

**PERUSAL SCRIPT**

# **PERSEPHONE**

A Greek Myth adapted by  
**Genevieve Aichele**

**Theatre Tales from Around The World *SERIES***



*Newport, Maine*

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**PERSEPHONE**

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**Cast of Characters** — 10 female, 7 male + 6-8 chorus (Doubling to 7f 4m + chorus(f))

Aphrodite -F (cannot be doubled)

Eros\*

Demeter -F (cannot be doubled)

Persephone -F (cannot be doubled)

Artemis -F (cannot be doubled)

Athena\*\*

Hades -M (cannot be doubled)

Zeus -M (cannot be doubled)

Water Nymph\*\*

Old Woman\*\*

Abas\*

Metaneira\*\*

Son of Metaneira\*

Daughter of Metaneira\*\*

Hermes -M (cannot be doubled)

Ascalaphus\*

Koryphaios (Chorus Leader) -F (cannot be doubled)

Chorus (female, 6-8 persons)

#### DOUBLING

\*male roles to be doubled

\*\* female roles to be doubled

5 female, 3 male,

5 smaller female roles can be doubled, 4 smaller male roles can be doubled

**PERSEPHONE** adapted from the Greek Myth by Genevieve Aichele. 10 female, 7 male + 6-8 female chorus (Doubling to 7f 4m + chorus) Ancient Greek or Modern costumes. Various simple settings inside a Greek Theatre. About 30 minutes. Kidnapping. Heartbreak. Evil exacting a price. Sounds like the 5 o'clock news? Well, no — it is Ancient Greece and the battle with Hades, Lord of the Underworld, to retain that which he has stolen; the beautiful Persephone, daughter of Demeter, a Goddess. Humor abound as Gods and mortals choose sides in the battle. Told with a Chorus and Leader, the form is classic Greek theater... but with a modern twist! Part of the TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD SERIES. **ORDER #3137**

**Genevieve Aichele** is Founding Executive Director of New Hampshire Theatre Project in Portsmouth, and has performed, directed and taught theatre arts both nationally and internationally for over 35 years, including 20 years of directing the NHTP Youth Repertory Company.

Genevieve has written dozens of story theatre scripts for use both onstage and in the classroom. Her adult scripts include *Neighborhoods* (2001 Portsmouth Spotlight Community Arts Award); original adaptations of *Lysistrata* and *Finding the Prince*; and *Dreaming Again*, commissioned in 2011 by the NH Humanities Council.

As a storyteller, Genevieve performs with musician Randy Armstrong in *World Tales*. Their two CD's have won numerous national and international awards. Her first audiobook recording, *Forest Secrets* by Tracy Kane, was released in 2012. *Ocean Secrets*, her first novel for young readers co-written with Tracy Kane, was released in May 2014.

Genevieve received the 2001 New Hampshire Governors Award for Excellence in Arts in Education and the 2008 NH Theatre Award for her work with youth. In 2002, she received an award for Outstanding Achievement in American Theatre from the New England Theatre Conference.

## **PERSEPHONE**

*(During opening CHORUS, characters of PERSEPHONE, DEMETER, ATHENA, ARTEMIS, APHRODITE and EROS appear in tableau.)*

**KORYPHAIOS:** Hear, O friends, the story of Persephone  
And Demeter, her mother. Hear, O friends, the story  
Of the dark lord Hades, ruler of the underworld....

**CHORUS:** *(interrupting)* Dark lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.  
Grim lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.  
BAD lord Hades, ruler of the underworld!

**KORYPHAIOS:** How dark lord Hades kidnapped poor Persephone  
And took her to the underworld, leaving sad Demeter  
To weep and seek revenge on...

**CHORUS:** *(interrupting)* Dark lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.  
Grim lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.  
BAD lord Hades, ruler of the underworld!

**PERSEPHONE:** *(stepping out of tableau)* Excuse me, ladies.

**CHORUS:** Yes?

**PERSEPHONE:** Could we, like, get on with the story?

**KORYPHAIOS:** And who, may I ask, are you?

**PERSEPHONE:** Duh. I'm Persephone. This is my story you're trying to tell.

**DEMETER:** *(stepping out of tableau)* Actually, dear daughter, it really is more of my story. I have more lines than you do.

