

The Swan Knight

Written by

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Based On

Lohengrin

By Richard Wagner

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FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE OUTSIDE ANTWERP, BRABANT, BELGIUM -
AFTERNOON

ELSA OF BRABANT and her brother, DUKE GODFREY OF BRABANT,
are strolling through the countryside outside of Antwerp.
It is the Middle Ages. Godfrey wears armor and is about
sixteen. Elsa is dressed in traveling robes and is
nineteen.

GODFREY

I can't believe Cousin Frederick. What
does he think, the commoners have
bottomless pocketbooks? If I made the
mistake of approving all his useless
rules--

Elsa touches his arm.

ELSA

Calm yourself, Godfrey. You're much too
smart for him to let him put anything
over on you.

GODFREY

How can I calm down when I see the way
he looks at you, Elsa? He's such a
perverse old man.

ELSA

Ignore the way he looks at me. That's
what I always do.

GODFREY

That's wise. I wish I could ignore him,
too, but Father did appoint him as my
regent. I look forward to the day I can
be crowned Duke and be free from Cousin
Frederick's thumb. Elsa, I must
apologize to you about our argument last
week. I was entirely out of line.

ELSA

I forgive you. And I must also
apologize for shouting at you. I did
not mean to say what I said.

GODFREY

That's quite all right, dear sister.

Elsa looks to the left. We follow her gaze and see a grove
of beautiful flowers alongside the River Scheldt.

ELSA

Oh, how beautiful! I'm going to take a look.

GODFREY

Very well. The path along here is faint, so I'll stay here so we don't lose track of it. Just remember, we have to be back home in time for dinner.

ELSA

I'll just be a moment.

Elsa goes to the grove and begins to look at the flowers. She smiles as she smells them.

Meanwhile, Godfrey watches over her. Suddenly, a gauntleted hand clasps over his mouth, and someone drags him away. The abductor's face is concealed by a helmet.

Elsa does not notice anything wrong as she continues examining the flowers. At last, she plucks a beautiful tulip and affixes it to her dress.

ELSA

Well, Godfrey, what do you--

When she turns around, she sees that he is no longer at the path. She frowns.

ELSA

All right, Godfrey, I'm not in the mood for practical jokes. Godfrey?

She returns to the path and looks for him in all directions. As she continues, she becomes increasingly frantic.

ELSA

Where are you? Godfrey? Godfrey! What if something has happened to him? I'd better get help.

She hikes up her robes and runs off in the direction of Antwerp.

EXT. ANTWERP, BRABANT, PRESENT-DAY BELGIUM

COUNT FREDERICK OF TELRAMUND, a middle-aged nobleman, emerges from the beautiful ducal palace in Antwerp. Two ENTRANCE GUARDS at the entrance salute him.

ENTRANCE GUARDS

Hail, Count Frederick!

Frederick returns the salute.

FREDERICK
Hail, guards. Carry on.

ENTRANCE GUARD 1
Do you need an escort, my lord?

FREDERICK
Nay, loyal guard. I'm just taking a walk.

Frederick passes through Antwerp towards the city gates. After he is out of the guards' line of sight, but before he reaches the gates, he turns down an alleyway. There, he approaches a MASKED MAN. The face mask is the same as the mask that Godfrey's kidnapper wore. Frederick speaks to him in hushed tones.

FREDERICK
I hope you have good news.

MASKED MAN
It is quite good, my lord. He is with Her Ladyship now.

FREDERICK
Excellent. And the girl?

MASKED MAN
She was beginning to run back to town just as I got the boy on my horse. I don't think she saw me. She will be back in moments.

FREDERICK
Then see me later for your pay. And melt down that mask in case she recognizes you.

Frederick leaves the alley and returns to the thoroughfare leading to the gates.

As the gates come into view, Elsa runs through, followed by two GATE GUARDS. She comes to a halt before Frederick.

ELSA
Frederick! Thank God!

FREDERICK
Elsa. You look absolutely horrified. What has happened?

ELSA

Godfrey and I were taking our weekly walk through the nearby woods, along the river. I felt guilty about having argued with him during the ball not long ago, and I wanted to talk it over with him and put it behind us.

FREDERICK

That's very mature of you, my cousin. What happened next?

ELSA

We came to a grove of flowers growing beside the river. While I went to the grove, he said he'd wait for me at the path. I picked this tulip that I'm wearing.

FREDERICK

It's lovely, Elsa.

Elsa hesitates.

ELSA

Thanks. Anyway, when I got up ... he was gone. I think he was abducted.

Frederick frowns.

ELSA

What?

FREDERICK

I know the spot you're talking about. It's a very quiet place, normally. If a struggle happened there, the sound would carry quite a ways. Guards, did you happen to hear anything?

GATE GUARD 1

I'm afraid we didn't, my lord. And until the lady came, we haven't seen anyone moving about.

GATE GUARD 2

That's correct, my lord.

ELSA

Frederick, someone needs to find him!

FREDERICK

All right, Elsa, all right. Let's head back to the palace, and I'll organize a search.

ELSA

Thank you, Frederick.

GATE GUARD 1

What should we do?

FREDERICK

Stay alert, guard. Duke Godfrey's abductor may pass by.

GATE GUARD 1

Yes, my lord.

Frederick and Elsa proceed through town to the castle gates. They pass through into the courtyard.

EXT. DUCAL PALACE COURTYARD

Frederick and Elsa make their way to the guard house, where several guards are coming out, including the CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Count Frederick, what's going on?

FREDERICK

Lady Elsa's brother, the duke, is missing. The lady believes that he's been abducted.

The guards murmur among themselves. The captain holds up his hand, and they fall silent.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

That's serious, my lord. We must investigate this.

FREDERICK

That's why I'm here, guard. Get your men out to search along the River Scheldt for any trace of Duke Godfrey. I myself will be going out first.

The captain salutes Frederick.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Very well, my lord.

Frederick returns the salute. He then leads Elsa towards the entrance to the keep.

FREDERICK

You've been through a terrible shock, dear cousin. Go to your room and get some rest.

ELSA

No, Frederick. I want to help look for him.

FREDERICK

Normally, I wouldn't hesitate to agree. But this is for your safety. Whoever is responsible for this may mean harm to you, as well. Please do as I ask. You have my word that I will do everything in my power to find Godfrey.

Elsa hesitates for a moment.

ELSA

Very well, Frederick. But I will wait only so long before leaving to investigate myself.

Elsa turns and enters the keep.

Frederick makes his way through the courtyard and into the stables.

EXT. ANTWERP

Frederick rides his horse out through the palace gates and then out of Antwerp.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE OUTSIDE ANTWERP

Frederick rides to a well-kept house outside Antwerp. The house is a short walk from the River Scheldt. He halts at a hitching post outside the house. He dismounts and ties up his horse.

Then he knocks at the door. After a moment, we can hear a lock being unbolted, and then the door creaks open. ORTRUD, a cloaked woman, is behind the door.

ORTRUD

Come in.

Frederick enters the house.

INT. ENTRY ROOM - ORTRUD'S HOUSE

The entry room of Ortrud's house contains several artifacts and idols of old Norse and German gods. Frederick eyes these with suspicion as Ortrud closes and latches the door.

Ortrud turns to him when the door is shut.

FREDERICK

Is it done, Ortrud?

ORTRUD

It is, Frederick. Now, you are almost assured of becoming the rightful duke.

FREDERICK

Very good, my dear. It pains me having to get rid of my nephew, but it had to be done. Had he become the rightful duke, my way of life would have been compromised.

Ortrud laughs. Frederick is startled.

ORTRUD

The only person you're deceiving is yourself, Frederick.

FREDERICK

What? How dare you.

ORTRUD

And you take offense too easily. Relax, my count. I find no fault with your true motives. You like being the acting duke, and you want the power for yourself permanently.

Frederick grits his teeth. He is clearly uncomfortable hearing this.

FREDERICK

As always, my lady, you can see what is in my heart, even when I refuse to see it. You're right, of course.

ORTRUD

Of course.

FREDERICK

Now, it's just a matter of convincing Lady Elsa to marry me.

ORTRUD

I'm afraid you will have to arrest Elsa.
Poor child, her heart is too pure to
live a lie.

FREDERICK

But that truly pains me, Ortrud. She is
innocent. She had nothing to do with
what happened to Godfrey.

ORTRUD

Do not allow yourself to feel too much
compassion for her, Frederick. Besides,
it will free you to repay your debt to
me.

Frederick's face falls.

FREDERICK

Ah, yes. You expect something in
return. What must I do?

ORTRUD

My dear, you mustn't make it sound so
onerous. All you have to do is request
my hand in marriage.

Frederick's jaw drops.

FREDERICK

Are you serious?

ORTRUD

You did say you would pay any price. I
could have asked for your soul, but I
know it's too black even for my taste.
Don't worry, you can go on screwing the
chamber maids to your heart's content.

Frederick scowls.

FREDERICK

How in God's name do you know that?

ORTRUD

Need you ask?

FREDERICK

I suppose not.

ORTRUD

Of course, it's not too late to reverse
the damage. After all, Godfrey is not
too far downriver.

FREDERICK

In heaven's name, I told you not to
throw his dead body in the river!

ORTRUD

Dead body? Don't be stupid. I never
said I'd *kill* him. I said I'd get rid
of him.

Frederick looks confused.

FREDERICK

But--what I meant--

ORTRUD

If you meant me to kill him, you should
have said so plainly.

FREDERICK

You treacherous harlot! What's going to
happen if he wakes up and swims out of
the river?

Ortrud begins to laugh.

FREDERICK

Damn it, this isn't a laughing matter!

ORTRUD

Oh, but it is! He's no longer in human
form, Frederick.

FREDERICK

He's not? What in God's name is he,
then?

ORTRUD

He's a swan.

FREDERICK

He's--a swan?

ORTRUD

Yes.

Slowly, Frederick's expression turns to one of wicked glee.

FREDERICK

That's perfect. There's nothing a swan can do against me. So, I'll present my case to King Henry. Elsa will have no means to defend herself from my accusations. Her neck will face the axe, and then I will be the rightful Duke of Brabant.

ORTRUD

Just remember one slight detail. I must be there at the trial.

FREDERICK

I wouldn't dream of leaving you out of it. Ortrud, will you marry me?

ORTRUD

Yes, Frederick, I will. Believe me.

EXT. DUCAL PALACE COURTYARD - TWILIGHT

Frederick rides into the courtyard around twilight to find many of the palace guards standing there. The captain is among them, and so is SIR EDWARD.

Frederick dismounts his horse and, holding the horse's reins, walks towards the group.

FREDERICK

What's the news, gentlemen?

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

My lord. My men and several of the town's nobles have looked all through the woods nearby. We found signs of a struggle, and signs that someone was dragged into the river. All indications pointed to no more than two people in the area. Only Lady Elsa and Duke Godfrey were there.

FREDERICK

I see. Sir Edward, you look like you have a theory.

SIR EDWARD

I hesitate to say this, my lord, but we may have to look at the possibility that Lady Elsa did this.

FREDERICK

Lady Elsa? Do you realize what a serious accusation that is, Sir Edward?

EDWARD

I realize it, my lord. But unfortunately, I see no other explanation. Most likely, she subdued the duke and dragged him into the river, where he drowned.

FREDERICK

Captain, what do you think?

CAPTAIN

It hate to admit it, my lord, but I have to agree with Sir Edward.

FREDERICK

I see. Then I will question her, gentlemen.

Frederick goes into the castle.

INT. ELSA'S CHAMBERS

Elsa stands gazing out her window at the twilight. Some knocks sound on her door.

ELSA

Who's there?

FREDERICK (O.C.)

It's me, Frederick.

ELSA

Come in.

The door opens to admit Frederick. He closes the door when he has entered.

FREDERICK

The guards have made a search, my lady.

ELSA

Made a search? It's only been a few hours.

FREDERICK

They searched the area where Godfrey was "abducted," to use your words.

ELSA

What are you talking about?

FREDERICK

I'm afraid they didn't find any signs of an abduction, Elsa. But they found signs of a struggle. The likeliest conclusion seems to be that you subdued Duke Godfrey and dragged him into the river, where he drowned.

ELSA

What? That's monstrous! Do you really think me capable of such a thing?

FREDERICK

Don't try to lie about your strength, Elsa. You're a strong woman, and Godfrey was still growing.

ELSA

That's not what I meant.

FREDERICK

There's also the matter of your argument with Godfrey during the ball. Everyone in the hall could hear you, I'm afraid. If I remember, what you said to Duke Godfrey was: "I could kill you for this!"

ELSA

Don't be ridiculous, Frederick. It was just a normal argument between siblings.

FREDERICK

I'm afraid that will be for King Henry to decide.

ELSA

What? You're bringing His Majesty into this?

FREDERICK

Actually, earlier, I received word from his courier. He will be here in one month to rally our support against the Hungarian barbarians assaulting the eastern borders of his land. I'm just taking advantage of the opportunity.

