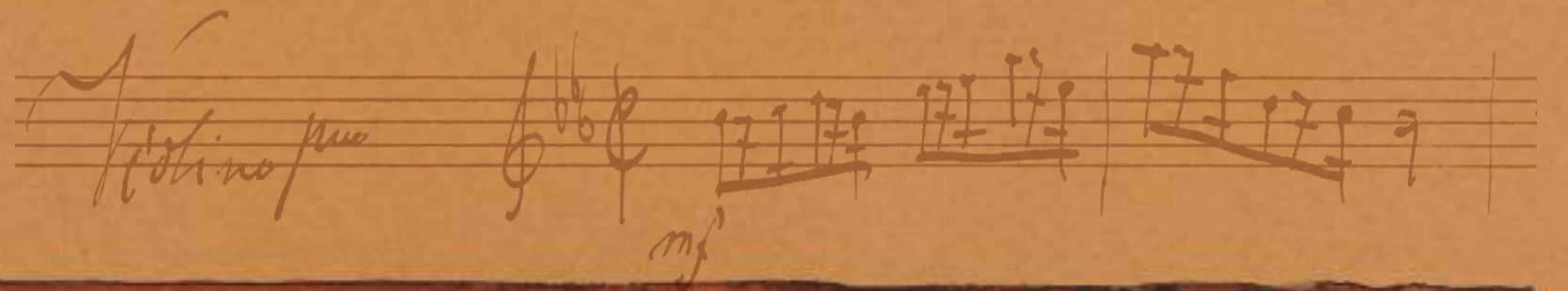


Antonín was impressed by the American effort to make the beauty of music accessible also to the poor.

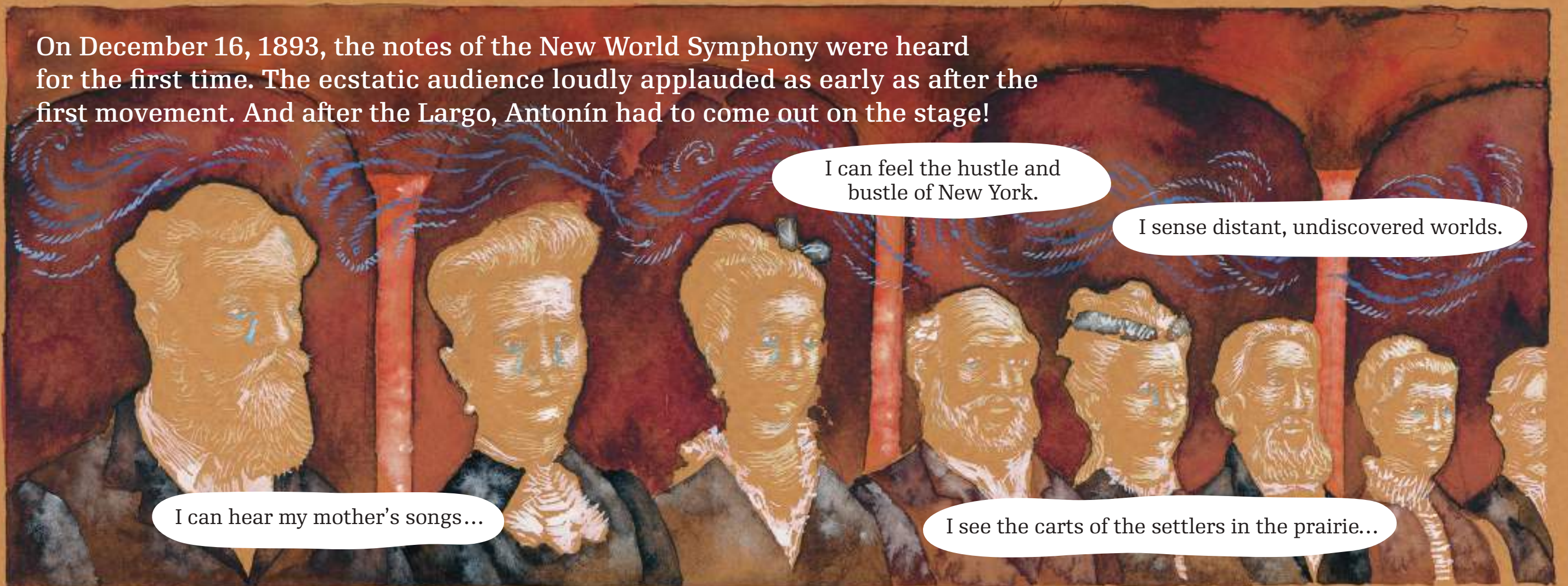


It did not take long and he completed another composition for his hosts - the American Flag cantata.

