

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

IOLANTA CHARACTERS

Iolanta (soprano)	Main character. Daughter of King René and blind from birth.
King René (bass)	King of Provence
Duke Robert (baritone)	Duke of Burgundy, Iolanta's fiancé.
Count Godfrey Vaudemont (tenor)	Burgundian knight, falls in love with Iolanta.
Ibn-Hakia (baritone)	Arab doctor.
Almeric (tenor)	King René's squire.
Bertrand (bass)	Castle doorman. Husband of Marta.
Marta (contralto)	Iolanta's housekeeper. Wife of Bertrand.
Brigitta (soprano)	Iolanta's friend.
Laura (mezzo)	Iolanta's friend.
Chorus	

MISE EN PLACE

The action takes place in Provence (France) in the mid-15th century. Iolanta has been blind from birth. She does not know she is blind, nor that she is a princess. She lives separately from her father, the King in a private residence withing a secluded garden. The garden is off limits under pain of death to all except for servants and two female friends.

ACT ONE

1.- Iolanta's Scene and Aria

(A beautiful and lush garden contains a large residence. At the bottom of the scene, there are rose bushes in bloom and fruit trees. Four musicians play. Iolanta picks fruit from the trees, detecting them by touch. To help her, Brigitta, Laura, and several servants hold the branches that bear ripe fruit. Marta carries a basket, into which Iolanta places the fruit. Little by little, Iolanta lets her arms drop.)

MARTA

Iolanta, little one, are you tired?

IOLANTA

Tired?...

I don't really know.

(sighing)

Yes!

Tell me something, love...

MARTA

What is it, my dear?

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

IOLANTA

I feel like I'm missing something... but what?

I'd like to know.

My father, you, Marta...

(turns to where she thinks the others are, who move accordingly)

and you, dear friends, you who go out of your way for me. You brighten my life with so much love, and I don't reward you enough!

MARTA

We are here to serve you: You are the mistress

and we are your servants!

IOLANTA

That's not true: you are my friends! Oh Marta, I feel like I need something... but what?... I don't know.

MARTA

(crying)

Come, stop, Iolanta, my little one.

IOLANTA

Wait a minute! Come to me... Come a little closer...

(Touches Marta's eyes)

Are you crying?

Why those tears?

MARTA

How can I feel calm, when I know you're crying too?

IOLANTA

Indeed, Marta, I'm crying,

But I don't show my tears.

My voice was firm and without trembling... You didn't touch my eyes... How do you know I was crying?

(confused, Marta remains silent)

There's something you're hiding from me, something you don't want to tell me!

MARTA

We must go!

BRIGITTA

(to Marta)

The music made you sad...

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

MARTA

Oh, yes, of course, the music!...

(to the musicians)

Thank you, that's all!

LAURA

(to the musicians)

If only you had played something happier!....

IOLANTA

Don't scold them!

(to the musicians)

Thank you, you played well,

(the musicians stop playing)

but come back later, perhaps at sunset... when it's not so hot, and then you'll make me happy again.

(The musicians exit)

BRIGITTA, LAURA

What would you like to do? Sing? Do some spinning?

CHORUS

Or listen to fairy tales?

IOLANTA

No, I don't want to do anything...

I'm tired, after all. Pick some flowers for me...

I'd like to hold them in my hands; the fragrance of the delicate petals, perhaps they will bring me peace... Last night I didn't sleep at all.

(Brigitta, Laura, and the servants exit)

Could it be that eyes are only good for crying!

Is that so, Marta?

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

Aria

(with great feeling)

Why, until now,
have I not shed tears,
nor known longing or sorrow? Why have my days been spent among roses and heavenly sounds?
Whenever I heard
the chirping of birds,
or the murmur of the forest,
I was filled with life,
as if I were
before a triumphant chorus!
But today I sense the reproach
that the chorus of birds
and the tumultuous brook send me concerning my mysterious destiny.
Why is the stillness of the night and its coldness dearer to me now? Why do I think I hear sobs, where
the nightingale sings?
Why? Tell me, Marta! Why?

2.- Scene and Chorus

MARTA

(leads Iolanta to a bench)

Enough, my dear, you torment your soul in vain, crying without knowing why: You offend God!

(Brigitta, Laura, and the other girls enter the scene laughing and carrying baskets full of flowers).

BRIGITTA, LAURA, GIRLS

We bring buttercups for you, cornflowers, mimosas, and lilies of the valley, sweet spring lilies,
blooming balsams and scents of jasmine.

BRIGITTA, LAURA

Touch them, smell their perfume!
They are pure and fresh like maidens!

