

The Dark Path Home

A full-length play

Written by Michael Cochran
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* CASTING NOTE- Every effort should be made to cast the characters as written. However if a theatre is unable to cast diverse actors for Kylie, Bonny, Ben, and Papa alternate lines marked with an * have been provided in an Appendix at the end of the script which allows anyone of any ethnicity to play the roles.

CHARACTERS

Young actors

DANNY- A young teen. Athletic and confident but sometimes it's a brave front. Dressed in modern clothes.

LEXIE- A young teen. More worldly than her peers. Adventurous and unafraid to express emotion. Dressed in modern clothes

KYLIE- A young teenage girl. Black. Loves books, learning and tries to figure out how things work. Dressed in modern clothes. *

JOEY- Lexie's younger sibling. Hesitant and afraid of the unknown. Dressed in modern clothes.

BONNY- A young Black teenage girl. Born in 1940 and dressed in 1950's style. Brave yet cautious. A ghost. *

BEN- About 8-10 years old. Black. Dressed in 1950's style. . Bonny's younger brother. Loyal to his sister and wants to be like his papa. A ghost. *

JASON- Late teens. Danny's older brother who terrorizes him on a constant basis.

Any Age

FOUR FACELESS FIGURES who never speak and help with transportation to and from various parts of the underworld.

Adult actors

CHARON/HADES-These characters can be played by the same actor switching masks or can be played by two actors. Charon is the son of Nyx (Night), whose duty is to ferry the souls of the deceased over the Rivers Styx. Hades is the Greek god of the underworld. Both characters wear Greek tragedy masks.

PAPA - Male 30's-60's. Black. He is a deceased spirit that transforms from light to human form. *

SPHINX/SIREN/ PERSEPHONE- All these characters can be played by the same actor or separate actors. The Siren is female voice and never seen. The Sphinx is seen only in silhouette and shadows. This can be as simple as a woman only or, if you have the ability,

show her other features: wings or her lion body. Persephone is the only actor we can clearly see. She can speak directly but her voice should sound echoey.

The set can be as simple or elaborate as you have the ability to make it. Simple light along with good sound effects, can be as powerful as a full set.

The Orpheum Theatre, a little after midnight. Once upon a time it was an old stage house. It closed down after a fire that killed dozens of people and has sat empty since. The audience seating area can be decorated to feel like an abandoned theatre with cobwebs and suitable decor to add to the atmosphere. On the stage there are a few ropes and set pieces scattered about including a closed trunk, a small boat with metal sides big enough for four people to sit in and an electrical box with several levers. Halfway back on the stage is a large box structure with what appears to be solid sides.. There is a ladder leaning against one side and is sturdy enough to climb and stand on top of the box. There is a single light bulb that illuminates the stage dimmly (the GHOST LIGHT.) Flashlight beams move around in the darkness of the audience and then LEXIE, DANNY, KYLIE, and JOEY enter. The characters can enter through a side exit or some place that is unexpected. Each of them are carrying flashlights. They make their way down an audience aisle towards the stage.

JOEY

This place gives me the creeps. Look at all these empty seats. I bet most of the people who used to sit here are dead by now.

KYLIE

I've seen pictures of people who used to come here all dressed up like some fancy party.

JOEY

People used to dress up to go to see movies?

KYLIE

Not movies, plays. They used to dress up to go to the store, too.

DANNY

Weird. *(Looks around excited.)* Didn't I tell you guys! This is the perfect place to be at midnight on Halloween!

JOEY

The only reason I'm here is because Lexie took that stupid dare and my parents told her she had to watch me while they were out at a party. *(To Lexie.)* Mom and Dad would kill us if they knew we were here.

LEXIE

(To Joey.) Mom and Dad will never know. Right little, brother? *(Looking at the burning light bulb.)* I can't believe this place still has power.

KYLIE

It's a ghost light. The community theatre my mom volunteers at has one. It's so people don't fall off the stage in the dark.

DANNY

(DANNY uses his arms to pretend to float like a ghost.) It's to keep the ghosts company.

They all stare at the audience.

JOEY

Feels like people are looking at us.

LEXIE

I knew this place burned in a fire but it's kinda weird seeing it in person.

DANNY

(Looks at the stage.) Doesn't look like everything burned.

LEXIE

(LEXIE shines a light above the audience's heads.) Look up there at the balcony. That must be where most of the fire burned. It's all black and those big chunks have fallen on those seats back there.

KYLIE

Lots of people died in the fire. The guy who owns the place didn't have enough money to rebuild so it just sat here.

LEXIE

My mom said that some famous singer came through town and looked at buying it to fix up for concerts.

DANNY

That's just rumors from people who don't want to tear it down.

JOEY

I thought the city bought it.

KYLIE

They took it over after the owner died, but nobody has the money to fix it up so it just sits.

LEXIE shines her flashlight straight up to look above the stage.

LEXIE

Whoa! Look up there. There's stuff hanging up there. Lights and big painted drops. What's that above the lights?

JOEY

Looks like some kind of wooden slats.

LEXIE

How cool would it be to go up there and look down here.

DANNY

Look! There are ladder rungs in the wall that go all the way up.

JOEY

Are you crazy? That's probably all rotted by now. We shouldn't even be standing underneath this stuff.

DANNY

(Looking at a row of levers.) Wonder what these were used for?

KYLIE walks to a different part of the stage while DANNY investigates a large console filled with levers.

DANNY

This is so cool. Look at all these levers. Like some old Frankenstein movie. I bet these controlled all the lights. Do you think any of them still work?

KYLIE

The ghost light still works.

DANNY flips a lever and we hear a noise like a set of gears moving above their heads.

JOEY

It looks like one of those pipes above us is moving.

Suddenly shadows of bats fly down from above. ALL SCREAM. We hear the SOUND of BATS everywhere. After a moment DANNY shines his flashlight around and comes to rest on JOEY who is revealed on his knees curled up in ball with his arms protecting his head with his fingers making the sign of a cross to keep away vampires. LEXIE starts to laugh and then DANNY and KYLIE start to laugh as well.

JOEY

It's not funny! Those could have been vampire bats!

LEXIE puts her hands up behind the ghost light and uses her hands to make a shadow puppet of a bird and makes HAWK sounds.

LEXIE

There that should scare away any bats. Vampire or otherwise!

KYLIE

Where did you learn to do that?

LEXIE

The street light outside my bedroom window shines in at night. Its a distraction.

JOEY

When mom and dad fight.

DANNY tries another lever and a spotlight shines on an old trunk.

KYLIE

Look over here.

KYLIE goes over to the large steamer trunk, setting on its end.

It looks like my grandma's old trunk in her attic. Maybe there are costumes inside?

THEY ALL walk over to join KYLIE at the trunk putting down their flashlights.

JOEY

Maybe there are spiders in it!

DANNY

(To Joey.) Scared?

JOEY

No I'm not.

LEXIE

Don't let him get to you, Joey.

KYLIE opens the trunk and begins to investigate. There is a tag hanging from inside the trunk.

KYLIE

Look at this. *(Reading the tag.)* Act Two costumes and props. They're amazing!

KYLIE takes a costume bracelet and puts it on. JOEY detects a strong smell from the trunk.

JOEY

It's smells like my grandma's closet.

KYLIE

That's mothballs. It kept them from falling apart all these years.

DANNY

How do you know all this stuff?

KYLIE

I read books. You should try it some time.

DANNY

I've got better things to do than clutter my brain with old facts.

KYLIE

(Laughs.) You are impossible.

LEXIE

(Exploring the trunk.) You two enjoy taunting each other far too much! Wooo, look at all this wild stuff.

KYLIE pulls out some pages. DANNY pulls out a tunic with a pattern on it which he puts on. LEXIE takes out a Greek robe and slips it over her head.

KYLIE

Hey, look at this. It's a script.

LEXIE

(To Kylie.) How do I look?

KYLIE

Like one of those Greek goddesses.

DANNY

You look like a ghost to me.

LEXIE

(Ghostly moans.) Ohhhhhhhhhhhhh.

JOEY

I don't think we should be messing with any of this stuff.

DANNY

Joey's afraid of ghosts?

JOEY

I'm not afraid of anything!

DANNY

You're afraid of everything.

JOEY

No, I'm not.

DANNY

Oh yeah. *(Points at Joey's shoulder.)* Like that big spider.

JOEY

(Jumping around brushing himself off everywhere.) Get it off! Get it off!

DANNY laughs at JOEY.

KYLIE

(Indicating DANNY.) Don't let him get to you Joey. Everyone's afraid of something.

DANNY

Not me.

LEXIE

What about your brother?

