Greek Mythology

Turning the Myth into a Musical

HADESTOWN
The Myth. The Musical.
The Definition of a Myth

"...a story, presented as having actually occurred in a previous age, explaining the cosmological and supernatural traditions of a people, their gods, heroes, cultural traits, religious beliefs, etc."

MEET THE CHARACTERS
Hades

GOD OF THE DEAD AND RICHES
KING OF THE UNDERWORLD

RICH AND POWERFUL, HE RULES OVER THE INDUSTRIAL
DYSTOPIA OF HADESTOWN, FORCING HIS WORKERS TO
BUILD A NEVER-ENDING WALL TO KEEP TRESPASSERS OUT
AND HIS WORKERS IN. FEARFUL OF LOSING PERSEPHONE'S
LOVE, ALL OF HADES' EFFORTS ARE TO CAGE HER AND
MAKE HER STAY WITH HIM.
Persephone
Goddess of spring, queen of the underworld

In the myth:
Hades stumbled across Persephone working in her mother’s field one day and instantly fell in love with the goddess. He stole her away to live in the underworld and be his queen. Her mother, upset at her daughter’s disappearance, refused to let anything above ground grow until her daughter was returned. But before Hades returned her daughter, Persephone ate 6 pomegranate seeds while in the underworld and therefore needs to spend 6 months in the underworld with her husband and 6 months above ground with her mother. This was what the people of ancient Greece used as an expalinations of why the seasons change, for when Persephone was above ground, it was spring/summer, flowers were blooming, it was warm. But when she is in the underworld it is fall/winter. And the world grows cold without her.

In the musical:
An outdoorsy girl married to Hades. She relishes the six months she’s allowed to be aboveground and gets increasingly annoyed when her husband comes to bring her home early, since it’s putting the seasons out of joint and the workers of Hadestown are suffering.
In our story...

Hades and Persephone have been married for a long time and have lost sight of the love they had for each other. There is a lot of tension between the two of them. Hades keeps wanting to bring Persephone to Hadestown too soon. Because of this, the seasons cannot regulate, the weather is out of control causing those "living up on top" to struggle and brave the elements.
Orpheus was the son of the muse Calliope - muse of epic poetry and Apollo the God of music. Therefore he was known to be the most talented music player of ancient times. He has such talented musical abilities that nothing could resist his music. It is said that even the rocks and trees would bend themselves to hear his music.

In the myth:

Orpheus believes that he can write a song to "bring the world back into tune". Orpheus is kind and naive, and while he means well, he has a tendency to fixate on his music above all else. He falls in love with Eurydice.
Eurydice
"A Hungry Young Girl"

In the Myth:
Eurydice is known as a nymph in the Greek myth. She falls in love with Orpheus and they decide to get married. On their wedding day, Eurydice tragically dies after being bitten by a snake. Thus leading Orpheus to travel down to the underworld to try to get her back.

In the Musical:
A practical girl who lives a hard life, Eurydice knows how to survive and is reluctant to open herself to others. Always roaming, she finds herself falling for Orpheus in spite of herself. When Orpheus becomes too wrapped up in his song, she has to brave the world on her own again, and ends up making a deal to come work for Hades, not knowing she is signing her life away.
Once Orpheus finds out that his wife has gone down to HADESTOWN, under the instruction of Hermes, Orpheus “takes the long way around, around the back” to sneak into HADESTOWN to get EURYDICE back. Unfortunately being found by HADES, ORPHEUS has to use his power of music to persuade HADES and PERSEPHONE to understand. He sings the following lyrics in Epic III:

“KING OF SHADOWS, KING OF SHADES
HADES WAS KING OF THE UNDERWORLD
BUT HE FELL IN LOVE WITH A BEAUTIFUL LADY
WHO WALKED UP ABOVE IN HER MOTHER’S GREENFIELD
HE FELL IN LOVE WITH PERSEPHONE
WHO WAS GATHERING FLOWERS IN THE LIGHT OF THE SUN
AND I KNOW HOW IT WAS BECAUSE HE WAS LIKE ME
A MAN IN LOVE WITH A WOMAN”
Orpheus' song touched the hearts of Hades and Persephone, reminding them of the love they shared while relating it to his own love for Eurydice. Hades makes a deal with Orpheus.

**Orpheus and Eurydice go on one condition: Orpheus must lead them out. If he turns around to confirm that Eurydice is following him, she will return to Hadestown and remain there forever.**

He cannot hear Eurydice's footsteps. He cannot see her. He just has to have faith that she is there. ...All while the fates are taunting him to get him to turn around.
COULD YOU MAKE IT OUT OF HADESTOWN?