

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE



CHORUS 1: You know how in some places, it is cold for part of the year and warm for the other part?

CHORUS 2: Well, there's a reason for that. Hear now the story of Demeter and Persephone.

CHORUS 1: One day, Demeter, the goddess of the harvest, was in the fields with her daughter, Persephone.

CHORUS 2: Persephone was a beautiful young girl, and Demeter worshipped the ground she walked on.

DEMETER: Come along, my darling girl. We must go home now.

PERSEPHONE: Oh, Mother, not now. Just a few more minutes. There are so many beautiful flowers to pick.

DEMETER: My sweet, wonderful child, all right. I am going to sit under this tree for a while. Go and find some flowers that are as beautiful as you are, if that's possible.

PERSEPHONE: Oh, Mom. Give it a rest.

DEMETER: Such a sweet girl.

CHORUS 1: Meanwhile, down in the Underworld, Hades, the god of that dark place, was unhappy.

CHORUS 2: He was being visited by his brother Zeus, the king of the gods.

HADES: It's so dark down here. Dark, dreary, dull. The only thing that might brighten it up a bit is a beautiful queen.

ZEUS: Yes, my brother. But, no offense, what woman would marry you?

HADES: Hey, listen. I have my own place, my own chariot, and I'm a king. What more could any woman want?

ZEUS: Hmm. You have a point. Well, do you have anyone in mind?

HADES: As a matter of fact, I do. Lovely Persephone.

ZEUS: Demeter's beloved daughter? There's no way. I cannot allow it. Besides, Demeter would never let her go.

HADES: I know. That is why I have a plan.

CHORUS 1: So Hades told Zeus his plan to steal Persephone.

CHORUS 2: Zeus, being a loyal brother, did nothing to stand in the way of Hades' plot.

CHORUS 1: Back on Earth, Persephone found a flower that Hades had placed in the field.

PERSEPHONE: Ooooh! Look at that narcissus! I've never seen one that was this dark red color. I must have it.

CHORUS 2: As Persephone bent to pick the flower, Hades arrived in his chariot and swept Persephone away.

PERSEPHONE: Whoa!

HADES: You're mine! All mine!!

PERSEPHONE: Help me! Mother!

CHORUS 1: But Demeter had fallen asleep under the tree and could not hear the cries of her daughter. Soon, she woke up.

DEMETER: Persephone? Where are you, my precious child? Oh, these young girls, they are such rebels. Persephone? Darling girl?

CHORUS 2: Demeter ran into Hecate, the moon god, who was snoozing in the field.

DEMETER: Hecate, have you seen Persephone?

HECATE: I have not. It is day, and I was asleep.

DEMETER: Oh, what good are you? I must find my daughter!

HECATE: Why don't you ask Helios, the sun god. He sees everything in the day.

DEMETER: Good idea. I take back what I said earlier.

HECATE: No problem.

CHORUS 1: Demeter went to see Helios.

HELIOS: Yes, I have seen Persephone. But you will not like what I have to say.

DEMETER: Say it, Sunny. I must have my daughter back!

HELIOS: Hades has taken her to the Underworld to be his queen.

DEMETER: What? How could this happen? Who would allow it?

HELIOS: You might want to check in with Zeus. That's all I'll say.

CHORUS 2: Meanwhile, back in the Underworld, Hades was happy, but Persephone was miserable.

HADES: Ah, you sure have brightened up the place with your beauty.

PERSEPHONE: Get me out of here!

HADES: Sure, it's dark. There are the souls of the dead roaming around. But you'll get used to it.

PERSEPHONE: Never! I must get back to my mother.

HADES: How about a little snack? You must be hungry.

PERSEPHONE: Save it, buddy. I won't eat your food.

CHORUS 1: Demeter went to see Zeus. He admitted that he did not stand in the way of Hades' plan to abduct Persephone.

DEMETER: You what?

ZEUS: Well, he's not so bad, is he? He's a powerful man, successful.

