

6FT UNDER

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“Myths about gods raping heartily and with impunity, and the goddesses or mortals surviving, often to give birth to gods and heroes, normalise the view that men’s sexual urges are to be given primacy and to be endured, perhaps in the hope that good things will occur as a result of a violation. To accept these myths is to accept that women are the servants of men, and ought to live subordinate lives. I do not accept that.”

-Tracey Nicholls

“Dismantling Rape Culture”

## CHARACTERS

Narrator	<i>Persephone moments after the events of the play take place.</i>
Persephone	<i>A young, bright, and happy girl.</i>
Hades	<i>A young man and the son of a powerful figure in the community.</i>
Orpheus	<i>The infatuated lover of Eurydice.</i>
Eurydice	<i>The partner of Orpheus.</i>
Hermes	<i>A motorcycle gang member who frequently posts ads on the community board.</i>

1968  
SUMMER

SCENE 1

*The inside of a dry, stone well. Persephone, dirty and worn, kneels in the middle-bottom of the well. She is visibly distraught. Silence and then screams. The narrator enters stage and addresses the audience.*

NARRATOR

Let me make this more palatable.

*Ext. Persephone and Narrator.*

SCENE 2

*The stage lights up to reveal an outdoor market with a flower stand. Orpheus sits in the corner with an acoustic guitar and Eurydice by his side. They are both smiling and having a pleasant time. The narrator stands downstage from the set and characters. Persephone skips through to the market wearing white and flowers (perhaps a flower crown).*

NARRATOR

She was 15-

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

18-

*Hades dressed in jean enters quietly as the Narrator speaks and leans against a wall or market stand “checking out” Persephone who is looking at the market stands.*

HADES

24...

NARRATOR

(Whichever makes you most comfortable) when she met Hades.

PERSEPHONE

You aren't being subtle.

HADES

I wasn't intending to be. (*Walks over to Persephone and shakes her hand.*) Name's Hades.

PERSEPHONE

I know who you are.

NARRATOR

There wasn't a person in town who didn't know who Hades was. Son of the owner of every mine skirting the town, and in this town if you weren't a miner you were the family of one.

HADES

Yet, I don't know who you are.

PERSEPHONE

I'm Persephone.

HADES

That's a beautiful name. A beautiful name for a beautiful girl.

*Hades and Persephone continue talking and interacting with the market silently while the lights shift to Orpheus and Eurydice. Orpheus is playing an acoustic guitar and Eurydice is sitting close beside him, listening.*

NARRATOR

Orpheus had no money, no job, no family by choice. His family were hawks and wanted him to join the war. From birth, Eurydice had no money, no education, no family. Out of a need for survival they fell in love.

*Eurydice gets up and starts dancing, spinning and smiling. Orpheus plays an upbeat tune for her to dance to. She spins until she feels faint and half collapses to the floor. Orpheus stops playing and scrambles to kneel beside her.*

ORPHEUS

Eurydice? What's wrong?

EURYDICE

*(Smiles.)* I guess I'm a bit hungry. *(Clutches her stomach.)* Or maybe a lot hungry.

ORPHEUS

Oh! Um... *(Scrambles to a backpack nearby. He digs his hand around but then dumps all the contents out of the bag. He picks up a lone granola bar, unwraps it, and hands it to Eurydice.)* Man, you eat more than I do.

EURYDICE

I think you're starving me on purpose. Afraid imma get too pudgy?

ORPHEUS

*(Slides Eurydice onto his lap)* Never.

*Lights shift back to Persephone and Hades who have been chatting and laughing. Hades stands close to Persephone and tucks a flower into her hair which he plucked from the stand next to them.*

HADES

Tomorrow at the well next to Hermes', 8pm.

PERSEPHONE

Are you asking me out?

HADES

A real man doesn't have to ask. Will you be there?

PERSEPHONE

I don't know... My Ma, I don't know how she will feel about meeting a boy like that. What if we met at the diner?

HADES

Will you be there?

*PAUSE*

NARRATOR

Our answers always seem right at the time. So she said-

PERSEPHONE

Yes.

