

## OPERAS FOR SEPTEMBER 2019

4 September	Fedora	Giordano
11	Beatrice di Tenda	Bellini
18	Le Prophete	Meyerbeer
25	Pelléas et Mélisande	Debussy

### Details of the Operas

#### **Fedora**                      **Giordano**

Fedora is an opera in three acts by Umberto Giordano to an Italian libretto by Arturo Colautti, based on the play *Fédora* by Victorien Sardou. Along with *Andrea Chénier* and *Siberia*, it is one of the most notable works of Giordano.

It was first performed at the Teatro Lirico in Milan on 17 November 1898 conducted by the composer with Gemma Bellincioni creating the role of Fedora, and Enrico Caruso as her lover, Loris Ipanov.

#### **Roles**

Princess Fedora Romazov	soprano
Count Loris Ipanov	tenor
Countess Olga Sukarev	soprano
De Siriex, a diplomat	baritone
Desirè, a servant	tenor
Dimitri, a servant	contralto
Grech, a police inspector	bass
Lorek, a surgeon	baritone
Cirillo, a coachman	baritone
Baron Rouvel	tenor
Borov, a doctor	baritone
Peasant Boy	contralto
Boleslao Lazinski,	a pianist

#### **Synopsis**

##### **Act 1:**

St. Petersburg, 1881. A winter's night in the palace of Count Vladimir Andrejevich Princess Fedora, who is to marry the Count the following day, arrives and sings of her love for him, unaware that the dissolute Count has betrayed her with another woman. The sound of sleigh-bells is heard, and the Count is brought in mortally wounded. Doctors and a priest are summoned, and the servants are questioned. It is proposed that Count Loris Ipanov, a suspected Nihilist sympathizer, was probably the assassin. De Siriex (a diplomat), and Grech (a police inspector) plan an investigation. Fedora swears on the jeweled Byzantine cross she is wearing that Count Andrejevich's death will be avenged.

##### **Act 2:**

Paris

Fedora has followed Loris Ipanov there to avenge her fiancé's death. There is a reception at Fedora's house. Boleslao Lazinski, a virtuoso pianist is playing for the party-goers. Ipanov

arrives and declares his love for Fedora. She tells him that she is returning to Russia the following day. Loris is desperate because he has been exiled from Russia and cannot follow her. He confesses to Fedora that it was he who had killed Count Vladimir. Fedora asks him to return after the reception is over to tell her the whole story. When she is alone, Fedora writes a letter to the chief of the Imperial Police in Russia accusing Ipanov of Count Vladimir's murder. Loris returns and confesses that he killed Count Vladimir because he had discovered that he and his wife were lovers. The night of the homicide, Ipanov had discovered them together. Vladimir shot at Ipanov and wounded him. Ipanov returned fire, killing Vladimir. Fedora realizes that she has fallen in love with Ipanov, and that he killed not for political ends, but to defend his honor. They embrace and she convinces him to spend the night with her.

### **Act 3**

The Bernese Oberland in Switzerland

Loris and Fedora are now lovers and living in her villa. With them is her friend, Countess Olga Sukarev. De Siriex arrives to invite Olga on a bicycle ride. He tells Fedora that as a result of the letter she had written to the police chief, Loris's brother, Valeriano, was arrested for being part of the plot to murder Count Andrejevich and imprisoned in a fortress on the Neva river. One night the river flooded and the young man was drowned. When Loris's mother heard the news, she collapsed and died. Fedora is anguished – she has been the cause of two deaths. Loris receives a letter from a friend in Russia who tells him of the deaths of his mother and brother and that the cause was a woman living in Paris who had written a letter denouncing him to the police. Fedora confesses to Loris that she had written the letter and begs his forgiveness. When he initially refuses and curses her, Fedora swallows poison which she had hidden in the Byzantine cross she always wore around her neck. Loris begs the doctor to save her, but it is too late. Fedora dies in Loris's arms.

### **Beatrice de Tenda Bellini**

Beatrice di Tenda is a tragic opera in two acts by Vincenzo Bellini, from a libretto by Felice Romani, after the play of the same name by Carlo Tedaldi Fores

Initially, a play by Alexandre Dumas was chosen as the subject for the opera, but Bellini had reservations about its suitability. After he and Giuditta Pasta (for whom the opera was to be written) had together seen the ballet based on the very different play, Tedaldi-Fores' *Beatrice Tenda*, in Milan in October 1832, she became enthusiastic about the subject and the composer set about persuading Romani that this was a good idea. Romani, who had his own concerns, the principal one being the close parallels with the story told in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*, an opera which had established that composer's success in 1830. Against his better judgment, he finally agreed, although he failed to provide verses for many months.