**PERSEPHONE:** Yeah, well, that's typical.

*(ARTEMIS and ATHENA step out of tableau.)*

**ATHENA:** Now, now, Demeter, it isn't goddess-like to argue with a daughter.

**ARTEMIS:** *(admiringly)* Athena, you are so wise.

**ATHENA:** Thank you, Artemis, but I wish I could hunt as well as you do.

**ARTEMIS:** You're a very good warrior though, Athena.

**ATHENA:** Artemis, you are too kind.

**PERSEPHONE:** OK, if we don't get this thing going, I am like outthere.

**DEMETER:** Persephone, watch your manners, please.

**PERSEPHONE:** You know, Mother, sometimes I think Hades did me a big favor getting me out of your clutches.

**APHRODITE:** (*stepping out of tableau*) Ladies, ladies, ladies, could we please let Koryphaios continue her story? I am already overdue at the salon.

**ARTEMIS:** Always thinking about your looks, Aphrodite! You know there are other things in life more important than...

**KORYPHAIOS:** (*blows whistle and interrupts them all*) Ladies, to your places! Persephone, Artemis, Athena – stage left, go!

(*They do, and pose.*)

Aphrodite, upstage and take Eros with you.

(*They do, and pose.*)

**DEMETER:** What about me?

**KORYPHAIOS:** You're offstage right now. Adios! Au revoir! Buh-bye!

**CHORUS:** Buh-bye! Buh-bye! Buh-bye!

(*DEMETER exits reluctantly.*)

**KORYPHAIOS:** Now, to continue... One morning, after a volcano erupted in Sicily, Hades emerged from the underworld to inspect the damage.

(*HADES enters and poses while CHORUS chants.*)

**CHORUS:** Dark lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.

Grim lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.

BAD lord Hades, ruler of the underworld!

**KORYPHAIOS:** Yes, well, while he was making sure there were no cracks in the earth that would let light down into the underworld, Aphrodite watched him from where she was resting on her flower-strewn hill.

**APHRODITE:** Look Eros, now is my chance to get even the grim Lord Hades under the rule of Love. Let's see, who else do I want to... Ah, I know.

**PERSEPHONE:** (*unfreezing*) Love, who needs that!

**ARTEMIS:** Love is for weaklings!

**ATHENA:** And those who don't have better things to do with their brains.

**APHRODITE:** Go, dear Eros, and shoot one of your golden arrows into the dark lord's heart while Persephone and her friends are in his vicinity.

**EROS:** I hear and obey, dearest mother.

*(EROS shoots his arrow at HADES. HADES sees PERSEPHONE and falls in love with her. PERSEPHONE sees him looking at her, laughs and exits with ARTEMIS and ATHENA. EROS returns to APHRODITE.)*

**APHRODITE:** Oh well done, Eros, very well done!

**EROS:** Thanks, Mom. Anytime at all.

**HADES:** I must have that girl!

**APHRODITE:** *(crossing to HADES)* Hades, yoo hoo!

**HADES:** Aphrodite, it's finally happened. I've found the girl of my dreams. Her name is Persippany. Purs-a-pony. Perzamity?

**APHRODITE:** Persephone.

**HADES:** Yeah, that's it. I don't think she digs me, though.

**APHRODITE:** Why don't you ask Zeus for her hand in marriage?

**HADES:** Zeus - my bro! Great idea!!

*(HADES exits.)*

**EROS:** Oh, Ma, he's got it bad!

*(EROS & APHRODITE high five, then exit.)*

**KORYPHAIOS:** So Hades went to see his brother Zeus, king of the gods.

**CHORUS:** Oh my, he's got it BAD!

*(Enter ZEUS, HERMES and HADES.)*

**ZEUS:** So Hades, my dark and inscrutable brother, grim lord of the dark and mysterious underworld, what brings you up here to Olympus?

**CHORUS:** Dark lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.

Grim lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.

BAD lord Hades, ruler of the underworld!

*(ZEUS gives the CHORUS a look and they freeze.)*

**HADES:** Bro, we gotta talk. I'm in love. I mean, I'm really in love.

*(ZEUS and HERMES look at each other, and shake their head.)*

**ZEUS/HERMES:** Aphrodite.

**HADES:** Aphrodite, tighty-whitey, whatever. I gotta have her.

**ZEUS:** Who is she?

**HADES:** Uh... Persippany. Perzamity? Somethin' like that.

**HERMES:** Persephone?

**HADES:** Yeah, that's her.

**ZEUS:** The daughter of Demeter, goddess of sunlight and flowers and harvest. She'll never agree to send Persephone to the underworld.

