

# CREATIVE MIND



ACTIVITY BOOK  
OF

-----

-----



Co-funded by  
the European Union



# ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

SUMMARY: Orpheus, endowed with a voice capable of enchantment, marries the nymph Eurydice who dies soon after the wedding.

Grieving, Orpheus descends into the underworld to ask for the return of his bride.

Hades is moved and accepts on the condition that Orpheus return to the surface without turning back.

Orpheus, doubting the presence of his beloved, turns around just before leaving, making Eurydice disappear.

ORIGINAL TITLE: ORPHEUS

KEYWORDS: ENCHANT; LOVE

GENRE: MYTH

AGE: 9–10 YEARS

## ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

A long time ago, in the time of gods and nymphs, there lived Orpheus and Eurydice.

This is their story.

Orpheus was beautiful, and even more so was his voice, which had the power to enchant. He enchanted humans and beasts alike. His voice could make the fox wake up from its sleep, the deer stop their skirmishes, the birds come out of their nests and even distract the sirens from charming unfortunate sailors. Whatever they happened to be thinking or doing, all of them stopped to listen to the soothing and persuasive melody of Orpheus' voice.

Orpheus sang and enchanted, his voice carried with it the love for the nymph, Eurydice. Nature itself resonated with these notes: flowers, young shrubs and trees danced in a harmony of sounds – rustling, chirping, buzzing.

The tree where Eurydice lived throbbed and infused her heart with this sweet feeling of Orpheus' song, filling her with joy and love.



Orpheus and Eurydice married, but their happiness did not last long.

Such was the grace of Eurydice that Orpheus was not the only one in love with her.

One day, while she was standing next to her tree, deep in thought, the young shepherd Aristeus saw her.

Hidden among the flowers, he observed her delicate and perfect features and fell in love with her. He felt his heart fill with such a strong passion that he could see nothing else. At night he dreamt of her, saw her face in the foliage of the trees, her body in the shape of the clouds.

Even the buzzing of his bees reminded him of Eurydice's voice. And the buzzing entered his head and whispered, "Come to me, Aristeus!"

But such was Eurydice's love for Orpheus that she was unaware of Aristeus' existence.

Despite this, the shepherd followed the nymph everywhere, searching for her gestures and her smiles, thinking and hoping that they were for him.

One day, while Eurydice was picking flowers, she heard a loud buzzing sound, as if there was a whole swarm of bees behind her. It was so loud and so noisy that she turned around, frightened. What she saw behind her wasn't a swarm of bees, however, but Aristeus instead.



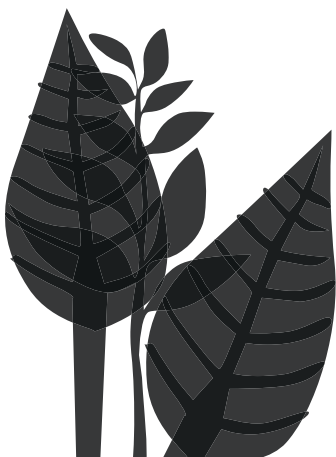
She was so alarmed by him that she started running, with the young shepherd chasing her. She ran through the trees and across the meadows, terrified, without looking at where she was putting her feet. Her only desire was to run away.

A poisonous snake was hidden in the grass, and when Eurydice ran past it, the snake bit her.

Hearing her distress, Orpheus arrived by her side, but it was too late. Eurydice fell dead into his arms, and Orpheus' tears transformed into a sad song.

Weeping and singing while holding Eurydice's lifeless body in his arms, Orpheus decided to do what no one before him had ever thought of doing: descend into the realm of Hades, the lord of the shadows and the dead, and ask him to bring Eurydice back to life and back to him.

"I cannot live without my beloved, my heart can no longer find a reason to continue beating..." he sang as tears flowed down and wet the strings of his lyre, which seemed to absorb that pain and return it with dense and heavy notes.



Thus, he embarked on his journey, which was long and perilous.

Finally, he reached the river Styx, the river that divided the realm of the living from that of the departed.

To reach the opposite shore, it was necessary to be transported by Charon, the ferryman of souls. Charon, who was known as a gruff and ferocious man, was also moved by the sorrowful voice of Orpheus in love, and led him to the other side.