Although unsuccessful at its premiere in Venice in 1833, Bellini felt that he had counteracted the horror of its story "by means of the music, colouring it now tremendously and now sadly". Later, after hearing of the opera's success in Palermo, Bellini wrote to his Neapolitan friend Francesco Florimo, stating that *Beatrice* "was not unworthy of her sisters". Also, it was Pasta's performances in the title role that overcame the public's hostility to the piece.

The opera was Bellini's penultimate work, coming between *Norma* (1831) and *I puritani* (1835) and it was the only one of his operas to be published in full score in his lifetime.

## Roles

Beatrice di Tenda, Filippo's wife	soprano
Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan	baritone
Agnese del Maino, in love with Orombello	mezzo-soprano
Orombello, Lord of Ventimiglia	tenor
Anichino, loyal friend of Orombello	tenor
Rizzardo del Maino, Agnese's brother and Filippo's confidant	tenor

## Synopsis

This is the story of Beatrice Lascaris di Tenda, the woman who was the widow of the condottiere Facino Cane and later the wife of Duke Filippo Maria Visconti, in 15th century Milan. Filippo has grown tired of his wife Beatrice; she regrets her impetuous marriage to him after her first husband's death, a marriage that has delivered her and her people into the Duke's tyrannical power.

**Time: 1418 Place: The Castle of Binasco, near Milan**

### Act 1

Filippo attends a ball at the Castle Binasco in Italy, shadowed as usual by the sinister Rizzardo. He is fed up with everyone paying obeisance to his wife. His sycophantic courtiers tell him how much they sympathize, and suggest that Beatrice's servants are all plotting against him.

Beautiful harp music is heard. Agnese, the current object of Filippo's lust, sings from afar that life is empty without love. Filippo echoes her thoughts and states how much he loves her; she has no equal. His courtiers again sympathize with him and encourage him to seize the moment. Agnese disappears and all leave. Then Agnese reappears, this time singing for Orombello. Mysteriously, she wishes that her heart will guide him to her arms and, as in all good opera plots, the object of her lust makes his entrance. Orombello splutters that he does not know where he is or why he is there. Comforted by Agnese, he begins to relax and agrees that he is deeply in love and, when asked about a letter, shows her the one he is carrying. "Such misfortune!" The letter he is referring to is one of many he has written to Beatrice and not the one that Agnese had sent to him. Agnese's world falls apart, her tenderness turns to vitriol, and the two of them spit out a dramatic aria and leave.

Beatrice enters one of her secret places with her ladies. She is happy, but soon loses her poise and laments how misguided she has been to have married the evil Duke Filippo. As they all go to leave, Filippo sees them in the distance and, believing she is avoiding him, demands that she be brought back. The two of them accuse and rage at each other, with Filippo producing some secret papers stolen from Beatrice's apartment.

In another scene, slightly the worse for wear, Filippo's soldiers discuss his silence and temper. Beatrice enters carrying a portrait of her beloved, deceased husband, Facino. She is bemoaning the fact that everyone has abandoned her when Orombello enters protesting that he has not. Excitedly, he tells her his plans to rally the troops and help her free herself. She crushes him saying, in so many words, that she does not rate his expertise in security matters. Stunned, Orombello protests his love and, even when begged to do so, will not leave her presence; instead, he kneels down in front of her, at which moment Agnese and Filippo enter and accuse the two traitors of having an affair. Everyone now joins in with accusation,

counter accusation, attack and defence. The upshot is that Filippo has the pair arrested — to be tried in Court for adultery.

### **Act 2**

The courtiers learn of the terrible torture that has been applied to Orombello. Then, the Court is summoned and Filippo sets out the case for the prosecution. Beatrice is dragged in, and she protests that the Court has no jurisdiction. Next, Orombello is hauled in and, after desperately seeking forgiveness from Beatrice, proclaims her innocence. Beatrice regains her will to live and something in her speaking touches Filippo's heart. He announces that the sentence should be delayed. The Court overrules him stating that more torture should be applied until the truth is spoken. Again, Filippo changes his mind and, supporting the Court's decision, instructs that, indeed, more torture seems to be necessary to extract the truth. The Court rises.