*During the scene change Hermes, who is wearing a Hells Angels leather jacket, comes out with a rolling bulletin board and pins a statistic. He also gives one to Orpheus who glances at it and drops it as he exits the stage.*

### SCENE 3

*Night. Hades has set up a picnic blanket, flowers, and food close to the well. He lights two lanterns that hold down the blanket, then fusses around excitedly and nervously. Persephone enters stage cautiously until she sees Hades.*

PERSEPHONE

What's all this?

HADES

A garden for my flower.

*The pair smile and settle on the blanket. Hades offers Persephone food and a beer.*

NARRATOR

Persephone doesn't drink. She could have had a thousand different reasons. She's too young, she has moral or religious vows, or she simply doesn't like the taste. It didn't matter the reason. She'd been offered enough drinks to know that a reason only gives them more to argue.

PERSEPHONE

I'm okay. I'm not thirsty.

HADES

Come on. I bought these for us.

NARRATOR

So she takes it and knows better not to drink it.

PERSEPHONE

Thanks. *(She reaches for the beer and then fixes her dress sleeve that is falling off her shoulder.)*

HADES

Wait. *(Hades moves the sleeve back down to be off her shoulder and then does the same for the other sleeve.)* I think it's meant to sit like that. Gorgeous.

*They sit and eat quietly until Hades reaches into a bag and pulls out a pack of cards.*

HADES

Know how to play Go-Fish?

PERSEPHONE

Of course I do!

*Hades shuffles the cards and deals.*

NARRATOR

Hades had a father who taught him how to properly take a woman on a date. He said: Son, make sure she's fed, she's got a drink, she's entertained, and if you play a game let her win.

PERSEPHONE

You got a three?

HADES

Mmm.. yes I do. *(He reluctantly gives her the three but holds it tight when Persephone tries to take it from his hand. Finally, he lets go with a smile.)* You're too good at this game. Do you have a five?

PERSEPHONE

Go fish.

*Hades looks down and sees there's no cards left.*

PERSEPHONE

I win.



HADES

*(He leans over to look at Persephone's two cards left in her hand.)* You're such a cheater!  
The five is right here.

PERSEPHONE

I have more pairs. I would have won anyway.

*Persephone leans in and kisses Hades on the cheek. Pause. Hades leans in and kisses Persephone. They kiss as Hades leans her back on the picnic blanket. Hades slides his hand up Persephone's dress and Persephone pushes his hand away. He continues to try.*

PERSEPHONE

Hades! Hades, stop! Please...

HADES

What? What is it?

PERSEPHONE

I can't. I can't go any further. I took a vow.

*Pause.*

It's important to me.

HADES

Until marriage? *(Persephone nods.)* Fuck.

PERSEPHONE

I'm sorry.

HADES

You're a real tease.

PERSEPHONE

I didn't know... I can do something else.

HADES

Like what?

*Persephone sits up and crawls between Hades legs. She starts to undo his belt until there is the sound of a porch door opening and closing. Hermes and the Narrator enter stage right. Hermes is holding a gun. The narrator speaks for Hermes.*

NARRATOR

Hey! Who's there? Get outta here before I shoot ya!

HADES

Ah crap! Quick, let's go.

*The two quickly pack everything up and exit stage left. Once gone, Hermes tapes another statistic to the front of the well, close to where Persephone and Hades sat. As he does he leaves a small plastic bag on the stage. He stomps his way back to his house. The door sound can be heard once more, silence, then a loud slap and a woman's scream.*

SCENE 4

*Morning. Eurydice and Orpheus lounge on center stage. Orpheus is lying down, smoking a joint; and Eurydice sits, leaned against her backpack. Eurydice becomes less relaxed the more Orpheus smokes.*

NARRATOR

On the way back from dumpster diving, Orpheus and Eurydice saw a man drop a plastic bag of marijuana. Eurydice wanted to roll it and sell it before Hermes noticed it was missing and Orpheus wanted to smoke it.

EURYDICE

He's going to kill us.

