

THE STORY OF  
**LA BAYADÈRE**

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Costumes and  
sets designed by  
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Long ago, in faraway India,  
deep in the Sacred Forest,  
lived a bayadère, a temple  
dancer, named Nikiya.

Nikiya was the most  
beautiful and talented of  
all the dancers. When she  
danced before the Sacred  
Fire, the flames danced  
with her in return.



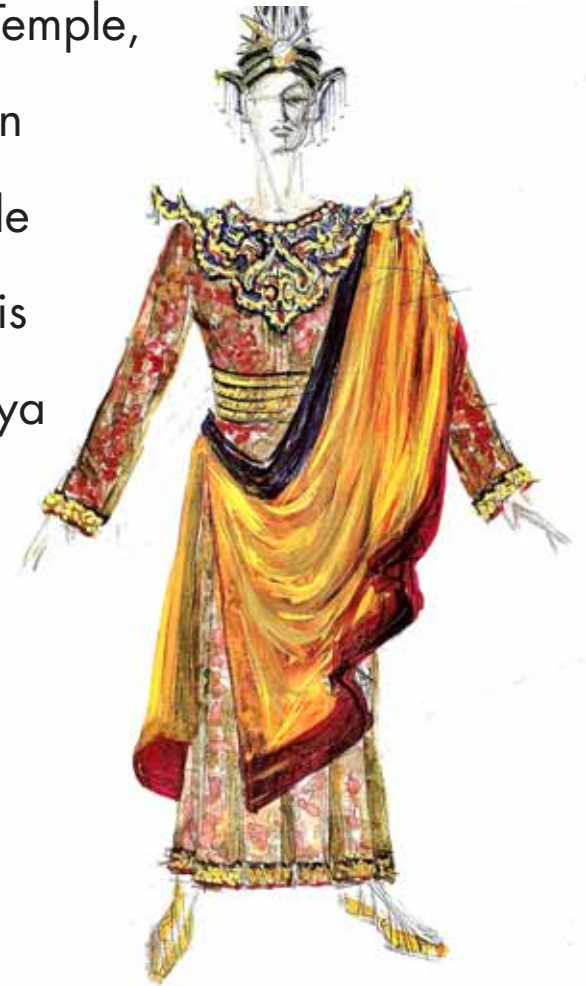
Nikiya was in love with Solor,  
a handsome and brave  
warrior. The couple had to  
meet in secret, for love  
between a bayadère and  
any man was forbidden



One day, preparations were made at the Temple to honor Nikiya as the new leader of the bayadères. Everyone was there to watch her dance, including the High Brahmin, the most powerful and respected man at the Temple.

The High Brahmin was entranced by Nikiya's

talent and beauty. Breaking his vow of devotion to the Temple, the High Brahmin took Nikiya aside and professed his love to her. Nikiya was shocked by his actions, and rejected him.



Later that evening Nikiya and Solor met. By the dim light of the moon and the stars, they danced together before the Sacred Fire, and swore their eternal love for one another.



Little did they know that they had been followed by the jealous High Brahmin! As the High Brahmin watched the happy couple, his rage grew. He vowed then and there to kill Solor.

The next day, Solor attended a celebration given in his honor at the palace. During the festivities, the Rajah stood and announced that he had chosen Solor to be husband to his daughter, Gamzatti.



As Solor was introduced to Gamzatti, he felt overwhelmed. Gamzatti was stunningly beautiful – but he had sworn his love to Nikiya, yet he could not defy the Rajah. Feeling he had no choice, Solor agreed to marry Gamzatti.

Seeing an opportunity for revenge, The High Brahmin told the Rajah of Nikiya and Solor's secret love. Instead of condemning Solor to death, as the High Brahmin had hoped, the Rajah decided that Nikiya must be killed.



Meanwhile, Gamzatti had been listening in on their conversation. Deciding to take matters into her own hands, she summoned Nikiya to her room and bribed her with promises of gold and jewels in return for giving up Solor.

They began to argue and Nikiya, afraid, pulled out a dagger and attempted to stab Gamzatti. A struggle ensued, and during the commotion the dagger was knocked away from Nikiya's hand. She fled back to the Temple, leaving a furious Gamzatti swearing revenge.

Then next day, Solor and Gamzatti were to be betrothed at the palace. In a cruel twist, Nikiya was commanded to dance for them. At the end of her first dance, Nikiya was presented with a basket of flowers. Thinking they were from Solor, she happily accepted them, and joyfully began to dance around the court.



Sadly, the flowers were not from Solor, but Gamzatti. The basket contained a poisonous snake, which bit Nikiya as she danced. She staggered and fell in pain.

The bayadère watched as Gamzatti led Solor away, which crushed her spirits. Heartbroken, Nikiya refused the antidote for the snake bite and died.

When Solor found out, he was stricken with grief. He fell asleep and began to dream. In his dreams, he was reunited with Nikiya in the Kingdom of Shades. When Solor awakened, he realized that he was still fated to marry Gamzatti.



At the wedding, Solor and Gamzatti began to say their vows. Suddenly a thunderous noise filled the air. The temple started to shake and crumble to pieces. Nikiya's restless spirit could not allow Solor and Gamzatti to marry.

As the temple fell around the people, Solor died, but his spirit was reunited with Nikiya's. Their love continued to live on for all time.

