Act I  King Heinrich asks Count Telramund to explain why the Duchy of Brabant is torn by strife. Telramund accuses Elsa of having murdered her brother, Gottfried. She relates a dream of a knight in shining armor who will come to save her. The herald calls for the defender, and finally a mysterious knight appears. He pledges his troth to her on condition that she never ask his name or origin. Defeating Telramund in combat, the newcomer establishes the innocence of his bride.

Intermission

Act II  Ortrud and Telramund swear vengeance. Ortrud attempts to sow distrust in Elsa’s mind. While the victorious knight is proclaimed guardian of Brabant, the banned Telramund furtively enlists four noblemen to side with him against his rival. At the cathedral entrance, Ortrud and Telramund attempt to stop the wedding. Though troubled by doubt, Elsa reiterates her faith in the knight before they enter the church.

Intermission

Act III  Elsa and her new husband express their love until anxiety at last compels her to ask the groom who he is and from where he came. Telramund and his henchmen burst in, and the knight slays him. He sadly tells Elsa that he will meet her later to answer her question. On the banks of the Scheldt, the knight explains that his home is the temple of the Holy Grail, Parsifal is his father, and Lohengrin is his name. Ortrud jubilantly rushes in, but as Lohengrin prays, the swan transforms back into the missing Gottfried. He names the boy ruler of Brabant and disappears. Ortrud collapses, and Elsa, calling for her lost husband, falls to the ground.

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