**Eurydice Audition Sides:**

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EURYDICE
I don’t know if I want to be an instrument.

ORPHEUS
Why?

EURYDICE
Won’t I fall down when the song ends?

ORPHEUS
That’s true. But the clouds will be so moved by your music that they will fill up with water until they become heavy and you’ll sit on one and fall gently down to earth. How about that?

EURYDICE
Okay.

*They stop walking for a moment.*

*They gaze at each other.*

ORPHEUS
It’s settled then.

EURYDICE
What is?

ORPHEUS
Your hair will be my orchestra and—I love you.

*Pause.*

EURYDICE
I love you, too.

ORPHEUS
How will you remember?

EURYDICE
That I love you?

ORPHEUS
Yes.

EURYDICE
That’s easy. I can’t help it.

ORPHEUS
You never know. I’d better tie a string around your finger to remind you.

EURYDICE
Is there string at the ocean?

ORPHEUS
I always have string. In case I come upon a broken instrument.

*He takes out a string from his pocket.*

*He takes her left hand.*

*He wraps string deliberately around her fourth finger.*

Is this too tight?

EURYDICE
No—it’s fine.

ORPHEUS
There—now you’ll remember.

EURYDICE
That’s a very particular finger.

ORPHEUS
Yes.

EURYDICE
You’re aware of that?
ORPHEUS
Yes.

EURYDICE
How aware?

ORPHEUS
Very aware.

EURYDICE
Orpheus—are we?

ORPHEUS
You tell me.

EURYDICE
Yes.

I think so.

ORPHEUS
You think so?

EURYDICE
I wasn’t thinking.

I mean—yes. Just: Yes.

ORPHEUS
Yes?

EURYDICE
Yes.

ORPHEUS
Yes!

EURYDICE
Yes!

ORPHEUS
May our lives be full of music!

Music.

He picks her up and throws her into the sky.

EURYDICE
Maybe you could also get me another ring—a gold one—to put over the string one. You know?

ORPHEUS
Whatever makes you happy. Do you still have my melody?

EURYDICE
It’s right here.

She points to her temple.

They look at each other. A silence.

What are you thinking about?

ORPHEUS
Music.

Her face falls.

Just kidding. I was thinking about you. And music.

EURYDICE
Let’s go in the water. I’ll race you!

She puts on her swimming goggles.

ORPHEUS
I’ll race you!

EURYDICE
I’ll race you!
ORPHEUS
I’ll race you!

EURYDICE
I’ll race you!

_They race toward the water._

_Scene 2_

_The Father, dressed in a gray suit, reads from a letter._

FATHER
Dear Eurydice,

A letter for you on your wedding day.

There is no choice of any importance in life but the choosing of a beloved. I haven’t met Orpheus, but he seems like a serious young man. I understand he’s a musician.

If I were to give a speech at your wedding I would start with one or two funny jokes, and then I might offer some words of advice. I would say:

Cultivate the arts of dancing and small talk.

Everything in moderation.

Court the companionship and respect of dogs.

Grilling a fish or toasting bread without burning requires singleness of purpose, vigilance and steadfast watching.

Keep quiet about politics, but vote for the right man.

Take care to change the light bulbs.

Continue to give yourself to others because that’s the ultimate satisfaction in life—to love,

accept, honor and help others.

As for me, this is what it’s like being dead:

the atmosphere smells. And there are strange high-pitched noises—like a tea kettle always boiling over. But it doesn’t seem to bother anyone. And, for the most part, there is a pleasant atmosphere and

you can work and socialize, much like at home. I’m working in the business world and it seems that, here, you can better see the far-reaching consequences of your actions.

Also, I am one of the few dead people who still remembers how to read and write. That’s a secret. If anyone finds out, they might dip me in the River again.

I write you letters. I don’t know how to get them to you.