ELSA

Well, good. Maybe he'll see how preposterous your interpretation is. You should keep looking for Godfrey.

FREDERICK

I'm afraid your account of events doesn't quite agree with the evidence that the guards found. Of course--

ELSA

What?

FREDERICK

I was just thinking. You could do something to convince me of your good intentions. Then, I would be less likely to see you as a suspect.

Frederick takes Elsa's hand gently.

ELSA

What, Frederick? I'll do just about anything to get you looking in the right place.

FREDERICK

Marry me.

Elsa's jaw drops open.

ELSA

What?

FREDERICK

I'm asking you to fulfill your father's dying promise. For serving as Godfrey's guardian, I receive your hand in matrimony. I could even convince everyone that you were acting to defend yourself.

Elsa yanks her hand out of Frederick's. She moves it as if to slap him, but then lowers it.

ELSA

Go to hell. I'm not going to lie.

Frederick scowls.

FREDERICK

If that's how you feel, so be it. King Henry will decide your fate. In the meantime, consider yourself under house arrest.

EXT. MONTSALVAT CASTLE - EUROPE - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Montsalvat is a beautiful castle in an unknown, mountainous area of Europe. After looking on the castle, we move into the castle's courtyard. We can hear swords clashing together in battle.

EXT. COURTYARD - MONTSALVAT CASTLE

In the courtyard, two knights are practicing their swordplay. One is PRINCE LOHENGRIN, about twenty-two years of age. His opponent is GRAIL KNIGHT Alfred, about fifty-five years of age, but he fights with the speed of a youth.

After a rousing swordfight, Lohengrin wins, stopping his sword barely a millimeter away from Alfred's heart. After a moment, both lower their swords.

ALFRED

Excellent, Prince Lohengrin. Your sword skills are at their peak, indeed.

Alonzo and Lohengrin salute one another.

LOHENGRIN

Thank you, Sir Alfred.

They sheathe their swords. Lohengrin turns to a window in the castle wall and looks out on the hilly countryside.

LOHENGRIN

When do you think I'll be ready to go on a mission of my own?

Alfred joins him.

ALFRED

You're anxious, aren't you? You want to go out, defeat evil, and rescue a lovely damsel in distress.

LOHENGRIN

Several knights who are younger than I am have already done it. I don't see why I haven't been sent yet.

ALFRED

Have patience, Your Highness. Your skills are more than a match for the others'. But you are more than an ordinary Knight of the Grail. You are the son of King Perceval, a good man who has made many bad enemies. He is concerned for your safety, and rightfully so.

LOHENGRIN

I know, and it's not that I don't appreciate it. But isn't that what I've been training for? To defend myself and others from evil?

ALFRED

True enough.

Footsteps are heard coming from the distance. The two turn around.

KING PERCEVAL is coming towards them.

Alfred kneels.

ALFRED

Your Majesty.

PERCEVAL

Greetings, Sir Alfred. Please rise.

Alfred returns to his feet.

LOHENGRIN

Greetings, Father.

PERCEVAL

Greetings, Lohengrin. Both of you, please come with me.

Perceval leads them to the chapel.

INT. MONTSALVAT CHAPEL

The chapel is empty, except for a monk going about his business. Perceval, Lohengrin, and Alfred approach the altar and kneel briefly. They arise, and Perceval faces Lohengrin.

PERCEVAL

Tell me of your feelings, my son.

LOHENGRIN

I feel ready to go forth, Dad. I must prove my worth as a Grail Knight.

PERCEVAL

Already, you have proven yourself in protecting this castle. And the Holy Grail.

Perceval gestures towards the altar, where a small, plain wooden chalice rests.

PERCEVAL

Besides, going abroad is a dangerous undertaking in these uncertain times.

LOHENGRIN

I know. But I feel that I am ready. Several young knights have gone and returned safely.

PERCEVAL

There are also many who have never returned, Lohengrin. I myself was almost one of them.

LOHENGRIN

You didn't dare refuse. Sir Bedivere was in danger, and you were the only one who could help him.

PERCEVAL

It's true that I went because he's one of my dearest friends. It's clear that you know how to defend yourself. But there's still one issue: we don't know where you will be called to go. Until you know your destination, what point is it to begin the journey? You may embark to Spain, only to realize that you have to go to Denmark.

LOHENGRIN

Yes, that's true enough. I don't have a clear direction yet.

PERCEVAL

The Lord works in mysterious ways. Do not worry, my son. If it is His wish, He will show you the way, as He has shown me many times past.

Suddenly, a grail knight thrusts open the door to the chapel. He hastily makes the sign of the cross.

GRAIL KNIGHT

Forgive my intrusion, Your Majesty, Your Highness, but the lookouts have discovered something that you should see.

PERCEVAL

Lead the way.

EXT. COURTYARD

The knight leads Perceval, Lohengrin, and Alfred to the opening drawbridge. Beyond the drawbridge, a magnificent WHITE SWAN approaches. It has suffered several wounds and limps as it walks.

PERCEVAL

My goodness.

EXT. OUTSIDE MONTSALVAT

Lohengrin crosses the drawbridge and carefully approaches the swan. It is not frightened as he approaches it and kneels down next to it. Instead, it nuzzles up to him trustingly.

LOHENGRIN

Good God, what terrible wounds. You poor fellow. Father, we should let this swan drink from the Holy Grail.

PERCEVAL

Good idea. Will he let you pick him up?

Being careful of its wounds, Lohengrin gently picks up the swan in his arms. He follows Perceval back towards the chapel.

INT. CHAPEL

Perceval leads the way to the grail altar. With reverence, he takes the grail and fills it with water. Then, he turns to the idyllic swan in Lohengrin's arms.

PERCEVAL

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Perceval offers the grail to the swan. The swan laps the water with its tongue. As it drinks, steam begins to hiss from its wounds, and the wounds close up. In moments, the swan cries out happily and spreads its wings.

ALFRED

The healing power of the Grail is truly miraculous.

The swan looks up at Lohengrin and gazes into his eyes.

LOHENGRIN

There is something about this swan, Dad. He seems almost human, in a way.

The swan warbles softly.

LOHENGRIN

I think he wants me to follow him.

Perceval regards Lohengrin and the swan for a moment.

PERCEVAL

I think you're right. I'm wondering, though. Maybe it should be me. I sense that a powerful evil enchantment has been placed on this swan. It could be dangerous for you, Lohengrin.

LOHENGRIN

Dad, I think it has to be me. Don't you think it significant that this noble swan responded to me?

ALFRED

With respect, Your Majesty, I believe that His Highness is right. The sign is clear to me.

PERCEVAL

Very well, then. As you know, Lohengrin, the Grail will protect you, but only so long as you do not reveal who you are.

LOHENGRIN

I understand.

PERCEVAL

Then if you choose to marry, what vow must your wife make?

LOHENGRIN

She must vow never to ask my name or where I come from. If she ever does ask, I must reveal myself, and the Grail's protection will be broken.

PERCEVAL

Exactly. I'll have the squires prepare
a bark for your journey.

EXT. RIVER BANK NEAR MONTSALVAT

Clad in brilliant armor, Lohengrin proceeds to the river bank, where several squires have a bark, a small sailboat, ready. The swan walks next to him. Perceval and Alfred follow.

LOHENGRIN

Thank you for preparing the boat, good
squires.

PERCEVAL

Go with God, my son.

LOHENGRIN

Thank you, Dad.

Lohengrin and Perceval embrace. Then, Lohengrin shakes hands with Alfred.

LOHENGRIN

I appreciate all your training, Sir
Alfred.

ALFRED

I have enjoyed having you as a pupil,
Your Highness. Remember your training
well. It can save your life.

LOHENGRIN

I will. Take good care of His Majesty
and the Grail.

The swan flutters into the water. Lohengrin boards the bark. The squires push the boat off into the river, and Lohengrin begins to unfurl the sail.

SQUIRES

Farewell, Prince Lohengrin!

LOHENGRIN

Farewell, noble squires. Mind your
studies.

Lohengrin tacks the sail so that he follows the swan closely enough to see it but not too closely. Lohengrin and the swan disappear into the distance.

EXT. OAK TREE - ALONG THE RIVER SCHELDT - OUTSIDE ANTWERP -
SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Outside the city of Antwerp, a great host has gathered. Several of them are Brabant nobles, including Count Frederick and Elsa. Others are German nobles from Saxony, Thuringia, and other areas of Germany.

Underneath the oak tree is a grand chair. Trumpets sound to announce the king's presence. Everyone kneels. KING HENRY arrives and seats himself in the chair. He makes an upward gesture with his hand, and everyone stands up.

His HERALD steps forward.

HERALD

Nobles, knights, and freemen of Brabant,
the German King Henry has arrived.

PEOPLE OF BRABANT

Welcome, King, to Brabant!

KING HENRY

Thank you for welcoming me to your land,
people of Brabant. As many of you know,
I come in a time of need. Many years
ago, the Hungarian people attempted to
invade the empire's eastern borders
through violence. I am grateful that
Brabant came to our defense back then.
We have had ten years of peace and
respite, but now the Hungarians stir
again to besiege our eastern lands. I
come to seek your aid once more.

He pauses and looks over the Brabantians.

KING HENRY

However, I am concerned to find you
divided. Count Frederick of Telramund,
please explain what has happened.

Frederick steps forward and bows to King Henry.

FREDERICK

Thank you, Your Majesty. As you are aware, my cousin, the late Duke of Brabant, assigned me as regent for his young son and heir, Godfrey. Over the past few months, Godfrey and his sister, Elsa, have been arguing more and more frequently. Just over a month ago, many witnesses overheard her threatening his life. Then, a week later, they went on a walk through the woods, which I found suspicious. My suspicions were confirmed when she came back alone, acting frantic. She claimed that she turned around one moment, and Godfrey had disappeared. I had many men go search the woods, but they found no sign of Godfrey. However, they did find signs of a struggle at a grove of flowers near the bank of the river, and Elsa had a tulip from that grove. The sequence of events became painfully clear to me. Elsa lured Godfrey into the woods, killed him, and dragged his body into the river so that he could not be found. I even offered to help her, thinking that perhaps she had acted in self-defense, but she spurned my help. Therefore, I accuse Elsa of killing her brother, Godfrey, so that she could be the sole heir to Brabant. I am willing to let her live, but only if she forswears her right to succeed her brother as duchess. As the next nearest kinsman of the late duke, I claim Brabant as my own.

He gestures to Ortrud, who comes to his side.

FREDERICK

My wife, Ortrud of Frisia, is also of the race that once gave a line of princes to Brabant.

Ortrud kneels to the king.

HENRY

Your charge is serious, Count Frederick. Let the accused come forth.

HERALD

Elsa, appear without delay!

Elsa steps forward, her head bowed. People murmur about her subdued state.

HENRY

Elsa of Brabant, do you understand the charges that Count Frederick has brought against you?

Elsa nods.

HENRY

What have you to say?

ELSA

What can I say? All I know is that I did not kill Godfrey. As to what happened to him, I do not know. I knelt down to look at the flowers in the grove beside the river. When I got back up, Godfrey was gone.

FREDERICK

A preposterous story. If something had happened to Godfrey, surely you would have heard it. Sound travels far in that area.

ELSA

Be that as it may, he didn't make a sound, Frederick.

HENRY

Please keep order, both of you. Elsa, do you have any proof of your claim?

ELSA

No.

HENRY

Whereas Frederick reports the evidence of a struggle.

ELSA

I have no idea how he came about it, though, Your Majesty. Godfrey and I did not struggle.

FREDERICK

An obvious lie.

HENRY

Count Frederick!

FREDERICK

Forgive me, sire, but the signs of struggle were clear and obvious. Several of the knights here investigated the scene and will swear to it.

HENRY

Attention, knights. Those who investigated the scene that Frederick described, step forward.

A group of knights steps forward from the Brabantian crowd.

HENRY

Now, on penalty of perjury: if there were clear signs of a struggle, raise your right hand.

Each knight in the group raises his hand. Elsa's face falls as she sees this.

HENRY

Thank you, knights. You may lower your hands and step back.

The knights comply with Henry.

HENRY

Elsa, there must be more. If you have anything further to say, I implore you to say it. Do you trust me?

Elsa nods.

HENRY

Do you know of anyone who can swear to your recollection of these events?

ELSA

No, Your Majesty.

FREDERICK

See, she admits her falsehood. My lady, I implore you, confess your crime.

ELSA

I have committed no crime.

HENRY

Count Frederick, this is your last warning. Do not speak out of turn again.

FREDERICK

Very well, Your Majesty.

HENRY

This is a difficult case to decide. There is little real evidence, not even Godfrey's body. Count Frederick's account, distasteful as it may be, seems more convincing, but I don't think it's conclusive. Therefore, to decide this case, I call for a duel of honor between a champion of Count Frederick's choosing and one of Elsa's choosing. Count Frederick, whom do you choose?

FREDERICK

Your Majesty, I respectfully protest. A duel will not change the facts.

HENRY

Your protest is noted. However, the facts are not clear to me. The duel will proceed. Name your champion.

