



Persephone

Proserpina

Περσεφόνη



*Daughter of Demeter and Zeus, she was abducted by Hades and became his wife... and Queen of the underworld.*

Persephone and her mother Demeter are 'nature' goddesses – in charge of vegetation, harvest and agricultural production. The gods Ares, Apollo and others attempted to court and marry Persephone, but Demeter refused them and hid Demeter away. Hades, god of the underworld fell in love with Persephone. Zeus suggested he steal her away, as Demeter was unlikely to allow him to marry her. As Persephone was gathering flowers in a meadow with a group of nymphs, Athena and Artemis, the ground opened up, and Hades took her into the earth with him. Demeter forbid the earth to produce, while she searched the world for her daughter. Helios, the sun finally told Demeter what had happened – the sun sees everything, and Zeus was forced to intervene because of the cries of the starving people. Because Persephone had been tricked or coerced into eating seeds from the pomegranate



given to her while in the underworld, she would be required to spend 4-6 months in Hades, and allowed to spend the remainder of the year with her mother. Zeus gave her to Hades, and she married him. She was written as a faithful wife, but they had no children. Her duties as Queen of the underworld included assisting her husband in seeing that the curses put upon the dead were fulfilled.

The abduction of Persephone is a wonderful story used to explain the change of seasons. When she is sequestered in Hades, the earth is barren and in winter. When she returns, spring begins – this is likely why the Roman version of her name means 'to shoot forth'.

In 1622, Gian Lorenzo Bernini completed a marble sculpture titled 'The Rape of Proserpina' (rape meaning 'to steal'). It includes Hades, Persephone, and Cerberus – the 3-headed dog.

For more information on Persephone and her story, visit <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persephone>

For colors, I focused on the pomegranate of the story, with pinks, reds, almost purples, and hints of white. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do!