Love,

Your Father

_He drops the letter as though into a mail slot._

_It falls on the ground._

_Wedding music._

_In the underworld, the Father walks in a straight line as though he is walking his daughter down the aisle. He is affectionate, then solemn, then glad, then solemn, then amused, then solemn._

_He looks at his imaginary daughter; he looks straight ahead; he acknowledges the guests at the wedding; he gets choked-up; he looks_
She tilts her head to the side and stares at him.

Would you like some champagne?

EURYDICE
Maybe some water.

MAN
Water it is! Make yourself comfortable.

He switches on Brazilian mood music. He exits.

Eurydice looks around.

EURYDICE
I can’t stay long!

She looks out the window. She is very high up.

I can see my wedding from here!

The people are so small—they’re dancing!

There’s Orpheus!

He’s not dancing.

MAN
(Shouting from offstage) So, who’s this guy you’re marrying?

EURYDICE
(Shouting) His name is Orpheus.

As he attempts to open champagne offstage:

MAN
Orpheus. Not a very interesting name. I’ve heard it before.

EURYDICE
Maybe you’ve heard of him. He’s kind of famous. He plays the most beautiful music in the world,

actually.

MAN
I can’t hear you!

EURYDICE
So the letter was delivered—here—today?

MAN
That’s right.

EURYDICE
Through the post?

MAN
It was—mysterious.

The sound of champagne popping.

He enters with one glass of champagne.

Voilà.

He drinks the champagne.

So. Eurydice. Tell me one thing. Name me one person you find interesting.

EURYDICE
Why?

MAN
Just making conversation.

He sways a little to the music.

EURYDICE
Right. Um—all the interesting people I know are dead or speak French.
MAN
Well, I don't speak French, Eurydice.

*He takes one step toward her. She takes one step back.*

EURYDICE
I'm sorry. I have to go. There's no letter, is there?

MAN
Of course there's a letter. It's right here. (*He pats his breast pocket*)
Eurydice. I'm not interesting, but I'm strong. You could teach me to be interesting. I would listen. Orpheus is too busy listening to his own thoughts. There's music in his head. Try to pluck the music out and it bites you. I'll bet you had an interesting thought today, for instance.

*She tilts her head to the side, quizzical.*

I bet you're always having them, the way you tilt your head to the side and stare . . .

*She jerks her head back up.*

*Musty dripping sounds.*

EURYDICE
I feel dizzy all of a sudden. I want my husband. I think I'd better go now.

MAN
You're free to go, whenever you like.

EURYDICE
I know.

I think I'll go now, in fact.

I'll just take my letter first, if you don't mind.

*She holds out her hand for the letter.*

He takes her hand.

MAN
Relax.

She takes her hand away.

EURYDICE
Good-bye.

She turns to exit.

He blocks the doorway.

MAN

EURYDICE
Oh no.

MAN
You need to get yourself a real man. A man with broad shoulders like me. Orpheus has long fingers that would tremble to pet a bull or pluck a bee from a hive—

EURYDICE
How do you know about my husband's fingers?

MAN
A man who can put his big arm around your little shoulders as he leads you through the crowd, a man who answers the door at parties . . . A man with big hands, with big stupid hands like potatoes, a man who can carry a cow in labor.

The Man backs Eurydice against the wall.

My lips were meant to kiss your eyelids, that's obvious!

EURYDICE
Close your eyes, then!
He closes his eyes, expecting a kiss.

She takes the letter from his breast pocket.

She slips by him and opens the door to the stairwell.

He opens his eyes.

She looks at the letter.

It's his handwriting!

MAN
Of course it is!

He reaches for her.

EURYDICE
Good-bye.

She runs for the stairs.

She wavers, off-balance, at the top of the stairwell.

MAN
Don't do that, you'll trip! There are six hundred stairs!

EURYDICE
Orpheus!

From the water pump:

ORPHEUS
Eurydice!

She runs, trips and pitches down the stairs, holding her letter. She follows the letter down, down down . . .

Blackout.

A clatter. Strange sounds—xylophones, brass bands, sounds of falling, sounds of vertigo. Sounds of breathing.

SECOND MOVEMENT

The underworld.

There is no set change.

Strange watery noises.

Drip, drip, drip.

