

## Script Sample

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## *Pelleas and Melisande*

**by Maurice Maeterlinck**  
**in a translation by Rob Melrose**

*Pelléas et Mélisande* premiered on May 17, 1893 at the Bouffes-Parisiens under the direction of Aurélien Lugné-Poe.

This translation premiered on October 27, 2011 at The Cutting Ball Theater (Rob Melrose, Artistic Director; Suzanne Appel, Managing Director) in residence at EXIT on Taylor. It was directed by Rob Melrose with an original score by Cliff Caruthers, choreography by Laura Arrington, sets designed by Michael Locher, costumes designed by Raquel Barreto, lighting designed by York Kennedy, and video design by Wesley Cabral. It was dramaturged by Bennett Fisher, stage managed by Jocelyn Thompson and assistant directed by Annie Paladino with the following cast:

Arkel	Paul Gerrior
Genevieve	Gwyneth Richards
Golaud	Derek Fischer
Pelleas	Joshua Schell
Melisande	Caitlyn Louchard
Ynoild	Jessica Rudholm
Porter	Paul Gerrior
Old Servant	Gwyneth Richards
Servant	Brittany Kilcoyne McGregor
Servant	Carla Pauli
Servant	Jessica Rudholm
Doctor	Bennett Fisher

### Characters

Arkel – the King of Allemonde  
Genevieve – his daughter, a princess  
Golaud – her son, a widowed prince

Pelleas – his younger brother, a prince  
Melisande – a lost princess  
Ynoild – Golaud’s son from his first marriage  
Porter  
Old Servant  
Seven Servants  
Doctor

## **Act I**

### **Scene I**

#### **The Gate of the Castle**

THE SERVANTS [all women, from inside]

Open the gate! Open the gate!

THE PORTER

Who's there? Why did you wake me up? Go out one of the doors. There are plenty of other ways out of the castle!

A SERVANT [from inside]

We've come to wash the entryway, scrub the steps, and polish the gate! So open it! Open it!

ANOTHER SERVANT [from inside]

There's going to be a celebration!

A THIRD SERVANT [from inside]

There's going to be a feast! Open quick!

SERVANTS [from inside]

Open! Open!

THE PORTER

Wait! Wait! I don't even know if I'll be able to open it. It's never open. Wait until daylight...

FIRST SERVANT

It's already daylight. I can see the sun through the cracks...

THE PORTER

All right, let me find the keys. Here they are. I've got them.

[He puts the enormous key into the lock and turns.  
It makes a grating sound that puts one's teeth on  
edge]

Ahhh! What a terrible sound. It won't budge. Help me! Help me!

THE SEVANTS

We're pulling! We're pulling!

SECOND SERVANT

It won't open...

FIRST SERVANT

Ah! Ah! It's opening! Slowly, it's opening!

[It gives a huge creak as it opens]

THE PORTER

Listen to that shriek! It'll wake everyone...

SECOND SERVANT [appearing in the entryway]

Oh! The light!

FIRST SERVANT

The sun is rising on the sea!

THE PORTER

It's open! I can't believe it...it's wide open!

[All the SERVANTS appear in the entryway and  
cross through it]

FIRST SERVANT

I'll wash the entryway first...

SECOND SERVANT

We'll never be able to wash all this.

OTHER SERVANTS

Bring water! Water!

## THE PORTER

Yes! Yes! Water. Pour all the water from the Lord's Great Flood, you'll never be able to finish.

### Scene II

#### A Forest

[MELISANDE is discovered on the edge of the spring. GOLAUD enters]

GOLAUD

I'll never find my way out of this forest again. God knows where that beast has led me. I thought that I shot it dead, and here are drops of blood. But now I've lost him; and I think I've lost myself as well--and my dogs can't even find me. I'll have to retrace my steps... I hear someone crying...Oh, what's that at the edge of the water?... A little girl crying at the spring?

[He coughs]

She doesn't hear me. I can't see her face.

[He approaches her and touches her on the shoulder]

Why are you crying?

[MELISSANE trembles, is about to run away]

Don't be afraid. You have nothing to fear. Why are you crying here all alone?

MELISANDE

Don't touch me! Don't touch me!

GOLAUD

Don't be afraid...I won't do you any...Oh! You're...beautiful!

MELISANDE

Don't touch me or I'll throw myself in the water!...