Even the monstrous dog with three horrible heads, Cerberus, whose howl sounded like thunder and who guarded the entrance to the kingdom of Hades, listened to Orpheus.

“What do you want? Why are you weeping and wailing when you are still alive?” one of the heads growled.

“I am looking for my beloved, who was snatched away from me,” sang Orpheus with a voice so poignant that even the horrible Cerberus could not resist.





Even the most fearful and cruel guardians were moved and, weeping for that sad story and that great love, they let the cantor pass.

They broke the rule that no one alive could ever enter the realm of the dead.

Walking through that dark and gloomy cavern, Orpheus finally reached Hades and his wife Persephone.

Hades was sleeping. Beside him was his wife, who knew the life of the world above and the world below very well. Every spring, Persephone returns to the world above with her beloved mother Demeter, who happily fills the trees with tender sprouts.

But at the end of the summer, when the leaves of the trees begin to turn yellow, heralding the autumn, Persephone returns to the underground, leaving her mother who, sad and sorrowful, covers the earth with the cold winter.



Persephone looked at Orpheus, his voice was so clear and crystalline that it illuminated that dark cavern. Persephone was moved to tears as she listened to the story of his love. It wasn't the death of Eurydice that saddened her as Persephone was always surrounded by death and its reminders; rather, she lamented for the lovers' lost happiness.

“Dear Orpheus, we allow you to take Eurydice back with you. We will grant you a courtesy that has never been allowed to anyone before – to return and start again, to continue your life where you left it,” said Persephone.

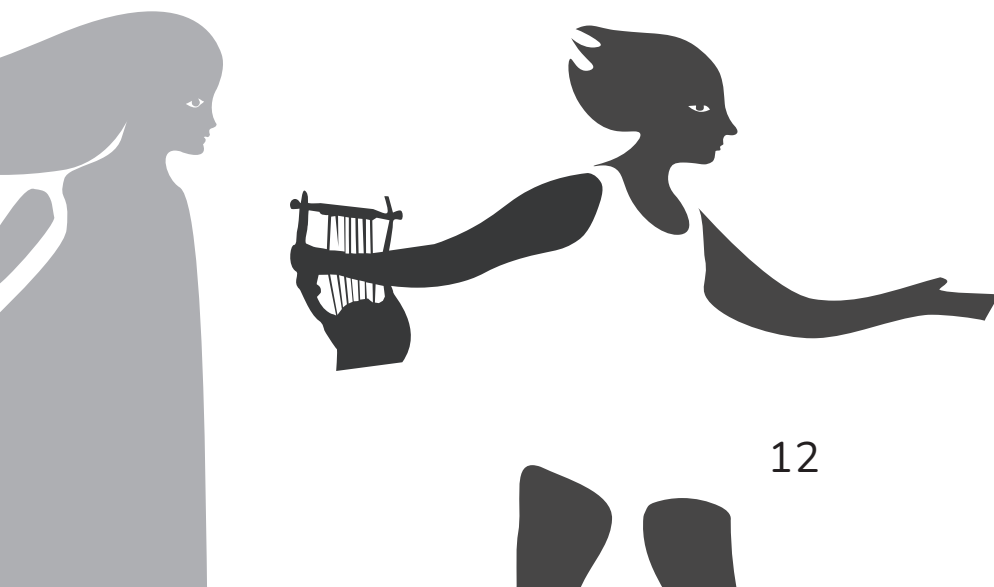
Hades, who was following everything as if in a dream, entranced by Orpheus' story, shared the words of his wife. Orpheus felt his heart leap in his chest – such was his joy. He wanted to run and embrace Eurydice, take her away. He thanked Persephone with his eyes, his voice and his thought.



“Wait!”, said Persephone, “You cannot go to her. You will have to return home by singing and never looking back. Eurydice will follow you, she will follow your voice, your steps; she will see your shadow in front of her and she will be with you. But you mustn't turn around to look for her or hear her. You must have faith that she will return to you and keep walking until you have reached the world above. Only then will you be allowed to embrace her.”

Orpheus was too happy to understand and too enamoured to realise the danger concealed in this proposal, so he accepted. He began to ascend, to walk the narrow streets of that spectral lair that in his impatience to arrive, he almost hadn't noticed before.