BRIGITTA, MARTA

Their fragrance can,
with all the sweetness and freshness
Of spring days,
to drive away torments and misfortunes, lulling you in a blessed sleep.

MARTA

You will have peace and joy again!

LAURA, GIRLS

They are soft as velvet, so delicate and fragrant, that you will forget your fears and doubts, lulling you
in a blessed sleep.

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

GIRLS

Fragrant as velvet, Pure, fresh, soft, and tender! Oh, such pleasure! Such beauty!

BRIGITTA, LAURA, MARTA, GIRLS

We bring you buttercups, etc.

MARTA

Your troubles will disappear,
joy will replace sadness, Oh flowers, gift of spring!

LAURA, BRIGITTA

Your troubles will disappear,
joy will replace sadness, Oh flowers, oh flowers, oh spring!

GIRLS

Joy will replace sadness! Oh flowers, gift of spring!

3.- Scene and Chorus.

IOLANTA

Brigitta, is that you?

LAURA

No, it's Laura...

IOLANTA

*(Without letting go of Laura's hand, she extends her other hand to Brigitta) I thank you, friends.
How can I ever repay you \for all your efforts?)*

BRIGITTA, LAURA

Your love is the best reward!

IOLANTA

Where is Marta?

MARTA

I'm here, my darling girl!

IOLANTA

Come, please.

Let me rest my head on you like when I was little, like this, and sing me that song...
Do you remember it?... My favorite!

(One of the girls picks up a large fan and gently fans Iolanta, who closes her eyes)

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

MARTA
Of course.

(addressing Brigitta and Laura)
And you... sing with me!

IOLANTA
(opening her eyes)
No, they'd be bored!

BRIGITTA, LAURA
What do you mean? Don't say that!

(Iolanta falls asleep. During the song, Marta gently leaves her and signals to the servants who are offstage. They enter and carefully take Iolanta away.)

BRIGITTA, LAURA, MARTA
Sleep!
May the angels with their wings
carry you to the land of dreams, quietly, kindly. Hush, sleep now!

GIRLS
Sleep, little one,
may a blessed sleep lull you!

BRIGITTA, LAURA
Sleep, little one,
may a blessed sleep lull you! God, who, hearing
your youthful prayer,
will shower the earth with generous gifts, sending us happiness,
peace, and joy.

MARTA, GIRLS
The Lord of the universe watches over you; may He grant you
happiness, joy, and peace.

BRIGITTA, LAURA, MARTA, GIRLS
Sleep peacefully, dear child! Sleep sweetly, radiant angel!
May the angels protect your dreams with the beating of their wings!
Sleep, child, sleep!
Silence...

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

4.- Scene and Aria of King René.

(The scene falls empty. A hunt is taking place in the distance. A bugle is heard, followed by a knock at the door. Enter Bertrand)

BERTRAND
A bugle call... Who could it be?

(The door opens. Enter Almeric)
Stop, whoever you are! Entry is forbidden
under penalty of death! Out!

ALMERIC
I come by order of the King and I will not leave until I have carried it out!

BERTRAND
When the King gives us orders, he sends Raúl, royal squire
and my friend.

ALMERIC
Listen, old man:
Raúl passed away yesterday!

BERTRAND
He died yesterday! Oh, poor friend! I haven't had the chance
to say goodbye!
May the Lord give peace to his soul... But who are you?

ALMERIC
I have taken his place.
This royal seal confirms it!...

BERTRAND
I know this seal. It's the king's. Yes, the letter bears the royal seal.

(reads the letter)
Come in, I beg you.

ALMERIC
Oh, what paradise! But before
you ask where I am, I must give you some news:
In an hour the king will arrive here.
along with a great Arab doctor. Now tell me, where am I? Who lives in this paradise
in the middle of the desert?

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

BERTRAND

King René's daughter! Blind Iolanta,
Robert's fiancée, Duke of Burgundy!

ALMERIC

Is the king's daughter blind?

BERTRAND

She doesn't know the light of day!

ALMERIC

But everyone knows
that she lives in Spain,
in a convent of Poor Clares.

BERTRAND

No, she doesn't live in Spain; she's lived here, with my wife,
her elderly nurse,
almost since the day she was born.

ALMERIC

Why?

BERTRAND

The king doesn't want Robert to know about his daughter's misfortune.

(Martha enters)

My wife, this is the royal squire! He brings a letter from the king informing us that he is coming here
accompanied by a great Arab doctor.

MARTHA

(to Almeric)

Do you know Iolanta's secret?

ALMERIC

Your husband told me everything.

MARTHA

But do you know that the poor girl is completely unaware that she is blind,
and that in her presence,
no one should speak of light, of beauty, or of anything else
that our eyes see?

You must not call her father majesty, monarch, or king...