DANNY

(Suddenly defensive.) Who said I was afraid of him?

LEXIE

Every time he comes around you get jumpy.

DANNY

(Getting angry.) No, I don't!

KYLIE

We understand. Your brother's scary. He hangs out with all those creeps from the riverfront. All they do is smoke and steal stuff.

JOEY

You told me he burned your arm with a cigarette just for fun.

DANNY

Can we stop talking about my brother?!

LEXIE & KYLIE

Okay, fine. Sorry.

DANNY grabs a lyre with a carrying strap. HE strums the lyre and it plays a beautiful chord.

LEXIE climbs a ladder built onto the side of the large box and stands on the top to look around while KYLIE is looking at the pages of the script and JOEY tries to read over her shoulder.

JOEY

Let me see. *(Sounding it out.)* Orp-hes.

DANNY

(Laughs.) Sounds like someone throwing up.

KYLIE

I think that's Orpheus.

JOEY

Sounds like Orpheum.

LEXIE

(Stands on the top of the box.) Maybe the theatre was named after that guy.

DANNY slings the lyre over his head so it's now strapped on his back and begins looking at the bank of levers and finds one marked with a sign that reads, "Special Effect."

DANNY

Special Effect. Let's see what this does.

HE moves the lever and suddenly everything goes black and LEXIE screams.

KYLIE

(Screams at DANNY.) What did you do?

DANNY

I just flipped the lever.

KYLIE

Flip it back.

DANNY flips it back and the lights come back on. LEXIE has vanished.

KYLIE
She's gone!

JOEY
I told you! I told you we shouldn't mess with stuff!

KYLIE
(Yelling.) Lexie? Lexie?

LEXIE moans from inside the box. KYLIE stuffs the script into her pocket.

KYLIE
She's inside the box!

KYLIE climbs the ladder to look where LEXIE had been standing.

DANNY
(To Joey.) It's not my fault! How was I supposed to know it would do that?

JOEY
We shouldn't be in here at all!

KYLIE
It looks like some kind of trap door in the top of this box.

JOEY
Don't stand on it!

KYLIE
I'm not stupid.

DANNY
Where did she go?

KYLIE
She must have fallen inside.

DANNY
(Points at the lever.) All I did was flip this lever.

KYLIE
Hand me my flashlight.

DANNY hands KYLIE her flashlight and she climbs the ladder on the platform and inspects the top.

Flip the lever again and let's see if the top opens.

DANNY

Ok. I'm flipping it. *(He does.)*

The lights go back out again. KYLIE's light shines into the top of the open trap door.

KYLIE

(Describing.) The top opened!

DANNY flips the lever back on and the lights come up again.

KYLIE

Now it's closed again. We need to find something to wedge it open.

JOEY and DANNY search around until DANNY finds the paddle for the boat. He hands it to KYLIE and she tries her best to wedge it open again.

DANNY

(Starts to climb the box.) Let me try.

KYLIE

No wait! Go back to the lever. When I say, "Now!" you flip that lever again and I'll jam this paddle in to keep it open.

DANNY

Okay.

KYLIE

Ready? Now!

DANNY flips the switch and KYLIE jams the board into the trap door.

Got it.

DANNY flips the lever back and the lights come back on.

(Looks down.) I see her!

KYLIE

We need to get her out.

KYLIE climbs into the trap and goes out of sight.

JOEY

Is she okay?

KYLIE

(From inside the box.) I can't tell. *(Pauses.)* It looks like there's a handle on the wall inside here that opens the box.

The face of the box opens up a little.

It won't open all the way. Try pulling it from your side.

DANNY and JOEY go and pull on the panels to open them revealing KYLIE with LEXIE lying on the floor.

KYLIE

(Bending over LEXIE.) She's still breathing.

JOEY

Ahhh. I cut my hand on the wall. The blood keeps oozing out.

DANNY grabs a piece of fabric from the floor inside the box and hands it to JOEY.

DANNY

Here. Wrap your hand in this.

KYLIE

(Bending over LEXIE and gently touching her shoulder.) Lexie? Lexie, wake up.

JOEY

It's filthy!

DANNY

Okay, then bleed to death. Your choice. *(To Kylie.)* Is she okay?

JOEY takes the fabric and wraps his hand.

KYLIE

(Spots blood.) There's a little bit of blood on the back of her head. She must have hit her head on something when she fell.

JOEY

We're all going to die if we don't get out of here.

KYLIE

We have got to get some help! Call 911!

DANNY and JOEY take out their cell phones.

DANNY

There's no service in here.

KYLIE

Go! I'll stay with Lexie while you get help.

DANNY and JOEY run down the audience aisle.

JOEY (O.S.)

The door won't open!

DANNY

It's wedged shut!

DANNY and JOEY return.

DANNY

It won't open. We've got to find another way out.

The lights suddenly go out and there is a strange SOUND of something scraping.

JOEY

What happened to the lights?

KYLIE

What was that sound?

DANNY turns on his flashlight and goes to the bank of levers.

DANNY

I don't know. Let me see if I can get them back on.

JOEY

Don't flip any more...

DANNY flips the lever and the lights come back on but start a rhythm of fading up and then fading down to blackness.

KYLIE

Stop messing with the lights!

DANNY

I'm not touching anything. Something else is controlling them.

KYLIE

(Points.) Look. I think there's a door over there.

JOEY

(Moving to the door.) There's no door knob.

JOEY bangs on the door.

Help! Somebody help us!

DANNY

(Banging his flashlight with his hand.) Why won't this flashlight work?

KYLIE

Mine doesn't work either!

JOEY

I'm scared!

During a dark moment BONNY and BEN move into place against the inside wall of the box. They are dressed in similar colors to the wall they stand in front of. The lights come back up.

JOEY

Can you flip the switch to make them stay on?

DANNY

You told me not to flip anymore switches! *(He tries the lever again.)* It doesn't seem to do anything now.

KYLIE

We need to find a way to get that door open. Try that paddle!

DANNY and JOEY try the paddle but it won't budge.

DANNY

It won't budge! Look for something else.

KYLIE looks around as the lights go out again. then discovers LEXIE's gone.

Where did Lexie go?

DANNY

She was right there just a second ago!

The lights go back out again.

JOEY

Lexie! Lexie!

KYLIE

She's got to be here somewhere!

DANNY and KYLIE'S flashlights comes on in their hands. They begin to search the room calling out for Lexie. DANNY points his flashlight at the inside wall of the box and suddenly sees BONNY and BEN standing there.

DANNY

Guys?

KYLIE

What?

DANNY

Look!

JOEY

What?

Their flashlights go dark again and the two children disappear.

I wish it would stop getting dark.

The lights come back on.

DANNY

Where did they go?

KYLIE

Who?

DANNY

There were two kids standing by the wall just now.

JOEY

Me and Kylie?

DANNY

No. There were two kids against the wall.

KYLIE

Stop playing around and look for a way out.

The lights fade again to complete darkness. In the darkness we hear LEXIE.

LEXIE (O.S.)

Let me go.

DANNY

Did you hear that?

Lights slowly fade back on.

JOEY

Can you make the lights stop doing that?

DANNY

I don't know how. There has to be some other door or some way out of here.

Lights slowly fade back out.

KYLIE

Use your flashlight.

DANNY tries the flashlight but it doesn't work.

DANNY

It's doesn't work again!

The lights fade back on again. KYLIE moves to DANNY. JOEY stays by the wall.

KYLIE

(To DANNY.) We need to find Lexie.

The lights fade back out and the two ghost children get in place standing on either side of JOEY.

JOEY

I wish we never came here!

KYLIE

Hurry up, Danny!

DANNY

(He is hitting the light with his hand.) I'm trying, I'm trying.

Lights go back out. During this time the two ghost children disappear along with JOEY.

JOEY

Something's got my arm.....

JOEY's voice is cut off mid-word as he disappears.

KYLIE

Joey?

Light fades back up again as DANNY hits his flashlight and gets it to come back on.

DANNY

Okay, now it works.

DANNY turns and sees an empty wall.

Where did Joey go?

KYLIE

Joey! Joey!?! Joey!

DANNY and KYLIE search the wall.

Why did you let him disappear?

KYLIE

I didn't let him do anything!

DANNY

He was standing right next to you.

KYLIE

If you hadn't dared us to come here none of this would have happened!

DANNY

We need to stop arguing and find them. Let's stick together. Here. Grab my hand.

They grab hands. They each start to head to opposite sides of the room and are yanked back.

DANNY

Stop pulling!

KYLIE

This is stupid.

KYLIE lets go of DANNY'S hand.