ORPHEUS

He's never gonna find out. Not if we smoke the evidence. *(Laughs and tosses the bag to Eurydice).*

EURYDICE

I don't want it. Smokin' dope just makes me more hungry. We shoulda sold it. *(Picks up the bag)* We can still sell it.

ORPHEUS

You gotta loosen up a bit. Besides, who's gonna buy dope from some hippie chick? You'll get beat and left without grass, cash, and dignity.

*Silence. Orpheus continues to smoke and hums.*

EURYDICE

I'm gonna get a job.

ORPHEUS

Oh yeah? Doing what?

EURYDICE

I don't know, Orpheus. But I'm tired of waiting around for you to "provide". I'm hungry and tired. You promised we'd get a place.

ORPHEUS

You on your period or somethin'? All you've done is complain these last few days. Or... are you horny? Is that it?

EURYDICE

*(He stands up and picks up her bag.)* I'm going to the corner store. See if they're hiring an extra hand.

*Ext. Eurydice. Orpheus stays on stage smoking till lights dim, then ext. Hermes passes out statistics of women in the workplace to the audience.*

## SCENE 5

*Midday. Hades leans over the well and looks down, waiting for Persephone.*

NARRATOR

Hades walked Persephone home after getting chased off. And despite how the date ended, Persephone still agreed to meet him again the next day. There was a guilt she felt for leading him on, for giving him false hope. She knew she needed to clear things up.

*Persephone ent. She wears the same dress as the day before. She pulls down her sleeves like how they were when Hades fixed them. She leans against the well next to Hades.*

PERSEPHONE

I'm sorry. I feel like I made things awkward yesterday.

HADES

You don't need to apologize. I was being a jerk. I couldn't help myself. I mean, you're really going to wear something like that and expect me not to want you? *(He smiles.)*

PERSEPHONE

I'm really not wearing anything special.

HADES

Persephone?

PERSEPHONE

Yes?

HADES

*(He reaches his hand in his back pocket and then kneels on one knee.)* Will you marry me?

PERSEPHONE

*(She begins laughing. First it starts soft, then louder, then quiets the longer Hades stays kneeling.)* You're joking right? I guess that's one way to break the tension.

HADES

*(He rises and begins laughing as well.)* Of course. I did want to give you this, though. An apology gift. *(He slides the ring onto Persephone's finger. He then pulls a bag out of his pocket.)* Also, these. We have the whole afternoon. I thought we could loosen up a bit and have some fun.

PERSEPHONE

What is it?

HADES

Pomegranate Seeds. *(He pours four pink pills into his hand.)*

PERSEPHONE

Those are not pomegranate seeds.

HADES

Haha, no, not real ones. It's just what they call them. Two for you, two for me.

NARRATOR

Persephone already disappointed him once. She liked him. So she took the pills.

*Persephone puts the pills in her mouth and Hades hands her a bottle to wash it down. As she drinks Hades places his hand on the side of the well and lets the pills fall. He then quickly puts his hand to his mouth and takes the bottle to drink as well.*

PERSEPHONE

What exactly does it do?

HADES

Makes you feel good.

*After a moment, Persephone begins to sway and smile.*

PERSEPHONE

You know, I wasn't going to agree to meet you. When you asked at the market? I was going to say no. I've been on too many horrible dates.

HADES

But you said yes. Are you glad you did?

PERSEPHONE

*(Laughs)* Yeah... you're real nice and funny.

HADES

*(He leans in and tucks some hair behind her ear.)* Yeah?

*Persephone nods and Hades kisses her. Her eyes get heavy and her body becomes loose. The two follow the narration of the Narrator.*

NARRATOR

Persephone doesn't stop him when Hades moves his hands up her dress, when he unzips the back. He gently lays her on the ground. He unbuckles his pants and when she lazily protests he says-

HADES

Shh... shh... Flower, it's okay. It's just me.