The movement to the underworld is marked by the entrance of stones.

Scene 1

THE STONES
We are a chorus of stones.

LITTLE STONE
I'm a little stone.

BIG STONE
I'm a big stone.

LOUD STONE
I'm a loud stone.
THE STONES
We are all three stones.

LITTLE STONE
We live with the dead people in the land of the dead.

BIG STONE
Eurydice was a great musician. Orpheus was his wife.

LOUD STONE
(Correcting Big Stone) Orpheus was a great musician. Eurydice was his wife. She died.

LITTLE STONE
Then he played the saddest music. Even we—

THE STONES
the stones—

LITTLE STONE
cried when we heard it.

*The sound of three drops of water hitting a pond.*

Oh, look, she is coming into the land of the dead now.

BIG STONE
Oh!

LOUD STONE
Oh!

LITTLE STONE
Oh!

We might say: “Poor Eurydice”—

LOUD STONE
but stones don’t feel bad for dead people.

*The sound of an elevator ding.*

An elevator door opens.

*Inside the elevator, it is raining.*

*Eurydice gets rained on inside the elevator.*

*She carries a suitcase and an umbrella.*

*She is dressed in the kind of 1930s suit that women wore when they eloped.*

*She looks bewildered.*

*The sound of an elevator ding.*

*Eurydice steps out of the elevator.*

*The elevator door closes.*

*She walks toward the audience and opens her mouth, trying to speak.*

*There is a great humming noise.*

*She closes her mouth.*

*The humming noise stops.*

*She opens her mouth for the second time, attempting to tell her story to the audience.*

*There is a great humming noise.*

*She closes her mouth—the humming noise stops.*

*She has a tantrum of despair.*

*The Stones, to the audience:*
THE STONES
Eurydice wants to speak to you.

But she can’t speak your language anymore.

She talks in the language of dead people now.

LITTLE STONE
It’s a very quiet language.

LOUD STONE
Like if the pores in your face opened up and talked.

BIG STONE
Like potatoes sleeping in the dirt.

Little Stone and Loud Stone look at Big Stone as though that were a
dumb thing to say.

LITTLE STONE
Pretend that you understand her or she’ll be embarrassed.

BIG STONE
Yes—pretend for a moment that you understand the language of
stones.

LOUD STONE
Listen to her the way you would listen
to your own daughter
if she died too young
and tried to speak to you
across long distances.

_Eurydice shakes out her umbrella._

_She approaches the audience._

_This time, she can speak._

EURYDICE
There was a roar, and a coldness—

I think my husband was with me.

What was my husband’s name?

Eurydice turns to the Stones.

My husband’s name? Do you know it?

_The Stones shrug their shoulders._

How strange. I don’t remember.

It was horrible to see his face

when I died. His eyes were
two black birds
and they flew to me.

I said: no—stay where you are—

he needs you in order to see!

When I got through the cold

they made me swim in a river

and I forgot his name.

I forgot all the names.

I know his name starts with my mouth

shaped like a ball of twine—

Oar—oar.

I forget.
FATHER
It’s like sitting in the shade.

EURYDICE
Oh.

FATHER
It’s like sitting in the shade with no clothes on.

EURYDICE
Oh!—yes.

FATHER
(Reading) I’m going to find you. I play the saddest music—

EURYDICE
Music?

He whistles a note.

FATHER
It’s like that.

She smiles.

EURYDICE
Go on.

FATHER
You know I hate writing letters. I’ll give this letter to a worm. I hope he finds you.

Love,
Orpheus

EURYDICE
Orpheus?

FATHER
Orpheus.

A pause.

EURYDICE
That word!

It’s like—I can’t breathe.

Orpheus! My husband.