GOLAUD

I won't touch you... Look, I'll stay here, against the tree. Don't be afraid. Has someone hurt you?

MELISANDE

Yes! Yes! Yes!...

[She starts sobbing]

GOLAUD

Who has hurt you?

MELISANDE

Everyone! Everyone!

GOLAUD

How did they hurt you?

MELISANDE

I don't want to tell you! I can't tell you!...

GOLAUD

Please, don't cry like this. Where are you from?

MELISANDE

I ran away...far away!

GOLAUD

Yes, but from where?

MELISANDE

I'm lost!...lost here...I'm not from here...I wasn't born here...

GOLAUD

Where are you from? Where were you born?

MELISANDE

Far from here...far...far...

GOLAUD

What's that shining at the bottom of the spring?

MELISANDE

Where?--Oh! It's the crown he gave me. It fell while I was crying.

GOLAUD

A crown! --Who gave you a crown?--I'll try to get it...

MELISANDE

No, no! I don't want it any more! I'd rather die!

GOLAUD

It would be easy to get back. The water isn't that deep.

MELISANDE

I don't want it anymore! If you take it out, I'll throw myself in its place!

GOLAUD

No, no. I'll leave it there.--Has it been a long time since you ran away?

MELISANDE

Yes....who are you?

GOLAUD

I'm Prince Golaud--the grand-son of Arkel, the old king of Allemonde...

MELISANDE

Oh! But your hair is already turning grey...

GOLAUD

Yes, a few grey hairs, here, near my temples...

MELISANDE

And a beard too...Why are you looking at me that way?

GOLAUD

I'm looking at your eyes.--Do you never close them?

MELISANDE

Yes, yes, I close them at night.

GOLAUD

Why do you look so astonished?

MELISANDE

Are you a giant?

GOLAUD

I'm a man no different from other men...

MELISANDE

Why did you come here?

GOLAUD

I don't know myself. I was hunting in the forest. I was chasing a wild boar and I lost my way.--You seem very young. How old are you?

MELISANDE

I'm getting cold...

GOLAUD

Would you like to come with me?

MELISANDE

No, I'm staying here.

GOLAUD

You can't stay here all alone. You can't stay here all night...What's your name?

MELISANDE

Melisande.

GOLAUD

You can't stay here, Melisande. Come with me...

MELISANDE

I'm staying here.

GOLAUD

You'll be scared, all alone. All night...impossible. Melisande, come, give me your hand...

MELISANDE

Don't touch me!

GOLAUD

Don't scream... I won't touch you any more. But come with me. The night is black and cold. Come with me...

MELISANDE

Where are you going?

GOLAUD

I don't know...I'm lost too...

(They exit)

### **Scene Three**

#### **A Room in the Castle**

[ARKEL and GENEVIEVE are discovered]

GENEVIEVE

Here is what he writes to his brother Pelleas, "One evening, I found her in tears beside a spring, in the forest where I was lost. I don't know how old she is or where she's from and I don't dare to ask, because she must have had an awful shock; and when I do ask what happened, she bursts into tears and sobs so hard that it scares me. Just before I found her at the spring, a golden crown had fallen to the bottom. And she was dressed like a princess, though her clothes had been torn by the thorns. It's now been six months since I married her and I don't know anymore than I did on the day we met. Meanwhile dear Pelleas, make ready for my return...I know that my mother will forgive me for this marriage. But I am afraid of the King Arkel, in spite of his kindness, because I know I destroy all his political plans with this strange marriage, and I am afraid that Melisande's beauty will not prove a good enough excuse for my weakness in his eyes. But, if he consents to welcome her as he would his own daughter, three nights after receiving this letter, light a lamp in the tower that overlooks the sea. I'll see it from the bridge of our ship. If not I'll go far away from here and never return." So what do you have to say about that?

ARKEL

Nothing. He's probably done what he had to do. I'm very old and still I've never had an instant where I've seen clearly into myself; how can I judge what others do? I'm not far from the grave and am incapable of judging myself... Sometimes we see better with our eyes closed. What he has done seems strange to us and that is all. His ripe age has past, and so he marries like a child a little girl he found by a spring...That seems strange to us, because we only see the wrong side of destinies...the wrong side even of our own...He has, until now, always followed my advice; I had thought to make him happy in sending him to ask for Princess Ursula's hand...he hates being alone, ever since the death of his wife he's been miserably alone, and this marriage would have put an end to long wars and old hatreds... But that was not his choice. Let it be as he has chosen: I have never stood in the way of destiny; and he knows his own future better than I do. Perhaps every event that occurs has its own purpose.