Now that he had found his love, Eurydice, now that she was walking behind him, following his every step and the melody of his voice, his task suddenly seemed much more difficult.



What if she was not really behind him, not following him?  
What if Hades had made a mockery of his hopes and his love,  
a love so immense that it had led him to the depths  
of the earth?  
What if...

A doubt began to creep into Orpheus' mind, a dark fear,  
a slimy uncertainty that made his thoughts waiver,  
and that was what led him to turn around.

His glance towards Eurydice happened too soon.  
Only Orpheus' foot had stepped out in the world above,  
while Eurydice was still in the narrow cave of the underworld,  
a few steps behind him.



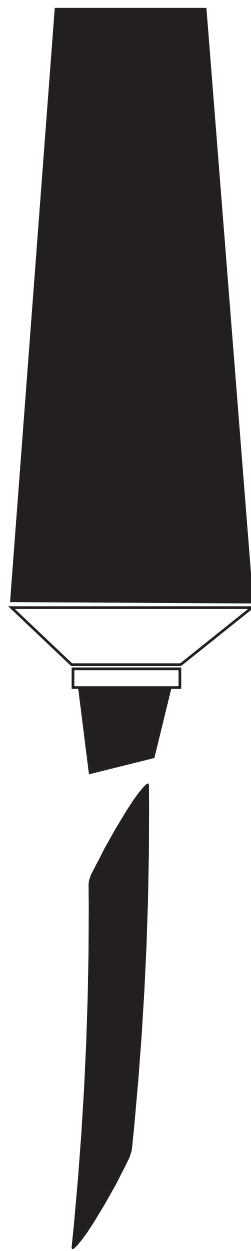
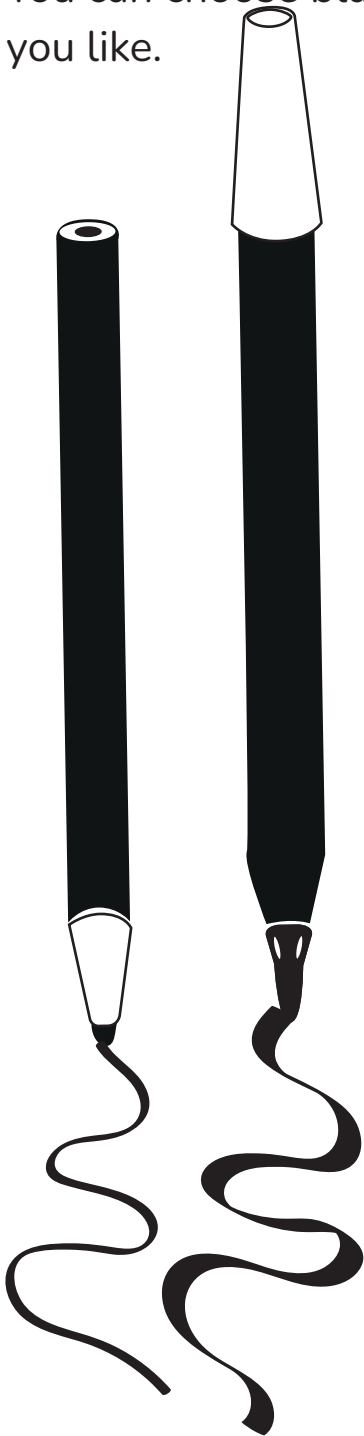
She responded to the gaze of her beloved with a slight smile that immediately dissolved like the most illusory of mirages. And with that, she disappeared into the darkness as if never behind Orpheus to begin with.

Orpheus cried and let out all the tears he had not cried before, but it was no use. Eurydice was lost forever.

Following her loss and his inability to have faith in the promise of their love, Orpheus' songs became sad, dispersing in the wind and disappearing just like Eurydice's last smile.

# ACTIVITIES

The tools we draw with are important. Get markers with different tips: flat, round, brush. Also get some brushes and tempera paints. You can choose black or any other colour you like.





