

Persephone UNCUT

by

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Persephone UNCUT

a play

CHARACTERS

PERSEPHONE, 18, a free spirit who's not that free

EURYDICE, 18, Persephone's best friend

HECATE, 18, a witch and handmaiden of Hades and Persephone

APHRODITE, 30's, the goddess of love

DEMETER, 50's, mother of Persephone

ATHENA, 21, goddess of intelligence

ARTEMIS, 21, goddess of the hunt

THE 5 MUSES

THE 3 FATES

3 WOOD NYMPHS

WITH CAMEO APPEARANCES FROM
ORPHEUS & ARISTAEUS (can be doubled)

SETTING

Ancient Greece

1.

Darkness. We hear some voices, garbled as if they are speaking underwater.

A light. We see Persephone, alone, seated on a black, wooden chair. She stares forward in a state of shock. We hear multiple voices whispering "Persephone." As the sounds get louder, we are slowly able to focus on a single, woman's voice. Her voice becomes clearer and clearer as the other voices fade.

HECATE

Persephone. Persephone. Can you hear me?

Hecate, dressed in a grey dress and carrying a lighted torch, enters from behind Persephone. Persephone never turns to face her.

HECATE (CONT'D)

Persephone.

(Beat, forcefully)

Persephone.

Persephone starts and is pulled out of the trance, but she doesn't stop staring forward.

HECATE (CONT'D)

Have you heard anything I've said?

PERSEPHONE

Every word.

HECATE

Do you understand what's happened?

PERSEPHONE

I died.

HECATE

You didn't die.

I'm dead.
PERSEPHONE

No, you're not.
HECATE

Where am I?
PERSEPHONE

The Land of the Dead.
HECATE

Then I'm dead.
PERSEPHONE

But you're not. If you had been listening--
HECATE

If I'm in the Land of the Dead, then I must be dead.
PERSEPHONE

It's complicated.
HECATE

What's complicated about it? Am I dead, yes or no?
PERSEPHONE

No.
HECATE

Persephone stands and finally faces Hecate.

Then why am I here?
PERSEPHONE

What was the last thing you remember?
HECATE

Beat.

Nothing. There's nothing. It's gone.
PERSEPHONE

It's still there.
HECATE

Persephone tries to remember, closing her eyes, making fists, trying to will herself to remember.

PERSEPHONE

(Eyes still closed)

Nothing.

HECATE

You're trying too hard. Let go.

Hecate puts her hand on Persephone. Persephone relaxes.

PERSEPHONE

The sun. I remember the sun. Fields. Flowers. I can see.

(Beat)

Eurydice.

Eurydice sits, enjoying the sun while she waits.

Persephone opens her eyes. Persephone rushes to Eurydice as Hecate and the chair disappear.

PERSEPHONE (CONT'D)

Sorry I'm late.

EURYDICE

Why are you out of breath?

PERSEPHONE

My mother took forever to leave, so I couldn't sneak out right away and had to run here.

EURYDICE

When do you have to be back?

PERSEPHONE

She's out setting the temperature, so we probably have a few hours. Where are we going today? The beach? A museum?

EURYDICE

I thought we could just stay here and talk.

PERSEPHONE

Talk? Okay. About what?

EURYDICE

You look very nice today.

PERSEPHONE

Thank you.

EURYDICE

Not that you usually don't. You always look so good. How do you do it? Look at you. You look great even out of breath and your hair all a mess.

PERSEPHONE

My hair's a mess?

EURYDICE

You're always glowing. Radiant.

PERSEPHONE

Thank you.

EURYDICE

Like the sun.

PERSEPHONE

Eurydice.

EURYDICE

Yes?

PERSEPHONE

Tell me.

EURYDICE

Tell you what?

PERSEPHONE

What you're avoiding telling me.

EURYDICE

I'm not avoiding--

PERSEPHONE

Tell me.

EURYDICE

Do I look radiant? Like the sun?

PERSEPHONE

I'm not sure I--

EURYDICE
Do I look like I'm glowing?

PERSEPHONE
Right now?

EURYDICE
Because you do. You always do. But I don't think I've ever been radiant. But he tells me I am.

PERSEPHONE
He who?

EURYDICE
I met someone.

PERSEPHONE
A "he?"

EURYDICE
Yes.

PERSEPHONE
Who is he?

EURYDICE
His name is Orpheus. He's a musician. He writes music.

PERSEPHONE
Writing music would make him a musician.