She thinks he is only a rich knight... Those are the king's orders!

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

ALMERIC

The king's wishes are commands!

(A bugle call is heard)

BERTRAND

A bugle call! It's time, it's the king!

(opens the door. King René enters, accompanied by Ibn-Hakia)

KING René

This, wise doctor, is the home of my poor dove, Iolanta! Now, you know everything.
In your hands I place my last hopes of her cure!

IBN-HAKIA

But where is she? I need to see the patient.

MARTA

She's sleeping;
the heat and the walking have tired her.

IBN-HAKIA

Good, I can examine the patient better while she sleeps.

KING René

(to Martha and Beltrán)

Marta and Beltrán, take the doctor to our dear dove.

(to Ibn-Hakia)

I await your news anxiously.

IBN-HAKIA

Allah is great, trust in Him!

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

(Exit Ibn-Hakia, accompanied by Martha, Bertrand, and Al-Meriq)

KING René

What will he say?

What will be the response of his knowledge? Will Iolanta see the light, or will I be forever tortured knowing that my daughter's world is darkness? O Lord, have mercy on me! Lord, if it is I who have sinned, why do you punish my angel?

Why, because of my sins, do

her radiant eyes see only darkness? O, allow me to be rewarded!

My hope with her healing!

For her sake, I would gladly surrender a crown, power, and dominions... Deprive me of peace, of happiness, I would humbly bear it all and thank you for it!

I would gladly lose everything, I would ruin my prestige,

but I beg you that my daughter may see, free her from her dark world!

O Lord, have mercy on me,

I would gladly ruin my prestige,

I beg you, O my Lord,

my Lord God, have mercy on me!

Scene 5: Ibn Hakiya's Monologue.

(Ibn-Hakia enters)

KING René

Your face is impassive,
stern, and dark, like your knowledge. In vain I try to discern
the answer by reading your face.

IBN HAKIA

Courage, Your Majesty, Allah is great!

KING René

Truly, He is great and good!

IBN-HAKIA

I will tell you my diagnosis.

Yes, Your Majesty, a cure is possible, but one thing...

KING René

Speak, then! Name the price! I would give you everything I own,
if you, doctor, would restore her sight!

IBN-HAKIA

She must be aware of her illness.

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

KING René

Her blindness?

Are you sure she will ever see again?

IBN-HAKIA

God decides everything.

My knowledge is not omnipotent. I cannot promise it...

KING René

So I must reveal to my daughter her sad and unfortunate fate, with no hope of a happy ending? Cruel Moor, you have no compassion for a father's suffering! How wrong I was! when I placed my hopes in you! I will never trust anyone again! Farewell!

IBN-HAKIA

Lord, you may do as you please. You are free to follow or ignore my diagnosis,

but I am obliged, if you allow me, to give you some advice.

Two worlds, flesh and spirit,
manifest themselves in every living being.

Divinity created them together
as inseparable companions. Some manifestations of being
do not belong only to the carnal world; the sense of sight is not solely in the flesh.
And, before light can flood our mortal eyes,
we need to feel
the concept of vision
within our eternal souls. When the knowledge of the truth awakens in our minds, then it will be possible, Lord,
for the power of desire to shed light within the darkness of the flesh.

KING René

O Lord, my God!

Have I been wrong until now? A terrible doubt assails me...

IBN-HAKIA

Now you must decide;

you already know my decision.

I cannot act until Iolanta learns of her blindness
and desires a cure.

I will remain here until evening,
in the castle, awaiting your decision.

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

(Exit)

KING René
Oh my daughter! Iolanta!
No, no! It can't be!
Whoever tries to reveal the secret will pay with their life.
This way the doctor will give in!

(Exit)

6.- Scene and Aria.

ROBERT
(offstage)
Be careful, it's very dark in here.

VAUDEMONT
Onward!
I see a door before us.

ROBERT
A door?

VAUDEMONT
Come, follow me!

(They enter through the door)

Where are we?
Do my eyes really see a paradise in the midst of these wild rocks?

ROBERT
Look, there's something written there: "Stop - Beware. No entry under penalty of death."

VAUDEMONT
Robert, where are we? Tell me!

ROBERT
I don't understand what this means.

VAUDEMONT
Let's go!

ROBERT
No, heaven protects us!
I will not leave this Garden of Eden! I am tired of traveling
through hills and forests!
We have already wandered far enough.

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

VAUDEMONT

But what if they find us here?

ROBERT

So what? He'd fly into a rage, and that's that; we'd calm his anger with the sword! We'd be delayed in reaching King René's house, and he'd delay my marriage to Iolanta—that would be the best thing for me. If she were to disappear from my life! I'd be glad to be lost, just as long as I never saw my betrothed!

