

THE STORY

BACKGROUND

Idomeneo, the King of Crete, is returning home after fighting in the Trojan War. Prior to his arrival, a ship containing prisoners of war was threatened by a storm, and on it was the Trojan princess **Ilia**. She was saved from drowning by Idomeneo's son **Idamante**, and they fell in love. The Greek princess **Elettra** has taken refuge in Crete; she also loves Idamante.

ACT I

Ilia is torn between her love for Idamante and her hatred of his father Idomeneo, whose forces killed her family during the war. Idamante declares his love for Ilia by announcing that he will release all Trojan prisoners. This action is condemned by the jealous Elettra.

The king's advisor **Arbace** brings news that Idomeneo's boat was near harbor, but has gone down in a storm. Idomeneo has survived, but as he prayed for safety, he promised to sacrifice the first person he sees after reaching land. This person is his son. Having been gone ten years, Idomeneo doesn't recognize Idamante at first. Once he does, he flees in horror, leaving his son distraught and confused.

ACT II

Idomeneo realizes that Ilia has fallen in love with his son. As Idomeneo searches for a way to save his son's life, he decides that Idamante should leave immediately to escort Elettra back to her home country. As they prepare to leave, a storm arises. Idomeneo confesses that he is responsible for this destruction, and that it is a punishment for breaking his vow.

ACT III

Ilia and Idamante express their love for one another, and Elettra desires revenge. Still fearing for his son's life, Idomeneo insists that Idamante be exiled. Idamante can't understand why his father has rejected him, and he goes out to prove his own worth in battle.

Crete continues to be plagued with violence and destruction, and the **High Priest** urges Idomeneo to bring about lasting peace. Idomeneo confesses the bargain he made with Neptune. Wanting to appease his father, Idamante agrees to sacrifice his life, but Ilia offers her own life in exchange.

A Voice proclaims that Idomeneo will be released from his vow if he abdicates the throne, leaving Idamante and Ilia to reign. Peace is restored.