

What is it that attracts us to the Orpheus and Eurydice myth? The classic tale of the young bride who's whisked off to the underworld and her lionhearted husband's fatal attempt to bring her back has magnetized us for centuries. We are fixated when Orpheus races to Eurydice's rescue, using his music to move the world of the dead to release her. We are crushed when, on their trek back to their hopeful future, he turns and looks back at his love only to lose her forever. The tale of Orpheus and Eurydice raises questions about what we will do for love and how far we are willing to go for it.

*Eurydice* is one of the earliest plays in Sarah Ruhl's much celebrated career. Her accolades include the PEN Center Award for a mid-career playwright, the Susan Smith Blackburn Award, the Helen Hayes Award, and the Feminist Press' Forty under Forty award. Ruhl wrote *Eurydice* in response to her father's death. In it, she explores how we deal with love, loss, and memory. The MacArthur Fellowship winner adapts the familiar myth, and in her version she shifts the perspective from the original eyes of Orpheus to his love, Eurydice. The original version of the story assumes there is nothing in the Underworld for Eurydice, but in Ruhl's version, Eurydice finds her father there. In death, she recovers a lost love of her own.

In the myth, Orpheus is instructed to lead Eurydice out of the Underworld without looking back to ensure she's behind him. If he turns to look at her, she'll remain dead forever. In this play, Ruhl builds on that image, repeating it both literally and metaphorically. It isn't just the moment that will decide Eurydice's fate; it is a collection of temptations to look back in life instead of moving forward. The nostalgia of being reunited with her father encourages Eurydice to reminisce. However, at the same time, she is driven to look ahead and make a choice to either remain dead with the man who raised her or to live again with the man who holds her heart. The play raises the notion that remembering is essential to avoid becoming stone-like, but at the same time, memories can keep a person from moving forward. At the end of the day, the play suggests that part of moving forward includes looking back. The characters prove that memory and loss are complex pieces of life we sometimes don't know how to deal with. When exactly is the right time to remember and the right time to forget? As the Father states, "How does a person remember to forget? It's difficult."