VAUDEMONT

Perhaps the king would agree to you annulling your promise of marriage. They say he's good and wise!

ROBERT

Ah, yes, I wish, Vaudemont!

VAUDEMONT

But what if she's charming?

ROBERT

Who?... Iolanta?

VAUDEMONT

Yes!

ROBERT

She must be prim and proud...

Nuns are a mystery to me. With all their "benedictus" and "amen," they are as cold and insensitive as stone.

Who can match the dazzling beauty of my dear Matilda's jet-black eyes, shining like celestial stars?

She is spicy and delicious,

as desirable and ardent as wine. Her gaze burns me like lightning, and my blood is inflamed by the flame of love!

Her laughter is like a string of pearls. Her eyes transmit to me a hot, exuberant, and wild passion, inviting me to succumb to her kisses and mad desires,

to the soft touch of her white hand,

and I reach supreme happiness that knows no limits or end!

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

6th Romance of Vaudemont.

VAUDEMONT

No!

The charms of a fiery beauty do not tempt me,
passion is not awakened in me
by voluptuous glances...

No! Immersed in silence,
the love within me makes me dream of an angel, chaste, meek, heavenly, and wonderful to behold!...
Who has the grace and
immaculate dignity of a goddess, and her gaze is full of kindness and angelic innocence...
To be a guest in a heavenly place, brighter than winter snow, purer than forest flowers, more delicate
than lilies...

That is what I long for!

Oh, come to me, bright vision, inspiration of love,
revive the strings of my heart, bring them back to life!

Like lightning in a storm,

Let your light shine

in the darkness of my ardent soul, Oh, don't be late! Don't be late!

Come to me, I'm waiting for you!

Oh! My heart is weary,

I'm waiting for you, hurry!

Come to me!

I'm waiting for you, bright angel. Come, come!

7th - Scene and Duet.

VAUDEMONT

But where are we?

What wizard lives in this paradise? Robert, look,
someone has left faint footprints...

ROBERT

No doubt a fairy...

VAUDEMONT

They head toward the terrace...

ROBERT

Knock on the door!

(Vaudemont jumps onto the terrace)

VAUDEMONT

It's not locked!

I barely touched it when it opened.

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

ROBERT

Look inside...what's there?

VAUDEMONT

My God! Robert, Robert! Oh, what do I see?

ROBERT

A sorceress?

VAUDEMONT

No, an angel! Good heavens! How beautiful she is!

ROBERT

Let me see her too!...

(Looks through the door)

She's just a little girl!

VAUDEMONT

Are you blind? Look again! Such cold words!

How can that virginal vision not make your heart beat?

ROBERT

Let's go, Godfrey!

It's dangerous to stay here. That beautiful girl's sleep is somehow artificial! What's wrong with you?

You're pale! Vaudemont!

VAUDEMONT

My God!

What heavenly tranquility she transmits!

ROBERT

She's bewitched, Godfrey! Answer me!... Let's get out of here! Free yourself from this spell!

VAUDEMONT

Silence, Robert!

Don't disturb the sleep
of this heavenly creature!

ROBERT

What's wrong with you? I'll save you!...

I won't allow you to remain here!

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

VAUDEMONT

(looking at Iolanta)

Don't open your eyes!...

Their light would blind me.

Allow me to die looking at you! My God, Robert!

She's woken up!

(runs down the terrace)

She's coming this way!

ROBERT

(trying to drag Vaudemont)

I won't let her touch you!... Let's run, quickly!

VAUDEMONT

(breaking free)

No, never, never!

(Iolanta enters and stops at the top of the terrace)

IOLANTA

Who's there?

VAUDEMONT

A gentleman from Burgundy, and...

ROBERT

(holding Vaudemont back)

Don't tell her who we are!...

VAUDEMONT

(avoiding Robert)

My name is Vaudemont...

ROBERT

Silence!

IOLANTA

I don't recognize your voices... Who are you?

VAUDEMONT

We got lost while crossing the forest.

IOLANTA

You must be tired! I'll bring you wine to restore your strength.

(goes to get some wine)

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

VAUDEMONT
(enthusiastically)
Oh, paradise!

ROBERT
No, it's a trap!
Death is looming over us! But it won't take me so easily; life is dearer to me than the grave.
Stay here if you prefer,
I'll go find brave men,
and with them, I'll come and save you!

(Iolanta returns, carrying two glasses of wine)
Don't be afraid, wait for me, goodbye!

(Robert exits)

IOLANTA
Here's the wine, gentlemen... it's the one my father likes...

VAUDEMONT
(Vaudemont taking a glass for himself)
Could it bring me any harm?...