Frederick sets his hand on the hilt of his sword.

FREDERICK

I choose myself, sire.

HENRY

Very well. Elsa?

ELSA

Your Majesty--well, this will just seem like a girlish fantasy.

HENRY

Do not be afraid of ridicule, Elsa. Please go ahead.

ELSA

Very well. In my dreams, I am often scared and surrounded by darkness. Then, he comes: a knight dressed in the most brilliant armor. His sword fights for truth and justice. He is a noble knight who saves me from the darkness. I believe Heaven will send him to save me.

FREDERICK

If I may, Your Majesty--

Frederick stops at a look of warning from Henry.

HENRY

No, you may not, Count. Elsa, it is a lovely dream, to be sure, but I would not advise you to rely on any dream.

ELSA

Normally, I would not, Your Majesty. However, this feels real to me, as if God himself is sending me this vision. If he is called, I believe in my heart that he will come. Further, I know that I am innocent. I am willing to submit to God's judgment through this duel. I would fight myself, but Frederick is still a more skilled swordsman than I am. Have your heralds call for my champion, Your Majesty. He will come.

HENRY

Very well. Sound the trumpets.

The Herald signals the trumpeters to blow mighty fanfares from their trumpets.

HERALD

Who will fight for the honor of Elsa of Brabant? Let him step forward.

Tense silence is interrupted only by a breeze whispering through the trees. Frederick and Ortrud smile.

FREDERICK

Your mysterious champion is nowhere to be seen, Elsa.

ELSA

Your Majesty, please call again.

HENRY

Very well. Sound the trumpets once more.

The Herald again signals the trumpeters to blow mighty fanfares from their trumpets.

HERALD

Who will fight for the honor of Elsa of Brabant? Let him step forward.

Again, all is silent. But only for a moment.

BRABANT KNIGHT

Look! A swan!

The swan that was once Godfrey swims up the river towards the bank. He leads the bark that bears Lohengrin. Lohengrin's armor is dazzling in the brilliant sunlight.

We look at a group of knights and commoners, who are stunned with amazement. They begin to mutter excitedly among themselves.

We also look at Ortrud, who scowls with venom upon seeing the swan. She and Frederick look at each other with apprehension.

Lohengrin guides the bark to a landing at the river bank not far from the tree. In the sunlight, the silver swan on his helmet and the swan emblazoned on his shield are clearly visible. As he departs the boat, he turns towards the swan, who waits at the river bank.

LOHENGRIN

My lovely swan, thank you for guiding me faithfully to this land. Farewell to you.

The swan inclines his head and then swims away. The bark follows it, even though there is no apparent line connecting the bark to the swan. Both recede into the distance and vanish.

Lohengrin turns and kneels to the king.

LOHENGRIN

Your Majesty King Henry, please forgive my intrusion on these proceedings.

HENRY

You need no forgiveness, sir knight. You may rise.

Lohengrin returns to his feet.

HENRY

What is your name?

LOHENGRIN

I hope you will forgive me, but I cannot reveal my name. You may call me the Swan Knight.

HENRY

Very well, Swan Knight. Are you aware of the events that have transpired here?

LOHENGRIN

Yes, Your Majesty.

Lohengrin turns to Elsa, who gazes at him in wonderment and happiness. For a moment, Lohengrin appears taken with her beauty, but then he advances to her.

LOHENGRIN

Lady Elsa, I know that the accusations that have been made against you are false. I am willing to become your champion.

ELSA

If you defend me, all that I have, all that I am, is yours.

LOHENGRIN

My lady, if I defend you, there is one and only one vow you must make. You must never ask me to reveal my name or where I come from.

ELSA

I promise, noble knight.

LOHENGRIN

Elsa! Did you understand? You must never ask me to reveal my name or where I come from. Otherwise, I must leave.

ELSA

Yes. I promise.

Lohengrin smiles happily. Elsa returns his smile.

LOHENGRIN

Then I will defend you and your lands, my lady.

Lohengrin turns to King Henry.

LOHENGRIN

Your Majesty, I shall be the lady's champion.

HENRY

Very well, Swan Knight. Three Saxon knights and three Brabant knights, mark the combatants' circle.

Everyone draws back except for Lohengrin, Frederick, and the six knights. The six knights form a wide circle around Lohengrin and Frederick to mark their battleground.

HENRY

Let us pray.

Everyone bows his head, except for Ortrud.

HENRY

Gracious and just God, we pray to you to govern this combat. Let the true be victorious, and let the wrong be struck down. Amen.

CROWD

Amen.

Henry draws his sword.

HENRY

Take your positions.

Henry strikes his shield with a resounding blow from his sword. Frederick and Lohengrin take their positions facing each other.

HENRY

Draw your swords.

Henry strikes his shield again. Frederick and Lohengrin draw their swords.

HENRY

Commence.

Henry strikes his shield a third time. Frederick and Lohengrin advance to each other.

FREDERICK

You should not have gotten involved, Swan Knight. I am widely regarded as the greatest swordsman in Brabant.

LOHENGRIN

Then you should not be afraid to face me.

FREDERICK

Afraid? Count Frederick of Telramund fears nothing.

They begin their swordfight. Both men are skilled with the sword, and for a long time, none gains the advantage.

The crowd is completely engrossed in the swordfight.

In the end, Lohengrin finds an opening and hits Frederick with a mighty blow, knocking him to the ground.

Frederick is winded and drops his sword. He looks up.

FREDERICK
 Won't you kill me now?

Lohengrin holds his sword's tip not far from Frederick's neck.

LOHENGRIN
 No. I spare your life, Count Frederick.
 His Majesty will decide your fate.

King Henry approaches with Elsa. The six knights draw away.

HENRY
 Count Frederick, the Swan Knight has
 shown more mercy than I would have. For
 falsely accusing the Lady Elsa, I strip
 you of your name and property.
 Furthermore, you are banished from the
 palace in Antwerp.

Frederick's jaw gapes, but then he closes it again.

FREDERICK
 I understand, Your Majesty.

Henry turns to Elsa.

HENRY
 And as for you, dear Elsa, come.
 Brabant needs you as its leader, until
 poor Godfrey is found.

ELSA
 Very well, Your Majesty.

Elsa and Lohengrin precede the crowd to Antwerp. A group of guards makes certain that Frederick and Ortrud do not follow.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DUCAL PALACE IN ANTWERP

Elsa is on her knees before King Henry. Henry picks up a ducal crown and holds it over her head.

HENRY
 Lady Elsa, until such time as your
 brother returns to claim his birthright,
 I name you Duchess of Brabant.

Henry lowers the crown onto her head.

HENRY
 Rise, Duchess Elsa.

Elsa rises. The people cheer, and trumpets are blown.

Elsa and Lohengrin's gazes meet.

EXT. COURTYARD - DUCAL PALACE - EVENING

That evening, a feast is held outside in the courtyard. Elsa is speaking with fellow Brabantians, but then she turns and sees Lohengrin alone on a parapet, gazing across the countryside. She turns back to her comrades.

ELSA

Excuse me.

She leaves her comrades and walks towards the access way for the parapet.

EXT. PARAPET - DUCAL PALACE

Lohengrin looks out over the darkening countryside. At the soft sound of approaching footsteps, he turns. We turn with him to see Elsa coming.

Lohengrin bows.

LOHENGRIN

Good evening, Duchess.

Elsa smiles.

ELSA

No need to be so formal, Swan Knight.
To you, I am Elsa.

LOHENGRIN

Very well, Elsa.

Elsa joins him at the side of the wall.

ELSA

The countryside is so lovely tonight.

LOHENGRIN

Yes. And so different from my own. My
homeland is much hillier.

ELSA

I see. I wish you could tell me more
about it. I've always been interested
in other places. Can you at least tell
me why?

LOHENGRIN

It's a strict policy of the people I serve.

ELSA

I see. And do you always follow the letter of the law?

LOHENGRIN

Yes, because I must. Especially the rule not to reveal my name or where I'm from. It's--well, I can't say much more without breaking that rule.

ELSA

Very well. But it's clear to me that you're a noble knight. No one else had the courage to fight Frederick, but I must admit there's good reason for that. He's one of the best swordsmen in the realm.

LOHENGRIN

I believe it. He was certainly a skilled opponent. But he's not the one that concerns me.

ELSA

Oh? Who is?

LOHENGRIN

His wife, Ortrud. I can sense a dark energy about her. Tell me, what do you know of her?

ELSA

Very little. But I think I saw Frederick with her, even before Godfrey's disappearance. Now that you bring it up, I also feel there's something dark about her.

LOHENGRIN

Where is she from?

ELSA

She's from Frisia.

LOHENGRIN

Frisia. That's right. Frisia is north of here, stretching almost to Denmark. There are many there who still adhere to the old pagan religions. I have heard tell of their mysterious powers.

ELSA

Do you think Ortrud could be one of those heathens?

LOHENGRIN

Best not to speak of it too loudly. We Christians are a good people, but we often seek to persecute what we don't like or don't understand. It is especially easy to condemn those who still practice the ancient religions, even though many are just as noble as our own.

ELSA

I guess you're right. My own father often spoke of such persecution. He vowed not to let it happen here in Brabant.

LOHENGRIN

He must have been a good man.

ELSA

He was. I loved him very much. And my brother, Godfrey, is just as good. Where do you think he is, Swan Knight?

LOHENGRIN

It's clear to me that someone made him disappear. He could be someone's prisoner. Someone might even have killed him. Frederick is probably the most likely suspect. It might be a good idea to have someone watch him, especially if Ortrud does have unusual powers.

ELSA

Do you really believe people can have such powers?

LOHENGRIN

I know they can. Some years ago, there was an evil sorcerer named Klingsor, who laid waste to an entire land with his magic.

ELSA

I see. How was he defeated?

LOHENGRIN

His gross self-confidence was eventually his undoing. He underestimated the strength of a brash young warrior named Perceval, who defeated him.

ELSA

Amazing.

She takes Lohengrin's hand.

ELSA

How long are you staying?

LOHENGRIN

As long as you need me here, Elsa. I intend to try to find Godfrey.

ELSA

It's been about a month. Do you think it's even possible?

LOHENGRIN

Anything is possible, my dear. It might be a long shot, but I'll do all that I can.

Elsa hesitates for a moment and then kisses his cheek. His face flushes slightly.

ELSA

Thank you, Swan Knight. Why don't you come down? I know several people would like to talk to you.

LOHENGRIN

This is your day, Elsa. You deserve to be the focus of attention, not me.

ELSA

You don't much care to socialize, do you?

LOHENGRIN

On the contrary. But if I do it here, I'm afraid I'll say too much.

ELSA

I understand.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD (O.C.)

Duchess!

Elsa and Lohengrin look down to the courtyard. We look down and see the CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD looking up at them.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

My lady, Sir Knight, forgive the intrusion. The guards on the east wall have reported seeing Frederick of Telramund lurking about outside the palace. It's beginning to get dark out there. May I ask you to look and see what's happening to the west from your side?

LOHENGRIN

Certainly, Captain.

Elsa and Lohengrin look out.

We look out on the town below and the countryside beyond. All seems peaceful.

ELSA

I don't see anything.

LOHENGRIN

Neither do I. But I have an uncomfortable feeling about this.

We hear the steps of armored feet. Elsa turns towards the stairs as the Captain of the Guard emerges on the parapet.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Do you see anything?

LOHENGRIN

No, but as you say, it's getting dark. I don't like this. There's enough cover out there to conceal a small legion.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Maybe I should call out the guards.

LOHENGRIN

No, not yet. Just bring them together as discreetly as you can in the courtyard. If guards start moving about the parapets, he'll be able to see them.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Very well.

LOHENGRIN

Meanwhile, I can slip out and reconnoiter the area.

ELSA
Be careful, sir knight.

LOHENGRIN
I will.

Lohengrin and the Captain of the Guard go back down to the courtyard.

EXT. WOODED AREA OUTSIDE ANTWERP - AFTER TWILIGHT

The night is dark and moonless outside Antwerp. Frederick approaches a group of knights nearby. Their leader is SIR PATRICK, a rather portly middle-aged man.

FREDERICK
Sir Patrick, are you and your men ready?

SIR PATRICK
As ready as we can be on such short notice, my lord.

FREDERICK
Indeed. You don't seem to like this idea very much.

PATRICK
With all due respect, my lord, I don't, especially since the king is there. To tell the truth, I'm considering the relative merits of backing out. Nothing personal, you understand.

FREDERICK
I see. Then you won't mind if I apprise your wife of an incredible scene that I saw recently. I don't think I've ever seen such flexibility in a young chamber maid before.

Sir Patrick's men begin to titter. Patrick silences them with a scowl.

FREDERICK
Need I go on?

PATRICK
No, my lord, you needn't.

FREDERICK
Very good. Follow my orders without question, and I won't say a thing.

One of Patrick's men, LAWRENCE, has been gazing silently towards the town. He turns around suddenly.

