

# SAINT LOUIS **BALLET**

## **SWAN LAKE**

**Synopsis** *(Read & Watch: time codes in BOLD refer to the same plot point in the video.)*

### **Prologue:**

Outside a castle home two children play - the young Prince Siegfried and his friend, Princess Odette. As he runs to fetch his mother an evil sorcerer, Von Rothbart, appears and captures the young Princess Odette. Prince Siegfried returns with the Queen and witnesses Odette's capture by Von Rothbart, but his mother did not see what had just happened. Prince Siegfried stands helpless as his friend is taken away into the woods.

### **Act 1: Scene 1– A magnificent garden before a castle**

Years later at the castle, peasants await the visit of the royal court. Prince Siegfried, now heir to the kingdom, joins the festivities. The Queen arrives and gives Siegfried a crossbow as a gift for his upcoming birthday. Because he will turn twenty-one, there will be a grand ball attended by royalty from neighboring countries. The Queen reminds him of his duty to choose a wife from the visiting Princesses. Upset that he cannot marry for love, Siegfried wanders into the forest. As the night grows darker a flock of swans flying overhead; Siegfried sets off in pursuit.

### **Act 1: Scene 2 – Lakeside**

**(0:00)** Siegfried aims his crossbow at the swans and readies himself for their landing by the lakeside. When one comes into view, however, he stops. Before him is a beautiful creature dressed in white feathers, more woman than swan. As they dance Siegfried realizes she is the same Princess Odette who had been captured by Von Rothbart years earlier. **(1:25)** A retinue of captured swan-maidens join Odette in the environs of Swan Lake. **(1:58)** Siegfried takes great pity on the maidens and he falls in love with Odette. Siegfried promises that he will swear his eternal love to Odette at the upcoming birthday ball —an act that will render the sorcerer's spell powerless.

### **Act 2: Scene 1 – An opulent hall in the castle**

**(2:37)** The Prince returns to the castle to attend the ball. Four Princesses arrive in hopes of being chosen as his wife, traveling from their kingdoms in from Spain, Italy, Russia and Hungary. **(2:57)** Von Rothbart arrives in disguise with his own daughter Princess Odile, the Black Swan. Under Rothbart's spell, the Prince mistakes her identify for Odette, and proclaims to the court that he vows to make her his wife. **(3:50)** Only a moment too late, the real Odette appears and Siegfried realizes the mistake he has made.

### **Act 2: Scene 2– Lakeside**

The swan maidens and Odette sadly gather at the lakeside, knowing they are now destined to be swans forever under Von Rothbart's power. Siegfried appears, apologizing to Odette for being tricked by Von Rothbart. Odette forgives him, yet tells him he must leave the lake and never return. As Von Rothbart appears, ready to kill Siegfried, and Odette stays to defend the Prince. Von Rothbart overpowers her and sends Siegfried over the cliff. Odette flies over the cliff to save Siegfried knowing now he is her true love. Her swan maidens flock together to fight against Von Rothbart, Overcome by the fierce swans, Von Rothbart's spell is broken. As the maidens shed their feathers and return to their human form, Odette and Siegfried are reunited and live happily ever after.

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**Vocabulary:** Provide a brief definition to these words from the synopsis.

1) Sorcerer: \_\_\_\_\_

2) crossbow: \_\_\_\_\_

3) retinue: \_\_\_\_\_

4) vow \_\_\_\_\_

5) Act (i.e. "Act I, Act II...") \_\_\_\_\_

6) prologue \_\_\_\_\_

**Comprehension:** After reading the synopsis, answer the following questions:

1) How old will Prince Siegfried be on his upcoming birthday? \_\_\_\_\_

2) What does the Queen tell Siegfried he must do? \_\_\_\_\_

3) What promise does Siegfried make to Odette? \_\_\_\_\_

4) Which countries do the four princesses travel from?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5) Who is Odile? \_\_\_\_\_

6) Who overtakes Von Rothbart? \_\_\_\_\_