Filippo and Agnese, full of remorse, are left alone and Agnese, realizing that things have gone much further than she had expected, begs Filippo to drop all the charges; but Filippo, not wishing to look weak, dismisses the idea.

Filippo now goes through several stages of torment and is obviously still deeply in love with Beatrice. Just as he has made up his mind to drop all the charges, with cruel timing, men still loyal to the late condottiere Facino arrive, to invade the castle. As a result, Filippo signs the death warrant now handed to him by Anichino and tries to justify his actions to the crowd, blaming Beatrice's behaviour.

There is a scene in which we see Beatrice's ladies outside Orombello's cell, while Beatrice prays. The action reaches its finale.

A detailed performance history is available here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatrice\\_di\\_Tenda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatrice_di_Tenda)

### **LE PROPHETE Meyerbeer**

Le prophète (The Prophet) is a grand opera in five acts by Giacomo Meyerbeer. The French-language libretto was by Eugène Scribe and Émile Deschamps, after passages from the Essay on the Manners and Spirit of Nations by Voltaire. The plot is based on the life of John of Leiden, Anabaptist leader and self-proclaimed "King of Münster" in the 16th century.

#### **Roles**

Jean de Leyde	tenor
Fidès, Jean's mother	mezzo-soprano
Berthe, Jean's bride	soprano
Jonas, an Anabaptist	tenor
Mathisen, an Anabaptist	bass or baritone
Zacharie, an Anabaptist	bass
Oberthal, a feudal count	bass

#### **ACT 1**

Dordrecht, Holland. Outside Count Oberthal's castle, peasants and millers rejoice in the fine weather. Berthe, a young orphan has her own reasons for rejoicing. Fidès mother of Jean has come from Leyden to take her son's betrothed home with her but Berthe, as a vassal, cannot leave without the Count's consent.

Meanwhile three Anabaptists.- Zacharie, Jonas and Mathiesen arrive. They are leaders of a revolt in nearby Westphalia and have come to foment further insurrection. The mere

appearance of the Count, however, suffices to intimidate the peasants Berthe asks his permission to marry Jean. Struck by her beauty the Count refuses When everyone expresses indignation at this decision, he has his soldiers arrest both Berthe and Fidès

## **ACT 2**

Jean's Inn, Leyden. Some villagers are dancing and a soldier offers them beer. Jean is concerned, for night is falling and his mother has not yet come back. The Anabaptists arrive and, seeing Jean, are struck by his resemblance to an image of King David in Münster Cathedral. Jean narrates a dream he has had in which he wore a crown before a prostrate throng The Anabaptists, planning to exploit him insist the dream is a prophecy: he will, indeed reign. He must follow them. Jean, whose thoughts are all of Berthe, dismisses them. Berthe having escaped the tyrant's clutches arrives at that moment. Jean hides her. Oberthal comes in with his soldiers and with prisoner, Fidès.

Jean has to choose between his mother whose life is threatened, and Berthe. He sacrifices his betrothed, and his mother calls upon God to bless her son for his cruel suffering. The three Anabaptists reappear, and Jean goes off with them saying nothing to his mother, who must not know their plan.

## **ACT 3.**

### **Scene 1**

The Anabaptists have set up their camp near Münster in Westphalia. The fighting forces bring in prisoners, and the leaders reveal their bloodthirsty nature. On the frozen lake there is skating. Provisions arrive; the weary soldiers refresh themselves.

### **Scene 2**

Zacharie's tent. With Mathiesen, Zacharie plans a night time attack. Oberthal appears, pretending to want to join the Anabaptists' ranks (in reality trying to reach Münster). The Anabaptists make him swear to hang Oberthal (ie himself). When his identity is revealed Zacharie sentences him to death on the spot. After Oberthal is led away, Jean tired of the life he is leading as a Prophet/figurehead for the revolt, enters. He is anxious to see his mother. Oberthal, brought back in, tells Jean that, to save her honour, Berthe has flung herself from the castle's battlements into the river but was saved and is apparently in Münster. Jean demands that Oberthal's life be spared: Berthe will decide the villain's fate. Now Münster must be taken.

### **Scene 3**

The camp. The rebels are restive, ready to turn against Jean. He rallies them once more, and they sing a Hymn of Triumph. As if in a miracle, the fog which has hung over the lake and the forest, clears. Münster can be seen in the distance.