LAWRENCE

My lords, I just noticed it. Someone in bright armor just slipped out of town into the woods. I almost missed him.

FREDERICK

Ah, that would be my usurper. Someone may have noticed me. Which way did he go?

LAWRENCE

I think southwards, but I could be mistaken in this light.

FREDERICK

All right. Sir Patrick, keep your men ready for my signal.

PATRICK

Yes, my lord.

Frederick moves stealthily through the woods to another group of knights several meters away and closer to Antwerp. One of these knights, SIR EDWARD, is gazing intently towards the town and following something with his eyes.

FREDERICK

What do you see with your sharp eyes, Sir Edward?

SIR EDWARD

The Swan Knight, my lord.

FREDERICK

Ah. What is he doing?

EDWARD

I'd say he's looking for someone.

FREDERICK

Then he's about to meet someone. Several someones. Let's surround him.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE ANTWERP

Lohengrin carefully approaches the tree line.

From inside the woods, we see a faint glint of armor.

Lohengrin does not approach it directly but continues on his present course. He soon steps into the woods. When he is concealed, he climbs the closest large tree swiftly and easily, in spite of his armor's apparent bulkiness. He alights on a thick limb.

As he looks down, the forms of Frederick, Sir Edward, and Edward's knights tread the ground in his direction. They begin to speak softly, but they can be heard clearly from Lohengrin's vantage point.

FREDERICK

Where is he?

EDWARD

He got out of my sight, but he can't have gone far. Men, spread out in teams of two and search for him.

EDWARD'S KNIGHTS

Yes, Sir Edward.

The knights spread out by twos. Frederick and Edward approach Lohengrin's tree. Looking around, they halt at its base.

EDWARD

He was in this vicinity when I saw him last.

FREDERICK

We need to find him.

EDWARD

Do you really think he used sorcery to defeat you?

FREDERICK

What other answer is there? You were there, Edward. You saw the way he fought.

EDWARD

True enough.

FREDERICK

And he has clearly enchanted King Henry, along with Elsa. I'm grateful that you and your knights are still faithful to Brabant.

EDWARD

Of course, my liege.

FREDERICK

After we've taken care of that knight,
we'll have to make our way to the king
so I can make my case. I should be able
to overcome the knight's spell over him.

EDWARD

I hope so. There's been enough
infighting in Brabant. Are you sure two
hundred men will be enough to take the
palace?

FREDERICK

We have the element of surprise, so it
shouldn't be a problem.

EDWARD'S KNIGHT 1

Sir Edward! Look over here.

EDWARD

Excuse me, my lord.

FREDERICK

Certainly.

Edward moves away towards the knight who called him.

We focus on Frederick. He secretively removes a small pouch
from his armor and examines it. Lohengrin silently drops to
the ground behind Frederick.

FREDERICK

Yes. These herbs from Ortrud will
certainly make King Henry see my point
of view. Just a pinch in his wine, and
he'll be powerless to resist.

Lohengrin's sword stabs out and pierces the bag. Frederick
cries out and tries to catch the falling herbs, but he
doesn't succeed. He whirls around to Lohengrin.

FREDERICK

You!

Frederick moves his hand towards the hilt of his sword, but
Lohengrin blocks Frederick's hand with his sword blade.
Then, Lohengrin points his sword at Frederick's neck.

LOHENGRIN

I wouldn't do that if I were you,
Frederick. I didn't spare your life
only to have you take control of the
king. What did you have to do with Duke
Godfrey's disappearance?

FREDERICK

You're looking at the wrong person,
knight. Elsa obviously did away with
her brother.

LOHENGRIN

As I understand it, there was no clear
evidence that she herself did anything
to him.

FREDERICK

Who else could have done anything?

LOHENGRIN

That's what I intend to find out.

EDWARD

Frederick!

Edward and his men, their swords drawn, surround Frederick
and Lohengrin.

EDWARD

Let him go, knight.

LOHENGRIN

Gladly.

Lohengrin withdraws his sword. As Edward's knights draw
close, Lohengrin jumps over them and runs back towards
Antwerp.

EDWARD

After him!

FREDERICK

No, wait.

Everyone stops and turns to Frederick.

FREDERICK

He may have heard us talking about our
numbers. By the time we get there, the
palace could be fortified against us.
We'll have to consider other options.

EDWARD

But my lord--very well.

EXT. ANTWERP - A LITTLE LATER

Many knights wait tensely in the streets of Antwerp. Lohengrin and King Henry come from the direction of the Palace to the Captain of the Guard.

LOHENGRIN
Any news, Captain?

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
Several minutes ago, the lookouts reported some people moving away from the city. I daresay they're withdrawing, Sir Knight.

KING HENRY
Frederick obviously knew you'd be coming back to report his plans to me, Swan Knight. It seems to me that his wife, Ortrud, is a witch. Captain, do you know where she lives?

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
Yes, sire. It is downriver not far from here.

LOHENGRIN
If I may ask, what is Your Majesty thinking?

HENRY
I'm wondering whether Ortrud might have had anything to do with Godfrey's disappearance.

LOHENGRIN
I've been considering that, as well. It might be worth investigating.

HENRY
But it might also be dangerous, if she is indeed a witch. They're even more dangerous than the Hungarians. Speaking of the Hungarians, we'll have to discuss them in the morning.

LOHENGRIN
Certainly, Your Majesty.

Elsa approaches them.

ELSA
What's the situation?

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
Duchess, I advise you to return to the
safety of the palace.

ELSA
I will go where I please, Captain. I am
no weak, feminine flower.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
Oh--right. Very well, Duchess.

LOHENGRIN
It appears that Frederick's people are
withdrawing, Duchess. But we shouldn't
relax the guard until we're sure no
one's coming.

ELSA
Very well. What of Ortrud? I know you
were speaking of her.

LOHENGRIN
Yes. She should be investigated,
Duchess. I believe she's a witch, and
my instincts tell me she had something
to do with Godfrey's disappearance.

Elsa appears thoughtful.

ELSA
I see. Yes, I think that's a good idea.

Lohengrin and Henry look at each other for a moment.

LOHENGRIN
What are you thinking, Elsa?

ELSA
I'm thinking that if Ortrud sees you
coming, she will prepare a strong
defense. But if I go to her--

LOHENGRIN
No.

ELSA
--she might not be on her guard.

LOHENGRIN
No, Elsa. It's too dangerous. If she
did make Godfrey disappear, I hate to
think what she might do to you.

HENRY

The Swan Knight is right, Elsa. I can't let you place yourself in danger.

ELSA

Your Majesty, please.

HENRY

It's late, my dear. No doubt, you're tired after this long day. Why don't you retire to your chambers? There will be enough time to discuss this matter in the morning.

ELSA

Very well, Your Majesty. Good night, both of you.

Elsa turns around and walks towards the castle.

Lohengrin watches her go.

HENRY

What are you thinking?

LOHENGRIN

I'm thinking that she gave up much too easily. She might do something that endangers her life. Captain, have someone keep an eye on her.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Yes, sir.

INT. ELSA'S CHAMBERS

Elsa enters her chambers with her HANDMAIDEN. The Handmaiden closes the door firmly when they are inside.

HANDMAIDEN

Begging your pardon, Duchess, but I don't think this is such a good idea. Why don't you let that handsome knight handle it?

ELSA

Because I've read a great deal about the witches of Frisia, more than I've let on. When they feel threatened, they're very dangerous. I don't doubt the brave knight's ability to defeat her, but he may have to kill her before he learns about Godfrey. If I can gain her confidence, though, I might learn something. Surely, she won't be afraid of a mere woman.

HANDMAIDEN

You're no mere woman, my lady. But if you're going to do this, let's get on with it. I'll be able to keep the news of your departure silent for only a short time.

ELSA

Thank you, my dear. Fortunately, there are few who know about the secret passage leading away from my chambers.

Elsa crosses to a desk and extracts a sheathed dagger. She lifts up her skirt and straps the dagger to her leg. She changes into a set of traveling boots. Then, the handmaiden helps her into a traveling cloak that conceals her dress.

Elsa crosses to the fireplace. She lifts a lever, and a secret door opens next to the fireplace. The handmaiden hands a lit torch to Elsa.

HANDMAIDEN

Good luck, my lady.

ELSA

You, too. And thank you.

When Elsa has entered the secret passage, she closes the door.

INT. SECRET PASSAGE

Elsa passes quietly through the dank, dark passage. She takes a long stairway down to an underground chamber. She sees a few rats along the way, but they do not deter her. She makes her way across the chamber to a path leading further away.

After walking some distance, she comes to a stair that leads up to a stone doorway set at ground level. Nearby, she finds a wheel. With some effort, she turns the wheel, and the doors swing open. She climbs out of the passage.

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE ANTWERP

Antwerp is faintly visible in the distance. The sky is clear with the moon and many stars.

Outside the passage, Elsa makes her way to a tree. She opens a door within it and turns another wheel. The passage door closes with little sound. Then, she makes her way away from Antwerp. She goes downriver for some distance.

Before long, Ortrud's house is visible in the distance.

INT. HALLWAY - DUCAL PALACE

Lohengrin approaches Elsa's room. When he arrives, he knocks on the door.

LOHENGRIN

Lady Elsa, it's the Swan Knight. I hate to disturb you, but I've considered your proposal more carefully. I believe it does have merit. I'd like to discuss it with you.

He waits for a moment, but he receives no reply. He knocks again.

LOHENGRIN

Lady Elsa? Are you in there?

Still no reply.

LOHENGRIN

Oh, no.

He twists the doorknob and softly opens the door. He enters Elsa's chambers.

INT. ELSA'S CHAMBERS

Lohengrin proceeds to Elsa's bed, where it appears that Elsa is sleeping. However, when he lifts the covers from her head, a stuffed pillow is revealed.

LOHENGRIN

She's gone.

The Handmaiden pads into the room.

HANDMAIDEN
Please, sir, don't raise an alarm.

LOHENGRIN
Close the door.

The Handmaiden obeys.

LOHENGRIN
Very well, handmaiden. Where is she?

HANDMAIDEN
I hope you understand, sir, I advised her against it.

LOHENGRIN
Against what?

HANDMAIDEN
Oh, sir, she has departed to find Ortrud's place.

LOHENGRIN
I was afraid of this. How in the world did she get out of here?

HANDMAIDEN
There is a secret passageway next to the fireplace. It's an escape route that was built when the castle was.

LOHENGRIN
I see. Then here's what I'd like you to do, handmaiden. Stay in here. If anyone comes in, make sure that no one notices that the duchess is missing.

HANDMAIDEN
Gladly, sir. But what about you?

LOHENGRIN
I have to go after her. Why in the world would she do something like this?

HANDMAIDEN
She wants to know what happened to her brother. She's rarely the type to ask others for help.

LOHENGRIN
I'm beginning to understand that. Where does the secret passage come out?

HANDMAIDEN

Outside the city gates, go to the tree line and turn right. If you look carefully, you'll just barely be able to make out a door set in the ground.

LOHENGRIN

Very well. Thank you, handmaiden. I'll do my best to return her safely.

Lohengrin turns and leaves the room.

EXT. COURTYARD - DUCAL PALACE

Lohengrin goes to the palace stables. There, he speaks to a stable guard.

LOHENGRIN

Guard, please prepare me a horse.

STABLE GUARD

At this time of night, sir? What's going on?

LOHENGRIN

I need to do some more reconnaissance. I'm a skilled rider, guard. You needn't fear for the horse's safety.

STABLE GUARD

Very well, sir. I'll be right back.

The guard enters the stables.

HENRY (O.C.)

Swan Knight!

Lohengrin turns around. We turn and see King Henry approaching.

HENRY

What's the problem?

LOHENGRIN

I want to do some more reconnaissance outside town, Your Majesty. Frederick could have left some scouts hidden out there, and I wouldn't want them doing anything untoward during the night.

HENRY

Yes, it's possible. Still, I think you should get your rest. Someone else can do this.

LOHENGRIN

I've done this before, sir. I was trained with good tracking skills. I once routed out a group of hidden soldiers spying on my homeland, and that was at night, also.

Henry frowns to himself. The door for horses swings open, and the guard leads a powerful stallion out. The stallion is fitted with a saddle and a bridle.

STABLE GUARD

Your Majesty. Is there a problem?

Henry looks at the horse and then at Lohengrin.

HENRY

No. Good luck, Swan Knight. Come back safe.

LOHENGRIN

Thank you, Your Majesty. And you, guard. What's this stallion's name?

STABLE GUARD

He's named Henry.

King Henry smiles.

KING HENRY

Good name. I like him already.

Lohengrin moves his hand to the horse's nose. The horse sniffs Lohengrin's hand and then moves his muzzle underneath Lohengrin's hand. Lohengrin pats the horse's muzzle and head.

LOHENGRIN

Let's ride, Henry the horse.

Lohengrin mounts the horse.

HENRY

Keep safe out there, Swan Knight.

LOHENGRIN

I will, Your Majesty. I'll return soon.

Lohengrin leads the horse away and out of the palace.

