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Eurydice sarah ruhl synopsis

Gain full access to show guides, character breakdowns, auditions, monologues and more! UPGRADE TO PRO SIGN UP or log in to your account The following version of this book was used to create the guide: Ruhl, Sarah. Eurydice. Samuel French, 2008.Sarah Ruhl's Eurydice is divided into three movements (acts). The first takes place only in the world above. The second and the third take place only in the underworld. This play is based on the classical Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. However, unlike in the myth, both Orpheus and Eurydice are human. In Movement One, the reader or the audience see their engagement and their wedding, which is not mentioned in the myth. Eurydice's father cannot attend their wedding, as he has already died and gone to the underworld. However, he writes a wedding speech, and he gives it to a worm whom he hopes will find Eurydice.While she is at her wedding, getting a drink of water from a water pump, Eurydice meets The Nasty Interesting Man. He flirts with her. Uncomfortable, Eurydice leaves. After she has left, The Nasty Interesting Man sees the letter her father sent. When he sees it is addressed to her, he puts it into the breast pocket of his shirt. When he sees Eurydice at the water pump again, he tells her about the letter. He lies though, saying the letter was wrongly delivered to his apartment. She agrees to come with him to his apartment and get the letter. The apartment is very high up. The Nasty Interesting Man makes a sexual advance on Eurydice while she is in his apartment. She escapes him, her letter in her hand. When she tries to descend his high staircase, she falls and descends into the underworld.In Movement Two, Eurydice meets her father in the underworld. She does not recognize him. Like most of the dead, she has dipped herself in the river and lost her memories. Her father, who was not held in the river long enough, still remembers how to read and write. He has also retained all of his memories. Since he knows Eurydice's relationship to him, he cares for her. When she says she would like to go to her room, he builds a house out of string. Gradually, he teaches her how to speak again. Her father and she slowly rebuild their former emotional bond, sharing unconventional definitions for words. When her father reads aloud to her from a letter Orpheus has sent, she remembers Orpheus is her husband. Suddenly, she recognizes her father too, and she embraces him. He teaches her to read. Together, they read a book Orpheus sent.Meanwhile, Orpheus makes a plan to rescue Eurydice from the underworld. He will put a straw in his mouth while he sleeps. He will grow smaller and fit inside the straw. His breath will propel him, and he will be swept to the underworld. Once there, he will sing a note so powerful, it will open the gate to the underworld. He successfully enters the underworld. He tells The Lord of the Underworld he has come to lead his wife to the world above. The Lord of the Underworld is so impressed by Orpheus' singing, he agrees to release Eurydice. If Orpheus walks out of the underworld, says The Lord of the Underworld, Eurydice will follow him. There is one condition: If he turns to look at her, they will be separated forever. Eurydice's father, who takes her to meet Orpheus, gives the same warning to her. Orpheus and Eurydice's walk out of the underworld is the plot of the Greek myth that inspires this play. However, in the play it is Eurydice who causes the permanent separation between Orpheus and herself. Walking behind him, she speeds up and calls out his name. She deliberately causes him to turn around so she can return to the underworld and be with her father.When Eurydice returns to the underworld in Movement Three, she finds her father has dipped himself into the river. Terribly lonely without his daughter, he decides to lose his memories instead of living with them. Eurydice tries to reawaken her father by teaching him how to spell her name, but he is unconscious. The Lord of the Underworld, who is played by the same actor who plays The Nasty interesting Man and has the same sexual aggressiveness, demands Eurydice marry him now that she has returned to the underworld. Eurydice does not want to marry The Lord of the Underworld. Nor does she want to live without her father. Instead she leaves a letter for Orpheus. Then she dips herself in the river. She falls down beside her father, unconscious. As soon as Eurydice has fallen, Orpheus descends to the underworld a second time. This time, he is in the elevator that rains on the inside. Unlike Eurydice in Movement One, he does not have an umbrella to shield him from the rain inside the elevator. He is happy when he sees Eurydice. When the rainwater falls inside the elevator, the water washes away his memories of her, as water usually does for the dead. He finds Eurydice's letter. He picks it up. He cannot read it. "Eurydice" reimagines the classic myth of Orpheus and Eurydice not through Orpheus's infamous pilgrimage to retrieve his bride, but through the eyes of its heroine. Dying too young on her wedding day, Eurydice must journey to the underworld, where she reunites with her father and struggles to remember her lost love. With contemporary characters, plot twists, and a script written to be a playground for designers, the play is a fresh look at a timeless love story. Eurydice had its world premiere at Madison Repertory Theatre in Madison, Wisconsin in 2003, after which it was performed at Berkeley Repertory Theatre in 