

ORPHEUS AND WHAT'S-HER-NAME

by Jon Jory

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ORPHEUS AND WHAT'S-HER-NAME

A One Act Comedic Play

by Jon Jory

SYNOPSIS: This fateful love story of Orpheus and Eurydice is spiced up with a modern twist. Follow Orpheus in his quest through the underworld to save the love of his life. Utilizing a large female ensemble cast, this fresh take on Greek mythology is sure to please.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6-23 females, 2 males, 0-1 either)

ORPHEUS (m)..... (174 lines)

EURYDICE (f) (94 lines)

HADES (m) (72 lines)

PERSEPHONE (f) (45 lines)

ENSEMBLE: *(4-21 females, 0-1 either)*

EUPHENIA (f) (21 lines)

ANASTASIA (f)..... (20 lines)

PETRA (f) (20 lines)

SAPPHIRA (f)..... (14 lines)

TISHA (f) (14 lines)

JOANNE (f)..... (13 lines)

OLD WOMAN (f) (16 lines)

ELEVATOR OPERATOR (f) (25 lines)

BOATMAN (m/f)..... (16 lines)

JULIET (f)..... (6 lines)

ANNA KARENINA (f)..... (5 lines)

CATHERINE EARNSHAW (f) (5 lines)

MEROPE (f)..... Leader of dead soul soldiers.
(18 lines)

GREEN WOMEN (f) 3 females. Chanting/singing
lines, continuous. (1 line)

DEAD SOULS (f) 2-3 females. (Non-Speaking)

DEAD SOUL SOLDIERS (f)..... 3 females. (2 lines)

DURATION: 40 minutes.

SET: The stage itself could have levels or it could be just flat.

SOUND EFFECTS

- ☐ bing
- ☐ electronic sizzle

COSTUMES

ORPHEUS – musician attire.

EURYDICE – red-hot street fashion glam, all grey outfit.

HADES – all black attire.

PERSEPHONE – swimwear/beach attire.

EUPHENIA – any attire, be creative.

ANASTASIA – jeans, t-shirt, cowboy boots.

PETRA – school uniform and glasses

SAPPHIRA – police uniform

TISHA – any attire, be creative.

JOANNE – any attire, be creative.

OLD WOMAN – old fashioned housedress, horns.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR

BOATMAN – tuxedo or suit and fabulous tie.

JULIET – grey robe

ANNA KARENINA – grey robe

CATHERINE EARNSHAW – grey robe

MEROPE – black robe.

GREEN WOMEN – green robes, hands and faces are green

DEAD SOUL SOLDIERS – black robes.

DEAD SOULS – grey robe

PROPS

- ☐ Diet Coke
- ☐ musical instrument
- ☐ two ice cream cones
- ☐ slip of paper
- ☐ walker
- ☐ bouquet of dead roses
- ☐ scythes
- ☐ two red umbrellas
- ☐ two small thrones
- ☐ coin
- ☐ pith helmet
- ☐ rolling suitcase
- ☐ chocolate milkshake with two straws
- ☐ table
- ☐ two chairs

AT START: *An empty stage except for ANASTASIA, dressed in jeans, t-shirt, and cowboy boots. She wanders on drinking a Diet Coke in a can. She glances out at the audience and gives a desultory wave. ANASTASIA does a couple of stretches.*

EUPHENIA: *(From audience.)* Hey, Anastasia!

ANASTASIA: Who's that?

EUPHENIA: It's me, Euphenia.

ANASTASIA: Hey girl, what's up with the blood thing?

EUPHENIA: Oh, there's some Spartans in town, you know.

ANASTASIA: How come those Spartan are always lookin' for trouble?

EUPHENIA: Just a Spartan thing, y'know. Whatta we got today?

PETRA enters, dressed in a school uniform and glasses.

ANASTASIA: What "got"?

EUPHENIA: Comedy or tragedy?

ANASTASIA: Sort of in the middle.

PETRA: It's a rom-com thingy.

EUPHENIA: Hey, Petra.

PETRA: Hey.

EUPHENIA: You guys doing the chorus thing?

SAPPHIRA enters, dressed as a policewoman.

PETRA: Chorus thing, yeah.

EUPHENIA: Better than nothing, right?

