

Samuel French Acting Edition

Eurydice

by Sarah Ruhl

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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CHARACTERS

Eurydice
Her Father
Orpheus
A Nasty Interesting Man/The Lord of the Underworld

A Chorus of Stones:

Big Stone
Little Stone
Loud Stone

SETTING

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.

AUTHOR'S 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.

Excerpt From *Second Movement, Scene 1*

A train whistle.

Eurydice steps onto a platform, surveying a large crowd.

EURYDICE. A train!

LITTLE STONE. The station is like a train but there is no train.

BIG STONE. The train has wheels that are not wheels.

LOUD STONE. There is the opposite of a wheel and the opposite of smoke and the opposite of a train.

A train pulls away.

EURYDICE. Oh! I'm waiting for someone to meet me, I think.

Eurydice's Father approaches and takes her baggage.

FATHER. Eurydice.

EURYDICE. *(to the stones)* At last, a porter to meet me!

(to the father) Do you happen to know where the bank is? I need money. I've just arrived. I need to exchange my money at the Bureau de Change. I didn't bring traveler's checks because I left in such a hurry. They didn't even let me pack my suitcase. There's nothing in it! That's funny, right? Funny – ha ha! I suppose I can buy new clothes here. I would really love a bath.

FATHER. Eurydice!

EURYDICE. What is that language you're speaking? It gives me tingles. Say it again.

FATHER. Eurydice!

EURYDICE. Oooh – it's like a fruit! Again!

FATHER. Eurydice – I'm your father!

EURYDICE. (*strangely imitating*) Eurydice – I'm your father.
How funny! You remind me of something but I can't understand a word you're saying. Say it again!

FATHER. Your father.

STONES. (*to the father*) Shut up, shut up!
She doesn't understand you.
She's dead now too.
You have to speak in the language of stones.

FATHER. You're dead now. I'm dead, too.

EURYDICE. Yes, that's right. I need a reservation. For the fancy hotel.

FATHER. When you were alive, I was your father.

STONES. Father is not a word that dead people understand.

BIG STONE. He is what we call subversive.

FATHER. When you were alive, I was your tree.

EURYDICE. My tree! Yes, the tall one in the back yard! I used to sit all day in its shade!

She sits at the feet of her father.

EURYDICE. Ah – there – shade!

LITTLE STONE. There is a problem here.

EURYDICE. Is there any entertainment at the hotel? Any dancing ladies? Like with the great big fans?

FATHER. I named you Eurydice. Your mother named all the other children. But Eurydice I chose for you.

BIG STONE. Be careful, sir.

FATHER. Eurydice. I wanted to remember your name. I asked the stones. They said: Forget the names – the names make you remember.

LOUD STONE. We told you how it works!

FATHER. One day it would not stop raining.
I heard your name inside the rain – somewhere between the drops – I saw falling letters. Each letter of your name – I began to translate.

E – I remembered elephants. U – I remembered ulcers and under. R – I remembered reindeers. I saw them putting their black noses into snow. Y – youth and yellow. D – dog, dig, daughter, day. Time poured into my head. The days of the week. Hours, months....

EURYDICE. The tree talks so beautifully.

STONES. Don't listen!

EURYDICE. I feel suddenly hungry! Where is the porter who met me at the station?

FATHER. Here I am.

EURYDICE. I would like a continental breakfast, please. Maybe some rolls and butter. Oh – and jam. Please take my suitcase to my room, if you would.

FATHER. I'm sorry, Miss, but there are no rooms here.

EURYDICE. What? No rooms? Where do people sleep?

FATHER. People don't sleep here.

EURYDICE. I have to say I'm very disappointed. It's been such a tiring day. I've been traveling all day – first on a river, then on an elevator that rained, then on a train...I thought someone would meet me at the station...

Eurydice is on the verge of tears.

STONES. Don't cry! Don't cry!

EURYDICE. I don't know where I am and there are all these stones and I hate them! They're horrible! I want a bath! I thought someone would meet me at the station!

FATHER. Don't be sad. I'll take your luggage to your room.

STONES. THERE ARE NO ROOMS!

He picks up her luggage.

He gives the stones a dirty look.

The sound of water in rusty pipes.