

Ancient Greece: Persephone (Myth)

The Ancient Greeks explained many things by telling stories of the gods that lived on Mount Olympus. This myth is a symbol of the budding and dying of nature, and why the seasons happen.

1. Persephone is the goddess of the underworld in Greek mythology. She is the daughter of Zeus and Demeter, goddess of the harvest.
2. Persephone was such a beautiful young woman that everyone loved her, even Hades, the god of the underworld, wanted her for to be his wife.
3. One day, when she was collecting flowers on the plain of Enna, the earth suddenly opened and Hades came through the gap on his chariot pulled by black horses. He grabbed her, and took her back down to the Underworld. Nobody except Zeus, and the all-seeing sun, Helios, had noticed it.
4. Broken-hearted, Demeter wandered the earth, looking for her daughter until Helios told her what had happened. Demeter was so angry and lonely that she withdrew herself, and plants stopped growing on the earth.
5. Knowing this could not continue much longer, Zeus sent the god Hermes down to Hades to make him release Persephone.
6. Hades grudgingly agreed, but only if she had not eaten anything while she had been in the Underworld, otherwise she could not return. Persephone had not eaten much, but she had eaten about six pomegranate seeds.
7. This had bound her to the underworld forever, and she had to stay there for one month for every seed she had eaten. The other months she stayed with Demeter, her mother.
8. As Demeter became happy again with her daughter, things started to grow on the earth again. But when Persephone returned to Hades, Demeter was sad and refused to let anything grow, and so winter began.

List of Characters:

Persephone, Demeter, Zeus, Hades, Helios