PETRA: It's okay.

SAPPHIRA: We got to rock this out ladies.

PETRA: Gotta go.

EUPHENIA: You want to grab some baklava after?

ANASTASIA: See you down in the Agora.

They form up on stage. SAPPHIRA down on one knee. The others standing behind her.

PETRA: Hit it.

PETRA, EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA: We're the Greek chorus. We're a little boring but get over it. The chorus used to be all men but those days are over, right? Okay, we're going to lay a myth on you.

PETRA: *(Moves away from the group toward the audience.)* The myths were stories the Greeks made up that explain the origin and nature of the world using gods and goddesses, heroes and monsters and...

EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA: Knock it off, Petra.

PETRA: Anyway, we explain stuff.

EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA: Petra!

PETRA races up and takes her place.

PETRA, EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA: This is the tale of Orpheus and... ummm... Orpheus and...

SAPPHIRA: Susie?

EUPHENIA, PETRA, and ANASTASIA: No, not Susie.

ANASTASIA: Persephone?

EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and PETRA: Uh-uh.

PETRA, EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA: Well, this is embarrassing. *(They whisper together then...)* Tonight! For one performance only. The amazing, remarkable, unforgettable myth of... *(They whisper again then...)* Orpheus!

ORPHEUS enters from one side with a musical instrument, he's in definite musician clothes.

PETRA, EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA: And what's-her-name!

EURYDICE enters from the other, she's dressed in red-hot street fashion glam.

EURYDICE: *(To PETRA, EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA.)*
I'm Eurydice, you idiots!

PETRA, EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA race offstage.
EURYDICE and ORPHEUS advance within a couple feet of each other.

ORPHEUS: (*Impressed.*) Whoa.

EURYDICE: (*Appreciative.*) Whoa.

ORPHEUS: (*Even better.*) Wow.

EURYDICE: Wow.

ORPHEUS: You are definitely something.

EURYDICE: What something am I?

ORPHEUS: I don't know. Let's say heart stopping. Electrifying.
Adorable.

EURYDICE: I like adorable. How adorable am I?

ORPHEUS: Socko. Bingo-bango. Whupsadoodle!

EURYDICE: Could you play a riff about me?

ORPHEUS plays a riff on whatever instrument he carries.

EURYDICE: Not bad. But yo, you fully appreciate I have a hundred qualities more interesting and important than my look. So don't objectify me.

ORPHEUS: A guy's got to start somewhere.

EURYDICE: What's your name?

ORPHEUS: Orpheus. You?

EURYDICE: Eurydice. So, Orpheus... (*Walking a circle around him.*)

You are actually pretty bingo-bango yourself. Plus your music, for instance, could be said to cast a considerable spell.

ORPHEUS: What kind of spell would that be?

EURYDICE: It soothes the savage beast.

ORPHEUS: You consider yourself savage?

EURYDICE: Under the right circumstances. A full moon kind of thing.

ORPHEUS: I'm glad you're soothed. I'm a little bit of a god actually.
You?

EURYDICE: Just a mortal. From Oklahoma actually.

ORPHEUS: What's that like?

EURYDICE: Empty.

ORPHEUS: That's where we all start.

A pause.

EURYDICE and ORPHEUS: Let's get married.

They shake hands and face front shoulder to shoulder, holding hands. PETRA, EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA race onstage from different entrances and strike a pose together.

PETRA, EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA: And, hey why not, they did!

PETRA: (*Stepping forward.*) In the rom-com genre, lovers meet, have assorted problems. The girl says...

ANASTASIA and SAPPHIRA: Yo, I am outta here!

PETRA: The girl slams the door, grabs a taxi and heads for the airport.

ANASTASIA: The guy pursues her by commandeering a city bus driven by Tom Hanks.

PETRA, EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA: She runs to the gate. He steals a skateboard. She boards the plane. The door closes. He pounds on the door. The airport police close in. She suddenly reappears. He breaks away from the police. They embrace! A cute four year old child with incredibly curly hair gives them her lollipop. The waiting room breaks into applause. They live happily ever after!! (*A pause.*) But that's not Orpheus and... whatshername.

EURYDICE: I cannot believe this!

PETRA, EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA: A myth is more down and dirty.