DANNY

Okay. But we have to keep talking so we stay connected.

KYLIE

Joey was talking and then he wasn't here.

DANNY looks around the room but sees no other doors.

DANNY

It's no use.

KYLE

What are we going to do?

DANNY

There has got to be some kind of secret door. Lexie and Joey couldn't have just disappeared.

The SCRAPING SOUND is heard again of the metal part of a boat scraping against rocks.

KYLIE

Did you hear that?

DANNY

Keep searching!

KYLIE and DANNY start feeling along the walls as the lights dim again. When the lights fade back up again the two ghost children have appeared again. The lights continue to fadeup and down during the next dialogue.

KYLIE

I really hate when these lights go out. Bad things always seem to...

KYLIE spots the two children while DANNY'S back is turned away.

Danny! Look!

DANNY

(He turns around.) Those are the kids I saw!

BONNY

You have to come with us.

BEN

Before he comes.

DANNY

Who are you?

BONNY

Hurry!

Where are Lexie and Joey? KYLIE

They're safe. BEN

Safe from what? DANNY

Safe from the scary man. BEN

Scary man? KYLIE

The one who took everyone away. BONNY

Away? DANNY

(Scared.) We have to go! BEN

(To Bonny.) Who did he take? KYLIE

People from the fire. BONNY

The fire? DANNY

We hid so he couldn't find us. BEN

You've been here since the fire? KYLIE

That's not possible. DANNY

DANNY pulls KYLIE aside.

Are we talking to....ghosts? DANNY

KYLIE

Look at how they're dressed. They must have died in the fire.

Metallic sound is closer.

BEN

(Urgent and scared.) We need to go before he shows up!

KYLIE

We want our friends back.

DANNY

Bring them back.

BONNY

Are you sure?

DANNY

Just bring our friends back now!

The SCRAPING METALLIC SOUND is heard louder which startles them. Suddenly the lights begin to swirl and go out. In the darkness JOEY and LEXIE return. JOEY is wrapping a piece of the cloth around LEXIE'S head.

LEXIE

Ow, that's too tight.

JOEY

It needs to have pressure to stop the bleeding.

LEXIE

(Looking at DANNY and KYLIE.) What's going on?

DANNY

(To Ben.) How did you do that?

KYLIE

You were gone and now you're back.

BEN

I don't hear him.

Who? What's going on? LEXIE

We have to find a way out. DANNY

You can't leave. BONNY

Why? KYLIE

He won't let us escape. BONNY

What? JOEY

Who are you? DANNY

I'm Bonny, this is my brother, Ben. BONNY

Where did you come from? LEXIE

(Pointing to the balcony.) Up there. BEN

The balcony? JOEY

When the fire happened most of the people couldn't get out. BONNY

My papa dropped us down as far as he could and we jumped the rest of the way. Papa told us to wait for him, and he went back to get our mama. Then part of the ceiling fell and we couldn't see them anymore. BEN

Everyone was running and screaming. BONNY

BEN

**(Optional Line available).*

We'd never been in this part before.

KYLIE

This part?

BONNY

**(Optional line available.)*

The Whites Only part. We were scared. The next thing we knew the man from the play appeared.

BEN

Then he started taking people.

LEXIE

What people?

BEN

The screaming people.

JOEY

Who took them? A fireman?

BEN

No, the scary man.

DANNY

What did he look like?

BONNY

Like the man in the play.

KYLIE

(Grabs the script from her pocket.) The script, Orpheus!

BEN

You're wearing his robe.

They suddenly remember the costumes they are wearing from the trunk.

BONNY

And carrying his lyre.

JOEY

His what?

BONNY

(To Joey.) It's like a harp.

KYLIE

(She looks at the script.) This script must have been the play they were doing when the fire happened.

JOEY

(To Bonny and Ben.) So how come you never left?

BEN

Every time we tried, we couldn't get out.

*The SCRAPING SOUND is heard again.
Everyone reacts.*

DANNY

(Stepping towards the sound.) It sounds like it's coming from this direction.

BONNY

We can't stay!

The lights go out and BONNY and BEN have disappeared when the lights come back on.

JOEY

They're gone again.

DANNY

We gotta get out here! Come on!

DANNY moves toward a door. As it opens there is a blinding light and standing there is a shadow figure of CHARON. There is a LOUD METALLIC SOUND coming from him. ALL THE KIDS SCREAM and drop their flashlights. CHARON is wearing a Greek mask that distorts his features.

DANNY

(Backing away.) What? Who are you?

CHARON'S VOICE

I am Charon. *(Pronounced Kye-ron.)* I'm here for you.

JOEY

For us?

CHARON'S VOICE

It is time.

LEXIE

Time for what?

CHARON'S VOICE

Those who are called will come.

KYLIE

We haven't been called.

CHARON'S VOICE

(Pointing at LEXIE and JOEY.) You both bleed. You will come.

DANNY

No! Wait!

CHARON'S VOICE

It is not your time, Orpheus.

CHARON moves his hand and the lights suddenly turn green. Entranced LEXIE and JOEY move toward CHARON as if pulled by a magnetic force. The others try to move but are unable.

KYLIE

I can't move.

DANNY

No! You can't take them!

LEXIE and JOEY exit and CHARON turns and closes the door blocking their path as he exits. The lights return to normal. DANNY and KYLIE run to the door but cannot open it. If there is no door they are stopped by some force.

DANNY

No! Come back!

DANNY and KYLIE pound on the door or yell to no avail.

No!

THEY slump on the floor.

KYLIE

(Trying to remember.) What did he call you...

DANNY

What?

KYLIE

He looked at you and called you something?

DANNY

Orpheus.

KYLIE looks at the script.

KYLIE

Wait a minute. *(Searches pages.)* Yes. *(Reading.)* Orpheus, a musician, who played beautiful music. Charon, the boatman, who takes the dead across the river Styx to the underworld.

DANNY

Takes the dead? But Lexie and Joey aren't dead.

KYLIE

He said something about blood and then he took them.

DANNY

But they aren't dead!

KYLIE

These pages say Orpheus was so overcome with grief over the loss of his wife Eurydice *(pronounced Ur-RID-eh-see)* that he convinced Charon to take him to the throne of Hades to plead for her life. Lexie was wearing Eurydice's costume.

DANNY

Hades? You mean hell?

KYLIE

No. Hades was the ruler of the underworld. In Greek mythology, it's where the dead go after life.

DANNY

Are you telling me that some random Greek guy has kidnapped Lexie and Joey?

KYLIE

Not a random guy. A character from the play! *(Suddenly hit by a thought.)* Wait! What if...

DANNY

If...

KYLIE

What if the fire brought the real Charon not only to get Eurydice but the people who also died in the fires?

DANNY

Who?

The lights fade out and back up as BONNY and BEN reappear.

BEN

Is he gone?

KYLIE

He took our friends.

BONNY

I'm sorry.

DANNY

Bonny what happened in the play before the fire?

BONNY

Charon-

BEN

-the scary man-

BONNY

-took the dead lady away in a boat.

BEN

(Pointing at it.) They got into that boat. Suddenly there was a big flame from one of the lights in the balcony

BONNY

-then the drapes on the exit up there caught on fire-

BEN

-at first we thought it was part of the play-

BONNY

-but then people started screaming and running and -

DANNY

What has this got to do with Lexie and Joey? They had nothing to do with the play or the fire that happened.

KYLIE

No. But what if in some weird way the play never got to finish and...it's still going on.

DANNY

Still going on? That's crazy!

KYLIE

(Points at Bonnie and Ben.) They said he kept looking for them.

KYLIE searches the script and finds the page.

It says here that Orpheus asked Charon to take him to the land of the dead to rescue Eurydice.

DANNY

So this guy comes back looking for dead...

KYLIE and DANNY look at BONNIE and BEN.

BONNY

We're not dead. We can't be.

KYLIE

(To Bonnie.) How long have you been here?

She doesn't answer.

BEN

We're waiting for our papa to come get us.

BONNY

He told us to wait here for him and he would come get us.

KYLIE

What if your papa couldn't come get you? What if...Charon was sent to take you to your papa.

BEN

(Begins to cry.) I don't want him to take me. I want Papa.

KYLIE

(Looking at the script.) Orpheus needs to ask Charon to take him to Hades to see Eurydice. *(To Danny.)* You need to ask him.

DANNY

Me?

KYLIE

And we need Bonny and Ben to help us.

BEN

No! I don't want him to come back.

BEN starts to shrink back scared.

DANNY

(To Ben.) We need you to help us find our friends.

BEN starts to whimper.

DANNY

(To Ben.) You want to know a secret?

BEN

What?

