

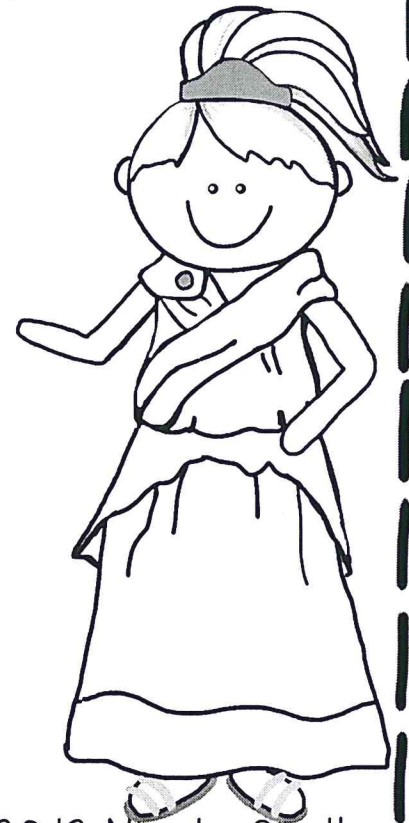
Persephone and Demeter

The Story of the Four Seasons

Demeter, the goddess of the harvest, was responsible for the all of the beautiful flowers and trees that grew. She adored making the Earth a pleasant place to live. There was only one thing she loved more than making the Earth bloom with vibrant colors, her daughter, Persephone. One of their favorite things to do together was to dance amongst the apple bearing trees. Persephone was amazed when beautiful flowers seemed magically bloom at her feet. She and her mother shared the love of nature and Demeter loved nothing more than to see a smile on her sweet daughter's face.

From a dark corner of the field, Hades, the god of the Underworld, watched the mother and daughter play and dance. He found himself uncontrollably drawn to Persephone. He was in love with her and wanted her to be his wife.

One day, Persephone was gathering flowers. She realized she had wandered away from her mother. Just as she was about to turn and head toward home, an unusual flower caught her eye. Persephone could not resist picking it. She knew her mother would find the flower as eye-catching as she did. As Persephone bent down to pick the flower, the ground broke beneath her. A chariot carrying a man dressed in black appeared and grabbed Persephone. Before Persephone could scream, she found herself in the chariot moving down a dark pit.



The Story of the Four Seasons

When Hades and Persephone arrived at the Underworld, he took her to his palace. There he explained that he wanted her to become his queen. Persephone was not happy. She did not want to be married to Hades. She wanted to return home to her mother, Demeter.



Hades did his best to make Persephone happy. He offered her a beautiful, jeweled crown and long tables of delicious fruits and sweet treats. However, Persephone refused the crown and the foods. All Persephone wanted was to leave the gloomy, dark world. She missed her mother.

Meanwhile, Demeter was searching everywhere for her precious daughter. Weeks had gone by and there had been no sign of Persephone. Demeter was overwhelmed with grief. She could not eat, sleep, and she cried uncontrollably. The Earth began to become cold; plants began to die, and nothing grew. The goddess of the harvest was no longer blessing the Earth with blooming vegetation.

Zeus was worried about the world. He knew that if nothing grew, everything would die from hunger. So Zeus made a visit to Demeter. He explained that their brother, Hades, was responsible for Persephone's disappearance. He realized that he must help Demeter get Persephone back because she was in such pain.

Zeus offered to send Hermes down to the Underworld to talk to Hades. Zeus did warn Demeter that if Persephone had

The Story of the Four Seasons

eaten anything during her stay in the Underworld, she would not be able to return home.

Of course, Persephone was thrilled to see Hermes and overjoyed at the thought of returning to her mother. As she was leaving the Underworld, Hades stopped her. He explained that if she had eaten any of his food, she would have to stay forever. Persephone's happiness quickly turned to sadness. She had eaten six pomegranate seeds earlier that morning.

Hades looked at the girl's face, and because he loved her so much, he made an exception. He agreed to allow Persephone to return to her mother for half of the year. The other half, she must stay with him and serve as his queen. Persephone gladly agreed. Hermes flew Persephone back to her mother. Demeter was so thrilled that her happiness made the Earth bloom with vibrant colors again.

Now when Persephone returns to the Underworld, Demeter mourns and nothing grows on Earth. However, when Persephone returns to her mother, Demeter is delighted and everything blooms again. The moods of the harvest goddess are reflected each year causing the changes of the seasons.

What is the the theme story? _____

How does this story explain why the Earth experiences seasons?

Hades

What character traits would you use to describe Hades? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Character Trait

Evidence from the text



Character Trait

Evidence from the text