PETRA, EUPHENIA, SAPPHIRA, and ANASTASIA race offstage in different directions.

ORPHEUS: Hi honey, I'm home. I got you the organic safflower oil in the organic disposable paper bottle with organic fine print saying no safflowers were harmed in creating the oil.

EURYDICE: Cool beans. How was your day?

ORPHEUS: I played a session with some guy named Elton John who was wearing a pink and orange space suit.

EURYDICE: That's wonderful! I'm so proud of you.

ORPHEUS: What have you been doing?

EURYDICE: Oh, this and that. Dying mainly.

ORPHEUS: You're dying?

EURYDICE: I have to lie down now. (*Lies on the stage floor.*)

ORPHEUS: (*Kneeling beside EURYDICE.*) You can't die. You are my only love, my life, my inspiration. Please, please don't leave me.

EURYDICE: You'll still have your music.

ORPHEUS: The music means nothing without you.

EURYDICE: I know our marriage had made us one soul but you'll still have one half. If you look in the refrigerator you'll see I've made you enough macaroni and cheese for ten or twelve years. There's also a cherry pie.

ORPHEUS: No! No Eurydice! I love you.

EURYDICE: And I love you. Don't forget to swifter the apartment.

EURYDICE dies. ORPHEUS puts his head in his hands.

ORPHEUS: Nooooooooooooo!

HADES, dressed in all black, enters.

HADES: How you doin', dude?

ORPHEUS: Who are you?

HADES: C'mon, you know me.

ORPHEUS: Must have slipped my mind.

HADES: Death. Everybody gets to know death. Well, actually the name is Hades. God of the underworld. (*Clapping his hands over the fallen EURYDICE.*) Up and at 'em, Eurydice.

EURYDICE rises.

ORPHEUS: Eurydice! You're alive.

HADES: You ever see a zombie movie?

ORPHEUS: This is Ancient Greece, how would I see a movie?

HADES: Well, if you saw one she'd be in it.

ORPHEUS: Eurydice, it's me, Orpheus.

HADES: (*Taps his forehead.*) Nobody home, pal. Girl, you got the shivers. Come along with me I'll take you somewhere warm. (*Takes EURYDICE by the elbow. They start off.*) Nice to see you, Orpheus. I'll be back for you in forty-seven years. Better pack.

ORPHEUS: Let her go!

ORPHEUS starts toward them. HADES holds up his hand and ORPHEUS is frozen in place.

ORPHEUS: I can't move.

HADES: Don't get your underwear in a twist. It'll wear off in a few minutes. You're a musician, right?

ORPHEUS: I am.

HADES: Women love musicians. You'll find someone else. Good luck, man. I'll buy your next album.

HADES and EURYDICE exit.

ORPHEUS: Eurydice!!

TISHA and JOANNE cross by with ice cream cones.

TISHA: So I said, "Mom, you have to let me live my own life."

JOANNE: Yeah. Everybody says that to their mom.

TISHA: And will she?

JOANNE: Yeah, eventually. You just have to wear her down by playing your music really loud.

ORPHEUS: Help.

TISHA: Did that statue just say help?

JOANNE: I don't think that's a statue.

TISHA: (*Goes to ORPHEUS.*) Excuse me sir, are you a statue?

ORPHEUS: I'm absolutely not a statue.

TISHA: (*To JOANNE.*) He's absolutely not a statue.

ORPHEUS: (*Body begins to unfreeze.*) Ok. Wait a minute. This guy froze me but I think I'm unfreezing.

TISHA: (*Weirded out.*) Okayyyy.

ORPHEUS: (*Moving.*) No, I'm definitely unfreezing.

JOANNE: Come on, Tisha.

TISHA and JOANNE start to exit.

ORPHEUS: Hey, could you, ummmm—could you tell me how to get to the underworld?

JOANNE: The underworld?

ORPHEUS: You know, the River Styx and all that. Like...

Pointing down.

ORPHEUS: Down there?

JOANNE: Are you a musician?

ORPHEUS: A musician? Yeah, yeah, I'm a musician. How did you know?

JOANNE: Well you talk in a disconnected, kind of weird way that is kind of... you know, cute and you're kind of out of it...

TISHA: And you're sexy.

