

HARMONIC NIGHTS

Written by

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Based on

Myth of Orpheus and Eurydice
Myth of Narcissus and Echo
One Thousand and One Nights
The Arabian Nights

004d - Revision: have fun with it, and trust your gut.

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BLACK SCREEN:

SCHEHERAZADE (V.O.)
Once upon a time... In a world not
too different from our own...

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING (BEDROOM) - MORNING

A YOUNG MAN in his early 30s sits in a chair chain-smoking cigarettes while the song Pictures of You by The Cure plays in the background.

He dials a phone and places it to his ear, it RINGS, and RINGS, and RINGS... No answer. He sighs, lights another cigarette, and dials again... RING, RING, RING... BEEP.

AUTOMATED FEMALE VOICE
The number you have dialed is no
longer in service.

He hangs up the phone, clicks around on his computer a few times, and ejects a CD.

He stamps out his cigarette, picks up a black magic marker, and writes on the CD:
"To EURYDICE, from ORPHEUS -- Heart of Hades Vol. 1".

Orpheus picks up his address book and turns to a page with a photo of Eurydice and him kissing while the sun sets in the background. His finger moves to reveal an address in Georgia. He slams the book shut and returns to his computer where he books a travel itinerary.

INT. LARGE SUBURBAN HOME (LIVING ROOM) - MORNING

A young and beautiful BRUNETTE WOMAN wearing a pair of black plastic glasses sits on a sofa reading a book of fairy tales.

STEVE, an older man in a business suit, enters the room. He's on the telephone.

STEVE
(on phone)
Yeah, the account should be closed
by tomorrow...

He places his hand over the receiver and lowers the phone as he turns to his wife:

STEVE (CONT'D)

Honey, did you remember to pay the gas bill?

BRUNETTE WOMAN

You said you'd do that.

STEVE

God damnit.

BRUNETTE WOMAN

I asked you last week and you said you had it covered.

Steve storms out of the room into the kitchen and we hear his voice trail off as it's cut out by a refrigerator door being opened forcefully.

STEVE (O.S)

(back on phone)

...just prep the W-10 forms and get them to Cindy ASAP so she can have me sign them.

The refrigerator door slams shut.

The Brunette Woman sighs. Closes her book. And follows her husband into the kitchen.

INT. LARGE SUBURBAN HOME (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

Steve stands by the sink. The Brunette Woman approaches, places her hand on the counter, and stands in front of him.

STEVE

(hand on phone receiver)

What's wrong?

She's silent.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(to her)

Ugh.

(to phone)

Hold on. I gotta call you back.

Steve hangs up the phone and places it on the counter.

STEVE (CONT'D)

What?

BRUNETTE WOMAN
My sister will be here tomorr--

STEVE
--shoot me now.

BRUNETTE WOMAN
Think you could curb that attitude
for a few days?

STEVE
What about *our* plans? I thought
we'd finally have a chance to get
away for a weekend...

BRUNETTE WOMAN
You know it's not that simple.

He's not listening.

STEVE
...but no, you're stupid fucking
sister had to go an--

BRUNETTE WOMAN
She's going through a rough time.
No one plans for these things. But
they happen. And she needs m-- us.

STEVE
Fine.

BRUNETTE WOMAN
Maybe we can go to Cabo next month.

STEVE
Fine.

Steve stands there for a few moments with a pouty look on his
face. He sighs.

The Brunette Woman smiles, leans in, and plants an endearing
peck, square in the center of his lips.

BRUNETTE WOMAN
Thanks honey.

A dog begins to BARK loudly from the other room. He runs
into the kitchen, passed Steve, towards the Brunette Woman
who extends her hand which he begins to lick.

She rubs his neck and we see the name "Cerberbus" on his
collar.

BRUNETTE WOMAN (CONT'D)

(to dog)

You're so sweet.

(to Steve)

I can't wait to make you that
dinner I've had planned.

Steve smiles at her and then looks down at the dog:

STEVE

I wish you'd get a leash for that
thing.

EXT. RIVERBOAT FERRY - NIGHT

The sound of an engine ROARS in the background. Stars glisten over the soft freshwater air. Orpheus sits, lost in thought, wearing a pair of headphones: listening to Hanging On The Telephone by Blondie. He's scribbling something down on a piece of paper: it's a poem.

INT. HOLLOW TREE BAR - NIGHT

Dark. Dank. And Dirty. Somewhere in a dive bar a soft feminine hand painted in pink nail polish taps to the beat against the glass of an old jukebox.

She pushes a button, and the disc changer CLICKS as it moves the record into place: the song Hanging On The Telephone by Blondie begins to play.