EURYDICE
He's been writing songs about me, and I need to know if the things he sings about me are true. Because when he sings and says I'm radiant, I kind of *feel* radiant. But feeling radiant and actually being radiant are two totally different things.

PERSEPHONE
I think you're radiant.

EURYDICE
We're getting married.

Beat.

PERSEPHONE
What?

EURYDICE

Orpheus and I are getting married.

PERSEPHONE

To each other?

EURYDICE

Yes, Persephone, to each other. And there's another thing, we're m--

PERSEPHONE

Oh, gods. It's my mother.

EURYDICE

Your mother? Where?

PERSEPHONE

I'm not here. I was never here!

Persephone rushes to hide. Demeter, Persephone's mother, enters, enjoying the weather, testing the temperature with her hands.

EURYDICE

Hello, mistress Demeter.

DEMETER

Eurydice? Is that right?

EURYDICE

Yes, you're right.

DEMETER

Hello.

EURYDICE

It's a lovely day you've made.

DEMETER

I'm thinking of rain for tomorrow.

EURYDICE

But the sun is so gorgeous.

DEMETER

The rain is necessary.

EURYDICE

You're right. Of course.

DEMETER

Nice seeing you. When I return to Olympus, I'll be sure to tell Persephone you say hello.

EURYDICE

Yes, because that's where she is right now. On Olympus.

DEMETER

Yes.

EURYDICE

And not here.

DEMETER

Here? Why would she be here?

EURYDICE

She wouldn't be. She's not here.

DEMETER

Of course not. I told her to stay on Olympus.

EURYDICE

Then that's definitely where she is.

DEMETER

Yes. Well... Good day, Eurydice.

Demeter starts to exit.

EURYDICE

Would you ever let her travel?

DEMETER

What?

EURYDICE

Would you ever let Persephone travel? Let her go out and see the world.

DEMETER

She can see the world just fine from on top of Olympus.

EURYDICE

But if she asked to go, would you let her--

DEMETER

Why would she ask to go?

EURYDICE

(Making sure Persephone can hear)

I'm getting married. And my future husband is a musician. He's going on tour, and we'll be leaving together. I was going to invite Persephone to come with us, but I haven't gotten the chance. Because she's on Olympus and not down here where I can talk to her.

DEMETER

That's sweet of you, but no. I know you're her friend--

EURYDICE

Best friend.

DEMETER

It's not safe out there, especially for someone like Persephone. She's a delicate flower, and I don't want to see her get plucked.

EURYDICE

What if she just left?

DEMETER

Left?

EURYDICE

If she didn't ask for permission and just left.

DEMETER

She wouldn't.

EURYDICE

Because she listens to you.

DEMETER

Precisely. If I tell her to do something, she does it. If I tell her to stay; she'll stay.

EURYDICE

Like a dog.

DEMETER

Exactly.

EURYDICE

A very beautiful dog.

DEMETER

My daughter is very obedient. She's respectful and always follows my directions.

EURYDICE

Yeah, right.

DEMETER

What?

EURYDICE

You're right. If there's one thing I know about Persephone, it's her devotion to you. Thanks again for the sunshine. Though it is feeling a bit cold out here now.

Demeter raises her palm to test the air. She's satisfied with the temperature and exits. Persephone comes out of hiding.

EURYDICE (CONT'D)

Your mother, Persephone, she's one, cold--

Persephone smacks Eurydice in the arm.

EURYDICE (CONT'D)

What was that for?

PERSEPHONE

You're leaving? When were you going to tell me?

EURYDICE

I was going to tell you, but you took off to hide from your mommy!

PERSEPHONE

If she saw me here, she'd go crazy.

EURYDICE

She has to cut the cord.

PERSEPHONE

What cord?

EURYDICE

It's an expression.

PERSEPHONE

My mother has never tied me up.

EURYDICE

No, it's an expression. When you're born, don't you have a cord that connects you to your mother?

PERSEPHONE

When you mortals are born, you're tied to your mothers?

EURYDICE

Not tied, connected. By a cord. Right here.

Eurydice points to her belly.

PERSEPHONE

What?

EURYDICE

When you're born, you don't have that? Right there.

Eurydice touches Persephone's belly.

PERSEPHONE

No.

EURYDICE

So, how does it work?

PERSEPHONE

It depends.

EURYDICE

It depends? On what?

PERSEPHONE

Well... When Zeus gave birth to my aunt Athena--

EURYDICE

Zeus gave birth to your aunt?

PERSEPHONE

Athena was born out of his head.