

LYRICS for HADESTOWN (A folk opera)

WEDDING SONG

EURYDICE

Lover, tell me if you can / Who's gonna buy the wedding bands?
Times being what they are / Hard and getting harder all the time

ORPHEUS

Lover, when I sing my song / All the rivers sing along
And they're gonna break their banks for me / To lay their gold around my feet
All a-flashing in the pan, all to fashion for your hand / The rivers gonna give us the wedding bands

EURYDICE

Lover, tell me, if you're able / Who's gonna lay the wedding table?
Times being what they are / Dark and getting darker all the time

ORPHEUS

Lover, when I sing my song / All the trees gonna sing along
And bend their branches down to me / To lay their fruit around my feet
The almond and the apple and the sugar from the maple / The trees gonna lay the wedding table

EURYDICE

Lover, tell me, when we're wed / Who's gonna make the wedding bed?
Times being what they are / Hard and getting harder all the time

ORPHEUS

Lover, when I sing my song / All the birds gonna sing along
And they'll come flying round to me / To lay their feathers at my feet
And we'll lie down in eiderdown, a pillow neath our heads / The birds gonna make our wedding bed
And the trees gonna lay the wedding table / And the rivers gonna give us the wedding bands

EPIC I

ORPHEUS

King of diamonds, king of spades! / Hades was king of the kingdom of dirt
Miners of mines, diggers of graves / They bowed down to Hades who gave them work
And they bowed down to Hades who made them sweat / Who paid them their wages and set them about
Digging and dredging and dragging the depths / Of the earth to turn its insides out, singing
La la la la la la la...

King of mortar, king of bricks / The River Styx was a river of stones
And Hades laid them high and thick / With a million hands that were not his own
And a million feet that fell in line / And stepped in time with Hades' step
And a million minds that were just one mind / Like stones in a row
And stone by stone / And row by row / The River rose up
Singing la la la la la la

WAY DOWN HADESTOWN

HERMES

Follow that dollar for a long way down / Far away from the poorhouse door
You either get to hell or to Hadestown / There ain't no difference anymore, anymore

Way down Hadestown / Way down under the ground

Hound dog howl and the whistle blow / Train come a-rollin' clickety-clack
Nobody knows where that old train goes / Those who go they don't come back

They go way down Hadestown / Way down under the ground

PERSEPHONE

Winter's nigh and summer's o'er / I hear that high and lonesome sound
Of my husband coming for / To bring me home to Hadestown

Way down, Hadestown / Way down under the ground

EURYDICE

Everybody dresses in clothes so fine / Everybody's pockets are weighted down
Everybody sipping ambrosia wine / In a goldmine in Hadestown

Way down Hadestown / Way down under the ground

ORPHEUS

Everybody hungry, everybody tired / Everybody slaves by the sweat of his brow
The wage is nothing and the work is hard / It's a graveyard in Hadestown

Way down Hadestown / Way down under the ground

FATES

Every little penny in the wishing well / Every little nickel on the drum, on the drum
All them shiny little heads and tails / Where do you think they come from?

They come from Hadestown, way down / Way down under the ground

ORPHEUS & HERMES

Mister Hades is a mean old boss / With a silver whistle and a golden scale
An eye for an eye! And he weighs the cost / A lie for a lie! And your soul for sale
Sold! To the king on the chromium throne / Thrown! To the bottom of a sing-sing cell
Where the little wheel squeal and the big wheel groan / And you better forget about your wishing well

Way down Hadestown / Way down under the ground

EURYDICE

Mr. Hades is a mighty king / Must be making some mighty big deals
Seems like he owns everything / Kind of makes you wonder how it feels

Way down Hadestown / Way down under the ground x 2

Way down under the ground x 2

HEY, LITTLE SONGBIRD

HADES

Hey, little songbird, give me a song / I'm a busy man and I can't stay long
I got clients to call, I got orders to fill / I got walls to build, I got riots to quell
And they're giving me hell back in Hades
Hey little songbird, cat got your tongue? / Always a pity for one so pretty and young
When poverty comes to clip your wings / And knock the wind right out of your lungs
Hey, nobody sings on empty

EURYDICE

Strange is the call of this strange man / I want to fly down and feed at his hand
I want a nice soft place to land / I want to lie down forever

HADES

Hey little songbird, you got something fine / You'd shine like a diamond down in the mine
And the choice is yours if you're willing to choose / Seeing as you've got nothing to lose
And I could use a canary

EURYDICE

Suddenly nothing is as it was / Where are you now, Orpheus?
Wasn't it always the two of us / Weren't we birds of a feather?

