

How the Stars Fall (And Rise Again)

Characters.

ANDROMEDA – daughter of Cassiopeia

CASSIOPEIA – queen and mother

POSEIDON – god of the sea

THE STARS – an ensemble chorus

Dramaturgical Note.

How the Stars Fall (And Rise Again) reimagines the myth of Andromeda. While inspired by classical sources, this version departs from the traditional telling in order to explore themes of hubris, beauty, and power. In many versions of the myth, Andromeda is a passive figure, sacrificed to appease the wrath of Poseidon. This adaptation instead centers her agency. Through the voices of the Stars (those who have suffered before her) Andromeda learns that divine power is sustained not by inevitability, but by belief. When that belief is withdrawn, even the gods may falter.

Scene I.

The stage opens, a circle representing a deep pit is in the center.

ANDROMEDA lies inside. STARS spread themselves around it.

STARS.

When we all may shine,

When my fate is mine,

As we grope and die,
In the place we lie,
When we all desire,
When they all conspire,
And our face they hide,
Still, we all may shine.

POSEIDON enters. STARS exit, scared. He uses ANDROMEDA as a puppet.

POSEIDON.

Little star, little mortal thing.
How easy you sleep,
How easy you bend,

He drops her. STARS scatter into darkness. POSEIDON exits. Silence. ANDROMEDA wakes.

ANDROMEDA.

Mother? *Mother!*

CASSIOPEIA.

Up already? The sun has barely touched the hills.

ANDROMEDA.

I had a dream.

CASSIOPEIA.

Dreams, dreams, another dream, you always have dreams.

ANDROMEDA.

No, this one felt different. It felt– (*she struggles for the word*) Heavy.

CASSIOPEIA grabs her hand, almost mockingly, to console her.

CASSIOPEIA.

Dreams are but the wind,

A shiver. A chill. They pass.

ANDROMEDA.

I was falling,

And the stars were watching,

And something— (*a pause*)

Something had my hands.

CASSIOPEIA, letting go.

You think too much. Go to the village.

We have guests today. Kings, sailors, priests.

They will want to see you.

ANDROMEDA.

Why?

CASSIOPEIA.

Because you are beautiful. Now go.

ANDROMEDA exits slowly. Again, silence.

Scene II.

Later. Silence. Then a rumble. The sea sound rises.

POSEIDON appears. CASSIOPEIA kneels immediately.

CASSIOPEIA.

Lord of the deep.

POSEIDON.

You boast loudly, queen.

You say your daughter shines brighter than my daughters.

The Nereids hear you. Your words lap at my tide.

(He draws close) And the sea hears you.

CASSIOPEIA, coldly.

Let them hear. Truth is not often silent,

It does not hide.

POSEIDON.

Does it, now? I suppose I will grant you that,

But know that truth also invites hunger.

CASSIOPEIA lifts her head.

CASSIOPEIA.

And are you hungry, my lord?

POSEIDON.

Starving.

CASSIOPEIA.

And what, Poseidon, would assuage the tempest?

What would satisfy the hunger of the waves.

POSEIDON.

Your daughter. (*A beat—not of fear, of pondering.*)

CASSIOPEIA.

As sacrifice?

POSEIDON.

No. As mine. As yours. As your blood tied to mine- a divine line.

CASSIOPEIA considers this. And she turns away.

CASSIOPEIA.

To bear a god in my family, to rise above this- this mortal dust.

(*Turning back with a sinister smile.*) Yes.

POSEIDON.

Then it is done.

CASSIOPEIA.

It is done.

POSEIDON.

And so it is written within the stars.

Scene III.

POSEIDON.

Little star. Wake.

ANDROMEDA tries to wake herself, but fails. She is awake.

ANDROMEDA.

You.

POSEIDON.

Your mother made a bargain

ANDROMEDA.

What bargain?

POSEIDON.

Your mother has promised you to the sea.

ANDROMEDA.

No.

POSEIDON.

Yes.

POSEIDON reaches for her. She turns and runs. But the circle of light traps her.

ANDROMEDA.

Mother!

She screams. No sound comes out. The circle of light tightens around her.

POSEIDON.

No one hears in dreams.

ANDROMEDA.

This is not real.

POSEIDON.

Everything that's real begins in dreams.

The STARS begin to appear around them. Faint. Watching.

STARS, whispering, crescendoing.

We see you,

We hear you,

We feel you

ANDROMEDA.

Who?

STARS.

Look up.

She complies.

STARS.

We were daughters,

We were lovers,

We were children,

We were bright

ANDROMEDA.

Stars.

STARS.

We died shining.

POSEIDON.

Silence!

The STARS do not move.

STARS.

He thinks the sky is his,
Much like his roaring sea.
But while the water moves around,
What is in it still remains. Apart, beyond.

The fault, dear Andromeda, is not in the stars,
But in the seas below,
And in the power we choose to grant.

We cannot break gods,
But we can break lies.

ANDROMEDA.

What lies?

STARS.

Power.
He lives on our belief in it,
He craves it.
But we no longer believe in it,
(*To Poseidon*) And so your hunger, starved.

The lights flicker. The rope around her wrists falls loose. POSEIDON freezes.

POSEIDON.

What have you done?

STARS.

Nothing. Only truth.

ANDROMEDA.

Then I will run.

STARS.

No. You will rise.

The STARS surround ANDROMEDA. POSEIDON struggles to move.

POSEIDON.

You cannot defy me!

ANDROMEDA and STARS.

We already did.

POSEIDON.

I am the sea!

ANDROMEDA and STARS.

You are hunger!

POSEIDON.

You will fall again!

ANDROMEDA and STARS.

Then we will rise higher!

The STARS step back, POSEIDON weakened.

ANDROMEDA.

All my life, I was told the sky belonged to gods.

But now I know that you are the sky.

STARS.

Yes.

ANDROMEDA.

Then I will shine with you.

A breath, as the universe commences again. Silence- not peaceful, but present. Reserved. Hopeful.

STARS.

Until we all may shine,

Until we all may shine,

ANDROMEDA, stepping forward.

Until we all may shine.

A pause.

Then, let us begin.

Blackout.