DANNY

Whenever I get scared of someone, I make myself angry so it feels like I have a suit of armor around me that doesn't let the scary thoughts in.

KYLIE

(To Bonny.) We have to go.

BEN

But isn't that where bad people go?

KYLIE

Hades is a person. Maybe when your papa told you to wait for him he meant to wait someplace else. (*Looks around.*) Some place better than a locked-up, cold, dark old theatre.

BONNY

You really think that's true?

DANNY

It's been a long time since the fire. Maybe Kylie is right. Maybe he's waiting for you some place else.

BONNY

But we tried to get out and we couldn't. Why couldn't we get the doors to open?

KYLIE

I don't know. (*Looks around and stops when her eyes rest on the boat.*) Maybe because you have to leave the way they did in the play. By boat.

DANNY

Boat?

KYLIE

If I remember right, we have to cross the river Styx.

DANNY

Why do you need a boat if the river's made of sticks?

KYLIE

S-t-y-x. It's the river's name.

DANNY

Oh. (*Looks around.*) But there's no water here.

BEN

If the play is still going, then we have to travel like they did.

DANNY

How?

BEN

We have to pretend.

KYLIE

Yeah. Let's just get in the boat and see what happens.

DANNY starts to take off his costume robe and the lyre.

KYLIE

NO!

DANNY

What?

KYLIE

If we are part of the play you need to keep that stuff on. You need to be Orpheus.

DANNY

(Sarcastic.) Terrific.

KYLIE and DANNY drag the boat from the side of the stage and place it center. They get in the boat. BONNY starts to get into the boat but BEN hesitates. BONNY takes his hand and they get in. Everyone is seated.

DANNY

Now what happens?

KYLIE

I guess we wait.

THEY all wait. They all look around scared.

DANNY

This feels stupid.

BONNY

Are you sure the boat will ferry us?

KYLIE

(Thinks for a minute then stand and shouts.) The fare!

Everyone is startled.

DANNY
Don't do that!

KYLIE
I just remembered!

KYLIE hops out of the boat and runs to the prop trunk. She grabs some coins.

We have to have drachma for the fare to cross the river.

KYLIE gets back in the boat and sits. Everyone waits looking around scared. After few moments.

BONNY
Nothing is happening.

KYLIE
I don't get it.

BEN
Maybe you have to throw the money into the river.

DANNY
Wait we forgot our flash-

Just as DANNY says his part KYLIE throws the drachmas onto the stage. Suddenly the lighting changes and the stage is filled with OTHER WORLDLY SOUNDS. The stage has transformed into a river. The prop trunk and other stage pieces are removed by a group of four actors all dressed in black with black face coverings. The shadowy figure CHARON appears in a mystical way.

CHARON'S VOICE
You have paid for passage. Do you wish to continue?

DANNY
We want...

KYLIE
(Softly to Danny.) To see Eurydice.

DANNY

(To Charon.) To see Eurydice.

CHARON'S VOICE

There is no turning back.

Sound and light create the sense of movement as the faceless figures move the boat about the stage. Actors synchronize movement from side to side as if they are in the rapids. Eventually, the boat comes to a rest as the faceless figures disappear. The lights take on an eerie glow.

DANNY

Are we here?

KYLIE

I guess so.

They slowly get out of the boat and KYLIE and DANNY push it back off to the side.

BONNY

So what do we do now?

CHARON'S VOICE

Follow the path.

They all look around.

BEN

What path?

The lights come up on a part of the stage and they move towards it. They then start a journey single file that leads them around the stage and through the audience. They become aware of the audience as if they are souls, floating.

KYLIE

(Looking at audience.) Do you see them?

DANNY

They look like little floating lights.

KYLIE

They must be the souls of the people who got lost on the path and never made it.

DANNY

Maybe they're the audience that died watching the play and never got to see the end.

BEN

They look strange.

BONNY

I hope I never end up like that.

DANNY and KYLIE look at each other.

DANNY

Yeah, let's hope not.

BEN

Do you think all of these people were bad so they didn't go to heaven?

KYLIE

No, I think they just got stuck in the middle.

A small light appears on the stage.

BONNY

Look at that light.

The light grows into a pool of light and begins to pulse brighter and dimmer. A voice is suddenly heard, softly at first but gets louder.

PAPA

Bonny?

The light goes out and when it comes back on an older Man steps into the light.

PAPA

Bonny, honey? It's me.

BONNY

Papa?

PAPA

Yes, baby. It's me.

BEN

(Runs to him.) Papa?

PAPA

My little man? Ben?

BONNY

It's us, Papa. We're here to find you. We waited for you to come but you never came back.

PAPA

I tried. Charon took me over the river and then I couldn't get back to you.

BEN

Papa, we missed you so much! We were so scared.

PAPA

You were very brave. Who are these others?

BEN

Danny and Kylie. We met them at the theatre.

PAPA

Did they die in the fire?

KYLIE

No, we broke in.

PAPA

Why are you dressed so strangely?

KYLIE

Because... we're from another time.

DANNY

(To PAPA.) Do you know where our friends Lexie and Joey are?

PAPA

Some young people came through here with Charon and he took them to see Hades.

KYLIE

We need to find them.

The light begins to pulse again. BEN and BONNY are unable to hang on to him and forced away from him.

BONNY

What's happening?

PAPA

I'm being pulled away. I can't appear in human form for very long.

BEN

(Begins to cry.) Don't go, Papa!

PAPA

I'm too weak. I'll need to rest up, and then I'll come back for you when I'm stronger.

BEN

No! Don't leave us again!

BONNY

No, Papa!

The light goes out and PAPA is gone. BONNY and BEN both are in tears and grab onto each other.

KYLIE

(To Bonny and Ben.) He said he would come back when he was stronger. He's waited for you this long, I'm sure he'll keep his promise.

KYLIE steps away to give BONNY and BEN some space.

DANNY

(Quietly to Kylie.) How are we supposed to find Lexie and Joey?

KYLIE

We need to find Hades. If we can find him then...*(To Bonny and Ben.)* maybe we can find your father again.

They all start to walk. We hear the sound of unidentified WHISPERS.

DANNY

Do you hear that?

KYLIE

Yes. It gives me the creeps.

DANNY

Let's go.

They begin to travel around the stage.

KYLIE

(Looking at the script.) According to the script the underworld is set up like a maze.

BONNY

What if we get lost?

DANNY

Then we find our way back to the start and begin again.

As they walk fog begins to fill the stage. DANNY, KYLIE, BONNY and BEN are engulfed by the fog. Eerie sounds come from different parts of the theatre. The sound of scurrying animal feet, heavy breathing from some large beast, the sound of chains being dragged. The lights on the stage change colors with sinister shadows to go with the sounds. If possible the actors voices should have an echo so it sounds like they are in a big cave.

BEN

Maybe we should go back to the shore were Papa was?

BONNY

(Losing him in the fog.) Ben? Grab my hand!

KYLIE

Danny? I can't see you.

DANNY

I'm here!

A glow appears in the fog and a shadowy figure appears. Its voice seems to come from nowhere and everywhere.

The figure is wearing a king's Greek tragedy mask that obscures part of his face. The voice should have an other worldly quality.

HADES

What living souls dare to enter my kingdom!

KYLIE, DANNY, BONNY and BEN all suddenly find each other and gather together as HADES confronts them.

HADES

Speak! Before I cast you into the flames of eternal agony!

DANNY

Hades?

HADES

Orpheus. I see you have come to rescue your beloved.

DANNY

My beloved?

HADES VOICE

(Roars with laughter.) Do you think I am someone to be trifled with? *(Suddenly serious.)* You are either very brave or very foolish. Eurydice is now part of my world and unless you have some greater gift than your life, you have wasted your own life and those of the others with you on a frivolous pursuit.

DANNY

Eurydice...yes, and our friends.

HADES

Silence! Your request is denied. All of you shall perish here.

BEN hides behind BONNY.

BONNY

Denied?

HADES

(To Bonny.) You, girl. You wasted all these years in vain? Go and seek out the other lost souls where you belong. Now away with you all.

DANNY

We are not going anywhere without our friends.

HADES

We are at an end. *(Turns to go.)*

Fog starts to fill the stage again.

DANNY

I'll do whatever it takes.

HADES

(Turning back.) Whatever it takes. Whatever it takes? *(Laughs.)* You amuse me, Orpheus. I am in need of amusement. Very well, if you can find your way through the maze, get past the Sphinx and my guardians, then I will consider your plea.

DANNY

The Sphinx? What is that?

HADES

The Sphinx a delightful creature. She has the body of a lion. The wings of a bird and the face of a woman.