HADES

Hey little songbird, let me guess / He's some kind of poet- and he's penniless
Give him your hand, he'll give you his hand-to-mouth / He'll write you a poem when the power's out
Hey, why not fly south for the winter?
Hey little songbird, look all around you / See how the vipers and vultures surround you
They'll take you down, they'll pick you clean / If you stick around such a desperate scene
See people get mean when the chips are down

GONE, I'M GONE

EURYDICE

Orpheus, my heart is yours / Always was and will be
It's my gut I can't ignore / Orpheus, I'm hungry
Oh, my heart, it aches to stay / But the flesh will have its way
Oh, the way is dark and long / I'm already gone-- I'm gone

FATES

Go ahead and lay the blame / Talk of virtue, talk of sin
Wouldn't you have done the same? / In her shoes, in her skin
You can have your principles / When you've got a bellyful
But hunger has a way with you / There's no telling what you're gonna do
When the chips are down / Now that the chips are down
What you gonna do when the chips are down? / Now that the chips are down

WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN

FATES

Life ain't easy, life ain't fair / A girl's gotta fight for a rightful share
What you gonna do when the chips are down / Now that the chips are down
What you gonna do when the chips are down / Now that the chips are down
Help yourself, to hell with the rest / Even the one who loves you best
What you gonna do when the chips are down / Now that the chips are down
What you gonna do when the chips are down / Now that the chips are down

EURYDICE

Oh my aching heart...

FATES

What you gonna do when the chips are down? / Now that the chips are down
Take if you can, give if you must / Ain't nobody but yourself to trust
What you gonna do when the chips are down? / Now that the chips are down
What you gonna do when the chips are down? / Now that the chips are down
Aim for the heart, shoot to kill / If you don't do it then the other one will
What you gonna do when the chips are down? / Now that the chips are down
What you gonna do when the chips are down? / Now that the chips are down
And the first shall be first / And the last shall be last
Cast your eyes to heaven / You get a knife in the back
Nobody's righteous / Nobody's proud, Nobody's innocent, Now that the chips are down
Now that the chips are down

WAIT FOR ME

HERMES

How to get to Hadestown / You'll have to take the long way down
Through the underground, under cover of night / Laying low, staying out of sight
Ain't no compass, brother, ain't no map / Just a telephone wire and a railroad track
But you keep on walking and you don't look back / Till you get to the bottomland

ORPHEUS

*Wait for me, I'm coming / Wait, I'm coming with you
Wait for me, I'm coming too / I'm coming to*

HERMES

River Styx is high and wide / Cinderbricks and razorwire
Walls of iron and concrete / Hound dogs howling round the gate
Them dogs'll lie down and play dead / If you got the bones, if you got the bread
But if all you got is your own to legs / You best be glad you got em

ORPHEUS

*Wait for me, I'm coming / Wait, I'm coming with you
Wait for me, I'm coming too / I'm coming to*

HERMES

You're on the lam, you're on the run / Don't give your name, you don't have one
And don't look no one in the eye / That town will try to suck you dry
They'll suck your brain, They'll suck your breath / They'll pluck the heart right out your chest
They'll truss you up in your sunday best / And stuff your mouth with cotton

ORPHEUS

*Wait for me, I'm coming / Wait, I'm coming with you
Wait for me, I'm coming too / I'm coming
Wait, wait, wait, wait*

WHY WE BUILD THE WALL

HADES

Why do we build the wall? / My children, my children
Why do we build the wall?

ALL

**Why do we build the wall? / We build the wall to keep us free
That's why we build the wall / We build the wall to keep us free**

HADES

How does the wall keep us free? / My children, my children
How does the wall keep us free?

ALL

**How does the wall keep us free? / The wall keeps out the enemy
And we build the wall to keep us free / That's why we build the wall
We build the wall to keep us free**

HADES

Who do we call the enemy? / My children, my children
Who do we call the enemy?

ALL

**Who do we call the enemy? / The enemy is poverty
And the wall keeps out the enemy / And we build the wall to keep us free
That's why we build the wall / We build the wall to keep us free**

HADES

Because we have and they have not! / My children, my children
Because they want what we have got!