BAR PATRON

Ugh. Not this one again.

Her soft pink lips crack a smile.

ECHO

This one, again.

EXT. RIVERBOAT FERRY - NIGHT

Orpheus is still scribbling. The TICKET MAN approaches:

TICKET MAN

Tickets.

Orpheus doesn't hear him.

He continues scribbling a poem: "I'm a retired liar. You can call me a telephone buyer. My love for you is like a spire. I feel so wired. But I'm just so tired. I want to"--

His neighbor pokes him.

Orpheus takes his headphones off and the music SPILLS out onto the deck.

ORPHEUS

Hmm?

Holding a silver hole puncher in his right hand, The Ticket Man extends his left with expectation:

TICKET MAN

Tickets.

Orpheus reaches his hand into his pant pocket and finds nothing. He checks his other pockets and pats himself down. No luck. Finally, he sticks his hand back in his front pocket, digs as deep as he can, and discovers his finger sticking out the other end of a hole.

ORPHEUS

Uhm...

TICKET MAN

Lost it, did you?

ORPHEUS

(embarrassed)

Yeah.

TICKET MAN

You can pay me now, or once we reach the other side.

ORPHEUS

Yeah... I'm broke.

TICKET MAN

Then I guess I'm going to have to throw you overboard.

Orpheus begins frantically checking his pockets again.

TICKET MAN (CONT'D)

I'm joking.

ORPHEUS

Oh.

Orpheus freezes, unsure of what to do next. His headphones go quiet as the track changes to the next. He looks at his shoes.

ORPHEUS (CONT'D)

So...

TICKET MAN

You alright?

Orpheus looks up and quietly nods.

The song Everybody Plays The Fool by The Main Ingredient begins to emerge from his headphones.

TICKET MAN (CONT'D)

What brings you to Georgia?

ORPHEUS

Excuse me?

TICKET MAN

Do you have a ticket?

-Pause-

ORPHEUS

Family.

TICKET MAN

Girl trouble?

ORPHEUS

How'd you--

TICKET MAN

What're you listening to on those headphones?

ORPHEUS

(embarrassed)

Oh.

*

Suddenly, a flash of light from above, Orpheus turns his head: a star falls from the sky... His head follows the beam of light as it extends across the night air.

EXT. GEORGIA SKYLINE (40,000 FEET ABOVE GROUND) - CONTINUOUS

The air burns. An object glows. Something is falling, and it's falling very fast...

EXT. GEORGIA FARM FIELDS - CONTINUOUS

SMASH! Fire. The object collides with the ground and a ball of white hot heat explodes around the epicenter.

EXT. SMALL FARMHOUSE (FRONT PORCH) - CONTINUOUS

The CREEK of a screen door opens as we see the silhouette of an ELDERLY WOMAN standing in the doorway looking out towards the fire.

ELDERLY MAN (O.S.)
What in heaven's name was that!?

ELDERLY WOMAN
I don't know, I--

ELDERLY MAN (O.S.)
(shouting from inside)
What?

ELDERLY WOMAN
It's a, a--

ELDERLY MAN (O.S.)
Well? Spit it out.

ELDERLY WOMAN
The fields. They're, they're on
fire.

The ELDERLY MAN rushes to join her in the doorway. He sees it. And for a moment they both stand in awe.

He wraps his arms around hers, grasps her hands in his, and pulls her close: the fire glistens off their eyes.

-Pause-

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT'D)
What if someone's in there?

Reacting instinctively, the Elderly Man quickly grabs his barn jacket off the hook and his keys from the bowl by the door.

ELDERLY MAN
Meet me out back. There's a fire
extinguisher in the truck.

EXT. RIVERBOAT FERRY - CONTINUOUS

Orpheus and the Ticket Man are still looking up at the stars.

ORPHEUS
Beautiful.

TICKET MAN

And rare.

ORPHEUS

I wonder how many there've been.

TICKET MAN

Did you make a wish?

Orpheus looks at his hands.

ORPHEUS

I forgot.

TICKET MAN

Better do it quickly.

Orpheus closes his eyes and lowers his head.

TICKET MAN (CONT'D)

They say every now and then, the
gods grant us with a gift.

Orpheus quietly lifts his head.

ORPHEUS

Hmm?

TICKET MAN

Nothing... How do you plan to get
where you're going once you reach
the other side?

ORPHEUS

Figured I'd walk there.

TICKET MAN

It's a long way.

ORPHEUS

You have a better idea?

TICKET MAN

Well... my cousin works at a bar.
He's always giving odd jobs to the
high school kids. He might be able
pay you for work.

