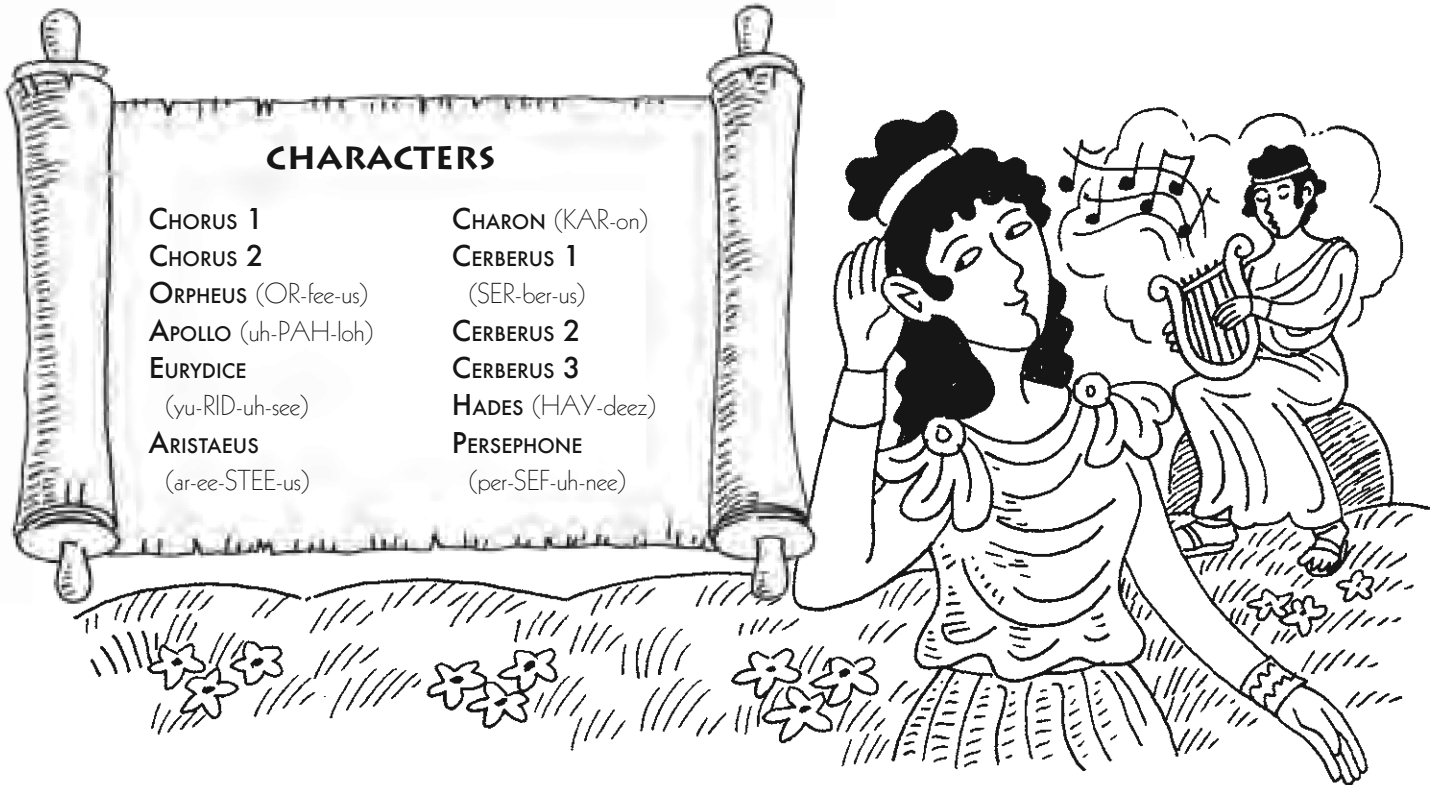


ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE



CHORUS 1: It is said that to trust is one of the most difficult things a mortal can do.

CHORUS 2: And few people know that more than Orpheus, whose lack of trust cost him love.

ORPHEUS: Father, I have fallen in love! I wish to be married! She's the most wonderful woman, well, nymph, in the world. Her name is Eurydice.

APOLLO: Eurydice. Ah yes, I know of her. She certainly is lovely. I give you my permission to marry her.

CHORUS 1: And so Orpheus and Eurydice were married.

CHORUS 2: Never before was there a happier couple.