ALL

**Because we have and they have not! / Because they want what we have got!
The enemy is poverty / And the wall keeps out the enemy
And we build the wall to keep us free / That's why we build the wall
We build the wall to keep us free**

HADES

What do we have that they should want? / My children, my children
What do we have that they should want?

ALL

**What do we have that they should want? / We have a wall to work upon!
We have work and they have none / And our work is never done
My children, my children / And our war is never won
The enemy is poverty / And the wall keeps out the enemy
And we build the wall to keep us free / That's why we build the wall
We build the wall to keep us free / We build the wall to keep us free**

OUR LADY OF THE UNDERGROUND

PERSEPHONE

I don't know about you, boys

But if you're like me then hanging around / This old manhole is bringing you down
Six-feet-under getting under your skin / Cabin fever is a-setting in
You're stir crazy! Stuck in a rut! / You could use a little pick-me-up
I can give you what it is you crave / A little something from the good old days, hey
I got the wind right here in a jar / I got the rain on tap at the bar
I got the sunshine up on the shelf / Allow me to introduce myself
Brother, what's my name? My name is

CROWD

Our Lady of the Underground!

PERSEPHONE

Brother, what's my name?

CROWD

Our Lady of Ways!

Our Lady of Means!

PERSEPHONE

Brother, what's my name? My name is

CROWD

Our Lady of the Upside Down

PERSEPHONE

Brother what's my name? I'll tell you my name: Persephone!

Come here, brother, let me guess / It's the little things you miss
Spring flowers, autumn leaves / Ask me, brother, and you shall receive
Or maybe these just ain't enough / Maybe you're looking for some stronger stuff
I got a sight for the sorest eye / When's the last time you saw the sky?
Wipe away your tears, brother, brother, I know how you feel
I can see you're blinded by the sadness of it all
Look a little closer and everything will be revealed
Look a little closer, there's a crack in the wall
You want stars? I got a skyful / Put a quarter in the slot, you'll get an eyeful
You want the moon? I got her too / She's right here waiting in my pay-per-view
Ooh, how long's it been? / A little moonshine ain't no sin
One at a time, boys, straight line / What the boss don't know, the boss won't mind

FLOWERS (Eurydice's Song)

EURYDICE

What I wanted was to fall asleep / Close my eyes and disappear
Like a petal on a stream, a feather on the air
Lily white and poppy red / I trembled when he laid me out
You won't feel a thing, he said, when you go down
Nothing gonna wake you now
Dreams are sweet until they're not / Men are kind until they aren't
Flowers bloom until they rot and fall apart
Is anybody listening? / I open my mouth and nothing comes out
Nothing / Nothing gonna wake me now
Flowers, I remember fields / Of flowers, soft beneath my heels
Walking in the sun / I remember someone
Someone by my side / Turned his face to mine
And then I turned away / Into the shade
You, the one I left behind / If you ever walk this way
Come and find me lying in the bed I made

NOTHING CHANGES

FATES

Why the struggle, why the strain? / Why make trouble? Why make scenes?
Why go against the grain? / Why swim upstream?
It ain't no use (x3)
You're bound to lose (x3)
What's done is done (x3)
That's the way the river runs
So why get wet? Why break a sweat? / Why waste your precious breath?
Why beat your handsome brow? Nothing changes
Nothing changes / Nothing changes anyhow

IF IT'S TRUE

ORPHEUS

If it's true what they say / If my love is gone for good
They can take this heart away / They can take this flesh and blood
Take my mouth that kissed her mouth / Take my tongue that sung her praise
Take my arms that used to reach out / In the dark to where she lay
If it's true what they say / I'll be on my way
If it's true what they say / If there's nothing to be done
If there's no part to be played / If there's no song to be sung
Take this voice, take these hands / I can't use them anyway
Take this music and the memory / Of the muse from which it came
If it's true what they say / I'll be on my way
We can all be on our way / If it's true what they say
But the ones who tell the lies / Are the solemnest to swear
And the ones who load the dice / Always say the toss is fair
And the ones who deal the cards / Are the ones who take the tricks
With their hands over their hearts / While we play the game they fix
And the ones who speak the word / Always say it was the last
And no answer will be heard / To the question no one asks
So I ask you as a brother / And I ask you as a friend
And I ask you as a lover / And I ask you once again
Is it true what they say?

HOW LONG?

PERSEPHONE

Hades, my husband, Hades, my light / Hades, my darkness
If you had heard how he sang tonight / You'd pity poor Orpheus!
All of his sorrow won't fit in his chest / It just burns like a fire in the pit of his chest
And his heart is a bird on a spit in his chest / How long, how long, how long?