KYLIE

How do we find this Sphinx?

HADES

She will find you if you are foolish enough to continue. But my patience has a limit. Before dawn you must return to the land of the living or your request is denied..

The figure, lights and the voice disappear into the fog.

BONNY

I don't like this.

BEN

Maybe we should just go back and search for Papa and take him back in the boat.

KYLIE

Charon said there was no return.

BONNY

What do we do now?

DANNY
We need to find the Sphinx.

He begins to search the stage.

KYLIE
What are you looking for?

DANNY
An entrance to the maze and maybe some kind of weapon.

BEN
Here's a stick.

DANNY
Good work!

KYLIE
What now?

The sound of wind blowing.

DANNY
(Stops and puts his hand up.) Do you feel that? It feels like a wind coming from this direction. That could be where the maze starts.

They begin to walk single file in a line in a pattern across the stage. The lighting limits their vision of what they can see to just a pool of light where they walk. The FOUR FACELESS FIGURES now accompany them and are always present at the edges of what is happening or actively manipulating wall like panels that can stand up tall, lay on their sides or create barriers that have to be crawled under or climbed over. After DANNY, KYLIE, BONNY, and BEN have walked for a few moments they come to the first obstacle created by the FOUR figures. They wriggle on their backs under the low obstacle one-by-one and then get back on their feet.

KYLIE
(Going under first.) It's getting hotter.

DANNY

What does that mean?

KYLIE

It means we are getting closer to the center of the earth.

DANNY

(Going under next.) What?

KYLIE

Didn't you pay any attention in science when we studied the earth's core.

DANNY

I never thought I would actually need to know any of that stuff.

KYLIE

In Greek mythology, the monsters usually come from under the earth. The hero has to confront them to slay them.

BEN goes under next.

DANNY

What if I don't want to be the hero?

KYLIE

It's not just you, stupid! All of us. We're the hero.

DANNY

All I know about heroes is from comic books and no one here looks like a hero. We've got me, a girl with her nose in books all the time, a couple of ghost kids.

BONNY is now crawling under the obstacle.

BONNY

(Her foot gets wedged.) I'm stuck.

*DANNY reaches down and tries to help her.
BONNY hesitates.*

DANNY

Your foot is caught.

BONNY pulls away from DANNY as he tries to help her only making it worse.

Something changes in DANNY's character as if he is repeating something that was said to him in anger.

Stop Squirming! You're just making it worse!

BONNY

(Pulls back away from him.) No... don't ... (She tries in vain to get unstuck.)

KYLIE

(Touching Danny's shoulder.) Danny! Danny!

DANNY looks at KYLIE and suddenly changes back to his normal self.

DANNY

(To Bonny.) I'm sorry.

DANNY steps away.

KYLIE

(To Bonny.) It's okay.

DANNY backs away. KYLIE kneels next to BONNY so only she can hear.

KYLIE

(To Bonny.) Danny won't hurt you.

BONNY

But he's... white (* Alternate lines in Appendix A).

KYLIE

I trust him. You can trust him.

BONNY looks at KYLIE for a moment and then nods her head. KYLIE smiles at her. BONNY looks to DANNY.

BONNY

(To Danny.) Would you help me?

DANNY gets down and helps gently get BONNY's foot unstuck and she crawls out.

BONNY

Thank you.

DANNY

No big deal. I would've thought a ghos...(Kylie clears her throat stopping him from saying ghost.) I mean.. I wouldn't think you could get your foot stuck.

DANNY goes over and sits down as BONNY re-ties her shoe lace. One of the FACELESS FIGURES exits.

BONNY

Kylie? Are we really ghosts?

KYLIE

I don't know. I've never seen a ghost before.

BONNY

(Looks at Kylie.) You're different.

KYLIE

Different how?

BONNY

I've never known a girl like you.

KYLIE

How do you mean?

BONNY

You keep telling Danny what to do and he's white. We weren't allowed to tell white people to do anything. My papa told me that white boys were just trouble and we should stay far away from them. (**Alternate lines Appendix A*)

KYLIE

Danny's not trouble. He's just dumb sometimes.

DANNY

Hey, wait a minute!

KYLIE

(To Danny.) I mean face it. We wouldn't be here if you hadn't dared us all to come to the theatre tonight. Lexie and Joey wouldn't be gone if you hadn't pulled that lever to make her fall down the trap door.

BONNY

We would still be waiting in the theatre if you hadn't come.

DANNY

See! *(To Kylie.)* Not everything I do is dumb! Going to the theatre was a smart idea.

*(*Alternate lines for page 44 and 45 in Appendix A)*

BONNY

I used to beg my papa to take us to the theatre. When the lights went down the color of my skin didn't matter. I would watch all those stories and I could be anyone: a king or a queen or fall in love with whoever I wanted.

BEN

When the plays were over, Bonny would get sad.

BONNY

We had to go back to following all the rules again. Papa would get angry when I asked him about it. Sometimes I think he was scared, too.

BEN

Danny said he gets angry when he gets scared.

DANNY

That's different.

BEN

Why?

DANNY

Because if I get angry then it doesn't hurt as much.

BONNY

We weren't allowed to get angry or fight back.

KYLIE

Lots of things have changed since you... since the fire. Martin Luther King did a thing called civil rights.

He got people to protest and integrate. They're not allowed to separate people by skin color anymore. We don't have colored balconies. Everybody goes to the same schools now. And we don't say colored anymore. "Black." And Black people are supposed to have the same rights as everybody else.

BONNY

What do you mean by rights?

DANNY

Like jobs and voting. We had a Black President.

BEN

President of what?

KYLIE

America. Barack Obama. You would have liked his wife, Michelle. She's cool. They had two daughters who lived in the White House with them.

BONNY

What a strange name (*Sounding it out.*) Obama. Truman was President when the fire happened. I would like to see the world you live in. A world with a Black President. It sounds wonderful.

DANNY

There are still lots of things that aren't so wonderful.

BONNY

Do most (*Saying the word as if its new term.*) "Black" people...have... white friends now?

KYLIE

Some do. Some don't. Some people still don't like black or brown people because the color of our skin. My momma says those people need to hate someone who looks different so they can blame their troubles on them.

A circle of light appears in the middle of the stage.

BEN

(*Seeing the circle and pointing.*) What's that?

DANNY

I don't know.

EVERYONE approaches it cautiously and steps inside the ring. The lights on the rest of the stage begin to narrow down towards the center.

BONNY

What's going on?

KYLIE

I don't know.

KYLIE steps out of the light and suddenly can't breathe.

KYLIE

It's like all the air is gone outside of the light.

*She steps back into the light. DANNY steps outside it and has the same effect. The pool of light continues to shrink. Everyone starts backing up towards the center of the circle. A silhouette of a lion like woman with wings appears in the darkness. (*See character notes about Sphinx.) We cannot see her face.*

SPHINX

Do you wish to enter?

DANNY

Enter?

SPHINX

To resume your journey. You must answer before the circle is extinguished.

The pool of light continues to slowly shrink.

KYLIE

Answer?

SPHINX

There is a house. One enters it blind and comes out seeing. What is it?

DANNY

I don't get it? A house?

BONNY

It's a riddle.

KYLIE

...enters it blind and comes out seeing..

BEN

Hurry! It's getting smaller.

The circle continues to close as they all continue to back up towards each other in the center.

DANNY

An eye doctor!

SPHINX

That is incorrect. You have two chances left.

DANNY

A dark room?

SPHINX

That is incorrect. You have one chance left.

The circle is now very small and all of them are back to back inside it.

KYLIE

Stop shouting out stuff ! You're wasting our chances!

DANNY

(Shouting.) I don't hear you coming up with any answers.

BEN

(To Bonny.) I don't want to die again.

BONNY

We have to stay calm and think. Think. Panic won't do us any good. Wait. It's a school!

The lights suddenly expands and the circle is gone.

SPHINX

Continue your journey.

The silhouetted figure exits as the lights fade away from her. The kids all take deep breaths of air.

KYLIE

(To Bonny.) How did you know to do that?

BONNY

What?

KYLIE

Stay calm when we were all panicking?

BONNY

I've never been able to do it before. My papa used to tell me that staying calm when everything around was trying to frighten me was the key to survive.

DANNY

How did you know the answer to the riddle?

BEN

Mama loved riddles. She use to ask us riddles all the time.

DANNY

Let's get moving.

They all begin to walk in a single file.

Suddenly three sets of glowing eyes appear in front of them. The three faceless black figures help manipulate a giant, three-headed puppet beast. It lunges and roars.

DANNY

Look out!

DANNY takes the stick he has been carrying and holds it out in front of him.