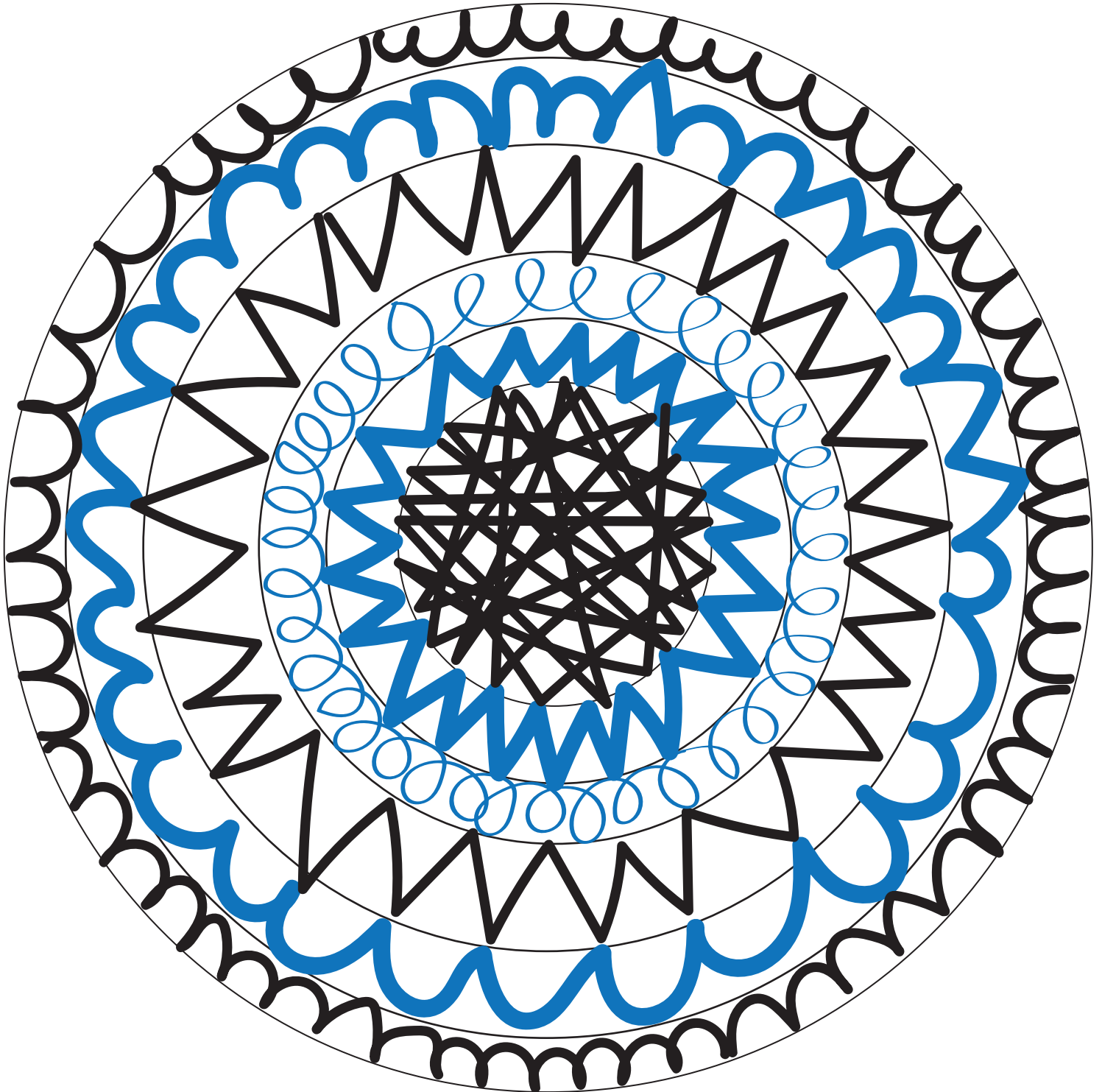
Use your sketchbook: by alternating between the various tools, draw continuous sinuous lines.

Draw each line without ever removing your hand from the paper.