## **ACT 4.**

### **Scene 1**

The square in Münster, now occupied by the Anabaptists. The rich burghers are forced to surrender their treasures and to curry the rebels' favour. Fidès arrives, now a beggar. She believes her son dead. She meets Berthe, tells her of Jean's death and blames it on the Prophet. Berthe vows revenge.

### **Scene 2**

In Münster Cathedral. All hail the Prophet, who is now to be crowned King. Fidès follows the crowd into the church but recognises her son only after the ceremony is finished. Before the

multitude she calls to him and claims to be his mother. This is blasphemy to the Prophet's followers, who are ready to kill the old woman. Jean stops them. Fidès realises that to insist in her claim would spell ruin for Jean. She denies he is her son, making it look as if he had miraculously restored her reason. The people are more enthralled than ever. Fidès remembers Berthe's murderous intentions.

## **ACT 5.**

### **Scene 1**

A cellar-dungeon in the Palace. The Anabaptist leaders have decided to betray Jean to the German Emperor, who is marching on Münster. As they leave, Fidès is brought in, a prisoner once more. She is prepared for death, but Jean enters, asks her forgiveness, and they are reconciled. Berthe appears, a torch in hand. The cellar is also a powder magazine, and she intends to blow it up when the Prophet and his followers are banqueting in the great hall above. She recognises Jean (unaware that he is the Prophet) and is beside herself with joy. But when she learns his identity, aghast, she stabs herself and dies. Jean, who was prepared to go off with her and his mother, now determines to remain. He will kill the wicked Anabaptists and himself with them.

### **Scene 2**

The Banquet Hall. Jean singing a drinking song, pretends to join in the bacchanal. When all his enemies are present, the flames begin to rise. Fidès has somehow managed to join him. They sing of heavenly release as the powder explodes and the palace collapses.

A detailed analysis and other historical performance details are available here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le\\_proph%C3%A8te](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_proph%C3%A8te)

## **Pelléas et Mélisande                      Debussy**

Pelléas et Mélisande (Pelléas and Mélisande) is an opera in five acts with music by Claude Debussy. The French libretto was adapted from Maurice Maeterlinck's Symbolist play Pelléas et Mélisande. It premiered at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on 30 April 1902 with Jean Périer as Pelléas and Mary Garden as Mélisande in a performance conducted by André Messager, who was instrumental in getting the Opéra-Comique to stage the work. The only opera Debussy ever completed, it is considered a landmark in 20th-century music.

The plot concerns a love triangle. Prince Golaud finds Mélisande, a mysterious young woman, lost in a forest. He marries her and brings her back to the castle of his grandfather, King Arkel of Allemonde. Here Mélisande becomes increasingly attached to Golaud's younger half-brother Pelléas, arousing Golaud's jealousy. Golaud goes to excessive lengths to find out the truth about Pelléas and Mélisande's relationship, even forcing his own child, Yniold, to spy on the couple. Pelléas decides to leave the castle but arranges to meet Mélisande one last time and the two finally confess their love for one another. Golaud, who has been eavesdropping, rushes out and kills Pelléas. Mélisande dies shortly after, having given birth to a daughter, with Golaud still begging her to tell him "the truth".

### **Characters**

Arkel, King of Allemonde	bass
Geneviève, mother of Golaud and Pelléas	contralto
Golaud, grandson of Arkel	baritone or bass-baritone
Pelléas, grandson of Arkel	tenor or high baritone (baryton-martin)

Mélisande	soprano or high mezzo-soprano
Yniold, the young son of Golaud	soprano or boy soprano
Doctor	bass
Shepherd	baritone

### **Synopsis**

#### **Act 1: Scene 1: A forest**

Prince Golaud, grandson of King Arkel of Allemonde, has become lost while hunting in the forest. He discovers a frightened, weeping girl sitting by a spring in which a crown is visible. She reveals her name is Mélisande but nothing else about her origins and refuses to let Golaud retrieve her crown from the water. Golaud persuades her to come with him before the forest gets dark.

#### **Scene 2: A room in the castle**

Six months have passed. Geneviève, the mother of the princes Golaud and Pelléas, reads a letter to the aged and nearly blind King Arkel. It was sent by Golaud to his brother Pelléas. In it Golaud reveals that he has married Mélisande, although he knows no more about her than on the day they first met. Golaud fears that Arkel will be angry with him and tells Pelléas to find how he reacts to the news. If the old man is favourable then Pelléas should light a lamp from the tower facing the sea on the third day; if Golaud does not see the lamp shining, he will sail on and never return home. Arkel had planned to marry the widowed Golaud to Princess Ursule in order to put an end to "long wars and ancient hatreds", but he bows to fate and accepts Golaud's marriage to Mélisande. Pelléas enters, weeping. He has received a letter from his friend Marcellus, who is on his deathbed, and wants to travel to say goodbye to him. Arkel thinks Pelléas should wait for the return of Golaud, and also reminds Pelléas of his own father, lying sick in bed in the castle. Geneviève tells Pelléas not to forget to light the lamp for Golaud.