25. The 'American' Quartet



On December 16, 1893, the notes of the New World Symphony were heard for the first time. The ecstatic audience loudly applauded as early as after the first movement. And after the Largo, Antonín had to come out on the stage!



I can feel the hustle and bustle of New York.

I sense distant, undiscovered worlds.

I can hear my mother's songs...

I see the carts of the settlers in the prairie...

Dvořák was celebrated in America and his admirers would have loved to carry him on their shoulders. And some of them expressed their enthusiasm in an unusual manner.



Daddy, look.
A DVORAK watch!

Yes, Dad knows about
that, he gave them his
permission.

Another DVORAK bowtie!

Dvořák launches a new era of music!

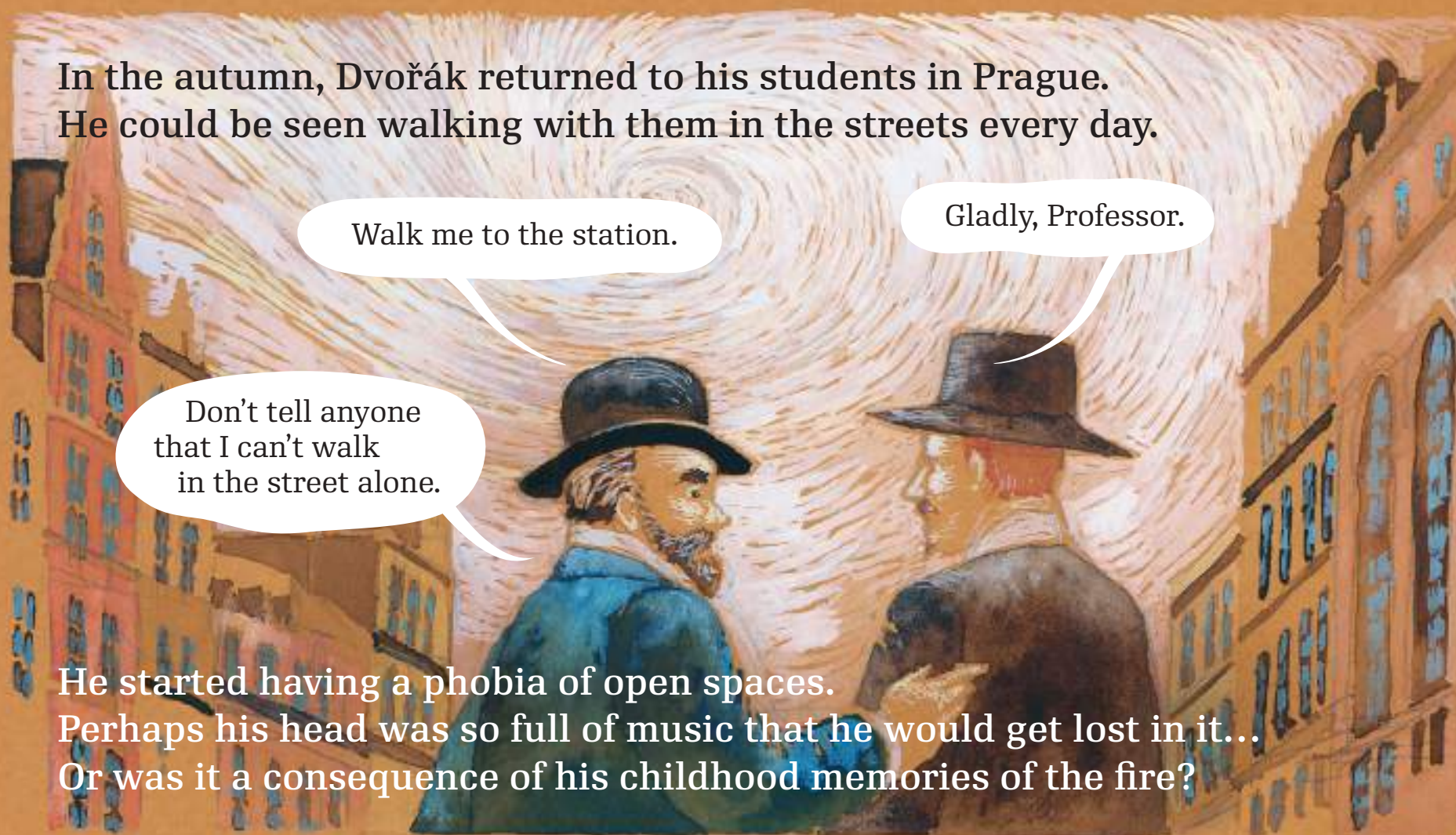
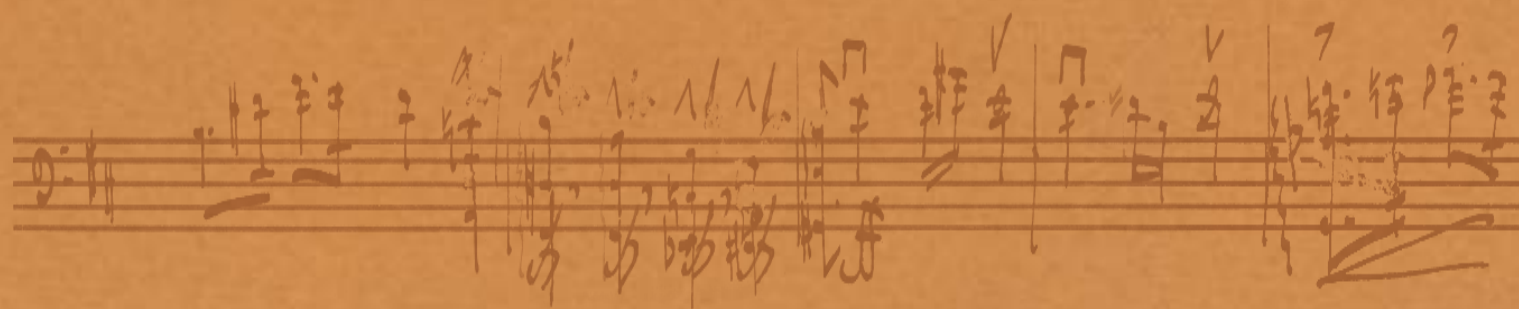
The unique success of the New World Symphony brought money to a lot of people. Antonín himself, however, was deeply worried about the future of his family.