**HADES:** C'mon, bro, give me a hand here.

**ZEUS:** Well, you could always kidnap her, I suppose.

**HADES:** Dude! What a radical idea!

**ZEUS:** Come on, we'll help you plan it out.

*(They start to exit.)*

**CHORUS:** Dark lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.

Grim lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.

BAD lord Hades, ruler of the underworld!

*(ZEUS gives the CHORUS a look and they freeze. ZEUS, HERMES and HADES exit.)*

**KORYPHAIOS:** So one spring morning, beautiful Persephone was walking with Artemis and Athena picking flowers.

*(PERSEPHONE, ARTEMIS and ATHENA enter and pick flowers.)*

**CHORUS:** Irises, roses, hyacinths, lilies,

Violets, violets, violets!

Irises, roses, hyacinths, lilies,

Violets, violets, violets!

**PERSEPHONE:** Girls, look at all these beautiful flowers. Irises, roses, hyacinths, lilies and...

**CHORUS:** Violets, violets, violets!

**ARTEMIS:** Enough with the flowers, girls, I'm in the mood for a good hunt.

**ATHENA:** We need to plot out the best strategy.

**ARTEMIS:** Let's go get my dogs.

**KORYPHAIOS:** Persephone wandered farther and farther from her friends.

*(ARTEMIS and ATHENA exit, chatting.)*

**KORYPHAIOS:** Suddenly, the earth in front of Persephone opened and a golden chariot appeared. It was...

**CHORUS:** Dark lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.

Grim lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.

BAD lord Hades, ruler of the underworld!

**PERSEPHONE:** Help!

**HADES:** Ha!

**PERSEPHONE:** Help!

**HADES:** Ha!

**KORYPHAIOS:** Hades seized Persephone ...

*(He does.)*

**PERSEPHONE:** Help!

**HADES:** Ha, ha!

**KORYPHAIOS:** ...And they dashed off in the chariot.

**CHORUS:** Dark lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.

Grim lord Hades, ruler of the underworld.

BAD lord Hades, ruler of the underworld!

**KORYPHAIOS:** As they drove through a lake, a water nymph recognized Persephone.

**NYMPH:** Yo! You with the chariot! Whaddaya doin' with Persephone?

**PERSEPHONE:** He's kidnapping me!

**HADES:** Yeah, what she said.

**NYMPH:** Not a smart idea, bro. Her mother Demeter is not gonna be happy about this. Why don't ya do it the smart way? You know, download love songs on her Twitter feed, sing her praises on Snapchat, woo her mama with a family cell phone plan and some beautiful bling?

*(Beat.)*

*(HADES & PERSEPHONE look at each other.)*

**HADES:** Uh... do you know what the heck she's talkin' about?

**PERSEPHONE:** Haven't got a clue.

**HADES:** Let's go!

**SEVEN MORE PAGES TO THE END OF THE SCRIPT:**

*(Music. All exit except the OWL and the LIZARD.)*

**OWL:** Well, that's all fine for them – the gods.

**LIZARD:** Yeah, they're happy and we pay the price.

**OWL:** Nice tail.

**LIZARD:** Thanks. That's a cool beak, man.



**OWL:** Wanna go look for some rodents?

**LIZARD:** Score.

*(LIZARD and OWL exit.)*

## **Pronunciation Guide**

**Aphrodite** – Ah-fro-DIE-tee

**Eros** – AIR-ohs

**Demeter** – De-MEE-ter

**Persephone** – Per-SEF-uh-nee

**Athena** – Uh-THEE-nuh

**Artemis** – ARE-ti-muss

**Hades** – HAY-deez

**Zeus** – ZOOS

**Abas** – Ah-BAHS

**Metaneira** – Meh-te-NAIR-uh

**Hermes** – HER-meez

**Ascalaphus** – As-CAL-ih-fuss

**Koryphaios** – KUR-uh-fie-ose

**Olympus** – Oh-LIMB-puss

**Eleusis** – ELL-lee-oo-sis

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