The Ticket Man writes down a name, address and phone number,
and hands it to Orpheus. Orpheus accepts.

ORPHEUS

Thanks.

The Ticket Man smiles, nods, and begins to walk away. A few steps later, he turns back and says:

TICKET MAN
Hey, would you mind doing me a favor?

ORPHEUS
Sure. Anything.

TICKET MAN
Tell him Charlie says 'hi'.

EXT. CROSSROADS (BUS STOP) - MORNING

An old red Chevy pickup truck rolls to a stop in front of a bench: two men sit inside.

INT. RED CHEVY PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

ELDERLY MAN
You sure about this?

THEODORE
Yeah.

ELDERLY MAN
I can drive you there.

THEODORE
It's ok.

ELDERLY MAN
But--

THEODORE
I have a meeting.

The door CRACKS and CLUNKS as Theodore opens it and steps out onto the road.

EXT. CROSSROADS (BUS STOP) - CONTINUOUS

As Theodore crosses the road towards the bus stop bench the Elderly Man opens the driver side door, steps out halfway, and stands tall on the truck's cab:

ELDERLY MAN
There's a diner half a mile up the road. Let me get you something to eat.

THEODORE
I'm not hungry.

ELDERLY MAN
Well, if you won't let me buy you
breakfast. At least take my
jacket.

THEODORE
I couldn't possibly--

ELDERLY MAN
I insist.

The Elderly Man throws his barn jacket to Theodore, it arcs across the road, and he catches it.

THEODORE
You sure?

ELDERLY MAN
It's a cold morning.

EXT. RIVER DOCKS - MORNING

Orpheus stands at the end of a dock watching the ferry disappear into the horizon. He takes a moment to drink it all in, consults a map, then turns toward his destination.

He puts his headphones in, stuffs the map into his bag, lifts it off the ground, slings it over his shoulder, and continues forward up the road.

He begins to WHISTLE a tune to himself.

EXT. CROSSROADS (BUS STOP) - AFTERNOON

Theodore is lying down, smack in the middle of the only bench for miles, eyes closed, facing up towards the sky.

A faint WHISTLING sound can be heard growing louder in the distance.

Theodore perks up and opens his eyes to the clouds.

Orpheus is coming down the road.

Theodore sits up, coughs a few times, and slides from the center to one side of the bench.

Orpheus arrives at the bus stop.

He looks around, realizes there is no where else to sit, and plops down on the bench next to Theodore.

THEODORE
Where you heading?

ORPHEUS
(exasperated)
Why does everyone keep asking me that?

THEODORE
Excuse me?

ORPHEUS
Nevermind.

THEODORE
Just curious.

ORPHEUS
Oh.

Theodore gives Orpheus the once over: glancing at his shoes, pants, and shirt -- ending on his unshaven face.

THEODORE
You look like shit.

ORPHEUS
Tell me about it.

THEODORE
One of those kinds of days, huh?

ORPHEUS
More like that kind of year.

THEODORE
Tell me about it.

ORPHEUS
You having a rough one too?

THEODORE
I just got evicted.

ORPHEUS
Fuck man. Trouble with the rent?

THEODORE
Something like that.

Orpheus leans forward and looks both ways up and down the road. Nothing but tumbleweeds.

ORPHEUS
Hey, how long you been waiting?

THEODORE
Lord if I can remember.

Orpheus stands up.

ORPHEUS
Well I'm going to walk.

THEODORE
Suit yourself.

Orpheus begins walking up the road, pauses, and turns to look back in the direction from where he came.

THEODORE (CONT'D)
You sure you're alright?

ORPHEUS
I will be.

THEODORE
Y'know, you don't have to go that way if you don't want to.

ORPHEUS
I do.

THEODORE
Why?

ORPHEUS
Because...
(pause)
...I have to.

Orpheus turns his head away from Theodore, back to the road.

THEODORE
Sounds like a man with an obsession.

ORPHEUS
Probably.

THEODORE
(serious)
Trust me. I know a thing or two.

Orpheus chuckles.

ORPHEUS
Jeez, I hope I don't end up like
you.

THEODORE
Good luck with that.

ORPHEUS
Dick.

Theodore laughs; Orpheus laughs too.

Orpheus grips the strap of his bag and squints toward his destination: for a moment it's as if the world stretches around the road like a tunnel, and the end seems so far away.

He breathes.

ORPHEUS (CONT'D)
You staying?

THEODORE
That an invite?

Orpheus turns his head back to Theodore: they make eye contact.

ORPHEUS
Got something better to do?