*Lights dim and Hades rapes Persephone. Both are fully clothed. The assault can be directed in an stylized fashion and catered to the actors comfortability. A spotlight lights the Narrator. Loud grunts can be heard as the Narrator speaks.*

NARRATOR

I wouldn't let her remember. I wouldn't let her comb through the details, trying to remember where each hand was placed, what muscles tensed and which went limp. I wouldn't let her remember how it felt to be pushed, fall 6ft, and land on the rock floor of Hermes' well.

*Hades buckles his pants and starts rolling Persephone towards the well. At the end of the Narrator's lines the stage goes dark and a loud thud can be heard.*

## SCENE 6

*Persephone, laying, crumpled in the middle of the well, wakes up slowly and gingerly gets on her feet. She looks around and runs to multiple sides of the well, looking for a door, increasingly becoming more anxious. She finally looks up and sees the opening of the well.*

PERSEPHONE

Is anyone up there? (*Pushes and attempts to climb on the wall*) Please, I'm stuck! Help!  
Help!

*Hades enters above the well on the upper walkway of the stage which once held the flower market.*

HADES

Quit the hollering, Percy. I'm right here.

PERSEPHONE

Hades! You've got to get me out of here. Go to Hermes and get some rope, please!

HADES

Marry me.

PERSEPHONE

What?

HADES

You heard me, flower.

PERSEPHONE

I'm not in a humorous mood, Hades. Please, just go get Hermes.

HADES

I'm not joking. If you marry me, I'll help you out.

PERSEPHONE

Are you insane? I'm not marrying you. You're being ridiculous so-

HADES

Your mother would be disappointed. You broke your vow. (*Persephone stays quiet, confused*). You mean you don't remember? Last night? (*Silence*) Is that your trick then? Tell them you're a virgin so they fuck you? Shoulda known. Never met a virgin that liked it as much as you did.

PERSEPHONE

Hades... What are you saying? We didn't... Please, I want to go home.

HADES

Will you marry me?

PERSEPHONE

For God Sakes, Hades! I don't love you! I barely know you!

HADES

Fine, then.

*Blackout.*

SCENE 7

*Evening. Orpheus leans against a closed stand at the market and plays guitar. Eurydice storms in.*

EURYDICE

They said I was just a dirty hippie.

ORPHEUS

Well doll, you are a dirty hippie.

EURYDICE

Oh yeah, well what does that make you?

ORPHEUS

Hey, no need to get like that. All I'm sayin' is I've got an education is all. I finished highschool. And you don't have any experience in anything. Meaningless house duties like sewing and cooking won't get you far.

EURYDICE

Then why don't you go get a job.

ORPHEUS

I have one. *(He smiles)*. I'm a musician. Dedicated to writing confessions of my love to my lovely "dirty hippie" girl.

*Eurydice finally gives in and smiles too. Hermes comes in with the sliding bulletin and posts another statistic. All exit.*

SCENE 8

*Night, in the well.*

PERSEPHONE

My mother always told me not to trust the men who opened the doors for pretty ladies, who lit your smokes, or walked you home. I never knew what she meant when she said to trust the men who are honest, the ones who fuck up but don't apologize. The ones that honk at you from the car but are predictable. "Those are the ones who will put food on the table," she said. I suppose if I had listened to her, I might not be down a well. I took those pills like Eve with an apple.



*Hades enters and looks down the well.*

HADES

You haven't gone crazy on me have you? Talking to the stone?

PERSEPHONE

Hades? Please, I'm sorry I disappointed you. It's so dark down here. It's so cold.

HADES

I hate to see you like that. You know I can take care of you. If we marry we won't have to worry about what happened. No one will have to know you broke your vow.

PERSEPHONE

Fine.

HADES

Hm?

PERSEPHONE

I will marry you.

HADES

Perfect! *(Hades throws a stapled form and a pen down the well)* Sign it.

*Persephone scrambles for the pen and paper and signs each page. Once finished, Hades throws down a rope.*

Off to the courthouse, my bride.