(resolutely)
So be it! From these hands, I would gladly accept death!

(drinks the wine)

IOLANTA
(continues offering the tray, waiting for Roberto to take the glass)
Where is your friend?...

VAUDEMONT
My friend has gone, but he will return...

IOLANTA
(placing the tray on a table)
Is he gone? What a pity...

VAUDEMONT
Pity? Why?

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

IOLANTA

I like being in company,
for I am rarely alone.
When I fell asleep, my friends
left, and it seems that none of them knows I am already awake.

VAUDEMONT

It was I who woke you... Forgive me!
You appeared before me like a heavenly and pure vision, like the image of a sweet dream. My
involuntary cry of joy
awakened you, and before my eyes,
an angel rose from heaven.
But I see that you are not a vision,
and that fate has ordained that you shall live, be desired, and know suffering and love!
(Bewildered, Iolanta walks to a rosebush and picks some flowers)

IOLANTA

I don't understand what you're saying... I don't know... and yet,
the sound of your words is pleasing to me.
Emotion moves my heart, at the same time as a doubt: Should I listen to you? Why?... Why do you
praise me like this? Today is the first time we've met.

VAUDEMONT

(expressively, with feeling)

Your wish is my command. I will hide my passion for you,
but, to prove that this
was not a dream, a mirage, as a parting gift, give me a red rose, for it will remind me of our meeting
and of the warm glow of your cheeks!

(Iolanta gives her white rose)

But... I asked for a red rose...

IOLANTA

What kind of rose is that? I don't know...

VAUDEMONT

(pointing to a rosebush of red roses)

I asked for one of those roses...

IOLANTA

Which rose? I don't understand. Give me back the rose I gave you, and I'll pick another one for you.

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

VAUDEMONT

Oh, no! It's as beautiful as you are,
I'll keep it as a memento,
a symbol of your purity. Pick a red rose from me and both flowers will be the weapons on my shield,
I'll be faithful to you until I die.

IOLANTA

I'll gladly give you another rose.

(picks another white rose)

VAUDEMONT

What? Are you giving me a white rose again?

(confused, Iolanta picks another white rose)

Again? I asked for a red rose!

IOLANTA

What does "red" mean?

VAUDEMONT

What a terrible feeling!...

(picking a bunch of roses)

Tell me: how many roses have I picked?

IOLANTA

(extending her hand)

Well, come forward then! Give them to me!

(Vaudemont recoils in horror)

Where are they?

You're playing with me...

VAUDEMONT

No! Tell me without touching them...

IOLANTA

Without touching them?... Is that possible?

VAUDEMONT

My God! She's blind!

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

IOLANTA

Come in! Where are the flowers? Oh, sir, where are you?

I don't understand your silence;

How could I have offended you?... Tell me, what am I guilty of? I rarely speak to strangers here. I still have so much to learn;

Be my teacher, I am young,

I will be an obedient student!...

Why this silence?

Do you want to leave me? That's right, then! Your wish is my command; I will hide my sorrow from the world...

But, as proof that it was not

a dream, a mirage of joy, as a parting gift,

give me one of those roses;

it will remind me of our meeting!

(bursts into tears)

VAUDEMONT

Dear child,

(taking her hands)

Oh no, please don't cry!

IOLANTA

(joyfully)

Haven't you left yet?

VAUDEMONT

Poor child! Tell me:

is it possible that the thought has never occurred to you

that fate, terrible and cruel, has deprived you of a precious gift? Have you never wondered why your eyes shine lifelessly?

IOLANTA

(touching her eyes)

Why do I have eyes? Well... to cry...

VAUDEMONT

To cry in the eternal night!

IOLANTA

But don't you know that if you cry, your sorrows last less?

Thus, in nature, after the storm, everything becomes fresher and more fragrant.

VAUDEMONT

Doesn't your heart yearn to see the light and glory of the universe?

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

IOLANTA

What does "see" mean?

VAUDEMONT

To know the light of God!

IOLANTA

Tell me, sir, what is "light"?

VAUDEMONT

(enthusiastically)

The first wonder of Creation, the first gift of God to the world; the manifestation of God's glory, the most beautiful pearl in his crown!

The sun, the sky, and the stars cover, with inexplicable beauty, the world, nature, and all creatures!

Whoever does not know light cannot love the world created by God, cannot worship God!

Thanks to His light, I, an unworthy soul, saw you, dear maiden, I saw your virginal and slender figure, I saw your endearing image.

Yes, light is the first prodigy of Creation, God's greatest gift to the world!

IOLANTA

Your words are so sweet!...

I don't know what's wrong with me! Never in my life have I been so happy as now... But no, no, you are very wrong! To glorify God, eternally, sir, I have no need of light!