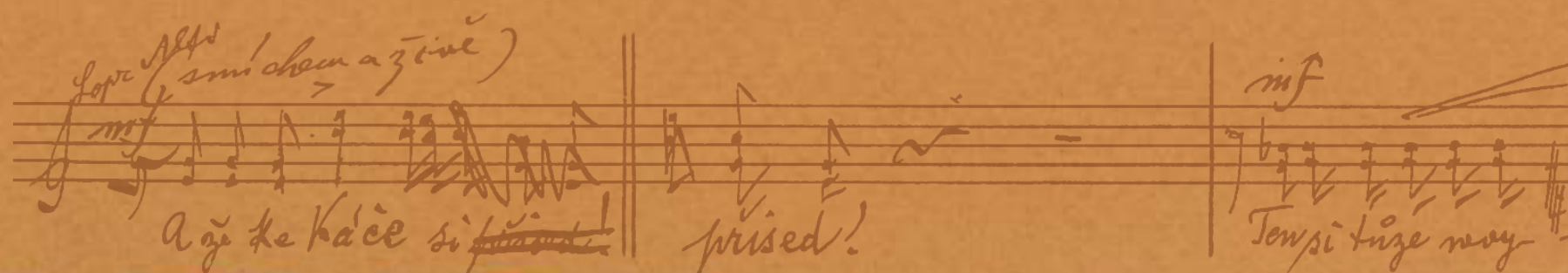
I don't want to worry
you, but the school hasn't
paid me for two months.

Don't trouble yourself.
We'll go to Bohemia
in the summer
and time will tell.

28. Cello Concerto in B minor



30. The Devil and Kate



The 19th century was coming to an end. Europe kept discovering new personalities in science and culture, new artistic trends, technologies and even sport. Dvořák was interested in all of that.