GENEVIEVE

He's always been so cautious, so grave and firm... If it were Pelleas, I would understand... But him...at his age...Who is he going to bring into our midst? A stranger found by the side of the road... Since his wife died he's lived only for his son, little Yniold, and if he was going to remarry, it was only because it was what you wanted...And now...a little girl in the forest... He's forgotten everything...--What should we do?

[PELLEAS enters]

ARKEL

Who's there?

GENEVIEVE



It's Pelleas. He's crying.

ARKEL

Is that you, Pelleas?---Come a little closer so I can see you in the light...

PELLEAS

Grandfather, when the letter from my brother came there was another letter with it. This letter was from my friend Marcellus... He's dying and wants me to visit him. He wants to see me before he dies.

ARKEL

You want to leave before your brother arrives? Perhaps your friend is less sick than he thinks...

PELLEAS

His letter is so sad that you can see death between the lines...He says he knows precisely the day when his death will come...He says I can make it there before that day if I want, but I have no time to lose. The trip is very long and if I wait for Golaud to come back, it might be too late...

ARKEL

You must wait a little while...We don't know what this homecoming has in store for us. And besides, isn't your father here above us dying as well, and perhaps even more sick than your friend? Can you choose between your father and your friend?

[He exits]

GENEVIEVE

Make sure to light the lamp in the tower tonight, Pelleas.

## **Scene IV**

### **Before the Castle**

[GENEVIEVE and MELISANDE enter]

MELISANDE

It's gloomy in the gardens. And the woods! Woods surrounding the entire palace.

GENEVIEVE

Yes, that shocked me too when I first arrived. It shocks everybody. There are places where you can never see the sun. But you get used to it quickly.... It's been a long time...it's almost forty years I've lived here...Look at the other side, you'll see the light from the sea...

MELISANDE

I hear a noise under us...

GENEVIEVE

Yes; it's someone coming up to us... Ah! it's Pelleas... He still seems tired from waiting so long for the two of you to arrive.

MELISANDE

He doesn't see us.

GENEVIEVE

I think he saw us but doesn't know what to do... Pelleas, Pelleas, is that you?

PELLEAS

Yes!... I was going to the sea-cliffs...

GENEVIEVE

So were we. We're trying to find some light. Here it's a little lighter than it is at the castle; and still the sea looks so gloomy.

PELLEAS

A storm is coming. We get lots of storms here...but the sea is so calm tonight... You could set sail without knowing and never return.

MELISANDE

Something is leaving the port...

PELLEAS

It must be a big ship... You can tell because the lights are up high, we'll see it as soon as it reaches that strip of light...

GENEVIEVE

I don't know if we'll be able to see it... There's fog on the water...

PELLEAS

The fog seems to be rising...

MELISANDE

Yes, I see a little light there I hadn't seen before...

PELLEAS

It's a lighthouse; there are others we can't see yet.

MELISANDE

The ship is in the light now... It's already far away.

PELLEAS

It's a foreign ship. It doesn't look like one of ours...

MELISANDE

It's the ship that brought me here!

PELLEAS

It's gliding away at full sail...

MELISANDE

It's the ship that brought me here. It has huge sails... I recognize it now.

PELLEAS

It will have a rough sea tonight...

MELISANDE

Why is it going away? You can hardly see it any longer... It might be wrecked...

PELLEAS

The night is falling fast...

[Silence]

GENEVIEVE

No one speaks?... You have nothing more to say?... It's time to go back. Pelleas, show Melisande the way. I have to go see little Yniold a moment.

[She leaves]

PELLEAS

You can't see anything on the water anymore.

MELISANDE

I see some other lights.

PELLEAS

Those are the other lighthouses... Do you hear the ocean?... It's the wind rising... Let's go down. Do you want to give me your hand?

MELISANDE

My hands are full of flowers and leaves.

PELLEAS

I'll hold you by the arm, the path is steep and it's very dark... I might be leaving tomorrow...

MELISANDE

Oh!...Why are you leaving?

[They leave]

**End of Script Sample**

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