The goodness of God is infinite, it has no limits.

The presence of God, sublime and kind, is manifested in all His creatures, in the warmth of the day, in the fragrances and sounds of nature... in myself!

Can anyone see the song of the birds in the rosebush, or the gentle murmur of the brook on the sand?

VAUDEMONT

Yes! It's true!

God's goodness is infinite, it knows no bounds!

You speak the truth!

The flame of truth

shines within your heart, and before it, my earthly light seems dim and futile.

I believe that even without knowing the light, one can glorify God!

The Lord's goodness is infinite, it knows no bounds!

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

IOLANTA

Can anyone see
the crash of thunder in the sky... or the song of a nightingale,
or the scent of a flower...
your voice, your words?
No, to glorify God, sir, I don't need light!
But, to be like you,
I would like to see the light of the sun,
the first wonder of Creation, God's first gift to the world, the manifestation of His glory,
the most beautiful pearl in His crown!

8.- *Scene.*-

MARTA, LAURA, BRIGITTA, GIRLS

(offstage)

Iolanta! Where are you?

IOLANTA

(answering her calls)

Marta and my friends are calling me, they know I'm already awake...

KING René

(offstage)

Where's my daughter?

IOLANTA

That's my father's voice! There! You'll recognize him!

MARTA, LAURA, BRIGITTA, REY

(offstage)

Iolanta!

(enter Marta, Brigitta, and Laura)

GIRLS

Where are you?

MARTA, LAURA, BRIGITTA, GIRLS

(seeing that Iolanta is with Vaudemont)

Good heavens!

She's with an unknown gentleman!

KING René

(entering)

Where is my daughter?

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

IOLANTA

Oh, dear father!

KING René

My sweet child!... Aren't you alone?...

(enter Ibn-Hakia, Bertrand, and Almeric)

Who is he?

(to Vaudemont)

How did he get here, you imprudent fool?

VAUDEMONT

I am a knight of Burgundy. I arrived here by chance, when I got lost in the mountains.

KING René

Haven't you spoken to her?...

IOLANTA

Oh, yes, father, she's told me many things I knew nothing about. Her words were kind when she explained to me that she was the "light" and that I was sad because I couldn't see!

MARTA, LAURA, BRIGITTA, VAUDEMONT, ALMERIC, IBN-HAKIA, Bertrand,

KING René, GIRLS

Good heavens!

KING René

Cursed one! What have you done? My lord, why have you sent me this sorrow?

IBN-HAKIA

(Ibn-Hakia approaches the King)

This is no misfortune. This is your daughter's healing!

(From this moment the scene begins to darken. The King hides his face in his hands, sinking onto a bench)

Blinded by a misguided affection, you tried to hide her misfortune, but you see, it is impossible to deny the existence of light.

It was a mistake, believe me,
the truth cannot be hidden.

Reason has triumphed in her,
the truth has thus been revealed to her! Have hope that her desire will be the cause of the light! It is possible that desire will bring her light!

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

IOLANTA

He spoke to me of the brightness
of a sunny day!
He is so kind!
He revealed the truth to me!
My heart rejoices with him! His words are full
of kindness, tenderness, and compassion; I listened with pleasure!
He wants to bring light to my darkness!

VAUDEMONT

What have I done?
Where has the ardor of my words led?
Instead of happiness, I have brought anxiety and restlessness to my beloved! What have I done? My
God, have mercy! Protect her from all misfortune!

BERTRAND

Impertinent madman!
How dare you violate the prohibition? You will die!
You will lose your head for your audacity. You have brought us misfortune!
Oh Lord, oh God, have mercy! Protect her from all misfortune!

MARTA, LAURA, BRIGITTA, ALMERIC

How dare you contravene
the written order, you insolent madman! You have brought us misfortune! You will pay for your
audacity with your life! Save her from all harm, O my Lord!

KING René

Iolanta, my dove, my child,
I have brought a doctor with me.
He has the technique to restore
the light to you; so tell me, do you wish to see?

IOLANTA

How can I impatiently yearn for something I do not know?
But, if my father wishes it,
I will submit to his wishes...

IBN-HAKIA

(to the king)
He has lost hope of a cure, the fruit of your effort is this:
She doesn't wish to have
the gift of sight or light.

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

KING René

(silently, to the doctor)

Wait! I see you're right! There's still hope... an idea just occurred to me...

(out loud)

Begin the treatment, doctor! God will guide you in your work!

(to Vaudemont)

And you, cause of the problem, answer! How did you get in? Did you read the sign?

VAUDEMONT

I did.

KING René

And you dared to enter the garden?

VAUDEMONT

As you can see, yes, I dared...