DANNY

(Yelling at the creature.) Stay back!

DANNY thrusts his stick at the monster. It dodges the stick and tries to attack him with its three heads.

KYLIE

Don't let it bite you!

DANNY

I'm trying not to.

They battle back and forth. DANNY makes a lunge at the BEAST and misses which allows the monster to move towards him and fling him to the side. DANNY cries out in pain.

DANNY gets back up and continues to distract the BEAST.

I'll distract it and then you all run.

The SCRIPT falls out of KYLIE's pocket. The BEAST lunges at DANNY and he falls to the ground but recovers.

KYLIE

(To herself.) There has got to be something in this script that can help us.

KYLIE flips through the pages quickly as DANNY continues to battle The BEAST.

DANNY

Stop reading the stupid papers and help me!

Just as DANNY is about to lose the battle. KYLIE finds what she is looking for.

KYLIE

It's the lyre Danny! Use the lyre!

THE BEAST prepares to lunge at DANNY again, he narrowly avoids it but is knocked to the ground. The BEAST lunges at DANNY again as he tries to shield himself with the lyre. It knocks DANNY to the ground.

DANNY

That's no help! It won't protect us!

KYLIE

I'm telling you the lyre is the key to beat it.

DANNY

(Sarcastic.) You want me to play it a song?

KYLIE

(Realizing that's the answer.) Yes! Play it!

DANNY

Play what?

KYLIE

The harp! Play it!

DANNY

I'm not/

KYLIE

/Just do it!

DANNY strums the lyre. The BEAST looks up and around as if confused for a moment. DANNY continues to play the lyre. The BEAST slowly lowers its head and backs away out of sight. From this point on there are only two FACELESS FIGURES manipulating the wall panels.

BONNY

It worked! Your music made it go away!

DANNY

(To Kylie.) How did you know it would do that?

KYLIE

I read the script. Everyone always teases me about reading my dumb books. But they're not dumb and I'm not dumb. I'm smart.

LEXIE (O.S.)
Kylie? Danny?

DANNY
That's Lexie's voice! We're over here.

JOEY runs on.

JOEY
I thought we were lost forever!

LEXIE runs to Kylie and they hug.

LEXIE
I can't believe you found us.

DANNY sinks to the ground in pain and exhaustion. KYLIE goes to him.

KYLIE
Are you hurt?

DANNY
I'm okay.

KYLIE
That thing almost killed you. Did it bite you? Let me see.

KYLIE lifts the back of DANNY'S shirt before he can stop her and the others sees black and blue bruises all over his back.

Oh, my god. Your back...

DANNY
(Quickly pulling his shirt down.) I'm fine.

LEXIE
You don't look fine.

DANNY
I said I'm fine. *(Standing up.)* It's nothing.

LEXIE
Those bruises look old. Did your brother do that to you?

DANNY
I said I was fine. Let it go.

KYLIE
Okay.

JOEY
Where have you been all this time?

KYLIE
We finally figured out how to get Charon to take us from the theatre to the underworld.

BEN
We met my papa on the shore but he couldn't stay with us and told us he needed to get stronger.

DANNY
Then we met Hades and he told us to go home.

KYLIE
But Danny refused.

BONNY
Then we solved the riddle of the Sphinx.

KYLIE
And ended up here.

JOEY
So mostly walking around in the dark.

DANNY
Yeah, something like that.

KYLIE
(To LEXIE.) Are you okay?

LEXIE
I'm all right. I've got a killer headache right now. I can't believe you found us.

DANNY
We couldn't just leave you.

JOEY
I hate this darkness.

LEXIE

I'm with you on that, little brother.

DANNY

Let's see if we can find our way back.

They all begin to walk to try to retrace their steps. The two FACELESS FIGURES create obstacles with the panels. As they clear a tight spot. A SIREN sings softly at first, then her volume increases. There are no words, just a lilting melody.

JOEY

What is that voice? It sounds like singing.

LEXIE

I don't feel good about this.

JOEY

Me neither.

KYLIE

The sound is so beautiful.

KYLIE, DANNY, BONNY, and BEN sit down.

KYLIE

It feels so peaceful.

DANNY

It makes me sleepy.

LEXIE takes the rag which is wrapped around her head and pulls it down over her ears while covering her ears with her hands. All except LEXIE slowly start to lay down and close their eyes.

BONNY

I think we should just take a little nap for a while and then we can find the way out later.

BEN

(Yawns.) I just want to take a nap.

LEXIE

We need to block out the sound. Joey put your fingers in your ears.

JOEY

Why?

LEXIE

Just do as a I say.

JOEY's stuffs his fingers in his ears. Suddenly a RUSTLING SOUND is heard along with the singing.

JOEY

I can't hear.

From above wispy nets fall like giant spiderwebs hanging through the space. (If this is not possible then the two faceless beings can manipulate fabric for the same effect.) The lighting makes them appear to be moving, slightly.

LEXIE

Look up *(Pointing at the spiderwebs.)* Spiders. There must be thousands of them all running this way.

The lighting makes it appear that little moving objects are all crawling down and even, if possible, towards the audience or all around the theatre.

LEXIE and JOEY pull on the others but they won't budge. Fog begins to fill the stage and the TWO FACELESS FIGURES from earlier creep out of the corners of the stage and begin to cover BONNY, BEN, KYLIE, and DANNY in gauzy fabrics as the voice continues to sing. Just like a spider wrapping its fly in a web before it eats ti.

JOEY

(Lifting Danny by the arms.) Danny! Kylie! Don't fall asleep.

LEXIE

Wake up.

The VOICE CONTINUES TO SING but gradually changes into a frightening sound with raspy noises and clicking sounds.

JOEY

I can't wake them up. We need to run.

LEXIE

We can't leave them. We need to do something!

JOEY

I know what to do!

JOEY takes a small flash light out of his pocket points it at LEXIE.

LEXIE

What are you doing?

JOEY

You said bats and spiders are afraid of birds. Make your bird shadow and that hawk sound!

LEXIE makes the shadow of a hawk and begins to make a HAWK SOUND. The spiders stop moving and begin to retreat as the noises fade away.

JOEY

It's working.

The others begin to awake. JOEY sets to work unwrapping the others. One of the FACELESS FIGURES now disappears.

KYLIE

What happened?

DANNY

All I wanted to do was to sleep.

BONNY

I was having the strangest dream. It was so warm and soft, *(Tries to lay back down.)* like being covered with a cloud.

JOEY

They were spider webs. They were going to eat you. Lexie made a shadow bird and scared them away.

BEN

Spiders?

DANNY

(To Lexie.) You saved our lives.

LEXIE

Actually, it was Joey who figured it out.

DANNY

I thought you were afraid of spiders.

JOEY

I was but I couldn't think of leaving all of you here.

KYLIE

How long were we asleep?

LEXIE

Just a few minutes, why?

JOEY

(Looks at his watch.) My watch says it's almost 5 am.

KYLIE

That's about an hour until dawn.

DANNY

We gotta go before sunrise or we're all stuck here.

LEXIE

Wait a minute! What do you mean?

JOEY

Why do we only have until dawn?

KYLIE

Because Hades said we were all trapped here if we weren't back by dawn.

KYLIE pulls the script pages out of her pocket and points at it.

KYLIE

So far almost everything has followed the script of the play. Hades gave us until dawn to get back or be trapped here.

LEXIE

Why does he care what's in the script?

KYLIE

You were taken because that's what happened in the play.

LEXIE

I wasn't in the play.

KYLIE

(Points to her Greek dress.) You're wearing Eurydice's costume. In the play Eurydice dies and goes to the underworld. Orpheus *(Points at Danny.)* risks his life to go to Hades, the King of the underworld, to plead for her return to the land of the living.

JOEY

Then what?

KYLIE

I don't know.

DANNY

What do you mean you don't know? I thought you knew all about this Greek stuff.

KYLIE

That doesn't mean I know every story!

LEXIE

What does the script say happens?

KYLIE shows LEXIE the last page of the script.

KYLIE
The final pages are gone.

JOEY
Gone?

KYLIE
It doesn't say how it ends.

DANNY
Do they get back?

BONNY
What about my brother and me?

KYLIE
I don't know.

LEXIE
Let me see that script.

KYLIE hands LEXIE the script. LEXIE begins to search through it.

BEN
I don't want to stay here any more.

LEXIE
(Looking at the script turns to Danny.) So you're Orpheus?

DANNY
(Looks at the costume he is wearing.) Yeah. I guess.

LEXIE
And I'm your beloved?

DANNY
(Looks at Lexie.) Well, the play says... yes, you are.

