

## The Story of Orpheus and Eurydice

Orpheus had the gift of creating the most beautiful music in all the lands. His songs had more than human power – as he walked through the forests and played his lyre, all the animals and nymphs would stop and listen to him. He sailed with Jason and the Argonauts on their famous voyage. Whenever a fight broke out in the crew, he would play music to soothe their spirits. Whenever they became tired, his music would inspire them to have strength to continue the journey. One time he even played his lyre so beautifully that he drowned out the song of the Sirens, whose enchanting voices usually lured any sailor who sailed past them to his death.



Orpheus had a wife, Eurydice. On their wedding day, she was bitten by a snake, and its poison quickly killed her. Orpheus was devastated, but was determined to do anything he could to bring her back. He traveled to the Underworld to bargain with Pluto. His music was so enchanting that it lulled the great dog Cerberus to sleep. Its magic entranced all of the souls in the Underworld, even Pluto and Proserpina, his queen. The king of the Underworld was so impressed that he could not deny Orpheus anything that he wanted. Pluto let Orpheus lead his wife back from the Underworld – on the condition that he did not look back at her while they were on their journey.



He immediately agreed, and the couple headed back to realm of the mortals. Just as Orpheus could see the light of day again, he wondered if Eurydice were still behind him after their lengthy journey. His curiosity overtook him, and he glanced quickly over his shoulder to make sure she was there. However, in that quick instant, he did the one thing he was instructed not to do. She sank back into the darkness of the Underworld, and he lost his beloved wife forever. He lived the rest of his days in misery because he knew it was his fault that she could not return to earth.

