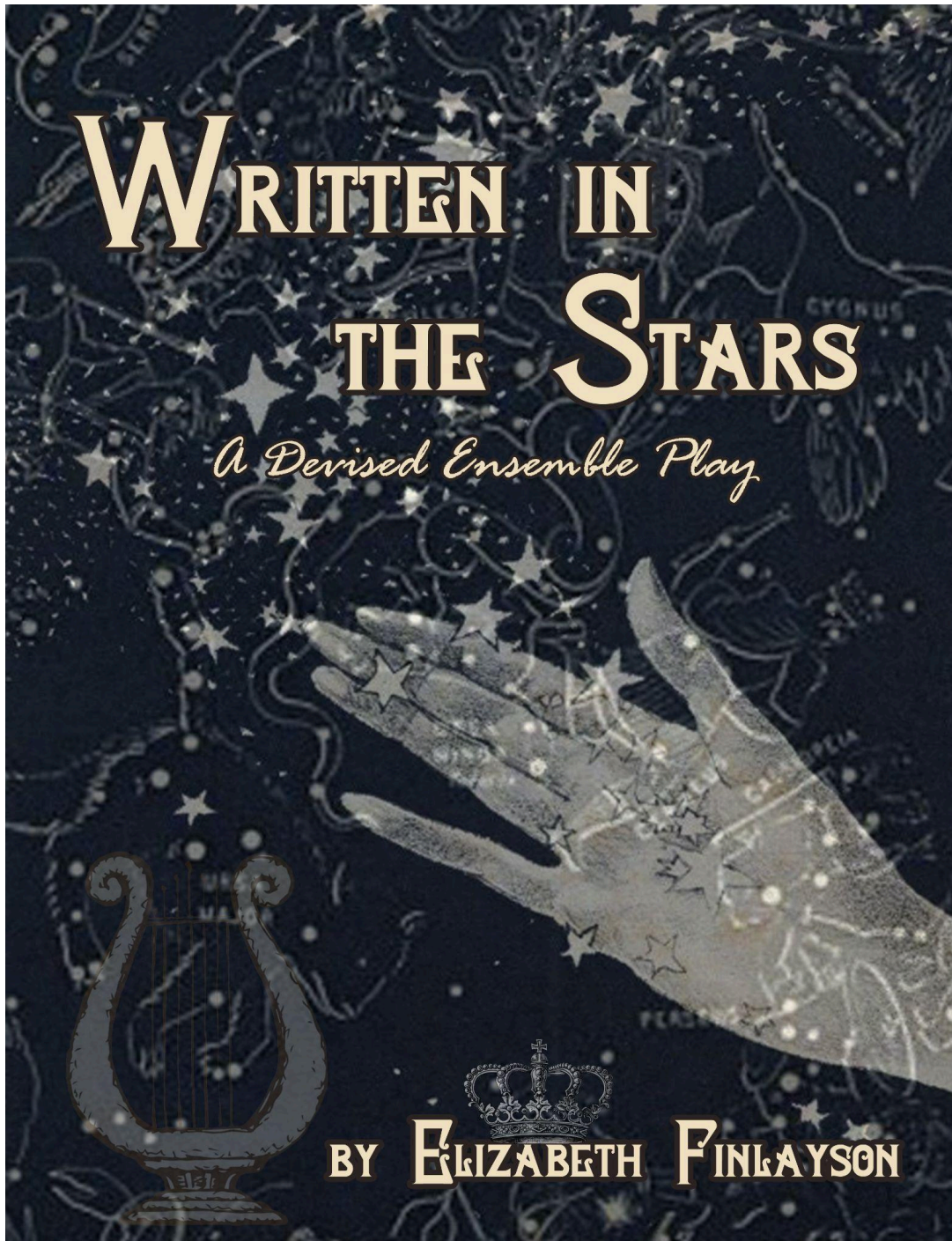


WRITTEN IN THE STARS

WRITING SAMPLE

The following material is written and owned by Elizabeth Finlayson.



Elizabeth Finlayson
eliza.fin.emf@gmail.com

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

PRELUDE

The preshow playlist and announcement ends.
Lights are dim. Dancers perform in a “museum.”
Beneath the text, there is movement choreography,
maybe lifting the NARRATOR or creating shapes
around them. Only one person speaks. NARRATOR
enters the ensemble, a field of statues. She walks
around them, and walks up to the box. She opens it.

NARRATOR:

Born on the earth, under bright starry skies.
Opening my fresh eyes to see above—
Mementos of the past, that we devised,
To remember ones that we lose and love.

I'll wed, beneath lovers of the years gone.
Under heroes, maidens— a perfect view.
My children are born to a brand new dawn,
I teach them, then, how I was taught by you.

When I die, don't bury me six feet down.
Lift me to the sky and let them decide.
Bless me, please, with their eternal renown,
In the clouds with them is where I'll reside.

I will be remembered the way they are.

They gesture to the statues, who have left the stage.

Now, at last, I'll be written in the stars.

SCENE 3 – Ariadne and Dionysus

ARIADNE has a moment of quiet, on the edges of her wedding. She looks out at the water, thinking.