KING René

Remember?

The sign condemns to death
those who enter without permission.

VAUDEMONT

I remember... yes!...

KING René

So if the treatment
doesn't cure Iolanta... you'll die!

IOLANTA, BRIGITTA, LAURA, MARTA ALMERIC, BERTRAND, GIRLS Oh, God, unfortunate knight!

IBN-HAKIA

What are you up to?

IOLANTA

Wait, Father, do I understand? Is he really going to die?

KING René

Yes, he must be executed.

IOLANTA

It can't be, no, I don't believe you! Father, your heart is noble
and you can't be so inhuman!

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

KING René

He will die if the treatment doesn't work.

BRIGITTA, LAURA, MARTA, ALMERIC, BERTRAND, GIRLS Poor Iolanta!

How she suffers, the pure angel!

Have mercy on your daughter!

IBN-HAKIA

(to the King)

I understand your plan... Now I will save her from the darkness!...

KING René

No, he will die,

your pleas are in vain!

IOLANTA

Doctor! Where is he? What must I endure? Will I suffer greatly?...

IBN-HAKIA

Oh no! All you need to do is ardently desire to see the light.

IOLANTA

(passionately)

No, name all the tortures, sufferings, and pains!

To save him, I will endure everything. He is my protégé,

he was the first to reveal the spiritual light to me

and gave courage to my heart.

Now, I believe and know what light is:

The first wonder of creation, the manifestation of God's glory, the most beautiful pearl in his crown!

VAUDEMONT

(falling at her feet)

Bright angel! Blessed maiden! I bow before you!

Whether you see or remain blind,

you will be mine forever!

I swear on my honor as a knight that I am yours, only...

even if I have to face

death and go to the grave for you.

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

IOLANTA

No, knight, no!

Life is wonderful, you must live, please live!

I will see... yes!

Give me your hand...

Now, I would like to touch your face...

(touches his face)

All right!

Doctor, begin his treatment now. I will endure anything. Father, hold me! Have hope! I will see, and he will live!

BRIGITTA, LAURA, MARTA, VAUDEMONT, ALMERIC, BERTRAND, IBN-HAKIA, CHORUS

May the Lord help you, pure angel!

(Iolanta slowly exits the scene, accompanied by the doctor, the women, and Beltrán. Almeric disappears through a secret door)

KING René

(watching Iolanta leave)

I believe you will be rescued

from the darkness, dear angel! Like the Lamb of God, walk to the sacrifice. My Lord God!

(bows his head in prayer)

9.- Finale.- *(The Duke of Burgundy's fanfares are heard. The King approaches Vaudemont)*

KING René

Forgive me for having lied to you so that my daughter would desire to see the light. Although you were condemned

to death,

you are now free...

VAUDEMONT

You ordered me to be executed for my reckless transgression. Who are you to have the power to decide the fate of the people?

KING René

I have the best right to ask you that question.

VAUDEMONT

I am Geoffrey Vaudemont, Count of Issodun, Clervaux, and Montargis, friend of the Duke of Burgundy.

As noble as you may be,

and you will not humiliate your lineage if you grant me your daughter's hand.

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

KING René

No, no, sir!

Although you would make a worthy husband, I must refuse your request: she has been betrothed to another since childhood.

VAUDEMONT

But I could challenge that union...

KING René

No, you must bow to him...

VAUDEMONT

But who is he?

KING René

Wait, I hear footsteps...

(enters Almeric)

What does this mean?

(to Almeric)

Who is there?

ALMERIC

My lord!

We can see men at arms coming this way
with great speed.

VAUDEMONT

It is my friend, the Duke of Burgundy.

KING René

Almeric, let them in!

(to Vaudemont)

Now you will see who your rival is.

(Almeric opens the door. Robert enters, followed by his men)

ROBERT

Godfrey,

I have returned to rescue you!

(Seeing the King, he kneels)

What do I see? The King!

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

VAUDEMONT

René? The King of Provence?...

KING René

Yes, brave knight,
you are in love with Iolanta,
the bride of Duke Robert!...

VAUDEMONT

(with feeling)

Robert, my duke, my friend! Would you like to tell the King everything?...

ROBERT

(embarrassed)

This is neither the time nor the place.

VAUDEMONT

Now or never! Robert,
your confession will give me life, I will love Iolanta until I die, and without her, life has no meaning...
Robert, I beg you!

ROBERT

(to the King)

Your Majesty! I am here
to fulfill the promise I made. As a child, I swore to marry Iolanta, but I have grown into a man
and I love Mathilde, Countess of Lorraine. You have the power to decide my fate: if you command, I
will go to the altar to take your daughter as my wife, but,
in my heart, I will be faithful to Mathilde.