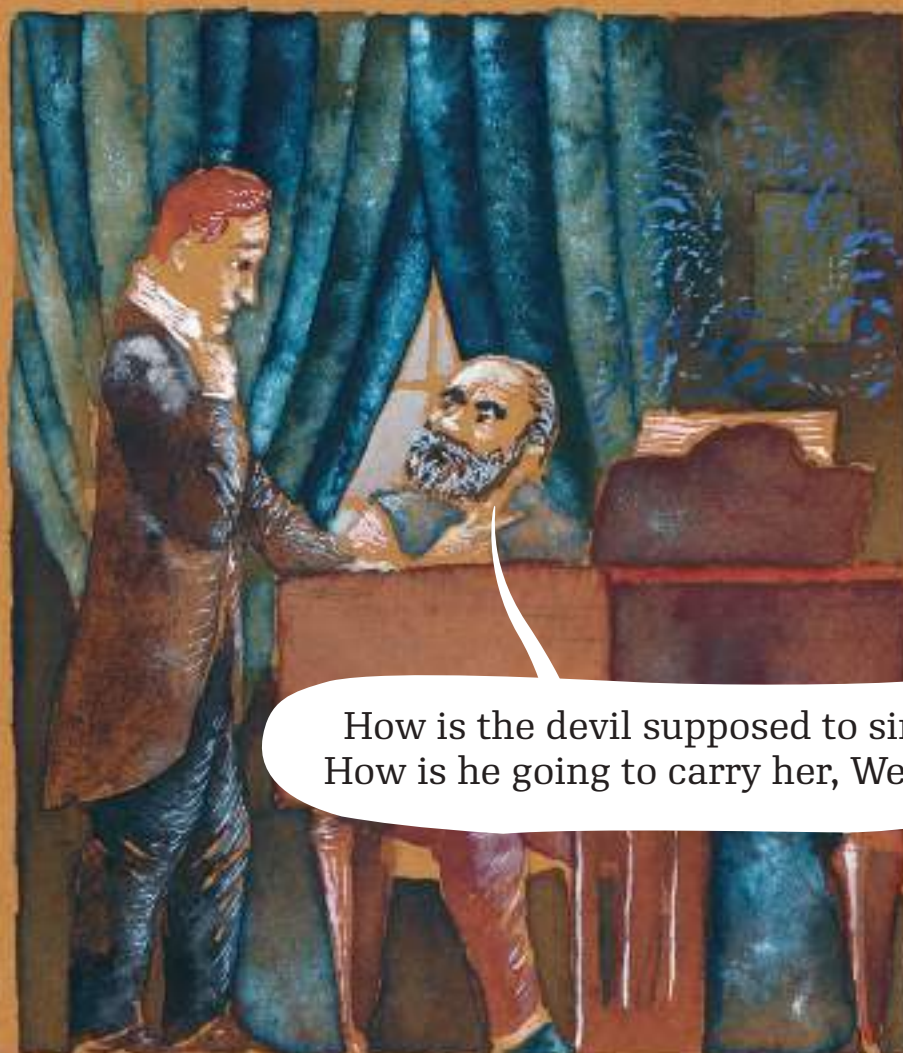
...talented conductor Gustav Mahler performs Hero's Songs by the renowned and world famous Antonín Dvořák.

...Marie Curie discovers a new chemical element with mysterious properties in Paris. She calls it...