JOANNE: *(Paying no attention.)* And you're kind of gangly with dopey gestures...

TISHA: And you're sexy.

JOANNE: *(Paying no attention.)* And you have kind of a far off expression in your eyes, plus pretty long fingers, and you seem both friendly and remote at the same time and...

TISHA: You're sexy.

ORPHEUS: *(Starting off.)* I have to go.

JOANNE: You want to hang out?

ORPHEUS: Hades has taken Eurydice down to the underworld and I have to rescue her.

JOANNE: Who's Eurydice?

ORPHEUS: The love of my life.

JOANNE: See? See! Every time I meet a musician he's already taken! What's the deal with you guys? Do girls just hang around your house and catch you with a butterfly net when you come out?

ORPHEUS: I really have to go.

ORPHEUS starts off past TISHA who holds out a slip of paper.

TISHA: Take this.

ORPHEUS: What is it?

TISHA: My phone number.

ORPHEUS: What would I do with your phone number?

TISHA: Well, if things don't pan out with "youralittledice" or whatever her name is, you could call me, because I'm a really good second choice, plus I plan to become an electrical engineer so I could support you and I would be there every time you play and I would scream, "I love you, Orpheus" and wave my napkin.

ORPHEUS: Gotta go.

ORPHEUS runs off.

TISHA: *(As she walks off the other direction with JOANNE.)* I just love how out-of-it musicians are.

JOANNE: They live in a complete fantasy world.

TISHA: Musicians are just stone cold sexy.

TISHA and JOANNE are gone. An OLD WOMAN enters with a walker. She wears an old-fashioned housedress. She has horns. ORPHEUS, carrying whatever musical instrument he plays, enters and runs past her, then stops.

ORPHEUS: Excuse me?

OLD WOMAN: What?

ORPHEUS: Do you know how I could get to the underworld?

OLD WOMAN: What?

ORPHEUS: The underworld!!

OLD WOMAN: There's no need to shout.

ORPHEUS: *(In a normal tone.)* The underworld?

OLD WOMAN: What?

ORPHEUS: *(In a medium tone.)* Hades, King of the Underworld, did he come past here with a young woman?

OLD WOMAN: Do you mean, "Hades, King of the Underworld"?

ORPHEUS: *(Hopeful.)* Yes, Hades.

OLD WOMAN: Why didn't you say so?

ORPHEUS: I did.

OLD WOMAN: No you didn't.

ORPHEUS: Yes, I did.

OLD WOMAN: No you didn't.

ORPHEUS: Yes, I did!

OLD WOMAN: No, you didn't.

ORPHEUS: Yes, I did!!

OLD WOMAN: (*Laughing hilariously in a high pitched cackle.*) Fun, huh? Want to do it again?

ORPHEUS: (*Starting off.*) I have to go.

OLD WOMAN: Hades with a girl, yup.

ORPHEUS turns.

OLD WOMAN: You'll never see her again. Once Hades gets them down there, they never come back. Terrible place, awful weather, nothing but dead souls to talk to, all you can do is count rocks to pass the time, and that's for eternity. Plus they feed you nothing but jalapenos. I'm the only one who ever made it out.

ORPHEUS: How did you get out?

OLD WOMAN: Swam the River Styx. That was no picnic I can tell you. It's a three month swim in boiling water filled with piranhas. I trained for seven hundred years. I had to rub myself all over with Stinking Bishop Cheese to get past the piranhas. I still stink. Smell me.

ORPHEUS: No thank you, I just ate. How do I get to the underworld?

OLD WOMAN: You take elevator 4. (*Pointing.*) It's right over there. You go down one million four hundred thousand three hundred and eighteen floors 'til it says "River Styx." Get off there and walk fifteen hundred miles through the deadly sand dunes and you'll see a neon sign that says River Styx Motel. Stand there until the boatman comes by. He shows up about every three months. If you're still out of your mind he'll take you across to the underworld from whence you will never return unless you find some Stinking Bishop Cheese and swim like a lunatic.

ORPHEUS: Thank you.

OLD WOMAN: You're a musician, right?

ORPHEUS: I am, yes.

OLD WOMAN: (*Exiting.*) If I wasn't a hundred years old and didn't smell so bad, I'd jump your bones.