EURYDICE: Orpheus, please play for me on your lyre. I've never heard such beautiful music.

ORPHEUS: And I've never felt more like playing. Being with you makes my music sound better.

CHORUS 1: Orpheus was the finest musician around.

CHORUS 2: His music charmed savage beasts and made all those around him feel happy and peaceful.

EURYDICE: My love, while you are playing, I think I will pick some flowers up on that hill. Your music will follow me and keep me company as I gather some blossoms.

ORPHEUS: I will play, my sweet. And I will eagerly await your return.

CHORUS 1: So, Eurydice went to pick flowers. As she strolled through the field, she was comforted by the sounds of Orpheus's lyre.

CHORUS 2: But Aristaeus, a hunter, spied Eurydice walking and pursued her.

ARISTAEUS: Why pick flowers when you are more lovely than any flower could ever be?

EURYDICE: Leave me alone, Aristaeus. I am wed to Orpheus and belong only to him.

ARISTAEUS: That puny musician! I am a hunter. I can provide for you. Meat sustains a person more than music.

EURYDICE: I said, leave me alone!

ARISTAEUS: I will not!

CHORUS 1: And with that, Aristaeus began chasing Eurydice through the woods. He was a hunter and was very swift, but eventually Eurydice was able to get away from him.

ARISTAEUS: Drats!

CHORUS 2: But alas, Eurydice was so panicked that she was not watching where she was going. She stepped on a viper whose bite filled her with poison, and she died. The last sound she heard was Orpheus's lyre singing through the trees as she traveled down to the Underworld.

ORPHEUS: Where is my Eurydice? She's been gone such a long time.

CHORUS 1: She's gone to the Underworld, Orpheus.

CHORUS 2: A viper has taken her from you.

ORPHEUS: No, not my beloved Eurydice! I won't allow it! I must get her back. Father!

APOLLO: I'm afraid there's nothing that can be done, my son. The dead cannot return to the land of the living. I'm sorry.

ORPHEUS: I will not accept it. I am going to her!

APOLLO: Orpheus, no!

CHORUS 1: But it was too late. Nothing would keep Orpheus from his Eurydice.

CHORUS 2: With lyre in hand, he traveled down to the Underworld and reached the River Styx, which separated the land of the living from the land of the dead. There he met Charon, ferryman to the dead.

ORPHEUS: Charon, row me across. I must get my Eurydice back!

CHARON: You must be kidding. You know I transport only the dead to the other side. In fact, wasn't that your wife I just rowed across?

ORPHEUS: You've seen my Eurydice! Take me to her, Charon. I must see her!

CHARON: Sorry, pal. Until you take your last breath, you won't be riding in my boat.

CHORUS 1: Orpheus was desperate. He had to get to Eurydice. Suddenly he had an idea.

CHORUS 2: He took out his lyre and began to play the most beautiful music Charon had ever heard. It moved him to tears with its loveliness.

CHARON: *(Visibly moved)* Oh, all right. Come aboard. I'll take you across.

CHORUS 1: So Charon rowed Orpheus across the River Styx to the land of the dead.

CHORUS 2: When they reached the other side, they were greeted by Cerberus, the three-headed dog.

CERBERUS 1: Go . . .

CERBERUS 2: a- . . .

CERBERUS 3: way!

CHARON: It's Cerberus, Hades' three-headed dog. I rowed you across, but he'll never let you in. He's fierce, I tell you!

CERBERUS 1: Leave . . .

CERBERUS 2: this . . .

CERBERUS 3: place!

CHORUS 1: Again, Orpheus took up his lyre and began to play. Before long, the dog was laying at Orpheus's feet getting a belly rub.

ORPHEUS: There now, good boy, uh, boys. Anyway, see ya!

HADES: I smell a living man here in the Underworld! Who dares to enter?

ORPHEUS: It is I, Orpheus, and I've come to take Eurydice home with me.

HADES: Home? Hah! She *is* home. This is now her home, Orpheus.

ORPHEUS: No, she was taken too soon. I must have her back. She'll come to you eventually, but not now!

CHORUS 2: Persephone knew what Orpheus was going through. She had to live half the year in the Underworld. For the other half, she could stay in the land of the living with her mother, Demeter.

CHORUS 1: Persephone, can't you help on Orpheus's behalf?

PERSEPHONE: Hades, maybe you can reconsider. I know how painful it is to be taken from those you love. I miss my mother terribly when I am down here for half the year.