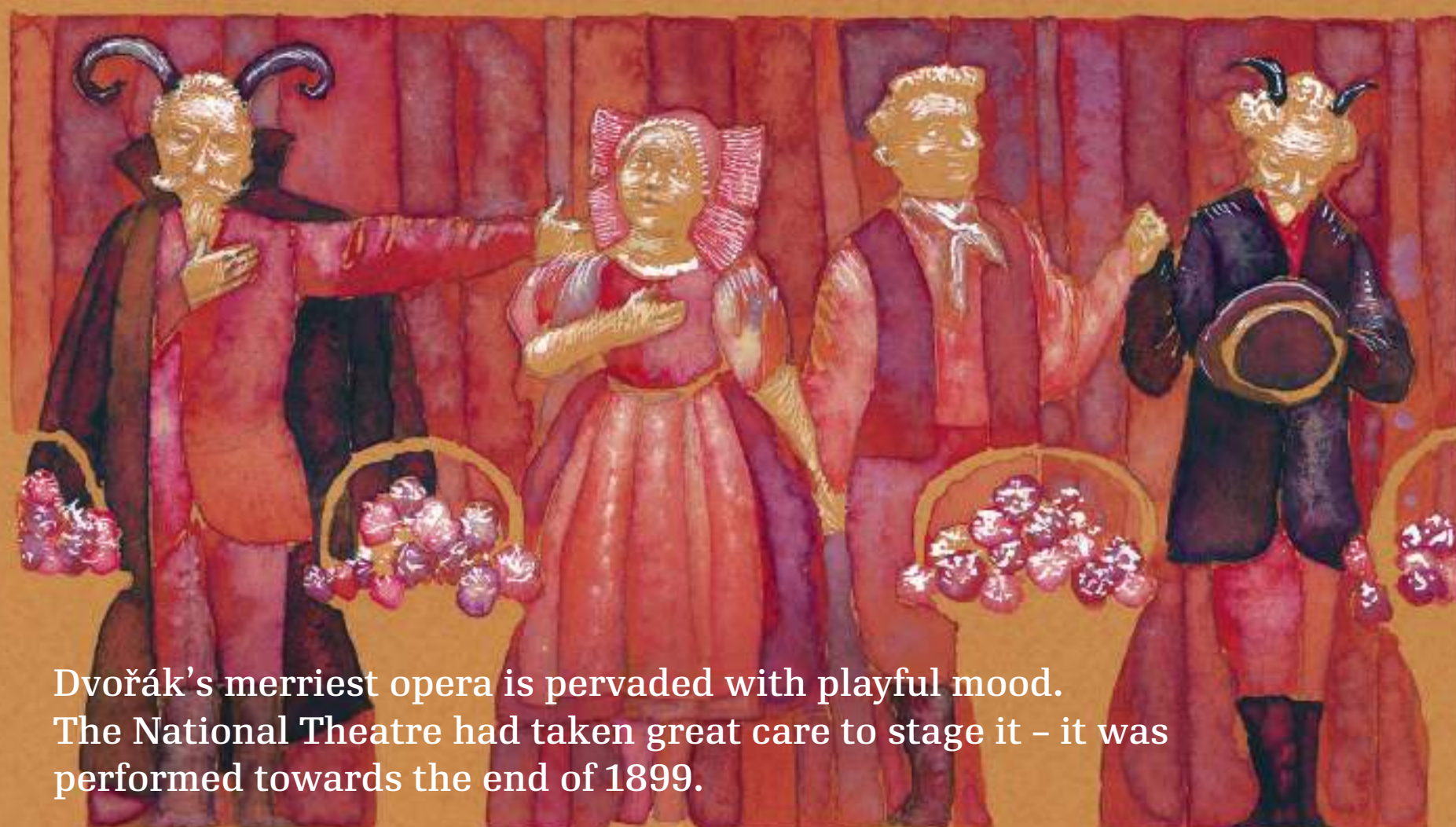
Come on, lads!



Dvořák intended to set to music the story of Hiawatha in New York. At home, however, he chose a libretto by Adolf Wenig based on a fairy tale about sharp-tongued Kate and a stupid devil.