Scene 7

ORPHEUS
Dear Eurydice,

Last night I dreamed that we climbed Mount Olympus and we started to make love and all the strands of your hair were little faucets and water was streaming out of your head and I said, why is water coming out of your hair? And you said, gravity is very compelling. And then we jumped off Mount Olympus and flew through the clouds and you held your knee to your chest because you skinned it on a sharp cloud and then we fell into a salty lake. Then I woke up and the window frightened me and I thought: Eurydice is dead. Then I thought—who is Eurydice? Then the whole room started to float and I thought: what are people? Then my bed clothes smiled at me with a crooked green mouth and I thought: who am I? It scares me,

Eurydice. Please come back.

Love,

Orpheus

EURYDICE
Orpheus?

FATHER
Orpheus.

Scene 8
FATHER
It means dead in a very abrupt way. Not the way I died, which was slowly. But all at once, in cowboy boots.

EURYDICE
Tell me a story of when you were little.

FATHER
Well, there was the time your uncle shot at me with a BB gun and I was mad at him so I swallowed a nail.

Then there was the time I went to a dude ranch and I was riding a horse and I lassoed a car. The lady driving the car got out and spanked me. And your grandmother spanked me, too.

EURYDICE
Remember the Christmas when she gave me a doll and I said, “If I see one more doll I’m going to throw up”? 

FATHER
I think Grammy was a little surprised when you said that.

EURYDICE
Tell me a story about your mother.

FATHER
The most vivid recollection I have of Mother was seeing her at parties and in the house playing piano. When she was younger she was extremely animated. She could really play the piano. She could play everything by ear. They called her Flaming Sally.

EURYDICE
I never saw Grammy play the piano.

FATHER
She was never the same after my father died. My father was a very gentle man.

EURYDICE
Tell me a story about your father.

FATHER
My father and I used to duck hunt. He would call up old Frank the night before and ask, “Where are the ducks moving tonight?” Frank was a guide and a farmer. Old Frank, he could really call the ducks. It was hard for me to kill the poor little ducks, but you get caught up in the fervor of it. You’d get as many as ten ducks. If you went over the limit—there were only so many ducks per person—Father would throw the ducks to the side of the creek we were paddling on and make sure there was no game warden. If the warden was gone, he’d run back and get the extra ducks and throw them in the back of the car. My father was never a great conversationalist, but he loved to rhapsodize about hunting. He would always say, if I ever have to die, it’s in a duck pond. And he did.

EURYDICE
There was something I always wanted to ask you. It was—how to do something—or—a story—or someone’s name—I forget.

FATHER
Don’t worry. You’ll remember. There’s plenty of time.

Scene 10

Orpheus writes a letter.

ORPHEUS
Dear Eurydice,

I wonder if you miss reading books in the underworld.

Orpheus holds the Collected Works of Shakespeare with a long string attached.
THE STONES
WHAT IS THAT NOISE?

LITTLE STONE
Stop singing!

LOUD STONE
STOP SINGING!

BIG STONE
Neither of you can carry a tune.

LITTLE STONE
It’s awful.

THE STONES
DEAD PEOPLE CAN’T SING!

EURYDICE
I’m not a very good singer.

FATHER
Neither am I.

THE STONES
(To the Father) Stop singing and go to work!

Scene 14

The Father leaves for work.

He takes his briefcase.

He waves to Eurydice.

She waves back.

She is alone in the string room.

She touches the string.

A child, the Lord of the Underworld, enters on his red tricycle.

Music from a heavy metal band accompanies his entrance.

His clothes and his hat are too small for him.

He stops pedaling at the entrance to the string room.

CHILD
Knock, knock.

EURYDICE
Who’s there?

CHILD
I am Lord of the Underworld.

EURYDICE
Very funny.

CHILD
I am.

EURYDICE
Prove it.

CHILD
I can do chin-ups inside your bones. Close your eyes.

She closes her eyes.

EURYDICE
Ow.

CHILD
See?
EURYDICE
What do you want?

CHILD
You’re pretty.

EURYDICE
I’m dead.

CHILD
You’re pretty.

EURYDICE
You’re little.

CHILD
I grow downward. Like a turnip.

EURYDICE
What do you want?

CHILD
I wanted to see if you were comfortable.

EURYDICE
Comfortable?

CHILD
You’re not itchy?

EURYDICE
No.