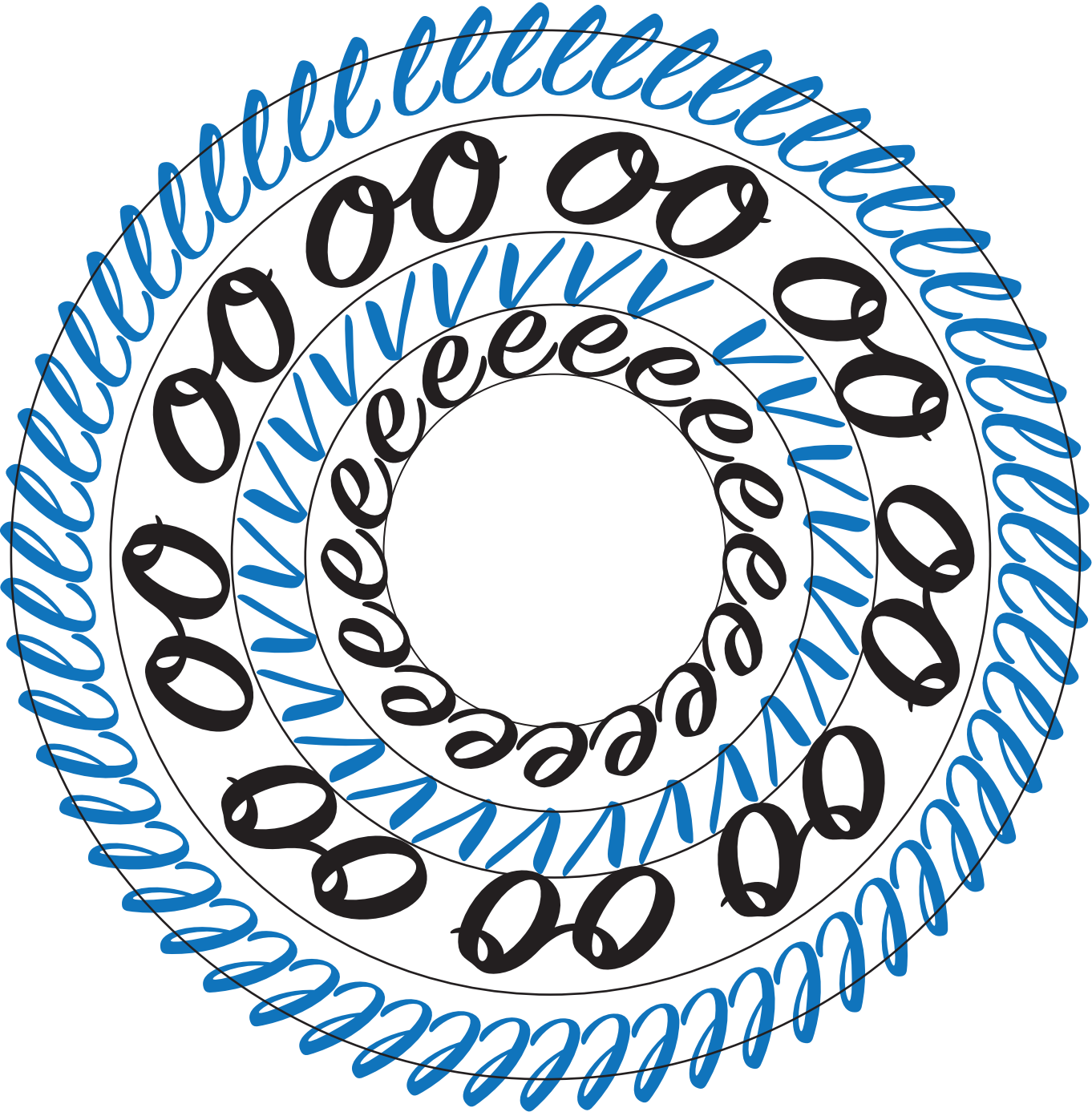
Proceed with other tools and lines. If you want, alternate between two colours.



Use the drawing provided that is made up of concentric circles.  
Draw a different continuous line inside each circle.  
Try to do so without removing your hand from the paper.



Use the key word or another word chosen with the teacher.  
Now do the same with the letters: use each circle to write  
a letter and write it consecutively.  
Alternate the different tools and colours.



LOVE

Now do the same with writing: use each circle to write a sentence. Alternate the different tools and colours.

Orpheus sings of his love.