Lights out. We hear GREEN WOMEN 1-3 singing. They sing a quiet chorus of "We're dead because we're dead, because we're dead, because we're dead. We're dead because we're dead, because we're dead, because we're dead."

Lights up. ORPHEUS, the ELEVATOR OPERATOR, and GREEN WOMEN 1-3 are packed together, as if in an elevator. The GREEN WOMEN 1-3 wear robes and their faces and hands are painted green. They sing softly but continually. ELEVATOR OPERATOR is at the front of the elevator.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Floor fifteen thousand seven hundred and three.

SFX: ding.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Classes and advanced degrees in mortuary science.

GREEN WOMAN 1 exits the elevator. The others keep singing softly.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Next stop, floor two hundred thousand. Flame proof styles for the discerning lady and piranha proof swimwear.

SFX: ding.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Here we are.

GREEN WOMAN 2 exits the elevator. The other keeps singing.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Coming up, floor one million four hundred thousand three hundred and eighteen, the River Styx and the island of dead souls featuring the world's most boring waterpark. Six inches of lukewarm water and you just lie there for eternity.

SFX: ding.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Y'all have a good time now.

GREEN WOMAN 3 exits the elevator.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: You're Orpheus the musician, right? I have all your albums.

ORPHEUS: I'm Orpheus, right.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Look, you don't want to get off here.

ORPHEUS: I don't?

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: You don't. There's no up elevator from this level.

ORPHEUS: But you go back up?

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Yeah, but I don't take passengers. Once you're here, baby, you are here. People beg me to take them up. Money, jewels, property, tickets to *Hamilton*. I never take 'em up on it.

ORPHEUS: Why not?

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: The floor of this elevator is a weight scale. I weigh one hundred and twenty-eight pounds. If when the door closes to go up the scale reads more than one hundred and twenty-eight pounds, that vent over your head pours wet cement into the elevator until it's completely full and the elevator won't go up until it dries. You see the problem?

ORPHEUS: I see the problem. Do you suffer from eternal love?

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Not really. Probably the closest I come is my Chihuahua. Around the third month I begin to see immediate flaws in my love object.

ORPHEUS: What kind of flaws?

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Oh, you know, the usual stuff. I find their voice irritating, they get salt all over the table when they season their eggs. They hum. Timeless humming is the worst. Oh, they don't come to a complete stop at stop signs, that really frosts my knickers.

ORPHEUS: Eurydice is perfect in every way but more importantly she forgives my imperfections and is lovingly devoted to my improvement. She taught me the most important thing a man can know, which is to make sure your mouth is closed while you're chewing.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Yeah, that's pretty big.

ORPHEUS: I love what she thinks and what she does and what she doesn't do. I love how she looks and how the vein in her neck throbs. I love when she gets angry and what she gets angry at. I love how she never hates or holds a grudge. Most of all I never get tired of loving her.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Wow. You must be the perfect man.

ORPHEUS: Nah. I got all the usual guy problems.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Like what for instance?

ORPHEUS: I watch too much basketball and forget to talk to her. Last night I watched a third grade semifinal. Prairie Ridge and Winnebago Grammar Schools.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: How'd it go?

ORPHEUS: Prairie Ridge won four to three in double overtime.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: But hey, you're a musician, you could have any girl you wanted. Musicians have a pretty bad rap for moving on.

ORPHEUS: But since I met Eurydice I've never wanted anybody else.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: How long have you two been together?

ORPHEUS: I don't know, maybe about three weeks.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Right. (*Straight-faced.*) That's practically a record.

ORPHEUS: I know. Eternal love.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Eternal love. Look uh, Orpheus, here's my phone number. You ever want to, you know, talk about how much you love what's-her-name or want to go to a game, give me a call.

ORPHEUS: I really like to talk about Eurydice.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Me too. We'll light some candles, put on some music and uh, talk about her.

ORPHEUS: Great! Only how will I get Eurydice out of the underworld if I can't take the elevator?

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: Take the stairs. It's a two year hike, but I'll still be around.

ORPHEUS: Thank you very, very much.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: No prob. Just for the record you're cute.