#### **Scene 3: Before the castle**

Geneviève and Mélisande walk in the castle grounds. Mélisande remarks how dark the surrounding gardens and forest are. Pelléas arrives. They look out to sea and notice a large ship departing and a lighthouse shining, Mélisande foretells that it will sink. Night falls. Geneviève goes off to look after Yniold, Golaud's young son by his previous marriage. Pelléas attempts to take Melisande's hand to help her down the steep path but she refuses saying that she is holding flowers. He tells her he might have to go away tomorrow. Mélisande asks him why.

#### **Act 2: Scene 1: A well in the park**

It is a hot summer day. Pelléas has led Mélisande to one of his favourite spots, the "Blind Men's Well". People used to believe it possessed miraculous powers to cure blindness but since the old king's eyesight started to fail, they no longer come there. Mélisande lies down on the marble rim of the well and tries to see to the bottom. Her hair loosens and falls into the water. Pelléas notices how extraordinarily long it is. He remembers that Golaud first met Mélisande beside a spring and asks if he tried to kiss her at that time but she does not answer. Mélisande plays with the ring Golaud gave her, throwing it up into the air until it slips from her fingers into the well. Pelléas tells her not to be concerned but she is not reassured. He also notes that the clock was striking twelve as the ring dropped into the well. Mélisande asks him what she should tell Golaud. He replies, "the truth."

**Scene 2: A room in the castle**

Golaud is lying in bed with Mélisande at the bedside. He is wounded, having fallen from his horse while hunting. The horse suddenly bolted for no reason as the clock struck twelve. Mélisande bursts into tears and says she feels ill and unhappy in the castle. She wants to go away with Golaud. He asks her the reason for her unhappiness but she refuses to say. When he asks her if the problem is Pelléas, she replies that he is not the cause but she does not think he likes her. Golaud tells her not to worry: Pelléas can behave oddly and he is still very young. Mélisande complains about the gloominess of the castle, today was the first time she saw the sky. Golaud says that she is too old to be crying for such reasons and takes her hands to comfort her and notices the wedding ring is missing. Golaud becomes furious, Mélisande claims she dropped it in a cave by the sea where she went to collect shells with little Yniold. Golaud orders her to go and search for it at once before the tide comes in, even though night has fallen. When Mélisande replies that she is afraid to go alone, Golaud tells her to take Pelléas along with her.

**Scene 3: Before a cave**

Pelléas and Mélisande make their way down to the cave in pitch darkness. Mélisande is frightened to enter, but Pelléas tells her she will need to describe the place to Golaud to prove she has been there. The moon comes out lighting the cave and reveals three beggars sleeping in the cave. Pelléas explains there is a famine in the land. He decides they should come back another day.

**Act 3: Scene 1: One of the towers of the castle**

Mélisande is at the tower window, singing a song (*Mes longs cheveux*) as she combs her hair. Pelléas appears and asks her to lean out so he can kiss her hand as he is going away the next day. He cannot reach her hand but her long hair tumbles down from the window and he kisses and caresses it instead. Pelléas playfully ties Mélisande's hair to a willow tree in spite of her protests that someone might see them. A flock of doves takes flight. Mélisande panics when she hears Golaud's footsteps approaching. Golaud dismisses Pelléas and Mélisande as nothing but a pair of children and leads Pelléas away.

**Scene 2: The vaults of the castle**

Golaud leads Pelléas down to the castle vaults, which contain the dungeons and a stagnant pool which has "the scent of death." He tells Pelléas to lean over and look into the chasm while he holds him safely. Pelléas finds the atmosphere stifling and they leave.

**Scene 3: A terrace at the entrance of the vaults**

Pelléas is relieved to breathe fresh air again. It is noon. He sees Geneviève and Mélisande at a window in the tower. Golaud tells Pelléas that there must be no repeat of the "childish game" between him and Mélisande last night. Mélisande is pregnant and the least shock might disturb her health. It is not the first time he has noticed there might be something between Pelléas and Mélisande but Pelléas should avoid her as much as possible without making this look too obvious.