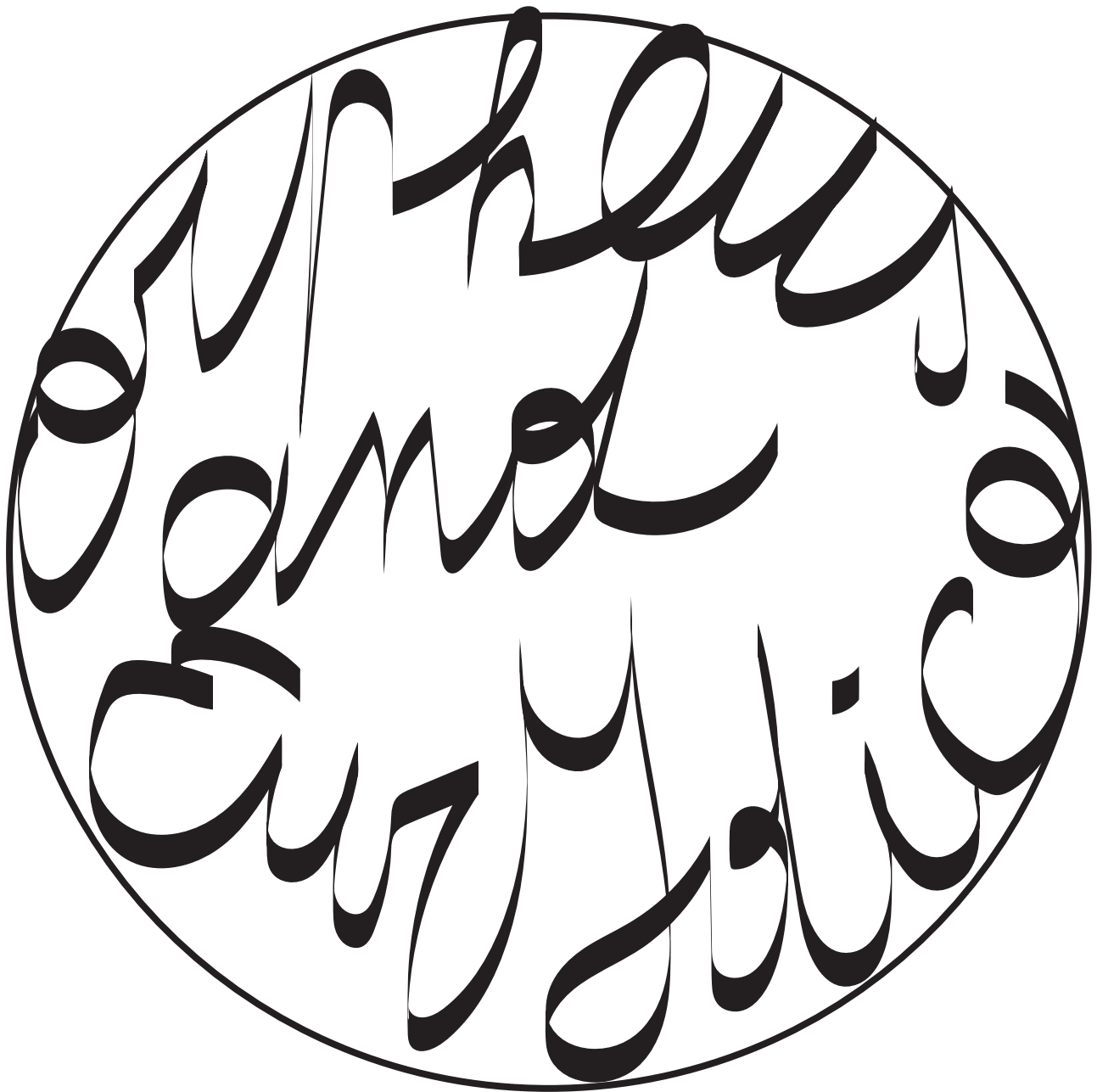
Orpheus descends into the underworld.



Using a circle or the shape of a star as a frame, try writing the title of the story inside.

Do this by trying to follow and occupy the chosen shape as much as possible.