ARIADNE

When you left, did you look back and see my silhouette against the horizon?
Did you even look back?
It doesn't matter anymore, I know,
I've had more than enough time to look back on us. On you.
And looking back, I think I know a lot more about myself now than I ever did with you.
And now I know, maybe I wasn't in love with you! Maybe I just liked the thrill of being with you.
Maybe you gave me an opportunity to act like a person instead of a figurehead.
And I'm grateful for that. For you, I guess.
Back then, all I had to look forward to was you.
When I woke up, and you were gone, I thought that was the end— my life, my story, would all end there.
And now I'm here. Getting married.
And they're more than I ever could have dreamed.
Now, they're not all I have to look forward to.
I look forward to them, yes, and to my life, and to my future, and to the world's future, and to
To everything, really.
I'm happy.
And looking back, I'm glad you left.
Looking back, I hope you're happy, too.

DIONYSUS comes to her side.

DIONYSUS

You alright?

ARIADNE smiles.

ARIADNE

Perfect.

They hold hands and return to the party.

SCENE 4 – Eurydice & Orpheus

EURYDICE is alone onstage. Music sounds from someone turned away from the audience. Playing either piano or guitar. They play as if they are currently writing something– repeating parts over and over, trying different chords. Etc.

EURYDICE

Our home has a voice.

It grumbles with our footsteps, sighs with our closing doors, moans under the weight of our presence here.

The heaviest thing in this house is our love.

Our love, and your talent.

At first, I thought I'd buckle under that pressure of loving a muse's son.

There was no avoiding that fact– it lives in everything you are and everything you do.

I can sense it when your fingers twitch like you're itching to play.

I can sense it when you hum during any moment of silence.

I can sense it when you kiss me and conduct my heartstrings like an orchestra.

Our home has a voice, but it sings just for you.

Because you're Orpheus. And I'm Eurydice.

Maybe that should bother me?

People come up to you and ask for advice or a song and I patiently wait behind you, your hand holding mine as if to remind me that you haven't forgotten that I exist.

But I don't mind.

They know your name, and your songs, but they don't know you. They don't know your legacy.

Maybe I am your legacy.

The music seems to click together into something romantic. EURYDICE smiles.

The muse's son and his muse.

They look behind them. The person playing,
portraying ORPHEUS, meets their eyes and smiles.
There's a beat. The imagery is so obvious.

I'm gonna take a walk.

They leave the stage, and the person portraying
ORPHEUS is alone. They continue to play
romantic, pleasant music, until suddenly there is a
harsh, biting, dissonant chord. Death!

EPILOGUE

NARRATOR

I wonder, sometimes, what I would do.

If I had forever, like that?

I mean, I don't, I haven't, I never will,

But there's something about eternity that sounds awfully enticing.

They turn to the mirror.

Maybe if I had forever, I could have worked through my problems before I put the blame on you?

And maybe, if I had forever, we would have had more time to work things out.

Because I assumed, like a lot of people do, that we would have forever.

Or if not forever, then longer than we did.

That time has passed, now, so I try not to think about all the 'what-ifs',
or about all the things I wish I knew then that I know now.

Why did you have to go when I was seventeen?

When I knew nothing?

I try not to think of the 'what-ifs.'

But they get stuck in my head like a song.

What if, what if, what if.

What if I wasn't gone all the time?

What if I checked in on you more?

What if I had known earlier?

And then there's the questions.

Did I ever hate you?

Or did I just hate myself?

Did I hate you?

Or did I see all the parts of me I was too scared to confront?

Did I hate you?

Or was I too selfish to say "I love you" when I left the house?

I don't think I hate you.

It's kind of ironic that I know that, now.

Now that I can't tell you.

All I'm left with is your memory.

And when I'm gone, then who will remember you?

Pause.

I think, maybe, I understand why everyone has put a meaning to the stars.

They're always there. They don't leave. They don't die. They don't fade.

Or, they do, but. They're about as close to permanent as anything can be.

Then, your memory isn't limited to your life. Or your kids' lives. Or your grandkids'.

It's there, forever.

I'm not an astronomer, so I don't really have the authority to go deciding what different constellations are.

But, I have thought about what I would put in the stars, if I could. For you.

I think I would do...

A shirley temple. Because that's what you used to order, when you were a kid, at that pizza place in Brockton, Massachusetts. And it's what I order there, now.

And... I would want your signature. That scribble that was never legible. And it got multiple permission slips passed back to me, because my teachers couldn't read it. Now, whenever I write in a rush, I think about how my handwriting starts to look like yours.

I'd put a CD player, and I'd put a Christmas tree, and I'd put your comically oversized purse, and I'd put anything and everything you'd ever touched if that meant the weight wasn't on me to remember it all.

They look at the audience.

Maybe that's why I do all this.

A few moments of silence and awkwardness, then,
they stand.

You know, the stars in the sky now are the same stars as when I was little, and I stargazed with a toy telescope with my mom in our driveway.

They're the same stars my mom and dad looked at from opposite sides of the country, wishing upon meteors.

They're the same stars the astronomers naming these constellations looked at, and thought, 'it's a lyre,' or 'it's a fish,' or 'it's a mother and her child.'

And they're the same stars the people they're named after looked at before they went to bed each night.

Maybe, tonight, I can go out and the stars will recognize me. They'll say, 'we know you.'

The stars come forward and put a hand on
NARRATOR's shoulder.

And I'll say, "I know you," right back.

If my mom was watching over me from anywhere, that's where she'd be.

I'm going to go say hello.

NARRATOR smiles, and leaves. The "museum" is
still. After NARRATOR leaves, they dance.