(Beat)

JOEY
Not to break up your little love "moment", but we want to go back home! How does Danny, I mean Orpheus, rescue all of us and not just his girlfriend?

LEXIE

I'm not his girlfriend.

KYLIE

We're wasting time. The script says Hades lets Orpheus go. That's the only clue we have.

DANNY

So we need to see Hades again, and we have to do it before dawn. Come on.

The lights transition as they walk around the stage to journey back. An arch is placed by the last FACELESS FIGURE and begins to glow red. DANNY steps into the arch and is immediately in pain and steps back.

DANNY

Oww!

KYLIE

What is it?

KYLIE walks up and reaches out into the arch and immediately pulls her hand back in pain.

KYLIE

Oww! When you reach through it burns.

LEXIE

There must be some way around it.

JOEY

Maybe we should go back the way we came and see if there's another

DANNY and KYLIE turn around as JOEY suddenly walks into an invisible barrier.

JOEY

Hey, there's some kind of wall here.

LEXIE

That's crazy.

LEXIE walks into the invisible barrier.

LEXIE

Oww.

JOEY

What did I tell you!

BONNY

But we just came this way.

JOEY and LEXIE begin to mime exploring along the invisible wall. BEN walks up to arch putting his hand out and feels nothing. He slowly keeps walking through the arch.

BONNY

(Turning to see Ben.) Ben!

They all look at BEN.

DANNY

How did you do that?

BEN

It doesn't hurt.

LEXIE

Let me try.

LEXIE tries to walk through the arch and is repelled by the pain.

LEXIE

Oww!

BONNY walks up and carefully puts her hand into the archway. She then slowly passes through the arch.

DANNY

Come back to this side and try walking through it again.

BEN and BONNY slowly walks back through the arch.

JOEY

How can they walk through and we can't?

KYLIE

(Hesitates to say it.) Maybe because they're...

BONNY

Ghosts?

LEXIE

They can walk through walls just like... Wait a minute! Back at the theatre. Remember how you pulled us out of the basement when Charon was coming.

BONNY

Yes.

DANNY

Maybe you could do the same thing you did there and get us past this wall.

BEN

We could try.

DANNY

What do we need to do?

BONNY

I have to separate the darkness and the light and pull you with me to the place I want to go.

KYLIE

Can you think of Hades and see if you can take us to him?

BONNY

I don't know? I can try. *(She pauses only briefly and then reaches for Danny's hand.)*
Give me your hands.

DANNY gives her his hand and BONNY smiles at him. They all grab hands with BONNY and BEN. Suddenly little points of light start spinning across the stage in a mirror ball type effect as all the lights go out.

The effect is darkness and light mixed together in swirling lights. The archway disappears and the lights come up. Everyone is no longer trapped.

LEXIE

(To Bonny and Ben.) You did it!

JOEY

We made it through!

KYLIE

Thank you both!

DANNY

(To Bonny and Ben.) You saved us.

Suddenly smoke fills the stage as a hazy figure appears. HADES voices comes from nowhere and everywhere.

HADES

I see you've returned.

HADES enters, wearing a Greek Tragedy mask.

DANNY

You said if we made it back you would reconsider.

HADES

You must have been very smart to get past the Sphinx.

DANNY

We made it through all your tests.

HADES

Not quite. *(To Danny.)* Fate and luck were with you. You'll have to do more than that to convince me to let you leave.

KYLIE

(Whispers to Danny.) Play the lyre.

What? DANNY

Play it. KYLIE

DANNY takes the lyre from his back and begins to play. It makes beautiful music.

What is that music? HADES

DANNY continues to play the lyre. The lighting slowly changes colors to make beautiful patterns. We then hear music like a summer morning with birds.

HADES
This music reminds me of Persephone who I love without end. I am only granted her presence for 6 months of each year.

DANNY stops playing.

HADES
I will grant your request. Charon will carry you and Eurydice back to the world of the living.

What about the others? DANNY

HADES
The dead cannot return to the living. *(Ben begins to cry. HADES turns directly to DANNY.)* If you wish to save the living, you will have to make a final sacrifice.

Is this another riddle? DANNY

LEXIE, KYLIE AND JOEY
You can't do that! That's not fair!

HADES
Silence! That is my decree! Charon will leave at dawn. If you choose to leave you must never look back at the dead or you will remain here.

DANNY
But that's not/

HADES
/Our conversation is ended.

HADES exits.

JOEY
(Sits.) I can't believe we made it this far only to fail.

BEN
(Crying.) We'll never see Papa again.

BONNY goes to comfort her little brother.

KYLIE
(To Bonny and Ben.) Don't cry. We'll figure this out (Looks at Danny.) won't we?

LEXIE
We only have a few minutes before dawn.

DANNY
(Changing the subject.) Bonny? Can you and Ben do that thing again?

BONNY
What thing?

DANNY
You know! Separate the dark from the light and take us to the place you want to go.

BONNY
Where do you want to go to?

DANNY
Back to the riverbank and the boat.

BONNY
I think so. But I'll need everyone to think of the riverbank since I don't know exactly where it is.

They all grab hands.

BONNY
(Starts the chant softly and the others soon pick it up.) Riverbank, riverbank, riverbank...

They all keep repeating the word softly as suddenly little points of light start spinning across the stage in a mirror ball type effect as all the lights go out. The effect is darkness and light mixed together in swirling lights. During the swirling lights the boat is set back on the stage by the four figures. The lights return to normal except for a single light that pulses.

PAPA'S VOICE

Ben? Bonny?

BONNY

Papa? Is that you? Where are you?

The light goes out.

PAPA'S VOICE

I'm here.

PAPA walks out of the darkness to join BONNY and BEN.

BEN

Hades said we couldn't go back.

PAPA

Go back?

BONNY

To the theatre.

PAPA

He's right. We can't go back to the land of the living. But we can go on to where your mama is.

BEN

Mama?

PAPA

When your mama and I got here she wanted to wait for you but I convinced her to go on ahead. I promised I would bring you later.

BEN

Is she... in heaven?

BONNY

How do we get there?

PAPA

I don't really know. We were together and your mama was thinking of you. She started smiling and then a light appeared. She looked up into it and I turned away to look for you and Ben. Then she was gone. I went back to the shore to wait for you. Maybe if you think of all the good things about your mama it might be enough to call the light to us. There is so much sadness here. It must have been her happiness that called the light to her. We must do it quickly before I lose my strength.

BONNY

(Turns to the others.) Will you help us?

DANNY

(DANNY takes LEXIE'S hand.) Whatever you need.

KYLIE

(KYLIE takes LEXIE'S hand.) We'll form a circle around you and think about you finding your mother.

KYLIE takes JOEY'S hand and completes a circle around BONNY, BEN and PAPA.

JOEY

(To Ben smiling.) I'm glad that you found your papa.

BONNY

(To Ben.) Are you ready?

BEN

Yes.

PAPA

Let's go home, children.

KYLIE

Wait!

BONNY

What?

KYLIE

I understand what Hades meant. The living can't look at the light or we can never leave. That's what he meant by you can't look back.

JOEY

(To Kylie.) If we do look, will we turn into a floating light?

PAPA

I don't think so because you're still alive, but I'm not certain.

They turn their backs on BONNY, BEN and PAPA still holding hands in a circle and then close their eyes. They begin to smile.

PAPA

(To Ben.) Here we go.

BONNY and BEN hug and a light shines down on them increasing in intensity.

PAPA

It's working!

BEN

It's too bright.

PAPA

It won't hurt. I promise.

Swirling colors of light now fill the stage as the color of the light in the shaft changes to a golden color and then the lights black out. When the lights come back on BONNY, BEN, and PAPA are gone. The others turn around slowly almost afraid to look.

KYLIE

They made it!

LEXIE

At least someone made it home.

KYLIE

We aren't beaten yet!

JOEY

Maybe we just take the boat back without Charon knowing.

CHARON's voice is heard

CHARON (O.S.)

There is passage for two.

DANNY

Everyone get in the boat.

KYLIE

But--

DANNY

Just get in the boat. Don't argue.

*KYLIE and JOEY get in the boat and sit.
DANNY does not get in the boat.*

DANNY

I'm staying.

LEXIE

(Refusing to get in the boat.) We aren't going without you.

DANNY

Get in! It's almost dawn.

KYLIE

We can't go back without you.

DANNY

It's obvious. Hades said everyone can't go home unless I make a sacrifice and the sacrifice is that I stay.

*From the darkness the lone FACELESS
FIGURE comes up behind DANNY and LEXIE
and grabs DANNY around the neck with his
arm.*

JASON

That's right. Danny will stay here with me.

