

# SYNOPSIS

## THE KINGDOM OF THE SWANS

### Prologue – The King’s Death

In a distant kingdom, a king loved by his people dies, leaving behind a grieving queen and a young prince in despair. Unable to face his pain, the prince refuses to attend the funeral. A grand funeral march accompanies the king’s coffin to the cemetery: the people, the court, and the loyal minister Rothbart proceed in mourning.

### Act I – The Prime Minister’s Ball

#### *Scene I. The weight of power*

A month has passed. Prince Siegfried, melancholy, spends his days at the piano. The queen joins him: he is now the ruler and, to preserve the unity of the kingdom, he must take a wife. The young king, overwhelmed, finds no comfort.

#### *Scene II. The grand ball*

For the prince’s birthday, a sumptuous ball is held in the aristocratic splendor of the nineteenth century: crinolines, waltzes, luxury. The prince has beside him his friend Benno and a young lady-in-waiting. During the celebration, the prince officially receives a crossbow as a gift, a tribute to his passion for hunting. Rothbart, already the late king’s right-hand man – an imposing and respected figure – mingles among the guests. His secret goal: to gradually seize power over the kingdom. The queen appears unsettled by

his presence, as if an ancient desire were resurfacing.

*Scene III. The appearance of the White Princess*

At the heart of the ball, a young stranger appears: a princess from afar, dressed in a white tunic covered in feathers. The prince is struck by her grace. But when Odette meets Rothbart's gaze, she panics and flees. The prince tries to follow her, but Rothbart holds him back. When Siegfried finally manages to break free, the princess has vanished. The guests depart. The prince, alone, filled with sorrow, returns to the piano.

*Scene IV. The swan's shadow*

Outside the window, a mysterious figure passes by – a bird-man with dark wings. Shaken, the prince grabs the crossbow he received moments earlier. A great lover of hunting, he ventures into the night to pursue the strange creature.

**Act II – The Swan Lake**

*Scene I. The revelation*

On the shores of a mist-shrouded lake, the prince finds Odette again. She reveals her secret: she and the other young women of the lake are victims of a spell. Transformed into swans, they return to human form only at sunset. Only a man's eternal love can break the curse. The prince swears his love, but Odette urges him to wait: the vow must be absolute, without hesitation.

A final *pas de deux* unites them before dawn. With the first light, Odette returns to the lake, becoming a swan once more.

**Act III – The Ball of Illusions**

*Scene I. Choosing a bride*

A new ball is held at the palace. The prince must choose his bride among the invited princesses. None of them can touch his heart: offended, they all leave. The hall is left almost empty: only the men of the court remain... and Rothbart.

*Scene II. Odile's arrival*

Rothbart enters accompanied by a woman dressed in black feathers: his daughter Odile, the perfect double of Odette. Rothbart entertains the court with a Spanish dancer, a Neapolitan couple, and a Hungarian dancer. Then Odile returns, transformed into a black swan. The prince, enchanted, dances with her and, believing her to be Odette, swears eternal love to her. The castle trembles: Rothbart has won. The queen understands the deception too late. The prince flees to find the true Odette.

**Act IV – The Lake of Tears***Scene I. Odette's despair*

On the lake's shore, Odette weeps over the prince's betrayal. The swans grow restless, seized by a dark premonition. The prince arrives, repentant; but Odette no longer believes in him. Their *pas de deux* is fragile, broken, exhausted.

*Scene II. The storm and death*

Rothbart bursts in, unleashing a storm. He seizes Odette and throws her into the waters of the lake. The prince tries to save her. Rothbart takes the prince's crossbow and aims to kill him. Odette steps in the way: the arrow strikes her. She dies in the prince's arms. The prince, devastated, is hurled into the lake by Rothbart. He drowns.

*Scene III. The queen's final cry*

At dawn the queen arrives, her hair loose, having walked all night. She finds the bodies of Odette and her son. She removes her crown, falls to her knees, and cries out: what is the point of being queen if she has lost her son?

The curtain falls.