ORPHEUS: I don't feel cute.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: That's the best kind of cute. Oh by the way, to get to the island of lost souls you'll need to take the boat. To take the boat you'll need to hail the boatman. He comes by twice a day. His name's Charon. He's always in a bad mood but he likes chocolate. You have any chocolate?

ORPHEUS: I have a few M&Ms left.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR: That'll work. Oh, and don't call him, "the boatman" he likes to be called "a travel professional". He also has a terrific collection of shrunken heads if that's one of your interests.

ORPHEUS: I'll keep that in mind.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR exits. ORPHEUS looks to his left.

ORPHEUS: Gloomy. *(Looks to his right.)* Very gloomy. *(Puts his hand up to shade his eyes and looks center.)* Unbelievably gloomy. With a side of gloomy. Wait. *(Squints.)* What's that? A row boat. Yes! Boatman!!

BOATMAN: *(Somewhere out in the auditorium. He wears a tuxedo or a suit and a fabulous tie.)* I'm not the boatman you fugly, mud duck, lot lizard! You are one fry short of a happy meal, swamp jockey!

ORPHEUS: Of course you're not the boatman. You're a world renowned travel professional!

BOATMAN: *(Coming up on the stage. His manner is slick and friendly.)* Well, I am indeed. And it's a great pleasure to meet a world traveler of taste and discernment. Charon's the name, luxury travel is my game. What can I do you for?

ORPHEUS: *(Pointing.)* I was kind of wondering what that is over there?

BOATMAN: What a sophisticated choice! What you are pointing at is the famous, remarkable and fascinating island of dead souls. As one sophisticated traveler to another I can tell you no one alive has ever visited there. It's the perfect choice for your bucket list. You're Orpheus, right? Love your records, baby. Frankly you are under appreciated, but aren't we all? So, I'm the only one on the river who can get you in there.

ORPHEUS: And you can get me out?

BOATMAN: We can talk about that later. Tour boat's leaving, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity.

ORPHEUS: How much does it cost?

BOATMAN: (*Cold and straightforward.*) Your life.

ORPHEUS: Pretty expensive.

BOATMAN: (*Back to his cheery salesmanship.*) Some things are beyond nice.

BOATMAN claps his hands. EURYDICE in an all grey outfit dances balletically or otherwise across the stage.

ORPHEUS: Eurydice!

BOATMAN: Pretty as a picture isn't she? The very embodiment of true love.

ORPHEUS: (*As EURYDICE exits.*) Eurydice!

BOATMAN: Absolutely worth the cost of a ticket.

ORPHEUS: I must go to her.

Starts to follow EURYDICE who has exited.

BOATMAN: You can't.

ORPHEUS: But I am.

BOATMAN: That was a hologram. Part of the advertising campaign. I thought it up.

ORPHEUS: I'll go.

BOATMAN: I knew you would. Musicians are suckers for romance. Come along Orpheus, the three dimensional Eurydice awaits!

Lights out. In the blackout we hear a lovely chorus of "we're here because we're here because we're here because we're here." Lights up. Dead souls, JULIET, ANNA, and CATHERINE, sit on the stage floor in grey robes staring out.

BOATMAN: Well Orpheus, congratulations you made it!

A DEAD SOUL rushes on with a bouquet of dead roses and hands it to him then rushes off.

BOATMAN: A complimentary bouquet from the management.

ORPHEUS: (*Looking at JULIET, ANNA, and CATHERINE, scattered about the stage, staring out.*) Who are they?

BOATMAN: A welcoming committee. That's Juliet on the left. Anna Karenina on the right. And Catherine Earnshaw from Wuthering Heights in the center.

ORPHEUS: But where will I find Eurydice?

BOATMAN: That's between you and King Hades. I called ahead. Someone will be right out to pick you up. Got to go. They don't like the dead souls to pile up at the dock. Hope you've got what every musician needs.

ORPHEUS: What's that?

BOATMAN: *(As he exits.)* A really good closing number.

BOATMAN is gone. ORPHEUS looks left, then right, then at JULIET, ANNA, and CATHERINE.

ORPHEUS: Hi.

JULIET, ANNA, and CATHERINE answer without looking at him.

JULIET, ANNA, and CATHERINE: Hello Orpheus.

ORPHEUS: You know me?

JULIET: You're a legend in your own time.

ANNA: All you need is love.