DEMETER: How could you allow it?

ZEUS: Look, he's my brother. He was lonely. He was sad.

DEMETER: Well, you are going to be sad when you hear what I'm about to say. As long as my daughter is down there, nothing will grow here on Earth.

ZEUS: Well, that won't affect me. I'm a god and don't eat mortal food.

DEMETER: Yes, but who worships you? The mortals! If they starve, there will be no one to praise and honor you.

ZEUS: What? No one to glorify the name of Zeus?! I can't have that! I must be glorified!

DEMETER: I knew you'd see my point.

ZEUS: Okay. I'll return your daughter to you. I just hope she hasn't eaten anything down there.

DEMETER: My girl knows better than that!

ZEUS: We'll see.

CHORUS 2: But Persephone did not know that whoever eats food from the Underworld may never leave.

CHORUS 1: Hades was trying his best to get Persephone to eat.

HADES: *(Holding out a pomegranate)* Just a tiny morsel, my dear. To keep up your strength.

PERSEPHONE: Well, maybe just a few of these juicy pomegranate seeds. What harm could they do?

CHORUS 2: Persephone, no!

CHORUS 1: Don't eat them!

PERSEPHONE: Hey, who asked you? You're as bad as my mother.

CHORUS 2: Suit yourself.

PERSEPHONE: I will.

CHORUS 1 & 2: Hmph!

PERSEPHONE: Hmph!

CHORUS 1 & 2: Go ahead and be foolish.

PERSEPHONE: I know you are, but what am I?

HADES: Oh, will you all stop it?! Here, my dear.

PERSEPHONE: *(Eating some seeds)* Juicy!

HADES: Ah-hah! Now you can never leave me. You have eaten food from the Underworld!

PERSEPHONE: That was a dirty trick!

CHORUS 1: Just then, Demeter and Zeus arrive.

DEMETER: My baby!

PERSEPHONE: Mother!

ZEUS: Hand her over, Hades.

HADES: Wait a minute. You said it was okay.

ZEUS: Well, I changed my mind. The king of the gods can do that, you know.

HADES: Well, you are too late. Persephone has eaten.

DEMETER: Persephone, how could you?

PERSEPHONE: Oh, Mother, lay off. I was so hungry and I just had six tiny, little pomegranate seeds.

DEMETER: Of course, my precious. Why am I criticizing the most wonderful thing in my life? Oh, Zeus, is there nothing you can do?

ZEUS: Six tiny seeds hardly seems to warrant staying down here for eternity. How about this? Since Persephone ate only six seeds, she will stay down here for six months of the year. The other six can be spent above with Demeter.

HADES: Well, I guess six months is better than none at all.

DEMETER: True. But for the six months that my daughter is away, nothing shall grow on Earth.

ZEUS: Demeter!

DEMETER: Let me finish. I will show the mortals how to harvest food and save it for the months Persephone is here. I think I deserve a break as well. I will rest during that time. Then I will rejoice with a bountiful growing season for the return of my beloved Persephone.

PERSEPHONE: Do I have any say in this?

**HADES, ZEUS,
AND DEMETER:** NO!

PERSEPHONE: Just asking.

CHORUS 2: And so it was then, and so it is now.

DEMETER: And remember, Mommy loves you!

PERSEPHONE: Can it, Mother!

DEMETER: Yes, my sweet.

THE END



Glossary

dreary: dull and miserable

offense: If you cause offense, you upset someone.

chariot: a small vehicle pulled by a horse or horses, used in ancient times for battle or for racing

narcissus: a plant that grows from a bulb and has yellow or white flowers and long, thin leaves

precious: very special or dear

rebels: people who fight against the people in charge of something

abduct: to kidnap someone

morsel: a small piece of food

pomegranate: a round, reddish yellow fruit that has a tough skin, red flesh, and many seeds

criticizing: telling someone what he or she has done wrong

warrant: to deserve

eternity: time without beginning or end; a seemingly endless time period