HADES: I won't. She died, and she's here now. And that's that.

CHORUS 2: Once again, Orpheus used the only weapon he'd ever had. He played a tune on his lyre that was the most beautiful ever imagined. It even reduced Hades, the god of the Underworld, to tears.

CHORUS 1: And that's no easy task!

HADES: (*Sniffing*) Please, stop. I can't take anymore. It's too, too beautiful. Okay, Orpheus. Since you moved me to tears, and no one has ever done that, you may have your Eurydice back.

PERSEPHONE: Bravo, Orpheus.

ORPHEUS: Oh, thank you, Hades!

HADES: On one condition. I may be a softy, but I'm still king of the dead. Eurydice will follow you back to the land of the living. But you must not turn back to look at her until you are both on the other side. If you do, she will be mine forever. Deal?

ORPHEUS: Sounds simple enough. Okay, bring her to me.

CHORUS 2: Eurydice was brought to Orpheus. The two could not contain their joy at seeing each other.

EURYDICE: Orpheus!

ORPHEUS: Eurydice!

HADES: Oh, please! Now go! And remember, do not look back!

CHORUS 1: So Orpheus and Eurydice began the long journey back to the land of the living, with Eurydice walking behind Orpheus.

CHORUS 2: They made it past Cerberus, who was drooling in his sleep, still wearing three big smiles from Orpheus's playing. They met Charon at the River Styx.

ORPHEUS: Charon, row us back to the other side. Oh, Eurydice. We will be so happy again together. You have no idea how much I missed you!

CHORUS 1: Eurydice did not answer as Charon docked the boat on the other side of the River Styx.

ORPHEUS: Here we are, my love. Now let's begin the long climb upward. Soon we will be together forever away from this dark and dreary place.

CHORUS 2: Still no response from Eurydice.

ORPHEUS: Eurydice? Are you there? Of course you are, why wouldn't you be? Still, I wish you'd answer me. Well, it won't be long now.

CHORUS 1: The two climbed and climbed.

ORPHEUS: I see light up ahead. It won't be long now! Isn't it wonderful, Eurydice?

CHORUS 2: Silence was the only answer Orpheus received.

ORPHEUS: This is getting frustrating! Perhaps Hades has played a trick on me and you are not there at all. But no, Persephone would not let that happen. But, what I wouldn't give to hear your sweet voice to assure me. We're far enough away from Hades. He can't see us. Surely just one little peek won't hurt. Just to be sure. Are you there, my love?

CHORUS 1: Orpheus looked back at Eurydice.

EURYDICE: Farewell, Orpheus. *(Holding out her hands to Orpheus as she fades off)*

CHORUS 2: And with that, Eurydice traveled back down to the Underworld, this time, forever.

ORPHEUS: Eurydice! No!

CHORUS 1: But it was too late. Eurydice was gone.

CHORUS 2: Orpheus returned to the land of the living. But his was no life. He was so miserable, he never played his lyre.

CHORUS 1: Orpheus's grief eventually caused him to die. However, this was not such a bad thing for Orpheus.

CHORUS 2: He returned to the Underworld, this time legitimately, and he and Eurydice were together forevermore.

EURYDICE: *(Adoringly)* Play it again, Orphie.

ORPHEUS: Sure thing, babe.

THE END



Glossary

mortal: a human being

nymph: in ancient Greek and Roman stories, a beautiful female spirit or goddess who lived in a forest, meadow, or stream

lyre: a small, stringed, harplike instrument played mostly in ancient Egypt, Israel, and Greece

savage: not tamed, or not under human control

pursued: followed or chased someone in order to catch him or her

sustains: gives energy and strength to keep going

swift: moving or able to move very fast

drats: an exclamation or interjection meaning the same thing as “Darn”

panicked: suddenly felt great terror or fright

alas: unfortunately, or sadly

viper: any poisonous snake

ferryman: person who rows people and things on a boat across a river or other body of water

transport: to move people and freight from one place to another

fierce: violent or dangerous

eventually: finally or at last

behalf: If you do something on behalf of someone else, you do it for that person in his or her place.

reconsider: to think again about a previous decision, especially with the idea of making a change

docked: brought a boat alongside a wharf or port so passengers can get off

dreary: gloomy

response: answer

frustrating: having that feeling of puzzlement or confusion

assure: to promise something, or say something positively

legitimately: lawfully or rightfully