CATHERINE: All you need is love.

JULIET: All you need is love, love.

JULIET, ANNA, and CATHERINE: Love is all you need.

ORPHEUS: What brought you here?

JULIET, ANNA, and CATHERINE: Men.

MEROPE: *(Offstage.)* Perhaps you have some advice for me?

JULIET, ANNA, and CATHERINE: Run. *(ALL exit.)*

MEROPE: *(Offstage. Setting a marching cadence.)* Give me your left, left, left right left. Give me your left, your left, your left, right, left.

MEROPE (the leader) and a unit of three female DEAD SOUL SOLDIERS enter marching. There are three of them, all women in black robes. They carry scythes like rifles. MEROPE sings out a marching cadence.

MEROPE: Ain't no use in going home

Honey, honey...

DEAD SOUL SOLDIERS: Ain't no use in going home, babe.

MEROPE: Ain't no use in going home

Hade's got your gal and gone

DEAD SOUL SOLDIERS: Honey, oh baby, mine.

MEROPE: Company, halt! At ease!

MEROPE stops about two feet from ORPHEUS.

MEROPE: Are you Orpheus, legendary poet and musician in Greek myth?

ORPHEUS: Yeah.

MEROPE: Says here you can charm all living things even stones with your music?

ORPHEUS: That stone thing is just hype. I've had decent luck with birds, fish, and wild beasts.

MEROPE: Look, Hades sent us out to bring you in, and what goes in there doesn't come out. He seems like an okay guy but he's not an okay guy. That man is slippery as a hog on ice. Word is you're looking for a chick named Eurydice. No dice. She's a goner, bro. She's got that long distance stare. Nobody home, you know what I mean? Hades, he collects musicians. He's got a whole warehouse full.

ORPHEUS: I am taking Eurydice out.

MEROPE: Never happen. But I'll tell you what, I got a little cave down by the River Styx and in that cave I've got the only_____. [Names the instrument this ORPHEUS can play.] In the underworld. I'm lonely, Orpheus. That's the only emotion we have down here, a fierce, ragged desperate, eternal loneliness—sharp as a sword. I got a suitcase full of the only tea bags in the underworld. You come down there we'll drink tea, play Beatles songs and stare down the loneliness that's deader than death. I'll tell Hades you fell into a volcano and flamed out. Can't beat that deal.

ORPHEUS: No can do. I got Eurydice in my heart and it's a one women heart. She's the only melody I can hear. What's your name?

MEROPE: Merope.

ORPHEUS: Stick out your tongue.

MEROPE: What for?

ORPHEUS: The only thing I can give you that will tone down the loneliness.

MEROPE sticks out her tongue. ORPHEUS reaches in his pocket and puts something in her mouth.

MEROPE: That lit up my heart. What was that?

ORPHEUS: My last M & M. It was green.

MEROPE: That Eurydice is one lucky dead soul and you're one knucklehead. Oh well. *(Back to being in charge.)* Company, ten-hut! About face! Step in line, Orpheus. *(ORPHEUS does.)* Gimme your left, your left, your left, your left, right left. Your left, your right, your left, your right, left, right, left.

MEROPE, ORPHEUS, and the DEAD SOUL SOLDIERS have completely exited. HADES enters with his wife, PERSEPHONE. They have red umbrellas.

HADES: Ah, Persephone what a day, eh? Gloomy, fetid, smoggy, a perfect day in the underworld. Our 87,000th anniversary.

PERSEPHONE: It seems no longer than an hour, Hades, my love.

HADES: I saw you in a dream, and for the only time in my eternal life left the underworld to pursue you.

PERSEPHONE: *(Chuckling him under the chin.)* You cheeky little devil.

HADES: We met in a field of violets and you kissed me on the cheek and ran away laughing.

PERSEPHONE: You were such a nerd, darling.

HADES: So I dived under the earth and caused the ground to split beneath your feet. And you fell...

PERSEPHONE: And fell...

HADES: And fell...

PERSEPHONE: For centuries.

HADES: And inches before you plunged into the eternal fire I caught you in my arms and placed a ring of blue flame upon your finger...

PERSEPHONE: *(Kisses her finger and touches HADES'S nose.)* And we've lived unhappily ever after.

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