Name: _____ Date: _____

The Girl and the Pomegranate

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 219 words

Persephone loved flowers. Her mother, Demeter, was the goddess of the harvest. Wherever Demeter walked, plants grew.

One morning, Persephone found a new flower. It had a hundred blossoms on one stem. She picked it.

The ground cracked open. Out came a golden chariot. Hades, the king below the earth, took her down.

Persephone was sad in the dark place. She did not eat or drink. She missed the sun.

Demeter heard a faint cry. She searched for nine days and nights with two torches.

Nobody had seen her girl. Demeter grew so sad that nothing would grow.

Leaves dropped from the trees. The wheat withered. For the first time, the world had winter.

The people were hungry. Zeus saw that the world needed help. He sent Hermes to bring Persephone home.

Hades listened. "Have a bite before you go," he said. He held a pomegranate, red and full of seeds.

Persephone was so hungry. She ate six of the shiny seeds. Then she rode up to her mother.

Demeter ran to hug her. "Did you eat anything below?" she asked. "Only six seeds," said Persephone.

So each year Persephone must go below for six months. When she is away, it is winter.

When she comes home, spring begins. The ice melts, and flowers open. Demeter is glad again.

Questions

1. Who took Persephone below the earth?

A. Zeus
B. Hades
C. Hermes

2. What did Demeter do to find her daughter?

A. She asked the farmers to dig
B. She called the sea
C. She searched with two torches

3. Why did winter come to the world?

A. Demeter was so sad that nothing would grow
B. The sun was lost
C. The farmers forgot to plant

4. What did Persephone eat before she left?

A. A loaf of bread
B. A cup of milk
C. Six seeds

5. In this story, what does "withered" mean?

A. Turned red
B. Dried up
C. Grew tall

6. What does the story say about spring?

A. It comes when Persephone returns
B. It comes when Hades sleeps
C. It comes with the winter

Words to know

harvest: crops picked at the end
chariot: a cart pulled by horses
withered: dried up
pomegranate: a red fruit with seeds
torches: burning sticks

Answer key: The Girl and the Pomegranate

1. B. Hades
2. C. She searched with two torches
3. A. Demeter was so sad that nothing would grow
4. C. Six seeds
5. B. Dried up
6. A. It comes when Persephone returns