



Book Illustration, Baur

Myth: Orpheus and Eurydice

A long time ago, there lived a gifted musician named Orpheus. Orpheus was the son of Apollo and Calliope (one of the muses.) With such talented parents, it was no wonder that Orpheus was a gifted musician. The truth is Orpheus was more than gifted, his music was magical. When he played the lyre, as his father had taught him, his songs could cast spells and soothe savage beasts.

Orpheus loved his wife, Eurydice, who was a mortal (human). When she died, Orpheus traveled down into the Underworld to get her back. He begged his great uncle Hades, keeper of the underworld, to allow his wife to come back to earth, and not be reborn as someone else.

Hades agrees, but under one condition: He will let Eurydice go back to earth with Orpheus if neither one of them looks back during the journey, until they both were safely back on earth.

Orpheus was worried. He was afraid that perhaps his wife might need his help - it was a very scary trip back to the surface. He worried that perhaps Hades would not send her after all. To reassure himself that all was fine, he risked a quick look behind him, and lost his wife forever.