CHILD
That’s good. Sometimes our residents get itchy. Then I scratch them.

EURYDICE
I’m not itchy.

CHILD
What’s all this string?

EURYDICE
It’s my room.

CHILD
Rooms are not allowed!

(To the Stones) Tell her.

THE STONES
Rooms are not allowed!

CHILD
Who made your room?

EURYDICE
My father.

CHILD
Fathers are not allowed! Where is he?

EURYDICE
He’s at work.

CHILD
We’ll have to dip you in the river again and make sure you’re good and dunked.

EURYDICE
Please, don’t.

CHILD
Oooh—say that again. It’s nice.

EURYDICE
Please don’t.

CHILD
Say it in my ear.
EURYDICE
*(Toward his ear)* Please, don’t.

CHILD
I like that.

*(A seduction)* I’ll huff and I’ll puff and I’ll blow your house down!

*He blows on her face.*

I mean that in the nicest possible way.

EURYDICE
I have a husband.

CHILD
Husbands are for children. You need a lover. I'll be back.

*To the Stones:*

See that she’s . . . comfortable.

THE STONES
We will!

CHILD
Good-bye.

EURYDICE
Good-bye.

THE STONES
Good-bye.

CHILD
I’m growing. Can you tell? I’m growing!

*He laughs his hysterical laugh and speeds away on his red tricycle.*

A big storm. The sound of rain on a roof.

Orpheus in a rain slicker.

Shouting above the storm:

ORPHEUS
If a drop of water enters the soil at a particular angle, with a particular pitch, what’s to say a man can’t ride one note into the earth like a fireman’s pole?

*He puts a bucket on the ground to catch rain falling.*

*He looks at the rain falling into the bucket.*

*He tunes his guitar, trying to make the pitch of each note correspond with the pitch of each water drop.*

Orpheus wonders if one particular pitch might lead him to the underworld.

Orpheus wonders if the pitch he is searching for might correspond to the pitch of a drop of rain, as it enters the soil.

A pitch.

Eurydice—did you hear that?

Another pitch.

Eurydice? That’s the note. That one, right there.
Scene 16

Eurydice and her father in the string room.

EURYDICE

Orpheus never liked words. He had his music. He would get a funny look on his face and I would say what are you thinking about and he would always be thinking about music. If we were in a restaurant, sometimes I would get embarrassed because Orpheus looked sullen and wouldn’t talk to me and I thought people felt sorry for me. I should have realized that women envied me. Their husbands talked too much.

But I wanted to talk to him about my notions. I was working on a new philosophical system. It involved hats.

This is what it is to love an artist: The moon is always rising above your house. The houses of your neighbors look dull and lacking in moonlight. But he is always going away from you. Inside his head there is always something more beautiful.

Orpheus said the mind is a slide ruler. It can fit around anything. Words can mean anything. Show me your body, he said. It only means one thing.

She looks at her father, embarrassed for revealing too much.

Or maybe two or three things. But only one thing at a time.

Before I go down there, I won’t practice my music. Some say practice. But practice is a word invented by cowards. The animals don’t have a word for practice. A gazelle does not run for practice. He runs because he is scared or he is hungry. A bird doesn’t sing for practice. She sings because she’s happy or sad. So I say: store it up. The music sounds better in my head than it does in the world. When songs are pressing against my throat, then, only then, I will go down and sing for the devils and they will cry through their parched throats.

Eurydice, don’t kiss a dead man. Their lips look red and tempting but put your tongue in their mouths and it tastes like oatmeal. I know how much you hate oatmeal.

I’m going the way of death.

Here is my plan: tonight, when I go to bed, I will turn off the light and put a straw in my mouth. When I fall asleep, I will crawl through the straw and my breath will push me like a great wind into the darkness and I will sing your name and I will arrive. I have consulted the almanacs, the footstools, and the architects, and everyone agrees. Wait for me.

Love,

Orpheus

Scene 17

EURYDICE

I got a letter. From Orpheus.

FATHER

You sound serious. Nothing wrong I hope.