**Scene 4: Before the castle**

Golaud sits with his little son, Yniold, in the darkness before dawn and questions him about Pelléas and Mélisande. The boy reveals little that Golaud wants to know since he is too innocent to understand what he is asking. He says that Pelléas and Mélisande often quarrel about the door and that they have told Yniold he will one day be as big as his father. Golaud

is puzzled when learning that they (Pelléas and Mélisande) never send Yniold away because they are afraid when he is not there and keep on crying in the dark. He admits that he once saw Pelléas and Mélisande kiss "when it was raining". Golaud lifts his son on his shoulders to spy on Pelléas and Mélisande through the window but Yniold says that they are doing nothing other than looking at the light. He threatens to scream unless Golaud lets him down again. Golaud leads him away.

**Act 4: Scene 1: A room in the castle**

Pelléas tells Mélisande that his father is getting better and has asked him to leave on his travels. He arranges a last meeting with Mélisande by the Blind Men's Well in the park.

**Scene 2: The same**

Arkel tells Mélisande how he felt sorry for her when she first came to the castle "with the strange, bewildered look of someone constantly awaiting a calamity." But now that is going to change and Mélisande will "open the door to a new era that I foresee." He asks her to kiss him. Golaud bursts in with blood on his forehead — he claims it was caused by a thorn hedge. When Mélisande tries to wipe the blood away, he angrily orders her not to touch him and demands his sword. He says that another peasant has died of starvation. Golaud notices Mélisande is trembling and tells her he is not going to kill her with the sword. He mocks the "great innocence" Arkel says he sees in Mélisande's eyes. He commands her to close them or "I will shut them for a long time." He tells Mélisande that she disgusts him and drags her around the room by her hair. When Golaud leaves, Arkel asks if he is drunk. Mélisande simply replies that he does not love her any more. Arkel comments: "If I were God, I would have pity on the hearts of men."

**Scene 3: A well in the park**

Yniold tries to lift a boulder to free his golden ball, which is trapped between it and some rocks. As darkness falls, he hears a flock of sheep suddenly stop bleating. A shepherd explains that they have turned onto a path that doesn't lead back to the sheepfold, but does not answer when Yniold asks where they will sleep. Yniold goes off to find someone to talk to.

**Scene 4: The same**

Pelléas arrives alone at the well. He is worried that he has become deeply involved with Mélisande and fears the consequences. He knows he must leave but first, he wants to see Mélisande one last time and tell her things he has kept to himself. Mélisande arrives. She was able to slip out without Golaud's noticing. At first she is distant but when Pelléas tells her he is going away she becomes more affectionate. After admitting his love for her, Mélisande confesses that she has loved him since she first saw him. Pelléas hears the servants shutting the castle gates for the night. Now they are locked out, but Mélisande says that it is for the better. Pelléas is resigned to fate too. After the two kiss, Mélisande hears something moving in the shadows. It is Golaud, who has been watching the couple from behind a tree. Golaud strikes down a defenceless Pelléas with his sword and kills him. Mélisande is also wounded but she flees into the woods saying to a dying Pelléas that she does not have courage.

**Act 5: A bedroom in the castle**

Mélisande sleeps in a sick bed after giving birth to her child. The doctor assures Golaud that despite her wound, her condition is not serious. Overcome with guilt, Golaud claims he has killed for no reason. Pelléas and Mélisande merely kissed "like a brother and sister." Mélisande wakes and asks for a window to be opened so she can see the sunset. Golaud asks

the doctor and Arkel to leave the room so he can speak with Mélisande alone. He blames himself for everything and begs Melisande's forgiveness. Golaud presses Mélisande to confess her forbidden love for Pelléas. She maintains her innocence in spite of Golaud's increasingly desperate pleas to her to tell the truth. Arkel and the doctor return. Arkel tells Golaud to stop before he kills Mélisande, but he replies "I have already killed her." Arkel hands Mélisande her newborn baby girl but she is too weak to lift the child in her arms and remarks that the baby does not cry and that she will live a sad existence. The room fills with serving women, although no one can tell who has summoned them. Mélisande quietly dies. At the moment of death, the serving women fall to their knees. Arkel comforts the sobbing Golaud.

Detailed analysis and background material is available here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pell%C3%A9as\\_et\\_M%C3%A9lisande\\_\(opera\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pell%C3%A9as_et_M%C3%A9lisande_(opera))