*Blackout.*

SCENE 9

FALL

*Daytime at the flower market. Eurydice stands with a wilting basket of carnations and a sign with a dollar on it. Narrator buys a flower from her. Hades enters.*

NARRATOR

Weeks go by and any bruises that Persephone had, faded. Persephone's mother wasn't particularly pleased by the marriage but respected it. Everyone had an opinion. She was too young to be married, she was too old for Hades, Hades was too old for her. They shouldn't have gotten married in the fall. They should have gotten married in a church. It bothered Persephone. Those comments meant that people thought she held value to their marriage. However, as time went on she began feeling the same as she did on her first date with Hades. He brought her flowers after work and appreciated her work in the garden. When night fell, he was gentle. That had to count for something.

HADES

Five flowers, please. *(Holds out a five dollar note for Eurydice.)*

EURYDICE

Hades, right? I think I'd be ashamed to charge you that much for these.

HADES

Take it. It's sad seeing you trying to peddle beside these stands.

EURYDICE

*(She takes the note from Hades and gives him the flowers.)* Thanks.

HADES

Who's letting a pretty girl like you work out in the cold like this?

EURYDICE

No one of any importance. *(Gets closer to Hades.)*

HADES

You save that bill and let me treat you to dinner.

EURYDICE

Thanks, but no thanks. I know what rich men like you pull. *(She pulls away from him.)*

*Enters Persephone.*

HADES

*(Grabs her hand and pulls her in.)* And what kind of thing do you think I'd pull?

EURYDICE  
*(Smiles)* Tonight at 9.

HADES  
Meet me at Hermes' well.

*Eurydice nods then exits stage. Persephone walks up behind Hades and pushes him.*

PERSEPHONE  
What was that?

HADES  
What? Her? Just chatting with an old friend. Are you jealous?

PERSEPHONE  
No! You're just being disrespectful.

HADES  
What if I told you she was flirting with me?

*Silence.*

What would you do if I told you I'm meeting her for a date? Would that make you angry?  
Jealous?

PERSEPHONE  
Shut up!

HADES  
You know the time and place. If you want to stop it.

*Lights dim. Hermes posts another statistic.*

SCENE 10  
*Evening at the well. Eurydice sits with her legs dangling over the well, waiting for Hades.  
Hades and Persephone enter behind Eurydice.*

HADES

She looks gorgeous tonight, don't you think?

*Persephone storms over to Eurydice and pushes her. Blackout for 3 seconds, thud, then lights lift again. Persephone stands in shock, her hands in her hair.*

PERSEPHONE

What have I done?

HADES

You've done me a favor, Flower. *(He throws a rope down and prepares to go down the well to meet Eurydice.)*

*Persephone exits in a panic. Lights dim.*

SCENE 11

*Night, closed flower market. Persephone rushes around looking for Orpheus. Orpheus enters from stage right, drunk.*

PERSEPHONE

Orpheus! I made a mistake. You've got to help Eurydice-

ORPHEUS

That skank broke up with me. Screw her! She never appreciated the life of an artist. I could have given her the world.

NARRATOR

Persephone tried to convince Orpheus, to no avail. Orpheus didn't understand why Eurydice would leave and the more Persephone explained, the angrier Orpheus got.

*Orpheus exits in a fit. Hades enters and passes Orpheus.*

HADES

Where were you?

PERSEPHONE

I was just coming back from mothers.

HADES  
You're a terrible liar.

PERSEPHONE  
I'm not lying!

HADES  
Were you talking to that boy?

PERSEPHONE  
I said hello.

HADES  
Does he know Eurydice?

*Silence. Hades grabs Persephone by the arm and drags her off the stage as Hermes comes out with the bulletin. Hermes posts a new statistic. This time it is a statistic that is relative to the area that the play is performed in.*

SCENE 12  
*Dawn in the well. Eurydice is passed out and Persephone is trying to tend to her bleeding forehead with her skirt.*

NARRATOR  
They should have known.

PERSEPHONE  
Why did you hit on a married man? Let alone Hades...

NARRATOR  
They ignored the signs.

EURYDICE  
Ugh... Persephone?

ORPHEUS  
*He enters above the well. Eurydice?!*

PERSEPHONE

Orpheus! We are down here!