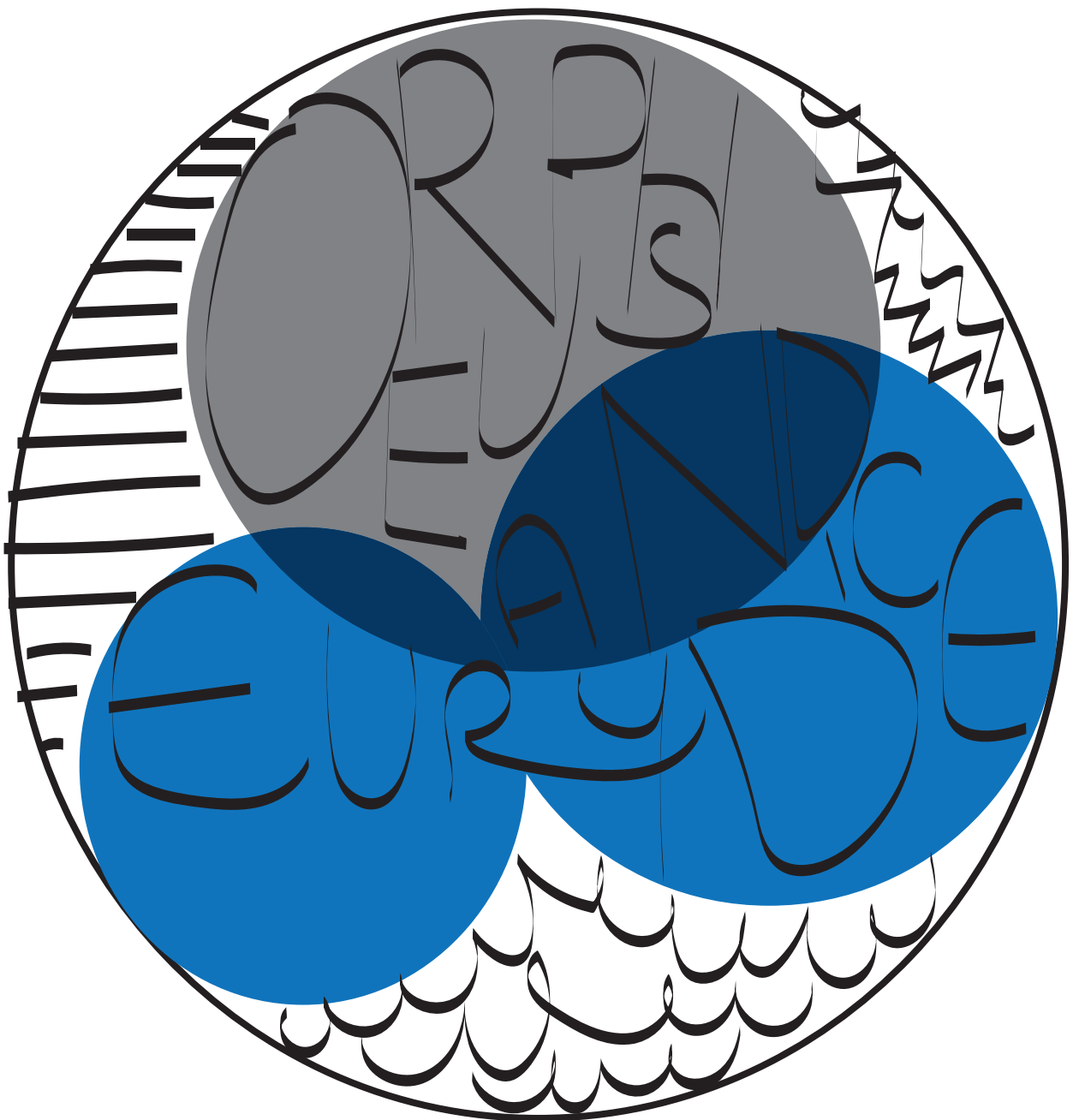
## Orpheus and Eurydice





Draw other circles inside the circle and colour them in.  
Write using capital letters inside each circle.  
Use the various lines to highlight spaces.

Orpheus and Eurydice



Draw a sinuous shape inside the circle and colour it in.  
Fill in and write in the empty spaces and inside the shape,  
matching the words to the spaces.  
Create a harmonious design.



Orpheus and Eurydice



Co-funded by  
the European Union

All content is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

The STORIAS project is co-financed by the ERASMUS+ programme of the EU. Its content reflects the views of the authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information therein.

(Project code: 2021-1-FR01-KA220-SCH-000029483)