

Persephone: Underworld's One Beauty

Hades arises from the ground in his magnificent chariot, searching for his prey. He has been watching Persephone in her beauty pick flowers and wanted her for himself. Then, just as the moment was right, he emerged from the ground and abducted her, took her to the Underworld to be his queen. When Demeter, Persephone's mother, heard about the tragic mishap, she went into a state of depression and stopped all life on earth. She told Zeus that all life would be stopped until Persephone was returned to her. So, Zeus being the mighty father he was, he went down to bargain with Hades. He thought he had it in the bag when Hades said Persephone would be set free, but when Persephone ate the pomegranate seeds from Hades that tied her to the underworld. Because she had eaten the seeds she was now tied to the underworld for one third of the year, and able to see her mother for two thirds of the year (Pontikis "Persephone"). Persephone's story relates to quite a few other myths and stories in mythology, even though hers is pretty unique.

There are a lot of myths and stories dealing with kidnappings and abductions in mythology. One example would be Helen of Troy. She was married to Menelaus very happily and Paris kidnaps her. Menelaus is so upset about it that he goes to his king brother and they go to Troy to get her back. The whole thing ends up causing the Trojan War (Pontikis). Another example might be Europa. Zeus saw much beauty in her, and wanted her for a wife. One day he took the form of a tame white bull and persuaded her to get on his back. They then swam to Crete where she bore him three children. Europa later married the King of Crete (Encyclopedia Mythica "Europa"). Just like these stories Persephone was abducted and it caused problems for others. Her story relates to others in a different way also though.

There are some stories that have to deal with the natural things happening on earth or things on the about the planet that we might just not understand. These all relate to Persephone's story. In her story it has her being tied to the underworld and her mother, Demeter, stopping all life while she is there for one third of the year. This is explaining why the seasons happen. One story that relates might be Phaeton and his father Helios, the Sun God. One day while Phaeton was caring for the horses of Helios' chariot, he decided he wanted to take them for a ride. Sometimes he would get too far from the earth, causing it to freeze, and sometimes he would get too close, causing it to burn (Pontikis). Thus explaining why there are the colder parts of earth like ice caps, and the hotter parts of earth like the deserts. One other story that illustrates this would be Pandora. She was given many gifts by Zeus, one of them being curiosity from Hera, when she was created. She was then given a box and told not to open it. But, with the gift of curiosity, that was the only thing she wanted to do. So, when her curiosity finally overtook her, she opened the box. All the evils of the world came flying out. She tried to close the box, but it just wouldn't go. The only thing that she got trapped in the box was hope (Pontikis "Pandora"). And so, this story explains how we got the evils in the world, and hope to help us through them. Persephone's story has a lot more to do with other myths however.

In most of mythology there are examples of the kings and gods getting what they want, just because they want it. Persephone's myth deals with this along with others. The first example I can think of would be Jason and the Golden Fleece. He went to meet his uncle, who was king. And, because his uncle didn't want him to end up being king and taking over, he sent Jason on this pointless quest for Golden Fleece. It was supposed to be impossible, therefore making Jason able to never be king, but he had some help. He rode on a dragon wearing the cloak of night, making him invisible, and got the fleece after much planning (Pontikis). Another story that shows this would be Hercules. He had killed his wife and kids, and was now being punished to do these supposedly impossible tasks, to pay off the debt. They were called "The 12 Labors". Just one of these was that he was sent to kill Hydra. Hydra was a nine headed sea serpent with heads that grew back when cut off, and one immortal head. Hercules of course, like other myths, got help from his nephew and ended up killing the serpent (Pontikis "Hercules"). Now Persephone didn't have to do any crazy tasks, but because Hades wanted her, he took her. They are a little different, but all the stories show the concept of kings or gods getting what they want, just because they want it.

Persephone's story might not relate to stories in a lot of ways, but it does have some very key ways that it does. She was abducted, which happens in most, or a lot of myths, causing problems. Her story also explains natural things about earth, like others. Hers was the seasons, others it could be how earth was formed the way it was, or how certain things came to be. And finally, one other way it relates would be that kings and gods can get whatever they want, whenever they want it. So, her story doesn't totally relate to others in a lot of ways, but the few ways that it does are very important.

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