

ACT III, scene 1

Elsa's bridal chamber. Richly decorated with a bridal bed Center and a window overlooking a garden. Singing is distant at first and grows closer. Women enter Right with Elsa; Lohengrin the King and Men enter Left. Pages with lights are positioned throughout.

Chorus:

May every step lead you to take
Refuge where blessings of love are enshrined.
In you are joined courage and faith.
May they be happily always entwined.

Champion of youth, step forward with joy!
Flower of youth, step forward with joy!
Go, leave the noisy festival behind you
So that your heart's desire may find you!

Doors open; processions meet Center. Lohengrin and Elsa embrace. Women remove an outer garment from Elsa and men remove Lohengrin's cloak and sword. A group of eight women walk slowly in circles around Lohengrin and Elsa.

Eight Women:

As God has blessed your union
We bless you all your days.
This hour of your communion,
Remember it always.

Fragrant and soft, we've made up the bed.
Flee from the crowd and stay here instead.

King blesses Elsa and Lohengrin. Page gives the crowd the signal to leave and everyone but Elsa and Lohengrin files out of the room, singing.

Chorus:

May every step lead you to stay
Here where the blessings of love are enshrined.
In you are joined courage and faith.
May they be happily always entwined.

Act III, scene 2

Lohengrin:

The sweet song lingers on. Alone, we'll stay
Together for the first time since I saw you.
Here in our own cozy, happy hideaway,
No listening ear can hear our hearts beat true.
Elsa, my wife! My sweetest, purest bride!
Confide in me, are you as happy as I?

Elsa:

Happy is far too poor a word to name it.
I feel that I am filled with heaven's bliss!
My heart sings out for you to come and claim it,
Glowing in wonder at God's gracious gift.

Lohengrin:

My darling, happy is just the word to name it,
For you fill me as well with heaven's bliss!

Lohengrin and Elsa:

My heart sings out for you to come and claim it,
Glowing in wonder at God's gracious gift.

Lohengrin:

We love each other with sublime emotion!
Before we met, we'd sensed each other's hearts.
I sallied forth as champion, but devotion
And love for you called me to play that part.
Your eyes proclaimed your innocent distress;
It was your gaze belied your tenderness.

Elsa:

But in my vision you'd already met me.
In joyful dreams, I saw you take my hand.
When I awoke and you'd come to protect me,
I knew you'd been sent at God's command.

There in the sunlight of your eyes, I melted,
Turned into water flowing at your feet.
Into a flower blooming in the meadow,

Waiting for you to trample underneath.
But did I love you?
What else could overcome me?
This so unutterably joyful word, like - ah!- your name, dear,
That you keep secret from me,
That from my lips, my dear, you've never heard.

Lohengrin:
Elsa!

Elsa:
How sweet my name sounds on your lips, my lover!
Would you deny yourself the same sweet sound
Just when we're snuggled underneath the covers,
Just when we know there's no one else around?

Lohengrin:
My darling wife!

Elsa:
Whisper your name, my dear.
There's not a soul around to overhear.

Lohengrin gives Elsa a friendly hug and points through the open window to the flower garden.

Lohengrin:
Let's stop, my love, and smell the blooming flowers.
How they enchant and charm us with their scent.
I fall, unquestioning, to their magic powers,
Trust and delighting in their innocence.

Thus, is the magic tie that binds us
Vital to our love and to our own good.
When we met, I didn't ask your title.
I saw your eyes and my heart understood.

Just as the flowers here enchant and charm me
On this night mysterious and sublime
Your innocence and purity disarm me

Though you once stood accused of dreadful crime.

Elsa hides her shame and humbly nuzzles against him.

Elsa:

If only I could be your equal
Instead of melting at your gaze!
Instead of being such a meek girl
I want to suffer for your sake!
You saved me from disaster certain --
If only I could rescue you!
I'd bravely bear your heavy burden
If what that was, I only knew.