EXT. OUTSIDE ANTWERP

Lohengrin and the horse Henry turn right as they leave Antwerp and head into the woods.

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE ANTWERP

In the woods ahead, the moonlight glints off of something silvery.

Lohengrin brings Henry the horse to a halt. When the horse has stopped moving, Lohengrin dismounts. Leading him by the bridle, Lohengrin carefully approaches the glint.

On the ground, the corner of a door is faintly visible. There are faint tracks of a woman's shoes leading away from the doorway and out of the woods towards the river.

LOHENGRIN

Elsa, where are you going?

Lohengrin mounts Henry the horse again, and they carefully follow the shoeprints.

EXT. NEAR ORTRUD'S HOUSE

Elsa cautiously approaches Ortrud's house. Frederick and Ortrud's voices are audible, but their words are indistinct.

EXT. OUTSIDE ORTRUD'S HOUSE

Frederick and Ortrud are standing outside of Ortrud's house.

FREDERICK

Oh, Ortrud, what are we to do now?
Thanks to that damned Swan Knight, all
the knights in the palace will be on
guard for me.

ORTRUD

Quit your whining, Frederick. Don't you
realize what happened? The fool has
spared your life twice already. He is a
weakling.

FREDERICK

What do you mean? My arms are sore from
swordfighting with him.

ORTRUD

That's not what I mean. He had two chances to strike you down, but he didn't. It's foolish to leave your enemies alive to hurt you. We will make him regret it.

FREDERICK

I don't see how that's possible. He's beaten me twice.

ORTRUD

That's your own fault. You shouldn't have rushed into your plan to take over the palace by force.

FREDERICK

Don't talk back to me, woman. It was all your idea to kidnap Godfrey and send him away so I could denounce Elsa and become Duke of Brabant. Your plan failed.

Ortrud holds up her right hand and seems to grip something in midair.

FREDERICK

I ought to--

Suddenly, his eyes bulge, and he makes choking sounds. He reaches to his throat uselessly.

ORTRUD

Quit blaming me for your problems, Frederick.

She relaxes her hand. Frederick, able to breathe again, gasps for air.

ORTRUD

I don't remember you objecting to my idea. Now, as I said, we need to focus on destroying that Swan Knight. Obviously, you're no match for him, so we'll have to use other methods. Are there still a few men loyal to you in the palace?

FREDERICK

Yes, of course.

ORTRUD

Good. You're going to disguise yourself and go there. This very night, if possible. Make them question the knight's motives, his refusal to give his name. If they make enough noise, even King Henry will have to take notice.

FREDERICK

Yes. It could work.

ORTRUD

In the meantime, I shall work on Elsa. She is a good girl, but she's also naïve. I must make her question the Swan Knight, also. She may be the only one whose demand he will honor.

FREDERICK

How do you expect to persuade her?

ORTRUD

You can leave that to me, dear. Why, I may even be able to convince her that the Swan Knight himself is responsible for Godfrey's disappearance, when it was us.

They both laugh.

EXT. ELSA'S HIDING PLACE

Elsa can hear them from where she is hiding. As they laugh, she puts her hand to her mouth.

ELSA

Oh, no. I can't let them do this.

She steps backward slowly. On the third step, she steps on a twig and snaps it.

EXT. OUTSIDE ORTRUD'S HOUSE

Ortrud and Frederick whirl around to the sound of the twig snapping.

FREDERICK

What was that?

They peer out. After a moment, Elsa can be seen for an instant between some trees.

FREDERICK

Elsa!

ORTRUD

Get after her! She must have overheard us.

Frederick runs off after Elsa.

After he is out of earshot, Ortrud raises her arms to the heavens.

ORTRUD

Odin, Freia, great gods and goddesses of old, help your servant in her hour of need. Help me take revenge on Duchess Elsa and on this Swan Knight. Allow Frederick to capture Elsa.

EXT. WOODS NEAR ORTRUD'S HOME

Elsa runs as fast as she can through the woods.

Frederick follows relentlessly and closes in on her.

FREDERICK

Duchess Elsa! We won't hurt you!

ELSA

Get away!

Elsa's foot hits a root protruding from the ground, and she falls with a cry.

Frederick stops next to her.

FREDERICK

Duchess, it'll be okay. We only want to help.

Elsa rolls onto her back and sits up.

ELSA

I don't believe you. I heard what you said about Godfrey. How could you, Frederick? You were supposed to protect him!

LOHENGRIN (O.C.)

Get away from her.

Elsa and Frederick look up.

Lohengrin approaches them, his sword drawn.

LOHENGRIN
Back off, Frederick.

Frederick draws his sword.

FREDERICK
I don't know how you've enchanted her,
but I won't let you use her misfortune
to take over Brabant.

ELSA
You're the one who wants to take over,
Frederick. What did you and Ortrud do
to my brother?

FREDERICK
I think you misunderstood what we were
saying.

ELSA
Don't insult my intelligence. Don't. I
could hear you two clearly.

LOHENGRIN
Speak, Frederick. Unless you're under
the witch's spell.

FREDERICK
You dare malign my wife by calling her a
witch?

LOHENGRIN
Was she not the one who prepared the
powder that you would have used to
enchant King Henry?

FREDERICK
Well--yes.

LOHENGRIN
Does she ever speak incantations to
Odin?

FREDERICK
As a matter of fact, yes. Why is that
important?

LOHENGRIN

Listen to me, Frederick. There are still clans in Frisia that worship the old gods, whose lord is Odin. Some sects seek to eliminate Christianity and powerful Christians.

FREDERICK

What? Whatever for?

LOHENGRIN

Religious hatred and zealotry rarely need reasons, Frederick. It's merely passionate fear and hatred that has gone out of control. I despair when I see good Christians condemn people for witchcraft, often when a reasonable explanation can be found.

FREDERICK

So, what's your reasonable explanation for defeating me? I have no idea who you are.

LOHENGRIN

My trainer was a superlative swordsman.

FREDERICK

And why don't you reveal your name?

LOHENGRIN

To protect my home.

FREDERICK

How noble of you. But, with a protector like you, who could possibly threaten your home?

LOHENGRIN

There are many examples. Including people like Ortrud.

FREDERICK

You know very little about her.

ELSA

Nor does anyone at the palace. To be frank, Frederick, we know more about this mysterious knight than we know about Ortrud, except where she's from and that she's your wife. I don't think there's any love between you two.

FREDERICK

You spurned my hand. What was I supposed to do when she offered her support in exchange for marriage? Ortrud has many allies in her homeland, Elsa. I'm not foolish enough to turn her down.

Soft footsteps sound in the grass. The three turn.

Ortrud approaches them.

ORTRUD

What's going on here, Frederick?

FREDERICK

I caught up to Elsa. But the unknown knight arrived just in time to be the hero.

ORTRUD

Oh, how admirable. Tell me, knight, do you enjoy keeping such an innocent girl in the dark about your identity?

LOHENGRIN

No, ma'am. But it's a rule where I come from. Now, you tell me something. What did you do to Duke Godfrey?

Ortrud laughs.

ORTRUD

You really don't know, do you? You naïve young hero. Don't you realize that it's because of him that you're here?

LOHENGRIN

He--

Lohengrin's eyes widen in horror.

LOHENGRIN

No. You didn't!

ORTRUD

Oh, yes I did.

Lohengrin points his sword at her.

LOHENGRIN

Change him back. Now.

ORTRUD

Or what, you'll kill me? I'd be amused to see you try. And if you do somehow manage it, Godfrey will die.

Clenching his teeth, Lohengrin lowers his sword.

ORTRUD

Good boy. Now get out of here.

LOHENGRIN

You haven't seen the last of me. Elsa, let's go.

Lohengrin and Elsa slowly back away from Frederick and Ortrud. Before long, they are out of sight.

FREDERICK

What now, Ortrud?

ORTRUD

Enough deception. If they want to know about my allies, they'll soon see them in plenty.

Elsa and Lohengrin approach Henry the horse.

ELSA

I don't understand, knight. What did Ortrud do to Godfrey?

Lohengrin appears reluctant.

LOHENGRIN

You know how she said I was here because of him?

ELSA

Well, yes.

LOHENGRIN

The swan guided me here.

ELSA

I don't see what that has to do with it.

LOHENGRIN

I think she turned Godfrey into the swan.

Elsa gasps.

ELSA

What? But that's impossible.

LOHENGRIN

Elsa, he led me all the way here from my home. Would an ordinary swan go to that effort?

ELSA

No, I suppose not.

Elsa begins to cry.

ELSA

Swan Knight, what are we going to do?

Lohengrin takes her into his arms gently.

LOHENGRIN

I haven't figured it out yet, but we'll do something, Elsa. I've never met a woman as brave as you are. We'd better get back to the palace.

ELSA

You're right.

Lohengrin mounts the horse, and then he helps Elsa aboard. The horse begins moving back towards the palace.

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE ANTWERP

Lohengrin stops the horse near the end of the secret tunnel.

LOHENGRIN

Here we are. You go back to your room this way, Elsa. With any luck, no one will ever know you were missing.

ELSA

Thank you, Swan Knight.

She hesitates a moment before kissing his cheek. Then, she dismounts the horse.

Elsa crosses over to the false tree and turns a wheel. The door opens in the ground. She passes into the underground. A few seconds after she has disappeared, the door closes again.

LOHENGRIN

Back to the castle, Henry.

Lohengrin sets the horse moving towards the castle at a slow trot.

As Lohengrin leaves, we see Sir Edward approach the secret door slowly on the back of a black stallion.

EDWARD

A secret doorway, is it? Lord Frederick and Lady Ortrud will be interested in this piece of news.

He turns away.

EDWARD

Hyah!

Edward and his horse move away with great speed.

EXT. OUTSIDE ANTWERP

Lohengrin guides his horse to the closed gates of Antwerp. As he nears, the gate guard peers out. The guard looks up to someone posted in the turret above and beside the gate.

GATE GUARD 3

It's the Swan Knight. Open the gate.

The gate begins to open.

LOHENGRIN

Thank you, guard. Have a safe shift.

GATE GUARD 3

Thank you, Sir Knight.

Lohengrin passes into Antwerp. The gate closes behind him.

EXT. COURTYARD - DUCAL PALACE

Lohengrin halts his horse outside the stable and dismounts.

STABLE GUARD

How was he, Sir Knight?

LOHENGRIN

Henry is an excellent steed, guard. You're to be commended.

STABLE GUARD

Thank you. Good night, sir.

LOHENGRIN

Good night.

Lohengrin moves into the palace.

INT. ENTRY HALL - DUCAL PALACE

King Henry is with the captain of the guard in the palace's entry hall. They turn to the door as it swings open.

Lohengrin enters the hall.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
Welcome back, Swan Knight.

LOHENGRIN
Thank you. What I have discovered disturbs me.

HENRY
What is it, Sir Knight?

LOHENGRIN
I managed to find Frederick and Ortrud. They are the ones responsible for Godfrey's disappearance. Further, I believe that Ortrud transformed Godfrey into the swan that guided me here.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
My God. How is that possible?

LOHENGRIN
When I was in her presence, I could sense her great powers. She is a haughty woman, and she's more dangerous than her husband. In fact, I believe that Frederick is in her power, to some extent.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
I have long known Frederick. I would never have believed him able to turn against Godfrey and Elsa as he has. Lady Ortrud must have done something to convince him to do as she wished.

LOHENGRIN
He's nothing more than a puppet to her. When he talked back to her, she threatened him.

HENRY
Wait a minute. You think him worth saving? If he had won that sword match, I doubt he'd have spared your life.

LOHENGRIN

Anyone is worth saving, Your Majesty. Most likely, Ortrud needs to exert her control over him frequently. If we stop her from doing that, I believe her influence will gradually leave Frederick.

HENRY

I see. How do you know all this, Swan Knight? You seem to know a great deal about witchcraft.

LOHENGRIN

To fight an enemy successfully, we need to understand them, Your Majesty. I have been trained in fighting sorcery.

HENRY

All right, fair enough. I hadn't thought of that, but I suppose it makes sense. For now, I think we need to get some rest.

LOHENGRIN

That's a good idea, Your Majesty. If there is anything you need, please let me know. And keep an eye out for Frederick.

HENRY

Don't worry, we will.

Lohengrin goes upstairs.

HENRY

Captain, you might want to keep an eye on the Swan Knight, just in case.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Very well, Your Majesty.

INT. ELSA'S CHAMBERS

Now in her nightgown, Elsa gazes out her window at the dark countryside.

Knocks sound on her door. She turns around.

ELSA

Come in.

The door opens to admit Lohengrin. When he has entered, he closes the door.

LOHENGRIN

Good to see you back, Duchess.

ELSA

It's all thanks to you, dear knight.

They approach each other and embrace. Elsa initiates a passionate kiss between them.

LOHENGRIN

Elsa--

ELSA

Sh. You are very brave, knight. If you asked me, I would marry you.

LOHENGRIN

Wait, Elsa. That would be wonderful, but it's not something I can do.

Elsa draws away a little bit.