DANNY turns around releasing the hold from the FIGURE. He reaches out and pulls the hood off of the faceless figure revealing DANNY'S brother JASON.

DANNY

Jason? How did you get here?

JASON

I've been waiting for you.

JASON grabs DANNY's arm and twists it behind DANNY's back turning DANNY into a shield against the others.

LEXIE

Let him go.

JASON

Danny loves to entertain me. Don't you Danny?

JASON twists DANNY's arm harder and he yelps in pain. JASON takes out a switch blade and opens it.

JASON

You and I are going to have lots of fun. All your friends should have heard you crying and begging for help. But this time I won't have mercy on you.

LEXIE

Danny!

DANNY

(To Lexie.) Get in the boat.

LEXIE

I'm not leaving without you.

KYLIE

Me neither.

JOEY

I'm with them.

JASON

Aww, how sweet.

JASON begins laughing. DANNY give an angry cry and then grabs JASON's arm with the switchblade and twists it surprising JASON who drops it. At the same time DANNY kicks JASON in the knee making him fall down on his back. DANNY turns jumps on him and begins to pummel JASON.

DANNY

I won't let you hurt me anymore!

DANNY continues to pummel JASON about the head as the dam burst inside him from all the years of abuse he has suffered.

You will never ever touch me or anyone else again. Do you hear me? I said do you hear me?!

JASON

I hear you, I hear you. Stop it. Get off of me. All right, All right! I promise. I promise!

JASON begins to cry and whimper and begs DANNY to let him go. DANNY stops and stands stepping over to collect JASON's knife.

DANNY

(Holding out defiant towards Jason.) I won't keep your secret anymore!

JASON slowly stands up and cowers away from DANNY.

Now leave! Go away!

JASON slinks back into the shadows and disappears as the final FACELESS FIGURE is gone. A WOMAN'S FORM appears in the shadows but her face is covered by a mask. Her voice seems to come from everywhere.

PERSEPHONE

(To Danny.) You have all passed your tests.

LEXIE

Who are you?

PERSEPHONE

I am Persephone. The wife of Hades and the daughter of Demeter. Both Hades and my mother the Goddess Demeter loved me so much they each agreed to sacrifice time with me so that I live part of the year here and part of the year above ground with the living. Hades has watched your sacrifice and agreed to release you. You may return to the land of the living.

DANNY

What did you mean all of us passed our tests?

PERSEPHONE'S VOICE

Fear is that which keeps you in bondage. Keeps you imprisoned. As you faced your fears, the pathway out was revealed. Kylie helped Bonny to understand that she could trust someone regardless of the color of his skin. Awareness conquered fear. Joey, you stopped the advancing spiders with a good plan. Reason conquered fear. Kylie, you used your vast knowledge and stopped battling being smart. Acceptance of your strength conquered fear. Danny, you faced your brother and spoke the unspoken. Finding your voice...(*Alternate lines in Appendix A.)

DANNY

Those things were our fears?

PERSEPHONE'S VOICE

Yes.

DANNY

(To Persephone.) Jason looked pretty real.

PERSEPHONE

It was your fear of him that you saw. You uncloaked that fear and it no longer has power over you. *(Looking away to the distance..)* You must hurry dawn is approaching.

LEXIE, DANNY, JOEY, and KYLIE move to boat.

PERSEPHONE drifts away into the darkness and the lights move about creating the feeling of travel as the boat carries them back to the theatre. They all climb out of the boat. The stage is illuminated by a single light bulb.

JOEY

(Looks around.) I never thought I would be so happy to be in this place again.

The lighting suddenly begins to brighten into a shaft of colors on them.

LEXIE

Look up there. *(Points up.)* That must be the dawn coming through that little section of stained glass by the balcony.

DANNY

That must be the sunrise.

LEXIE

You were so brave.

DANNY

I wouldn't have made it without all of you.

We hear the SOUND OF A BAT and JOEY immediately puts his hands up with his fingers forming a cross shape to ward off vampires. They all laugh.

JOEY

What? After what we just went through you can't be too careful.

LEXIE

I know this all started as a dare to see who would chicken out, and we almost died, but... I wouldn't trade this night for anything. *(Grabs Danny's hand.)*

KYLIE

Me, neither. *(Takes Danny's hand.)*

JOEY

Me, neither. *(Takes Lexie's hand.)* As long as we never have to do it again!

THEY LAUGH.

LEXIE

(To Danny serious.) So what are you going to do about Jason?

DANNY

I'm going to tell my parents what he's been doing.

KYLIE

What if they don't believe you?

DANNY

Then I'm going to keep telling people until someone believes me. I'm not going to let him hurt me ever again.

LEXIE

I'll be there if you need me.

KYLIE

I will too.

JOEY

Me, too.

DANNY

(Overcome with gratitude.) Thank you. *(They feel a little awkward and drop hands.)* I guess we should take off this stuff before we leave.

KYLIE

You're right. These things should stay here.

They begin removing the robes and costume pieces that they had put on back at the beginning.

DANNY

(Holding on to the lyre.) I hate to let go of this.

DANNY puts the lyre back in the trunk.

JOEY

You think anyone will ever believe what happened to us tonight?

KYLIE

Ben and Bonny will. And we will. Nobody else matters.

They look at each other nod their heads and then JOEY, KYLIE, and LEXIE start to exit the stage and as. DANNY takes one last look around. LEXIE turns and goes back to DANNY and gives him a quick kiss and then runs after the others. DANNY is taken off guard and then smiles broadly and runs after them.

DANNY

Hey, wait up!

HE exits.

THE LIGHTS FADE OUT

APPENDIX A

NOTE- The play was inspired by a theatre in the south that had been closed for years and still had a sign on a side entrance that said “Colored Balcony”. I wrote the play to connect to that time. However the alternate lines provided below can work with any kind of casting for the characters and isn’t limited by ethnicity.

(*Alternate line choices)

Page 22- Cut the following lines

BEN

We’d never been in this part before.

KYLIE

This part?

BONNY

The Whites Only part. We were scared. The next thing we knew the man from the play appeared.

Page 42

BONNY

But he’s... white.

Change to

BONNY

My cousin used to grab onto me and try to hold me down. He said he was just playing but I told my Papa and he told me to never be alone with boys like that.

KYLIE

Danny isn't like that. You can trust him not to hurt you.

Page 44-45 changes

KYLIE

(To Danny.) I mean face it. We wouldn't be here if you hadn't dared us all to come to the theatre tonight. Lexie and Joey wouldn't be gone if you hadn't pulled that lever to make her fall down the trap door.

BONNY

We would still be waiting in the theatre if you hadn't come.

DANNY

See! *(To Kylie.)* Not everything I do is dumb! Going to the theatre was a smart idea.

Alternate lines start

BONNY

I used to beg my papa to take us to the theatre. I would watch all those stories and I could be anyone: a king or a queen or fall in love with whoever I wanted.

BEN

When the plays were over, Bonny would get sad.

BONNY

We had to go back to our everyday lives again. I walked around scared a lot.

BEN

Danny said he gets angry when he gets scared.

DANNY

That's different.

BEN

Why?

DANNY

Because if I get angry then it doesn't hurt as much.

BONNY

We weren't allowed to get angry or fight back.

KYLIE

Lots of things have changed since you... since the fire. Girls are allowed to be angry and to fight back now. Lots of women protested for equal rights.

BONNY

Equal rights?

DANNY

Like jobs and pay and getting elected.

BEN

Elected to what?

KYLIE

Mayors, Senators, Judges. Some women even ran for President.

BONNY

President?

KYLIE

Maybe some day we'll have a woman President. We've had some women who even became astronauts.

BONNY

What's an astronaut?

KYLIE

Women pilots and scientists who fly into outer space.

Return to dialogue on page 45

A circle of light appears in the middle of the stage.

BEN

(Seeing the circle and pointing.) What's that?

DANNY

I don't know.

EVERYONE approaches it cautiously and steps inside the ring. The lights on the rest of the stage begin to narrow down towards the center.

BONNY

What's going on?

KYLIE

I don't know.

Page 71 changes

PERSEPHONE'S VOICE

Fear is that which keeps you in bondage. Keeps you imprisoned. As you faced your fears, the pathway out was revealed. Awareness conquered fear. Kylie helped Bonny to understand that she could trust that not all boys were going to hurt her. Reason conquered fear. Joey, you stopped the advancing spiders with a good plan. Acceptance of your strength conquered fear. Kylie, you used your vast knowledge and stopped battling being smart. And you Danny, finding your voice you faced your brother and spoke the truth that had kept you chained to fear.