

The Story of Persephone and the Pomegranate Seeds (Retold)

Mother Ceres prepared for her long day out in the fields to care for all the crops all over the earth; the season was going slow and it was essential to speed the ripening season before the world deals with famine. She gathered all her special equipment and was about to leave for the day, when she kissed her beloved daughter Proserpine on her forehead.

“I’ll miss you a lot, sweetie. I understand you will be bored, so I am allowing you to spend your day at the shore with the harmless sea nymphs. But this is only under one condition: you must not stray away from them and go wandering alone,” Mother Ceres explained.

“Thank you, mother. I promise to remain an obedient daughter. I will not do any mischief, nor will I think of such a thing,” convinced Proserpina.

“Very well then. Off I shall go! I will be out in the deep corn fields. You take care of yourself and I want you back home before nightfall. Your mother loves you, and expects to be a well-mannered young lady at all times!” Mother Ceres affirmed.

“Do not fret, Mother. It is my duty! Have a safe trip!” said Proserpina.

“Farewell!” yelled out Mother Ceres from her chariot. She watched Proserpina run out in the distance sun, dancing and skipping. Mother Ceres was more than elated to see her daughter in a joyful mood; it was something all mothers wished to see. However, Mother Ceres was slightly reluctant to let Proserpina go off to the shore. She knew the sea nymphs would not dare do any ill with her daughter. However, her heart and her decision did not align when she let Proserpina go; even Mother Ceres cannot explain why.

After the speedy ride offered by the ornamented chariot, Mother Ceres did not wait any longer to start working. She parked her chariot in an area where she can always see it, and began working in the paddy farms. She extracted grain for hours and hours, not noticing the beaming heat of the sun or dark, angry clouds that were slowly rolling into her area.

Hours passed and Mother Ceres transitioned her task from extracting grains to working in the paddy fields. While she was working, she heard an unwelcoming wailing of a young child, most likely a girl. Mother Ceres stood still for a moment, in a state of confusion. The swaying of the trees, the occasional zephyrs, and the atmosphere had stopped, as if they were lifeless.

Minutes passed, and Mother Ceres went back to doing her work. But her attention was not on the paddy fields; she was closely listening to the sounds around her. She heard a bird’s chirp and would drop her tools. She was not paying attention at all, in fact; she had accidentally clipped her nails instead of clipping off a thorn, and out of the agony, this time she had screamed.

But even more agonizing was Proserpina's shrieks. This time, Mother Ceres was certain that something was not right, and it certainly involved her—and Proserpina. Mother Ceres dropped her fresh tools, and left it there to rust in the paddy fields. She was taught never to disrespect her tools, but Mother Ceres had not a second to think. She ran into the chariot, and yelled: "Go! Go! Anywhere, just go!"

Confused, the horses just decided to take the chariot back to her home. Suddenly, droplets of rain started pounding against the covers of the chariot. The pebble road started to get bumpy and the ride was very turbulent due to strong winds. The rain was getting heavier and heavier; holes started to form throughout the protective covers. By the time the chariot had made it to the main road, the entire cover was ripped, and Mother Ceres was not only soaked in water, but also tears of worry.

Mother Ceres had had enough. She got off the chariot, and took on foot back home. She ran faster than she ever had, and looked for every possible shortcut back to her home.

At last, Mother Ceres finally saw her home in sight. She was in a mixture of feelings: anger, worry, confusion, and the feeling any good mother would have when anxious of her daughter. She cared not to greet her neighbors; she just banged her door open and yelled: "My dear Proserpina, where shall you be? What happened to you? Where are you?"

She heard nothing. The eerie silence and dark atmosphere was just the tip of the iceberg. She was about to awaken the entire city and ask the entire town of her daughter's whereabouts. She remained standing in the foyer, without any further investigation. Later on, Mother Ceres left the house again, but purposefully did not lock the door in case her daughter would come.

She trekked to the sea nymphs, in hope of an answer to her biggest query ever yet.

"Where is my daughter? Did you fools look after her? What have you done? Where is Proserpina?" yelled Mother Ceres.

The sea nymphs gradually got up; they were in deep sleep but woke up suddenly at the sound of the angry lady.

"We are so sorry madame, but we do not find ourselves wrong. Proserpina spent the day with us, then said she was expected home by dusk—and off she went! Hadn't you have checked your home? She must've been sleeping, I suppose," explained the sea nymphs in unison.

"I fear I did," reluctantly said Mother Ceres, knowing that she did not go past her foyer. "Did you hear any shrieks earlier today, though?"

"I'm afraid it was no shriek—today is the first day of Whale season, so you must've heard the whales!" explained the sea nymphs.

“Ah.” Mother Ceres had no words to speak. She was embarrassed of herself, but was slightly relieved from the fact that the long wails were not her daughter’s. Ceres curtsied and left the sea nymphs, then ran back to her home. She realized that she was not thinking practically—her daughter was most likely in her room, asleep.

Quietly entering her home, she crept up her stairs, and thankfully found her daughter sound asleep. It was all a work of perception that completely changed the plot.