ELSA

Why ever not?

LOHENGRIN

Before I married you, I would have to tell you everything about me. And I can't do that, Elsa.

ELSA

No, knight. You don't have to tell me a thing. I already know I want to spend the rest of my life with you.

LOHENGRIN

Believe me, I'm deeply honored. And I'm in love with you, too. At least give me time to consider this, Elsa, and take some time to consider it yourself.

ELSA

Very well, knight. I suppose you're right. It's best to know as much as possible about the person you want to marry, isn't it?

LOHENGRIN

That's what I've been taught.

ELSA

Very well.

Elsa draws completely away from him and turns to the window.

ELSA

Any idea what Frederick and Ortrud's next move will be?

LOHENGRIN

Not at the moment. But I wouldn't put anything past them. Ortrud may have allies that she can call on with short notice. Elsa, I'm going to get some rest in preparation.

ELSA

Very well, Swan Knight. Sleep well.

LOHENGRIN

You, too.

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE ANTWERP

Edward guides Frederick, Ortrud, and Patrick into the area with the concealed doorway.

EDWARD

It was in this area.

FREDERICK

How did they open the door?

Edward inspects one of the trees.

EDWARD

Ah, here it is.

Edward turns the wheel in the tree.

Patrick, who is standing on one of the door panels, is thrown to the ground with a yelp as the doors swing open. Patrick picks himself up.

FREDERICK

Very good. Ortrud, I take it your allies are on their way.

ORTRUD

Yes. They should be here by morning.

FREDERICK

Good. You'll have the best chance of getting in unnoticed if you go by yourself. Good luck, my dear.

ORTRUD

You too, Frederick.

She kisses his cheek. His skin there withers for a moment before recovering.

Edward and Patrick notice this and share a look of concern.

ORTRUD

I'll be back soon, gentlemen.

Ortrud climbs into the passageway. When she's far enough in, Edward and Patrick close the door behind her.

FREDERICK

Now, we need to round up more of my supporters. Patrick, you're probably the least conspicuous of the three of us. Go into town, and carefully figure out who's still loyal to me. In particular, try to find out if the captain of the guard is still one of them.

PATRICK

Will do, Frederick. If he isn't?

FREDERICK

Then be even more careful. And just to jog your memory, I still remember your extracurricular activities.

PATRICK

I needed no reminding, sir. I'll keep that in mind in case I get caught.

FREDERICK

Good man.

INT. ELSA'S CHAMBERS

Elsa is sleeping peacefully in her bed.

With soft scraping, the secret passage opens and admits Ortrud to the room. Ortrud silently approaches Elsa and sprinkles some powder on her.

ORTRUD

Sleep deeply while I'm here, Duchess
Elsa.

Ortrud crosses over to the door and opens it carefully.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE ELSA'S CHAMBERS

Ortrud pokes her head outside the door to Elsa's room and looks about carefully.

No one is in the hall to the left or to the right.

Ortrud pulls up her cowl, hiding her face, and slips into the corridor as she closes the door behind her. She creeps down the corridor with care and pauses pensively before each door.

Finally, she comes up short in front of one door.

ORTRUD

Ah.

She looks around again before opening the door with care. As the door opens, we can see Lohengrin lying asleep in the bed.

INT. LOHENGRIN'S CHAMBERS

After entering Lohengrin's room, Ortrud closes the door. She creeps towards Lohengrin's bed. Once there, she sprinkles some of her powder on him.

ORTRUD

Sleep deeply, knight. I hope you enjoy
my sleeping powder for the duration of
my stay.

Looking around, she finds his helmet. She lifts it up and examines it but finds no significant markings, aside from the swan device on the front. She examines the breastplate, mail shirt, leggings, boots, shield, and everything else, but still she finds nothing significant.

At last she turns to his sword and draws it from the scabbard. She looks it over and shrugs. She moves to pick up the scabbard.

Suddenly, a mark on the blade near the hilt glints in the moonlight.

Her jaw falls open. She goes to the window and holds the sword blade up to the moonlight. The light reflects silvery markings on the sword. As Ortrud examines these markings, she begins to shake her head slowly.

ORTRUD
Oh, no. Oh, no!

She takes the sword back to its scabbard and puts it back in almost too loudly. She winces and then puts the sword and scabbard down quietly.

Then, she goes to the door and opens it slightly. After looking around, she leaves the room and closes the door.

INT. HALLWAY

Looking around with care, Ortrud runs back towards Elsa's room, her heels clacking faintly on the stone floor.

A man's heavy footfalls begin to sound from behind her.

Ortrud reaches Elsa's room. Without bothering to look, she thrusts the door open and shuts it behind her.

The Captain of the Guard comes around a corner and sees the door to Elsa's room closing.

INT. ELSA'S CHAMBERS

Ortrud rushes to the fireplace.

ORTRUD
Secret passage.

Intently, Ortrud looks for the means to open the door to the secret passage.

Suddenly, heavy knocks sound on the main door to the hall.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD (O.C.)
Duchess? Are you all right?

Elsa moans softly in her bed.

Gritting her teeth, Ortrud keeps looking. She moves a lever, and the passage door begins to slide open.

Heavy knocks sound on the door from outside again.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD (O.C.)
Duchess? What's happening in there?

The passage door is almost open when Elsa's voice sounds behind Ortrud.

ELSA
What? Who's there?

Ortrud does not turn around. As soon as the passage door is open, she bolts through it.

ELSA
Halt!

INT. SECRET PASSAGE

Ortrud halts just long enough to pull a cord that closes the door to the secret passage.

INT. ELSA'S CHAMBERS

Elsa springs out of bed. Immediately, she is woozy.

The door from the hall opens to admit the captain of the guard.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
Duchess!

He catches her as she is about to fall and helps her back into bed.

ELSA
Thank you, Captain. Someone...

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
What is it?

ELSA
Someone escaped through the secret passage. I couldn't see who--dressed in robes.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
There's a secret passage here?

ELSA
Yes. Behind the fireplace. In the top left--a secret lever opens it.

The captain finds the secret lever and opens the door to the secret passage.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Amazing.

The captain closes the door from the hallway.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Duchess, I'm going to pursue this person. I believe that he--or she--was in the Swan Knight's chambers. I don't know what this person was up to.

ELSA

Very well, Captain. The cord that closes the passage door is not far inside. Be safe.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

You, too.

The captain enters the passage.

INT. SECRET PASSAGE

Finding the cord, the captain closes the passage door. Then, he takes off down the passage.

INT. ELSA'S CHAMBER

Elsa rubs her eyes.

ELSA

The knight.

Elsa gets up from bed carefully. As she does, she notices some powder on her sleepwear.

ELSA

What's this? Powder of some kind? Is this what's making me so drowsy?

As she pats the powder off her clothing, she heads to the door. She opens the door and exits her room.

INT. HALLWAY

Elsa moves down the hall to Lohengrin's room. She knocks on his door.

ELSA

Swan Knight? Swan Knight?

After several seconds with no response, she opens the door. Lohengrin is in deep sleep.

INT. LOHENGRIN'S ROOM

Elsa stops beside Lohengrin's bed.

ELSA
More powder.

She gently brushes the powder off of him. Then, she shakes him gently.

ELSA
Swan Knight.

Lohengrin moans. Elsa shakes him again.

ELSA
Swan Knight, get up.

Lohengrin opens his eyes and looks up at her.

LOHENGRIN
Elsa? What's going on?

ELSA
Someone was in here a few moments ago. They escaped through the secret passage in my room.

Lohengrin sits up.

LOHENGRIN
Who was it?

ELSA
I don't know. I want to make sure you're all right, and you're not missing anything.

Lohengrin stands carefully. She helps steady him.

LOHENGRIN
Thank you. I feel so drowsy.

ELSA
Whoever it was used some sort of sleeping powder. They used it on me, too.

Lohengrin checks his possessions.

LOHENGRIN

Everything seems in place. Except--

Lohengrin focuses on his sword, which is in its scabbard. He picks it up by the scabbard.

LOHENGRIN

The sword is in the scabbard backwards.

He edges the sword out and catches sight of the writing that Ortrud noticed earlier. Lohengrin appears concerned.

LOHENGRIN

Oh, no. Whoever it was must have seen this.

ELSA

What is it?

Lohengrin removes the sword and turns it around before putting it back in.

LOHENGRIN

If they can figure out what it means, they might figure out how to use it against me. And you say they took the secret passage to escape?

ELSA

Yes. The captain of the guards went after them.

Lohengrin frowns.

LOHENGRIN

The captain?

ELSA

Yes. What's wrong?

LOHENGRIN

There could be a problem.

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE ANTWERP

Frederick waits beside a tree. The door begins to open. Ortrud climbs out to the ground. Frederick comes over to her.

ORTRUD

Draw your sword. Someone's after me.

Frederick draws his sword and steps in front of Ortrud.

Footsteps come from inside the passage, and the Captain of the Guard rushes out into the night with his sword drawn. He stops when he faces Frederick.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
Frederick!

FREDERICK
Captain. What is it to be?

The captain sees Ortrud behind Frederick and frowns.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
Give up that woman, and I might consider letting you go.

FREDERICK
Not on your life, Captain. She's my wife.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
Frederick, she's a witch!

FREDERICK
Then how is she all that different from that mysterious knight?

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
The knight has not sought to harm us, unlike Ortrud. I don't know what she just did to Duchess Elsa, but the duchess could barely wake up.

ORTRUD
Don't you think she deserves it after what she did to her brother?

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
From what I understand, Ortrud, you are responsible for what happened to the duke. For that, I will bring you to justice.

FREDERICK
En garde, Captain.

Frederick attacks the captain. The captain defends himself ably, and they swordfight around the area. After some time, it is clear that they are evenly matched.

From cover, Ortrud makes gestures with her hands, ending with a shove towards the captain.

With a shout, the Captain of the Guard is knocked to the ground by an invisible force. Frederick runs him through with his sword. After a moment in tense pain, the Captain collapses dead against the ground.

Frederick cleans his sword against the ground.

FREDERICK

You didn't need to do that. I had him.

ORTRUD

Sure you did, dear. Now, let's get out of here. We have to get ready to face that knight.

After closing the secret passage, Ortrud leads the way towards her house.

Frederick hurries after her.

FREDERICK

Wait. What do you mean? What did you find out?

ORTRUD

It's much worse than I thought, Frederick. That Swan Knight--he's a Knight of the Holy Grail.

FREDERICK

What? How do you know this?

ORTRUD

I found a mark on his sword. It only appears in the light of the moon. One of my allies who fled the Grail Knights described the very same symbol that was on this knight's sword. The Holy Grail itself protects the Grail Knights from harm, but only as long as they do not reveal their names or origins. I don't have a sure way to take away that power, but I have an idea that just might work.

FREDERICK

I hope so. Let's get back.

EXT. WOODS AT THE SECRET PASSAGE EXIT

The door opens. Lohengrin and Elsa, each with a torch, carefully come out of the secret passage.

Elsa points.

ELSA

Oh, my God. Look, knight!

Lohengrin looks where she's pointing.

The captain of the guard is lying dead on the ground.

Lohengrin kneels next to him, careful not to touch the captain's blood.

LOHENGRIN

He was killed here. A sword wound to his abdomen. It looks like he was knocked down suddenly before he was killed. Ortrud must have done it. She could have been the one who crept into the palace through the passage.

ELSA

How did she find the secret passage?

Lohengrin stands up.

LOHENGRIN

It could be that one of Frederick's allies saw you use it. I wonder if one of his allies is in Antwerp now to consolidate support for him.

ELSA

Then they must be stopped. But what about the captain here?

LOHENGRIN

I'll get someone to help me get him out of here. For now, let's get back to the palace.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PALACE GATES - PREDAWN TWILIGHT

Disguised in robes, Patrick approaches a guard, HAROLD, posted at the palace gates.

PATRICK

Hello, Sir Harold.

Harold gasps and looks around. Then, he leans towards Patrick and addresses him in confidence.

HAROLD

What are you doing here, Sir Patrick? We have orders to arrest Lord Frederick on sight.

PATRICK

Are you sure you want to do that,
Harold? You used to support him.

HAROLD

That was before he accused Elsa of
killing her own brother. She isn't
capable of it, Patrick.

PATRICK

That's all in the past. Harold, this is
about that mysterious knight. Don't you
think he should have to tell everyone
where he's from?

HAROLD

I will admit, I have misgivings about
him.

PATRICK

And how about the way he defeated
Frederick in battle?

HAROLD

I have no problem with that. Sir
Frederick is a good swordsman, but
obviously he's not the best. The Swan
Knight, on the other hand, appears to be
exceptionally skilled. I see nothing
suspicious about that.

PATRICK

But Harold--

HAROLD

Patrick, enough. You won't find me
supporting Lord Frederick. And we've
been friends, so I'm warning you to stop
before I have to arrest you for
seditious activities.

PATRICK

Very well.

Gritting his teeth, Patrick moves away. He approaches a
shadowed corner, where SIR STEPHEN is waiting.