What secret spell was cast upon you?
What can't you tell a single soul?
What evil pact have you been sworn to?
And would would happen if you told?

If that's so, and if you tell me,
I'll keep your secret locked away.
No threat of violence could compel me --
I'd die before your trust betray!

Lohengrin:
My darling!

Elsa:
Oh make me proud and show you trust me,
That I'm not some unworthy maid!
So share your dark secret with just me,
That I might know and lend you aid!

Lohengrin:
Enough, Elsa!

Elsa:
Give your faithful one the glory of your noble name!
Without remorse, say where you come from!
I'll keep my silence to the grave!

Lohengrin: (*forcefully, seriously, moves back a few steps*)

You've had my trust since I began my mission.

The oath you swore, I took it to be true.

If you can keep my only prohibition,

A treasure among wives I will call you.

Come to my arms and feel my heartbeat,

Feel how it burns with loving fire.

Shine your bright eyes soft upon me

For they reflect my heart's desire.

Oh let me breathe the air that you breathe

As one our breath may rise and fall.

Press, darling, press yourself unto me

For you're my everything and all!

Because your love is treasure beyond worth

I gave up all I had before.

No destiny in all God's green Earth

Was nobler than what I foreswore.

Offer me kingdoms as my prizes,

I'll rightfully reject them all.

The one thing worth my sacrifice is

To hear you answer my love's call.

Rid yourself now of doubt insidious.

Your love's the only thing I need.

My secret is not dark and hideous

But bright and wonderful indeed!

Elsa:

Dear God, tell me this can't be!

How could you be so cruel?

You wanted to enchant me,

To play me for a fool!

The glory that you gave up,

Oh how can I compare?

From Wonderland you came up,

Now you're wishing you were there!
My womanly fidelity could never compensate!
One day you'll take it all away
And leave me desolate!
And leave me desolate!

Lohengrin:
Stop torturing yourself so!

Elsa:
Why do you torture me?
Am I to count the hours till you decide to leave?
From fear that you'll abandon me
I grow pale and gray

Then, bored with me, you'll summon
Your swan and sail away!

Lohengrin:
You'll keep your beauty always if you keep free from doubt!

Elsa:
Ah! How to find the subtle way to keep you in my power?
A magic swan brought just you
and miracles to me
How can I ever trust you
Without a guarantee?
(startled, as if listening to something)
Listen to that! Ah, can you hear him coming?

Lohengrin:
Elsa!

Elsa:
Ah, no. Here's there --the swan! The swan!
I seem on the water, swimming toward us.
You've summoned him and soon you'll both be gone!

Lohengrin:
Elsa, calm down!

That's madness and it's wrong!

Elsa:

No words can stop my crying,
To madness I will cling!
Ev'n at the risk of dying,
I must know this one thing:

Lohengrin:

Elsa, you wouldn't dare to--

Elsa:

Ill-fated, noble man, you'll answer what I ask you:
Now say your name and whence you come afar
And what you are!

Lohengrin:

Stop now! Oh no! What have you done to us?

Elsa: *(sees Friedrich and his four nobles enter from a backdoor, Up, swords drawn.)*
Save yourself! Your sword! Your sword!

Elsa gives Lohengrin his sword, which had been lying on the couch. Friedrich rushes Lohengrin, sword raised, but Lohengrin kills him with a single blow. The Four Nobles, horrified, drop their swords and kneel before Lohengrin. Elsa, who had thrown herself at Lohengrin, falls fainting to the floor.

Lohengrin:

Woe betide us. All our joy is gone!

Elsa: *(dully closing her eyes)*

Almighty God, oh pity me!

The four nobles take Friedrich's body out through the door R. Lohengrin rings a bell. Two ladies enter from L.

Lohengrin:

Dress Elsa in her finest vestments
Before the King she shall be led.

There I will answer all her questions
So she may know to whom she's wed.

He exist mournfully. The two ladies accompany Elsa, incapable of speech, off L. Day has slowly begun to break. The candles are extinguished.