**The Myth of Hades and Persephone**

**One morning when Demeter descended on Earth with her daughter Persephone , she left her to play with the sea nymphs called Nereids and the Naiads who were the freshwater nymphs of the lakes, springs and rivers.**

Demeter went to supervise her bountiful crops. As Persephone played with the others, her attention fell upon the potently fragrant valley nearby and there she saw the yellow flower narcissus. She called upon her playmates to accompany her, but they couldn’t possibly go with her as leaving the side of their water bodies would result in their death.

Demeter went to supervise her bountiful crops. As Persephone played with the others, she heard a whisper on the wind calling her name. The wind rustled the trees of the nearby forest, drawing Persephone’s attention to a lone flower. Unaware, she wandered away from the nymphs and towards the yellow flower narcissus.

The flower Narcissus was planted there by Gaia, who was following the orders of Zeus. The goal was to enchant Persephone and lure her away from her guides.

So, Persephone danced her way to the garden alone and tried to pluck the narcissus flower. It tired her as the narcissus only came out after a lot of pulling. But suddenly, to her utter fright, she saw the tiny hole from which she had drawn out the flower shaft, began to grow in size until it became an enormous chasm.

From this came the vigorous galloping sounds of multiple horses. Out of all her friends only the naiad Cyane tried to rescue the crying Persephone but she was no match for the powerful Hades. Lamenting her friend’s kidnap, Cyane melted into a pool of tears and formed the river Cyane at the spot.

From this came the vigorous galloping sounds of multiple horses. The nymphs and naiads stood between Hades and his prey, but they were swatted away furiously by Hades as he claimed his prize. Struck by their grief, the nymphs and naiads melted into a pool of tears and formed the tributaries of the river Cyane.

Demeter rushed back to where she had left her daughter and found only the Cyane river there with the other nymphs weeping. Worried as she was, she asked all as to the whereabouts of her beloved daughter.

Nobody could tell her anything. Furious that they couldn’t protect her child, she cursed all the nymphs into becoming heinous women with plumed bodies and scaly feet, called the sirens. It was only the river Cyane who helped her by washing over the belt of Persephone, indicating that something gravely wrong had happened.

Demeter went mad and hunted for her daughter everywhere. The myth says that she even disguised herself as an aged lady and with lighted torch in her hands roamed the Earth for nine long days and nine long nights.

Finally, she met Hekate, the deity of magic, witchcraft, spirits and crossroads. Hekate advised her to seek help from the all seeing Helios, the sun god. Helios told Demeter all about how Hades had dragged Persephone into the underworld.

Finally, she met the Fates, seeking information as to the whereabouts of her daughter. In exchange for X the Fates offered Demeter the information she sought, to which she agreed. They told Demeter about how Hades had dragged Persephone into the underworld.

Persephone’s mother, Demeter, begged her brother Hades to allow Persephone to come back to the living world. Hades consulted with Zeus and they both decided to allow Persephone to live on earth for eight months each year, while the rest of the time she would reside in the Underworld.

Before leaving the underworld, Persephone had been persuaded to eat four seeds of a pomegranate. In ancient mythology, to eat the fruit of one’s captor meant that one would have to return to that captor or country, so Persephone was doomed to return to the underworld for four months of the year.

**The myth of Hades and Persephone is associated with the coming of Spring and Winter: When Persephone comes to the Earth, it’s springtime. When she descends to Hades, it is winter.**