SIR STEPHEN

Any luck with Harold, Patrick?

PATRICK

No. It seems like a third of Lord Frederick's old supporters are seeing things differently. Fortunately, two thirds, such as you, see things his way. They will wait for his signal in the morning, and then they will make way for him to enter the palace.

STEPHEN

Good. Patrick, how about you get back to Lord Frederick? I'll make sure things stay ready for him in the morning.

PATRICK

Very well, Stephen. Thank you. I'll get back to him right away.

Patrick goes towards the town exit.

EXT. ELEVATED WALKWAY OF THE PALACE

King Henry and Lohengrin approach a WALKWAY GUARD, who is gazing down into town.

HENRY

Report, guard.

WALKWAY GUARD

There seem to be a great deal of comings and goings for the hour, Your Majesty. In particular, I thought I saw Sir Patrick wandering around town. A few moments ago, he spoke with Sir Harold, who's on duty at the palace gates.

HENRY

Sir Patrick?

WALKWAY GUARD

A middle-aged knight. He has frequently followed Lord Frederick's lead in the past. He's just headed for the town gates.

HENRY

I see. Keep up the good work, guard.

WALKWAY GUARD

Thank you, Your Majesty.

Henry and Lohengrin turn away.

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD

Henry and Lohengrin approach the Palace gates, where Sir Harold is conversing with another guard.

HENRY
Sir Harold.

Harold turns to the king and salutes.

HAROLD
Your Majesty. What can I do for you?

HENRY
Did you just talk with Sir Patrick?

HAROLD
Yes, sir, I did.

HENRY
What did he have to say?

HAROLD
Well, sir, he tried to recruit me for Lord Frederick. Unsuccessfully, I assure you.

HENRY
I hope so, guard. I've had a report of him going around town. How many allies does Frederick have?

HAROLD
He has several, but most of us here are loyal to the duchess. I think it's terrible the way he tried to drag Duchess Elsa through the mud over Duke Godfrey's disappearance.

HENRY
I'm glad you think that way, Sir Harold. If you see Sir Patrick again, you are to arrest him on sight. Understood?

HAROLD
Understood, Your Majesty.

Henry and Lohengrin go back towards the center of the courtyard.

HENRY
What do you think, knight?

LOHENGRIN

I think Lord Frederick is preparing to attack the palace. Sir Patrick was probably preparing Frederick's followers for a signal.

HENRY

Damn. When I heard about the situation here, I never suspected it would turn this volatile. And you say the Captain of the Guard's body is still out there?

LOHENGRIN

Yes, Your Majesty.

HENRY

All right. I'd like you to choose a couple of guards and go out and retrieve him.

LOHENGRIN

I'll do that.

EXT. CITY GATES OUTSIDE ANTWERP

Mounted on a horse, Lohengrin leads two mounted guards and a riderless horse out of the city. They turn towards the wooded area where the exit of the secret passage is.

EXT. WOODS AT THE SECRET PASSAGE EXIT

Lohengrin and his companions stop at the body of the Captain of the Guard. After they stop, they dismount.

LOHENGRIN

Come on. Let's get him up on the horse. If Frederick's got any sense, his people will be watching this area.

The three gently lift up the captain and carefully place him on the riderless horse. As they finish, an arrow whizzes over their heads and hits a nearby tree.

LOHENGRIN

Let's get out of here.

As the three mount their horses, three men run out of the woods and aim arrows at them. Lohengrin and company get moving in time to evade the enemies' arrows.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE ANTWERP CITY GATES

Lohengrin and companions leave the tree cover and head to the city gates.

Behind them, a group of mounted enemies emerges, shooting arrows.

As Lohengrin and companions reach the city gates, one companion gets an arrow in the arm. He yelps but keeps going. When they have passed through the gates, the gates close, barring the enemy group.

EXT. ANTWERP

Lohengrin and company pass through Antwerp to the palace.

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD

As the group passes into the courtyard, the wounded guard groggily dismounts and falls down.

Henry and some Thuringian knights come near.

HENRY

Get this man to help.

Two of the Thuringian knights help the wounded guard towards the palace keep.

LOHENGRIN

As I feared, Your Majesty, Frederick had men lying in wait. They chased us to the gate.

HENRY

This is bad.

Henry turns to his knights.

HENRY

Men, help the knight get the captain to the mausoleum. The rest of you, prepare to defend the city.

EXT. OUTSIDE ORTRUD'S HOUSE

At Ortrud's house, over a hundred knights have gathered. At their front, Edward steps forward to Frederick.

EDWARD

Here are the men who joined us from their farms, my lord. Sir Patrick reports that a third of our allies in the city are prepared to help us get in.

FREDERICK

Good work, Sir Edward. We'll march on the city on my order.

Frederick turns to Ortrud, who is hunched over a glowing ball.

FREDERICK

All right, Ortrud. I can't wait much longer. Where are your allies?

ORTRUD

You need to learn patience, my husband. They're almost here.

In a moment, faint high-pitched sounds can be heard from above. The two look up.

We look up in the sky to see a group of black-clad forms flying overhead. In all, there are about twenty-five of them.

We turn back to Ortrud and Frederick. Frederick's mouth is wide open in shock.

ORTRUD

There they are, my dear. All ready to help.

There are faint murmurs from Frederick's men.

In a moment, Frederick shakes himself off.

FREDERICK

And they'll follow my commands?

ORTRUD

I must be with you to relay your commands, but yes.

FREDERICK

What kind of man takes his wife into battle?

ORTRUD

Don't be such a chauvinist. You need me with you to communicate with them in the air. And all of them are women, too. The men can't fly.

Frederick grits his teeth.

FREDERICK

Very well. We mount my horse. Everyone! To your horses!

Everyone who isn't on horseback yet mounts up. Frederick and Ortrud both mount Frederick's horse. Frederick rides forth to address his men.

FREDERICK

Men, I thank you for answering my call. That nameless knight has bewitched Duchess Elsa and King Henry, and he is stealing the honor of Brabant. We must defeat him at all cost. Forward to Antwerp!

Frederick leads the charge to Antwerp.

EXT. ELEVATED WALKWAY - ANTWERP PALACE

Lohengrin and the king are gazing out over the countryside towards Ortrud's house. Elsa approaches them. She wields a bow and a quiver full of arrows. She is clad in mail that fits her stature.

ELSA

How is the situation, Your Majesty?

HENRY

Duchess, you should get to safety.

ELSA

With respect, Your Majesty, if the castle is overrun, it will no longer be safe. I will defend my home.

HENRY

Very well, Duchess. We're still waiting for the enemy to approach. The knight here is watching for suspicious activity within town to see whether Frederick's supporters will act up.

ELSA

Very good. I--

She squints as she looks in the sky.

ELSA

Look there.

Henry shades his eyes with his hand.

In the distance, a group of flying forms can be seen.

HENRY

Swan Knight, what in heaven's name are those?

Lohengrin looks at the approaching shapes.

LOHENGRIN

They're witches on broomsticks, Your Majesty. Don't let them get too close, or they can attack with fiery arrows. Get the archers shooting.

HENRY

Very well. Archers! Aim for those witches!

Including Elsa, the archers aim for the approaching witches. There are about twenty archers on the walkway.

HENRY

Ready, aim, fire!

The archers open fire.

EXT. SKIES WEST OF ANTWERP

Elsa's arrow finds its mark, shooting a witch off her broomstick and into the river below. The water sizzles as she plunges in. A couple other arrows also knock witches down.

However, the other arrows miss, and the remaining witches continue on course.

EXT. ELEVATED WALKWAY - ANTWERP PALACE

Henry gazes out at the approaching witches. They are getting close to the city wall.

HENRY

Good job, Elsa. You got one. Archers! Prepare another volley!

The archers load their arrows again and take aim.

HENRY
Ready, aim, fire!

The archers open fire again.

EXT. SKIES NEAR ANTWERP

The witches move to dodge the arrows coming among them. Elsa's arrow strikes another one, and five more arrows hit witches. All six witches fall to the river below.

Sixteen witches remain. They draw their arrows. Three of them set fire to the tips of their arrows. As one, they all fire on the palace archers.

EXT. ELEVATED WALKWAY - ANTWERP PALACE

HENRY
They're firing! Shields!

The archers pull out their shields to guard against the witches' arrows. The flaming arrows all come towards Lohengrin, but when they strike his shield, the fire goes out.

The remaining arrows either hit the archers' shields or miss.

HENRY
Prepare another volley! Fire when ready!

The archers quickly get their bows and arrows ready, aim, and fire.

Most of them find their targets, knocking thirteen of the witches off their brooms and into the river.

But the three remaining witches are now over the city. Each crone points a hand at the elevated walkway and shoots a flaming ball of fire. Three archers are struck with flames and begin to burn.

LOHENGRIN
Drop to the ground and roll!

The archers obey. Two manage to put the flames out, but one screams as he is burned alive and dies.

The three witches alight on the walkway and pull out wands. They aim their wands at Lohengrin and open fire, but he blocks their fire with his shield. Wielding his sword, he advances on them and cuts their wands. They turn to flee but are blocked by a group of archers who have drawn their swords.

LOHENGRIN

You cannot win. Give yourselves up.

The witches put their hands up.

LEAD WITCH

This is only the beginning, knight.
Look at the city gates.

Lohengrin looks down towards the gates and gasps.

The city gates are being opened to welcome Frederick and some one hundred knights into the city.

HENRY

This was a diversion.

LEAD WITCH

Oh, yes. Soon, Lady Ortrud will be your mistress.

HENRY

What about Frederick?

The witches laugh.

LEAD WITCH

Frederick? That simpleton couldn't plan a coup if he tried. Soon, he will know who's really in charge in his marriage. You men always think you're so smart.

HENRY

Enough. Men, take these ladies into custody, and prepare to repel Frederick's forces.

As a group of Saxons closes in on the witches, the witches propel themselves over the wall and land in the river. The water hisses as they go in.

ELSA

Why did the water boil like that?

LOHENGRIN

I'll have to explain it later. We've got trouble. Frederick's men are nearly to the palace gate.

Below, defenders are attacking and delaying many of Frederick's knights, but Frederick himself and a core group of about twenty knights are advancing unmolested towards the city.

HENRY

Lord Frederick, hold! Reconsider what you're doing. If you attack this palace, you will attack your king, which is treason.

FREDERICK

Your Majesty, I have no choice. It's clear to me that this unknown knight has bewitched you and Duchess Elsa both. I will only hold my attack if he reveals his identity and where he is from. Your Majesty, I urge you, command him to reveal himself to you.

Henry turns to Lohengrin for a moment. Then, he turns to Frederick.

HENRY

Lord Frederick, I can safely tell you that I am not in this knight's power. I admit, I am uncomfortable not knowing his name or origin. However, he has dealt honorably with me in his time here. I will not compel him to reveal himself.

FREDERICK

What about the captain of the guard's corpse?

HENRY

The captain was not killed by the knight's blade, Lord Frederick. I have had the chance to look at his body. The wound was too small, and the knight's blade too wide.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PALACE GATES

Frederick grits his teeth.

FREDERICK

Your Majesty, what if he is the one who is responsible for Duke Godfrey's disappearance?

HENRY

You're sounding desperate, Frederick. I'm warning you now, stand down. Any blood that is spilled will be on your hands.

Ortrud leans forward and speaks into Frederick's ear.

ORTRUD

He is afraid, my dear. Let's do it.

As her breath strikes his ear, his ear withers momentarily. When she stops speaking, his ear recovers.

Frederick draws his sword.

FREDERICK

I'm sorry, Your Majesty, but I can't stand down. If I must commit treason to free you of the knight's influence, then so be it. Ortrud, if you will be so kind.

Ortrud points at the sturdy, beautiful wooden gate and sets fire to it.

EXT. ELEVATED WALKWAY

HENRY

My God. She's set fire to the gate. Everyone! Prepare to defend the palace! Elsa, this time I mean it. Get to safety.

ELSA

Very well, Your Majesty.

Elsa goes into the palace.

INT. PALACE HALLWAY

Elsa's handmaiden is waiting just inside the hallway.

HANDMAIDEN

Oh, my lady, it's so good to see you safe.

ELSA

We'd better get to my room and make sure that reinforcements are not trying to sneak in through the secret passage.

Elsa hurries down the hallway.

HANDMAIDEN

But my lady!

The handmaiden hurries after Elsa.

EXT. PALACE GATE

Frederick and his forces have dismounted their horses. As the gate collapses, they rush through. Immediately, Henry's forces set upon them.

Frederick, Ortrud, Edward, and Patrick make their way around the melee towards the entry to the palace keep.

PATRICK

Why are we headed this way? The best way to get to the knight is to go up the far wall.

FREDERICK

We're not facing the knight directly. His weakness is Elsa.

Amid the fighting, they slip into the palace keep.

EXT. ELEVATED WALKWAY

The melee below is fierce, with no side having a clear advantage.