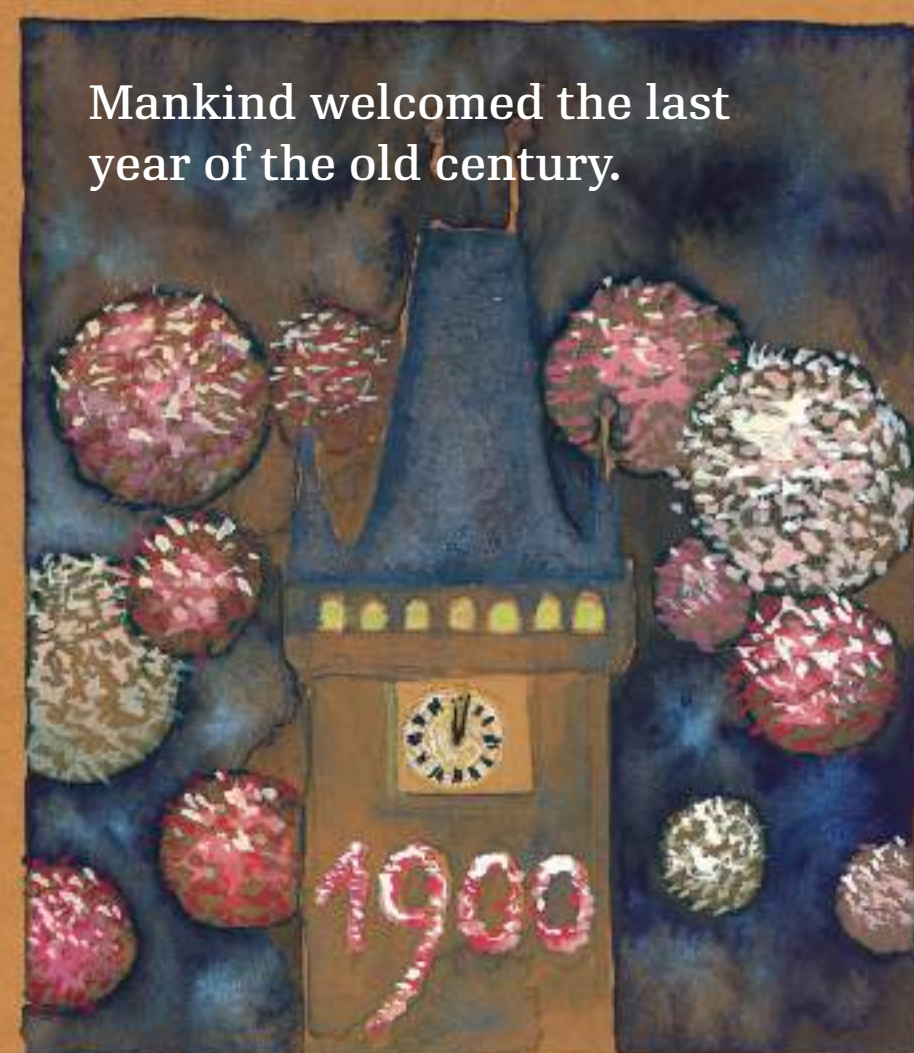


How is the devil supposed to sing?!
How is he going to carry her, Wenig?!