HADES

How long? Just as long as Hades is King / Nothing comes of wishing on stars
And nothing comes of the songs people sing / However sorry they are
Give them a piece and they'll take it all / Show them the crack and they'll tear down the wall
Lend them an ear and the Kingdom will fall / The Kingdom will fall for a song

PERSEPHONE

What does he care for the logic of kings? / The laws of your underworld?
It is only for love that he sings! / He sings for the love of a girl

HADES

You and your pity don't fit in my bed / You just burn like a fire in the pit of my bed
And I turn like a bird on a spit in my bed / How long, how long, how long?

PERSEPHONE

How long? Just as long as I am your wife / It's true the earth must die
But then the earth comes back to life / And the sun just goes on rising

HADES & PERSEPHONE

And how does the sun even fit in the sky? / It just burns like a fire in the pit of the sky
And the earth is a bird on a spit in the sky / How long, how long, how long?

EPIC II

ORPHEUS

Heavy and hard is the heart of the king / King of iron, king of steel
The heart of the king loves everything / Like the hammer loves the nail
But the heart of a man is a simple one / Small and soft, flesh and blood
And all that he loves is a woman / A woman is all that he loves
And Hades is king of the scythe and the sword / He covers the world in the color of rust
He scrapes the sky and scars the earth / And he comes down heavy and hard on us
But even that hardest of hearts unhardened / Suddenly when he saw her there
Persephone in her mother's garden / Sun on her shoulders, wind in her hair
The smell of the flowers she held in her hand / And the pollen that fell from her fingertips
And suddenly Hades was only a man / With a taste of nectar upon his lips
Singing la la la la la la la

HIS KISS THE RIOT

HADES

The devil take this Orpheus / And his belladonna kiss
Beautiful and poisonous / Lovely! Deadly!
Now it thickens on my tongue / Now it quickens in my lung
Now I'm stricken! Now I'm stung! / It's done already!
Dangerous this jack of hearts / With his kiss the riot starts
All my children came here poor / Clamoring for bed and board
Now what do they clamor for? / Freedom! Freedom!
Have I made myself their Lord / Just to fall upon the sword
Of some pauper's minor chord? / Who will lead them?
Who lays all the best laid plans? / Who makes work for idle hands?
Only one thing to be done / Let them think that they have won
Let them leave together under / One condition
Orpheus, the undersigned / Shall not turn to look behind
She's out of sight! / And he's out of his mind!
Every coward seems courageous / In the safety of the crowd
Bravery can be contagious / When the band is playing loud
Nothing makes a man so bold / As a woman's smile and a hand to hold
But all alone his blood runs thin / And doubt comes, doubt comes in

DOUBT COMES IN

ORPHEUS & FATES

Doubt comes in / And strips the paint
Doubt comes in / And turns the wine

ORPHEUS

Doubt comes in and leaves a trace / Of vinegar and turpentine
Where are you? Where are you now?

ORPHEUS & FATES

Doubt comes in / And kills the lights
Doubt comes in / And chills the air

ORPHEUS

Doubt comes in and all falls silent / It's as though you aren't there
Where are you? Where are you now?

EURYDICE

Orpheus / You're shivering
Is it cold or fear? / Just keep singing
The coldest night / Of the coldest year
Comes right before the spring

ORPHEUS & FATES

Doubt comes in / With tricky fingers
Doubt comes in / With fickle tongues

ORPHEUS

Doubt comes in and my heart falters / And forgets the songs it sung
Where are you? Where are you now?

EURYDICE

Orpheus / Hold on
Hold on tight / It won't be long
Cause the darkest hour / Of the darkest night
Comes right before the dawn

I RAISE MY CUP TO HIM

PERSEPHONE

Pour the wine and raise a cup / Drink up, brothers, you know how
And spill a drop for Orpheus / Wherever he is now
Some birds sing when the sun shines bright / My praise is not for them
But the one who sings in the dead of night / I raise my cup to him

EURYDICE

Wherever he is wandering / Alone upon the earth
Let all our singing follow him / And bring him comfort
Some flowers bloom when the green grass grows / My praise is not for them
But the one who blooms in the bitter snow / I raise my cup to him

PERSEPHONE

I raise my cup and drink it up

EURYDICE

I raise it high and drink it dry

PERSEPHONE & EURYDICE

To Orpheus and all of us / Goodnight, brothers, goodnight