Lohengrin fires arrows into the melee. His arrows strike several of Frederick's knights in the arm, disabling them. This helps to swing the odds in the defenders' favor.

HENRY

Knight! Frederick is slipping into the keep with a few of his men.

Lohengrin looks down at the entry to the keep.

Patrick is slipping into the keep, closing the door behind him.

LOHENGRIN

They must be going after Elsa.

Henry takes up a bow.

HENRY
I'll deal with things out here. You go
help her.

Lohengrin takes the door into the palace.

Henry aims for one of Frederick's men in the melee.

HENRY
All right. Mess with King Henry the
Fowler, will you?

INT. PALACE HALLWAY

Frederick and Edward fight fiercely, knocking out the guards
that face them in the corridors.

ORTRUD
You ought to kill them, Frederick. If
they come to, they could cause trouble.

FREDERICK
I'm not going to kill them just for the
hell of it, Ortrud. Let's go.

They make their way to Elsa's chambers. When they arrive,
Frederick pounds on the door.

FREDERICK
Elsa, this is Frederick. I just want to
talk. Will you let me in?

ELSA (O.C.)
Not on your life.

FREDERICK
I tried asking nicely.

Frederick backs away from the door. Ortrud conjures a blast
of air that slams the door open.

Ready with a bow and arrow, Elsa immediately fires an arrow
into Patrick's gut. Gurgling, Patrick falls to the floor.

INT. ELSA'S CHAMBERS

Edward rushes into the room and lunges for Elsa, but she
rolls out of the way and draws her sword. As he notices her
sword, he backs away.

EDWARD

Why don't you put that sword away, my lady, before someone gets hurt?

ELSA

If you want to take it away, go right ahead, Sir Edward.

Edward draws his sword.

EDWARD

If you insist.

Edward executes a brutal lunge. Elsa parries the lunge, using the momentum to bring her sword around and slash at Edward. He parries her slash clumsily. As the fight goes on, his lack of finesse costs him the match. Elsa parries another thrust and swipes his hand with her sword.

EDWARD

Yah!

Edward drops his sword and holds his bleeding hand.

ELSA

Who's next?

Frederick claps his hands in a mocking manner as he and Ortrud step into the room.

FREDERICK

Very good, Duchess. Clearly, you learned your swordfighting well. Unfortunately, I won't be so easily humiliated. Ortrud?

Ortrud raises her hands, and a dark cloud flows forward from her hands to Elsa's face.

Elsa tries to dodge out of the way and to cut the cloud with her sword, but nothing works. The cloud engulfs her head. She coughs and collapses to her knees.

Ortrud cuts off the dark cloud. Frederick swiftly gets behind Elsa and takes her securely with his sword near her neck.

ELSA

Let me go!

FREDERICK

Save your strength, Duchess. Ortrud, let's get out of here.

INT. PALACE HALLWAY

Ortrud leaves Elsa's room first. Frederick then drags Elsa out.

ELSA
Just wait until the Swan Knight gets here.

FREDERICK
That's what we're counting on, my dear.

Footsteps can be heard approaching from the distance.

LOHENGRIN (O.C.)
Elsa!

His sword drawn, Lohengrin rounds the corner and comes toward Elsa's room. He stops near Frederick, Elsa, and Ortrud.

LOHENGRIN
Release her, Frederick.

FREDERICK
I'll be glad to, knight, on one condition. Reveal your name and origin. Otherwise, Elsa dies.

ELSA
Don't tell him a thing, Swan Knight.

Lohengrin grits his teeth.

LOHENGRIN
My code forbids me from letting people die to protect my secret. Very well, Frederick. But it will be in front of everyone.

FREDERICK
Of course, knight. Sheathe your sword, and lead the way.

Lohengrin sheathes his sword and begins to lead the way out.

Clearly in pain, Edward comes out of Elsa's room. His wound is still bleeding.

EDWARD
Frederick. My hand.

LOHENGRIN

There's an infirmary on the lower level to take care of the wounded. Go see them.

FREDERICK

How do I know they won't kill him?

ELSA

Oh, get real, Frederick. The doctors have no interest in killing people. You know them as well as I do.

FREDERICK

I suppose that's true. Go ahead, Edward.

EDWARD

Thank you.

Edward leaves.

Lohengrin leads the way to the elevated walkway. The others follow.

EXT. ELEVATED WALKWAY

The fight is nearly over. Frederick's forces have all but surrendered, but many are wounded on both sides.

King Henry disarms an opponent, who surrenders.

The door from inside opens to allow Lohengrin and the others out onto the walkway.

FREDERICK

Hold, Your Majesty. I have the Duchess.

HENRY

Frederick! Release her.

FREDERICK

I have told the unknown knight my condition for doing so. He must reveal his identity and his origin once and for all to save her life.

HENRY

What? How dare you. Men, take aim.

Henry's archers aim for Frederick.

Frederick's sword cuts slightly into Elsa's neck, drawing a little blood.

FREDERICK

Do not toy with me, Your Majesty.

LOHENGRIN

Your Majesty, please ask your men to lower their bows. I have already agreed to reveal who I am.

HENRY

You don't need to do this, knight.

LOHENGRIN

I cannot allow my secret to endanger anyone, Your Majesty. And I am deeply in love with Duchess Elsa.

Everyone falls silent for a moment.

Henry nods to his archers. They lower their bows.

HENRY

Very well, knight. Go ahead.

LOHENGRIN

I come from a distant land where there is a magnificent castle called Montsalvat. The castle's temple houses the Holy Grail, the same vessel that caught Lord Jesus's blood as he died on the cross over a thousand years ago. The Grail has performed many miracles in the past. Only the purest men may guard it, the Knights of the Grail. Many years ago, Perceval cleansed the land of a great evil and became king. Since then, many Grail Knights have gone into the world under the Grail's protection to right monstrous evils. All Knights must remain anonymous while abroad; if they are discovered, they lose the Grail's protection. I am one of the Grail Knights, and also King Perceval's son. My name is Lohengrin. I was sent here to right the wrong done to Duchess Elsa and her brother.

There is muttering among the spectators.

Frederick and Elsa are both in shock.

ELSA

Oh, wondrous Lohengrin!

Elsa moves Frederick's sword aside and then rushes to Lohengrin's side. They embrace each other passionately.

FREDERICK

My God. What have I done?

ORTRUD

Be quiet, you fool.

Frederick frowns at her.

FREDERICK

I allowed you to manipulate me, you faithless woman. But Prince Lohengrin's story has opened my eyes. Your Majesty, I have the truth for you.

ORTRUD

I told you to shut up!

She raises her hands, and a lightning bolt blasts down on Frederick from the heavens, knocking him to the ground.

Lohengrin draws away from Elsa and draws his sword. Henry draws his sword, as well.

HENRY

Lady Ortrud, I already know the truth. You transformed Duke Godfrey into a swan.

ORTRUD

That's correct, Your Majesty. Now, with the help of the ancient, true gods, I will destroy all of you.

She raises her hands. The skies darken with stormy clouds. Lightning begins to strike down.

LOHENGRIN

Everyone find cover!

People scramble for cover under overhangs or inside doorways.

Lohengrin holds his shield over him and Elsa.

LOHENGRIN

Elsa, get inside.

ELSA

No! I can't let you face this witch alone.

Everyone aside from Lohengrin, Elsa, Ortrud, and Frederick has now gone to cover. A massive lightning bolt strikes down on Lohengrin's shield, but the shield deflects the blast away.

Another lightning bolt hits an overhang, causing some bricks to fall down. The people sheltered there shrink back with screams of panic.

Lohengrin and Elsa slowly advance on Ortrud, her hands still raised. They stagger as a sudden gale blows into them.

A bow skitters across the ground. Elsa throws her foot out and stops it. Carefully, she bends down and picks it up.

Another lightning bolt blazes down onto Lohengrin's shield. He deflects it again, but he nearly buckles to his knees.

LOHENGRIN

I can't take much more, Elsa. Shoot her.

ELSA

I don't have an arrow!

Suddenly, a swan's cry sounds over the torrential wind. A white swan battles the wind to fly from the river over the palace wall.

Elsa sees it.

ELSA

Is that ... Godfrey?

The swan dives down to an abandoned quiver and picks up three arrows in its beak. Then, it struggles to get back in the air, and slowly makes its way to Lohengrin and Elsa.

ORTRUD

No!

A lightning bolt shoots down from the sky and sizzles the swan's tail feathers, but the swan keeps going. It lands uncertainly near Lohengrin and Elsa.

Elsa takes the arrows from it. She nocks the first arrow in the bow and takes aim. She shoots it, but the wind blows it off course. The arrow goes wide of Ortrud and imbeds itself into the wall.

LOHENGRIN

Try again!

Below, the wind is beginning to rip leaves off nearby trees.

A lightning bolt shoots down onto the palace's cross, blasting the head of it off. It comes down into the courtyard with a massive crash.

Elsa aims and fires her second arrow. It seems to be on a true course to Ortrud's heart. However, a lightning bolt comes down and knocks the arrow out of the sky.

LOHENGRIN

Better. Try again.

ELSA

I've only got one left. This better work.

She nocks the last arrow and begins to aim.

Suddenly, Frederick stumbles to his feet behind Ortrud and holds her still.

ORTRUD

Frederick! What are you doing?

FREDERICK

Elsa! Aim true!

Gritting her teeth, Elsa takes careful aim. When she is ready, she fires. The arrow flies through the air and imbeds itself into Ortrud's heart.

Frederick lets Ortrud go as Ortrud shrieks.

ORTRUD

No! Ancient gods, forgive me! Your faithful servant has failed you.

She falls dead to the floor. Almost immediately, the skies begin to clear, and the wind dies down.

Also, the swan begins to glow.

Henry and others begin to emerge from cover.

HENRY

What's happening to the swan?

There is no time to respond, as the glow becomes blinding and changes to a human shape.

Everyone has to cover their eyes against the glow. When they can see again, they are amazed.

Godfrey stands before them, looking himself over.

ELSA
Godfrey!

GODFREY
Elsa!

Elsa and Godfrey embrace tightly.

ELSA
Dear brother, I never thought I'd see you again.

They come apart, and Godfrey kneels to Henry.

GODFREY
Your Majesty.

HENRY
Arise, Duke Godfrey.

Godfrey gets to his feet.

HENRY
It's good to see you as yourself. How are you feeling?

GODFREY
I'm feeling quite well. It's certainly good to be human again.

With a sudden grunt, Lohengrin falls to his knees. Elsa is by his side instantly.

ELSA
Lohengrin, what's wrong?

LOHENGRIN
The power of the Holy Grail is leaving me.

Elsa helps Lohengrin to his feet.

LOHENGRIN
Forgive me, everyone, but I must return home.

HENRY

Won't you reconsider, knight? I was hoping that you would help me by leading the forces of Brabant in the east.

LOHENGRIN

The rules are quite strict, Your Majesty. But do not fear. I'm confident that the German people will prevail and will never fall to any forces in the east.

HENRY

I appreciate that, Lohengrin. Have a safe trip back to Montsalvat.

ELSA

Lohengrin, wait. I would like to come with you.

LOHENGRIN

Elsa, are you certain? It's a long journey to Montsalvat.

ELSA

I love you.

They gaze into each other's eyes.

LOHENGRIN

You should make sure it's all right with Godfrey.

ELSA

You're right. Godfrey--

GODFREY

Of course, dear sister. You should follow your heart's desire. I can lead Brabant to help Germany, if Frederick is willing to put the past behind us and help me.

A gasp rises from the crowd.

Frederick's jaw drops.

FREDERICK

You would be willing to forgive what I've done? Thanks to me, Ortrud could have destroyed Antwerp.

GODFREY

True, but you were under Ortrud's control most of the time. I'm willing to give you a chance, Frederick.

FREDERICK

Thank you, Godfrey. I will not disappoint you.

HENRY

Very well. But I will also keep my eyes on you, Frederick. Now, it's time to see Prince Lohengrin and Duchess Elsa off.

EXT. OAK TREE - ALONG THE RIVER SCHELDT - OUTSIDE ANTWERP

Lohengrin's bark is still tied up near the oak tree. Lohengrin boards the bark and prepares to push off.

Elsa and Godfrey embrace.

GODFREY

Goodbye, Elsa.

ELSA

Goodbye, Godfrey. I know you will lead our people well.

Afterwards, Henry and Elsa embrace.

HENRY

Have a safe trip, my dear.

ELSA

Thank you, Your Majesty.

Elsa boards the bark with Lohengrin.

HENRY

Farewell, Swan Knight. It was an honor to know you.

LOHENGRIN

You, too, King Henry. Duke Godfrey, thank you for leading me to Brabant.

GODFREY

Thank you for following, Prince Lohengrin. You two have a safe voyage to Montsalvat.

LOHENGRIN

We will.

Lohengrin pushes off, and the bark begins to drift downriver. Soon, Lohengrin raises the sail and tacks it, and the bark picks up speed. The people on shore wave, and Lohengrin and Elsa wave back.

Soon, Lohengrin and Elsa disappear around the river bend.