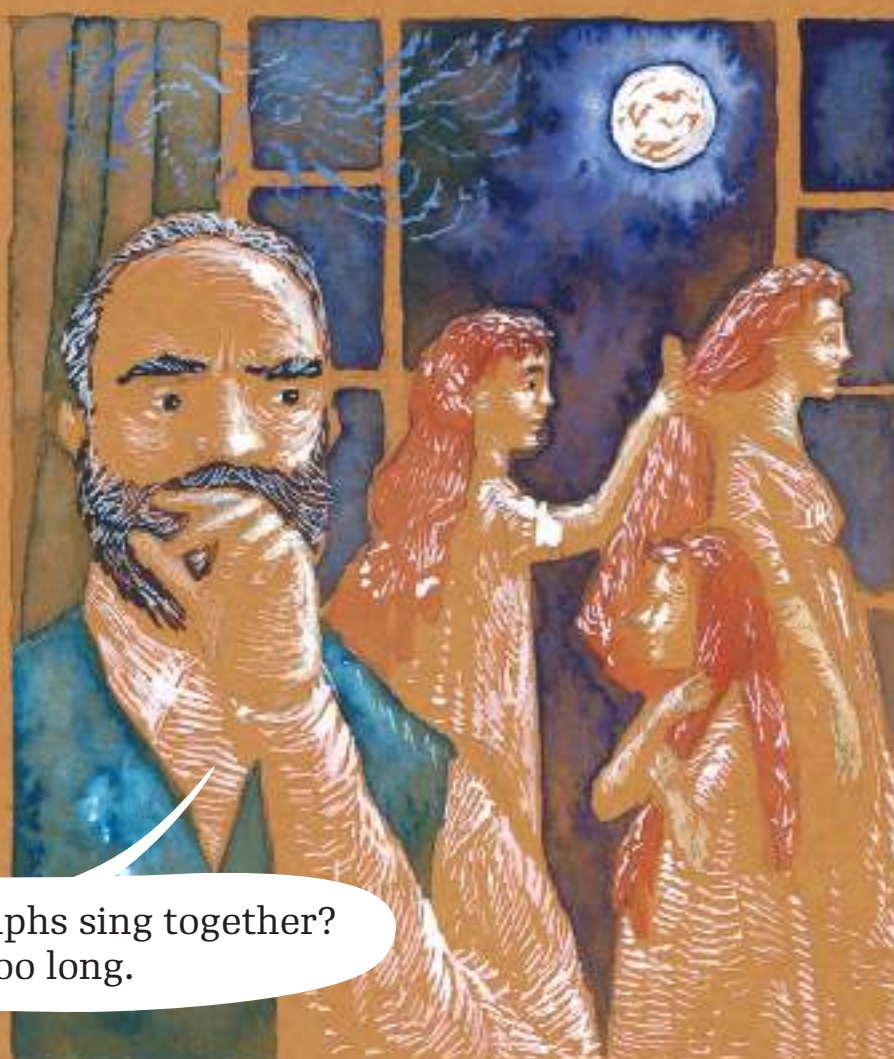
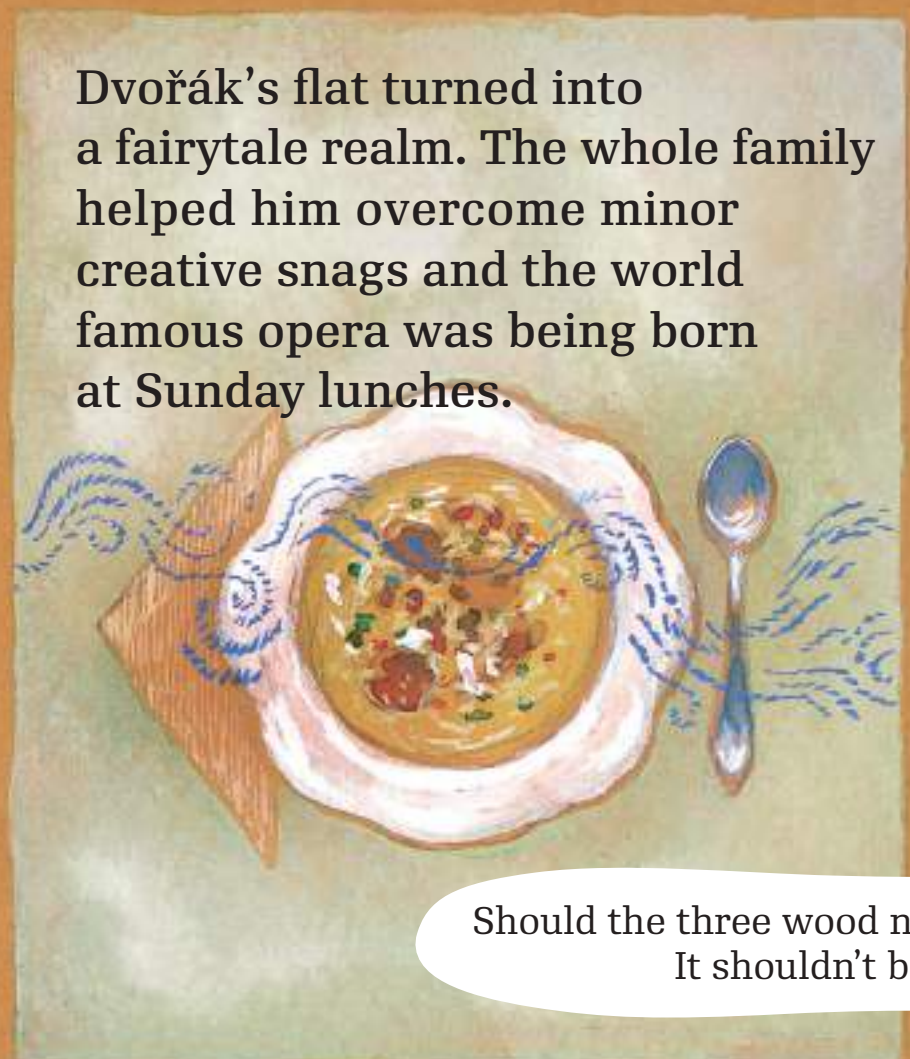
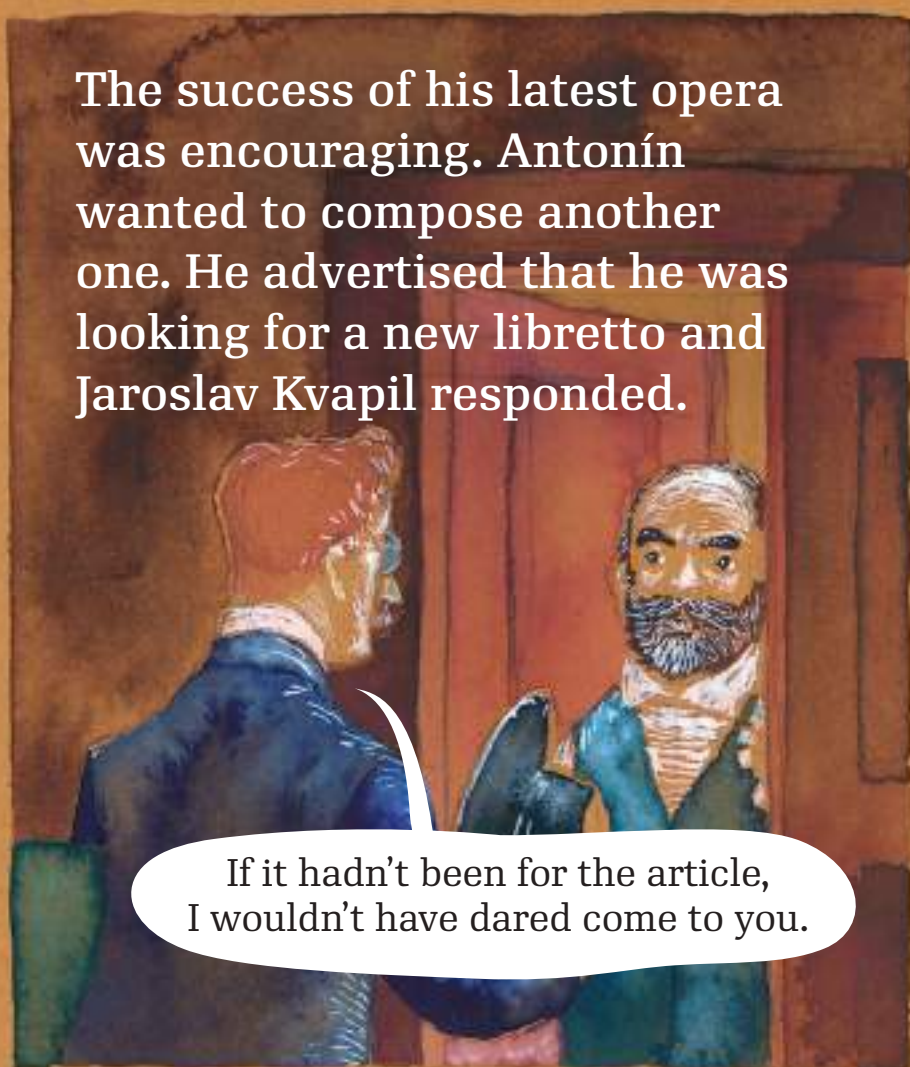
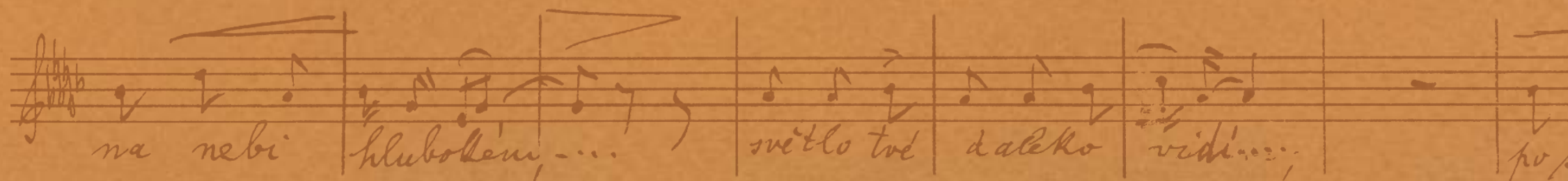


Dvořák's merriest opera is pervaded with playful mood. The National Theatre had taken great care to stage it - it was performed towards the end of 1899.

Mankind welcomed the last year of the old century.



31. Rusalka



The timeless story of love and self-sacrifice was hugely successful both in Bohemia and abroad. The lovely aria about the Moon is on the concert repertoires of many a world famous soprano.