*Orpheus throws down a rope with a loop on the end. Persephone helps Eurydice fasten to the rope and Orpheus lifts her up.*

PERSEPHONE

Quickly, Orpheus! Throw it down!

ORPHEUS

I'm sorry... I can't. I can't! We have to go! (*Orpheus exits with Eurydice.*)

*Persephone, dirty and worn, kneels in the middle-bottom of the well. She is visibly distraught.*

NARRATOR

Days and nights pass. Hades doesn't come to see her. Persephone screams until her voice goes hoarse and only a whisper can escape her lips. One morning, Hermes goes to do maintenance on the well and finds her.

HERMES

(*He looks down the well.*) Hey!

PERSEPHONE

Hermes... Help, please.

*Hermes walks back to his house and brings out a polaroid camera. He leans over the well, takes a picture of Persephone, lets it print, and pins it on the bulletin. Hermes exits.*  
*Blackout.*

## STATISTICS TO USE DURING SCENE CHANGES

(Each stat can be shortened to make it clearer/bolder on a small sign.)

“Across their lifetime, 1 in 3 women, around 736 million, are subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner – a number that has remained largely unchanged over the past decade.” (World Health Organization, 2021).

<https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2021-devastatingly-pervasive-1-in-3-women-globally-experience-violence>

“In 2020, one in four women (25%) and one in six men (17%) reported having personally experienced inappropriate sexualized behaviors in their workplace during the previous year.” (Statistics Canada, 2020)

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210812/dq210812b-eng.htm>

“LGBTQ+ women (63%), women who experienced childhood violence (62%) and women with a physical or mental disability (51%) were among those most likely to report having been sexually assaulted since the age of 15.” (Statistics Canada, 2020).

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/201202/dq201202a-eng.htm>

“...most students (91% of women and 92% of men) who had witnessed unwanted sexualized behaviours stated that there was at least one occasion where they did not take action. The most common reason for not taking action was that they did not see the behaviour as serious enough (69% of women and 81% of men). It was more common for women than men to say that they did not act because they felt uncomfortable (48% versus 25%), feared negative consequences (28% versus 18%) or feared for their safety (18% versus 8%).” (Statistics Canada, 2020)

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200914/dq200914a-eng.htm>

“Sexual violence is a substantial problem on college campuses, particularly for undergraduate women who consistently report higher rates of nonconsensual sexual contact (23.1% v. 11.7%) and sexual harassment (61.9% v. 47.7%) during their college careers when compared to the general student population.” (Gartner, 2019).

[https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/etd/ucb/text/Gartner\\_berkeley\\_0028E\\_18634.pdf](https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/etd/ucb/text/Gartner_berkeley_0028E_18634.pdf)

“From May 2018 to August 2019, 57 people disclosed an incident [of sexualized violence] to EQHR. These incidents ranged from sexual looks and inappropriate jokes to non-consensual sexual acts. 79 per cent of the survivors were students and the remaining 20 per cent were staff and faculty. 89 per cent of the survivors identified as females.

37 per cent of the disclosures were found to be outside of EQHR’s jurisdiction.

This means that of those 57, 35 cases were in their jurisdiction and 21 were not.” (Korte, 2021).

<https://www.martlet.ca/weve-all-got-tired-of-fighting-the-system-charges-dropped-no-uvic-investigations-for-students-sexual-assault-cases/>

Of every 100 incidents of sexual assault, only 6 are reported to the police

1 - 2% of "date rape" sexual assaults are reported to the police

1 in 4 North American women will be sexually assaulted during their lifetime

11% of women have physical injury resulting for sexual assault

Only 2 - 4% of all sexual assaults reported are false reports

60% of sexual abuse/assault victims are under the age of 17

over 80% of sex crime victims are women

80% of sexual assault incidents occur in the home

17% of girls under 16 have experienced some form of incest

83% of disabled women will be sexual assaulted during their lifetime

15% of sexual assault victims are boys under 16

half of all sexual offenders are married or in long term relationships

57% of aboriginal women have been sexually abused

1/5th of all sexual assaults involve a weapon of some sort

80% of assailants are friends and family of the victim