KING René

Your frankness ennobles you.
I release you from the oath you swore.

ROBERT

Your Majesty, you are magnanimous!

KING René

(to Vaudemont)

And now, young count,
I will give you Iolanta's hand, provided she regains her sight.

VAUDEMONT

Your Majesty, we are in love
and wish to be together
in joy as in misfortune. Whether she sees the light or not, I will give her my life!

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

KING René
She is yours, my son!

VAUDEMONT
Kind father!

ROBERT
Is Yolande really blind?

KING René
Everything is in the doctor's hands!

(enters Bertrand)
Bertrand, how's the treatment going?

BERTRAND
It's over!

VAUDEMONT, ROBERT, KING René
Can Iolanta see?

BERTRAND
I don't know: I couldn't stay there. Even a stone would have dissolved into tears at the sight of something like that!...
Docile as a lamb,
steadfast as a rock, sitting there, our little one, repeating:
"Oh, dear knight, live!"

VAUDEMONT, ALMERIC, ROBERT, KING René
Lord, have mercy on us!

BRIGITTA, LAURA, MARTA
(offstage)
Iolanta can see!

BRIGITTA, LAURA, MARTA, GIRLS
Iolanta sees the light!
Oh happiness, oh joy! Iolanta can see!

(Ibn-Hakia introduces Iolanta into the scene. It is almost night; the mountaintops are faintly tinged with twilight. Iolanta is wearing a bandage.)

KING René
Silence, the doctor, he is bringing her here!

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

CHORUS

Silence, silence!

KING René

Lord! For this instant, take my life in exchange!

IOLANTA

Where am I?

Where are we, doctor?

I wish I could see again the marvelous light that suddenly shone before me!

(Ibn-Hakia removes the bandage.)

There it is! Again! Again! Oh, unbearable brilliance! What is it?

IBN-HAKIA

It's the garden, the trees, the flowers!...

IOLANTA

No! No! I don't recognize them!... I've never been here before!

I'm scared!... Doctor!

Where are you? I'm scared! Everything is crowding around me!...

Something is falling...

It seems like everything will fall on me! I will perish! Doctor! Save me!

IBN-HAKIA

Look up,

the sky will not frighten you!

IOLANTA

(raising her eyes to heaven)

Oh, how wonderful! So much light! What is it? God?...

The spirit of God?

IBN-HAKIA

The light and the sky.

IOLANTA

The sky?... The sky?... Is God in heaven? Lord, I am before you!

(kneels)

Good, great, incomparable Lord,
you who spoke to me in the darkness! Show yourself now,
lord of the universe, in the light of day!

IBN-HAKIA

Now, look around you.

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

IOLANTA

Who are they? I don't know them.

IBN-HAKIA

They are people...

IOLANTA

People like me?

IBN-HAKIA

Yes, you know them.

IOLANTA

I don't know them...

KING René

My child! Don't you know me?

IOLANTA

Oh my God, my God! Who is it?

(She touches the King's face)

Father! I recognize your features. I beg you to protect me in this new world of light!

KING René

My angel, I am old,

I do not have the strength of a young man.

(pointing to Vaudemont)

You have a protector here!

VAUDEMONT

A protector faithful until death!

IOLANTA

O beloved, is this your voice?

You gave me light, you gave me love!

VAUDEMONT

And that light will always be like a star, showing you the way!

ALL

Glory to the Creator, the merciful! Glory to the Creator!

IOLANTA LIBRETTO

IOLANTA

Hear the prayer of your servant,
my voice is weak and my eyes timid. Before you bows the whole communion of angels and cherubs!
But You are merciful
and Your love knows no bounds,
in the smallest creatures,
Your light shines, like the sun in the dew!

KING René

Hear the prayer of Your servants, my God!
You answered my tearful plea, my God!
You have snatched her from the darkness! O our Creator!

BRIGITTA, LAURA, MARTA, VAUDEMONT, ALMERIC, ROBERT, IBN-HAKIA, BERTRAND

God, accept the prayer of Your servant!
You have given her sight!
You have sent her Your mercy! Almighty Lord, glory to You! Your love knows no bounds,
in the smallest creatures,
Your light shines, like the sun in the dew! You have performed a miracle, O Creator! You have
snatched her from the darkness!
Compassionate God!
You have heard our prayers!
O God, giver of all good things! Glory to You!

CHORUS

Hear the prayer of Your servant! Before You, we are nothing!

ALL TOGETHER

Glory to You, almighty God! Hosanna in the highest!
You are the shining light of truth! Glory to You, almighty Lord! Glory to You, almighty Lord!
Glory to You!

(All kneel)