2004, and Yale Repertory Theatre in 2006, directed by Les Waters. It opened Off-Broadway at Second Stage Theater in 2007. Sarah also adapted the play into the libretto for an opera, Eurydice by Matthew Aucoin, which premiered at the L.A. Opera in February 2020. CHARACTERS: Eurydice Her Father Orpheus A Nasty Interesting Man/The Lord of the Underworld A Chorus of Stones: Big Stone Little Stone Loud Stone The set contains a raining elevator, a water-pump, some rusty exposed pipes, an abstracted River of Forgetfulness, an old-fashioned glow-in-the-dark globe. NOTES: Eurydice and Orpheus should be played as though they are a little too young and a little too in love. They should resist the temptation to be "classical." The underworld should resemble the world of Alice in Wonderland more than it resembles Hades. The stones might be played as though they are nasty children at a birthday party. When people compose letters in this play they needn't actually scribble them—they can speak directly to the audience. The play should be performed without an intermission. This play is for my father. First Movement. Scene 1 A young man--Orpheus--and a young woman--Eurydice. They wear swimming outfits from the 1950s. Orpheus makes a sweeping gesture with his arm, indicating the sky. EURYDICE: All those birds? He nods. EURYDICE: For me? Thank you. They make a quarter turn and he makes a sweeping gesture. He makes a gesture of giving the sea to Eurydice. EURYDICE: And—the sea! Now? Orpheus opens his hands. EURYDICE: It's mine already? Orpheus nods. EURYDICE: Wow. They kiss. He indicates the sky. EURYDICE: Surely not—surely not the sky and the stars too. Orpheus nods. EURYDICE: That's very generous. Orpheus nods. EURYDICE: Perhaps too generous? Orpheus shakes his head. EURYDICE: Thank you. She crawls on top of him and kisses his eyes. EURYDICE: What are you thinking about? ORPHEUS: Music. EURYDICE: How can you think about music? You either hear it or you don't. ORPHEUS: I'm hearing it then. EURYDICE: Oh. (Pause.) I read a book today. ORPHEUS: Did you? EURYDICE: Yes. It was very interesting. ORPHEUS: That's good. EURYDICE: Don't you want to know what it was about? ORPHEUS: Of course. EURYDICE: There were—stories—about people's lives—how some come out well—and others come out badly. ORPHEUS: Do you love the book? EURYDICE: Yes—I think so. ORPHEUS: Why? EURYDICE: It can be interesting to see if other people—like dead people who wrote books—agree or disagree with what you think. ORPHEUS: Why? EURYDICE: Because it makes you—a larger part of the human community. It had very interesting arguments. ORPHEUS: Oh. And arguments that are interesting are good arguments? EURYDICE: Well—yes. ORPHEUS: I didn't know an argument should be interesting. I thought it should be right or wrong. EURYDICE: Well, these particular arguments were very interesting. ORPHEUS: Maybe you should make up your own thoughts. Instead of reading them in a book. EURYDICE: I do, I do think up my own thoughts. ORPHEUS: I know you do. I love how you love books. Don't be mad. Pause. ORPHEUS: I made up a song for you today. EURYDICE: Did you? ORPHEUS: Yup. It's not interesting or not-interesting. It just—is. EURYDICE: Will you sing it for me? ORPHEUS: It has too many parts. EURYDICE: Let's go in the water. They start walking, arm in arm, on extensive unseen boardwalks, towards the water. ORPHEUS: Wait—remember this melody. He hums a bar of melody. EURYDICE: I'm bad at remembering melodies. Why don't you remember it? ORPHEUS: I have eleven other ones in my head, making for a total of twelve. You have it? EURYDICE: Yes. I think so. ORPHEUS: Let's hear it. She sings the melody. She misses a few notes. She's not the best singer in the world. ORPHEUS: Pretty good. The rhythm's a little off. Here—clap it out. She claps. He claps the rhythmic sequence for her. She tries to imitate. She is still off. EURYDICE: Is that right? ORPHEUS: We'll practice. EURYDICE: I don't need to know about rhythm. I have my books. ORPHEUS: Don't books have rhythm? EURYDICE: Kind of. Let's go in the water. ORPHEUS: Will you remember my melody under the water? EURYDICE: Yes! I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR MELODY! It will be imprinted on my heart like wax. ORPHEUS: Thank you. EURYDICE: You're welcome. When are you going to play me the whole song? ORPHEUS: When I get twelve instruments. EURYDICE: Where are you going to get twelve instruments? ORPHEUS: I'm going to make each strand of your hair into an instrument. Your hair will stand on end as it plays my music and become a hair orchestra. It will fly you up into the sky. 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 gaze at each other. ORPHEUS: It's settled then. EURYDICE: What is? ORPHEUS: Your hair will be my orchestra and—I love you. 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. ORPHEUS: This hand. He wraps string deliberately around her fourth finger. ORPHEUS: 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. EURYDICE: What are you thinking about? ORPHEUS: Music. Her face falls. ORPHEUS: 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! EURYDICE: I'll race you! EURYDICE: I'll race you! They race towards the water. Scene 2 The Father, dressed in a grey 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. (The father thinks—oh, dear.) 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 at his daughter and smiles an embarrassed smile for getting choked up. He looks straight ahead, calm. He walks. Suddenly, he checks his watch. He exits, in a hurry. « Page 1 of 14 »

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