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Beginning Acting

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Character Analysis of Eurydice

1. Given Circumstances

My name is Eurydice. My father gave me that name, while my “mother named all the other children” (364). I recently married Orpheus, who is a musician. Orpheus is “kind of famous. He plays the most beautiful music in the world, actually” (352). The night of Orpheus and my wedding I went to get some water from a nearby water pump, where I met a Nasty Interesting Man. He thought I was very interesting (345-346). I returned to my wedding party, but became thirsty again (348). While I was at the water pump the second time, the Nasty Interesting Man returned and told me he had a letter for me from my father (349). He brought me to his “elegant high-rise apartment” where he had told me my letter was, but he wouldn’t give it to me (349). He kept stalling; he offered me champagne (351), made small talk (353), and eventually he even professed his love for me (355). I tricked him into closing his eyes in hopes of a kiss, took the letter from him, and ran away (355-356). As I ran away the Nasty Interesting Man warned me not to run. He told me, “you’ll trip! There are six hundred stairs!” (356). His warning didn’t help, and I fell down the stairs and died (356).

After I arrived in the Underworld, I first spoke to the Stones. I asked them, “My husband’s name? Do you know it?” but they only shrugged (360). I couldn’t remember his name. In fact, “I forgot all the names” (361). The next person I spoke to was my father, but because I couldn’t remember him I thought he was a porter (362). He tried to tell me he was my father, but I didn’t

understand (363). Later, after “*Time passes*” (367), my father brought me a letter from Orpheus and read it to me (370-371). At the end of the letter I remembered who Orpheus is and that he is my husband (371). My father helped me remember many things after that, and he told me stories about my uncle and grandparents (373-375). He even taught me to read (377). After my “*Father leaves for work*” I met the Lord of the Underworld, who is merely a Child (380). He tried to seduce me but I told him, “I have a husband” (383). He replied that “Husbands are for children. You need a lover” (383).

The time period of this story is unclear. The only given hints are provided by the fact that the swimsuits Orpheus and I wore the day he proposed to me on “*extensive unseen boardwalks*” (337) were from the 1950s (333), and that the outfit I was wearing when I arrived in the Underworld is from the 1930s (359). However, there is also mention of an “elegant high-rise apartment” (349) and the possibility of “installing an elevator” (351), which can both indicate a more modern time period. The time of day and season are also unclear because nothing is indicated when I am still alive, and the only hints given about time in the Underworld are that “*Time passes*” (367, 377) and “*Time shifts*” (373).

2. Imagined Circumstances

While in the Underworld I asked my father to tell me stories about many people; about my grandmother, my grandfather, my aunts and uncles, and my father himself. I asked him about my “mother and brothers and sisters,” (372) but he wouldn’t tell me about them because “It will make you sad” (373). He was right. I had two brothers, who were significantly older than I, and one younger sister. My brothers were either nasty to me or ignored me completely, and my sister and I never liked each other. I was jealous because she was our mother’s favorite, and she was jealous because I was our father’s favorite. My mother didn’t like me either, so I moved out shortly after

my father died a slow death from cancer. I was excited to hear about my mother and siblings, so I think my father didn't tell me about them because he wanted me to be hopeful and happy while trying to remember them.

While I was growing up my family lived in a big, interesting house that creaked when the wind blew. It was beautiful, and full of hidden nooks and crannies where I would curl up with one of my books. After my father died and I moved out I got a small apartment and started going to Ampelios College. I met Orpheus at this college. He was a music major and I was a literature major, but we fell in love anyway. I don't really know why we connected though; we've never had the same interests. I made some friends in college, but they weren't as interesting as I had hoped my friends would be. After graduation, Orpheus composed music and I worked in a small book store where I helped to sell and organize the books. I would often get in trouble for reading on the job instead of working. Orpheus and I became engaged not long after our graduation. My uninteresting friends came to our wedding party (345).

3. Major Objective for the Monologue

To convince Orpheus to marry again so that Orpheus will be happy and taken care of in the upper world, even though I am going to dip myself in the river and marry the Lord of the Underworld.

4. Major Objective for the Play

To ensure Orpheus' happiness.

5. Obstacles

The first obstacle that was against me achieving my major objective for the play was that I died on our wedding night. After my death, Orpheus was so sad that "he played the saddest music" (358). When he came to the Underworld for me, there was a chance for his happiness

again. That time my obstacle was my own fears. Orpheus and I were “a little too young and a little too in love,” and I wasn’t ready to be married (332). I wasn’t ready to “stop being married” to my father, but because he was dead by the time Orpheus proposed, I didn’t have my father around to stop being married to (345). Once I regained my father in the Underworld, I realized just how unready I was to leave him. Because of my unwillingness to be without my father, I startled Orpheus into turning around, even though we could have left the Underworld together had I not done so (396-397). My final obstacle is also the one that keeps me from achieving my major objective for my monologue. As I write my letter and dip myself in the River, Orpheus is in the process of dying and coming to the Underworld, where everything that I have written him to ensure his happiness will be useless.

6. Moment Before/Expectations

During my monologue I am in the Underworld. I have just discovered that my father has dipped himself in the River of Forgetfulness, and the Lord of the Underworld intends to marry me extremely soon. My expectation for this monologue is that I am going to write a final goodbye to Orpheus; I expect that he will heed my advice by remaining in the upper world and remarrying. I want him to remarry so that he is happy and doesn’t come looking for me again, only to discover that I have remarried as well, albeit against my will. I expect that after I finish my letter I will dip myself in the River to forget my father, who has already forgotten me, Orpheus, the life we could have had together, and the fact that (as far as I know) Orpheus’ life will go on happily without me. I want to forget all of these things so that marrying the Lord of the Underworld won’t be as painful for me.

Work Cited

Ruhl, Sarah. *Eurydice. The Clean House and Other Plays.* New York: Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 2006. 325-411. Print.