

WHY YOU SHOULD NEVER EAT A POMEGRANATE SEED

[Natalie] ZEUS: A bold god who thinks too much of himself. Ever since his birth, he has continuously had power be a follow-up to his name, so when he begins to be questioned, he gets angry. (envision Thor, but braggy)

[Simone] DEMETER: A fierce goddess who has always been an overprotective mother to PERSEPHONE. She thinks of her daughter as her only family and the joy of her life and is furious with HADES for stealing her daughter... and even more furious with ZEUS for letting him get away with it. (classic white suburban soccer mom)

[Heather] PERSEPHONE: PERSEPHONE is your average teenager if a teenager's only interests were looking at their phone. She isn't used to being expected to have something particularly important to say, as most of her days were spent eating fruits her mother grew and picking flowers. (Hillary from "Fresh Prince" but with a white girl feel to it)

[Lila] HADES: A sweet god who has proper morals... for an Ancient Greek. He respects DEMETER and PERSEPHONE and knows that ZEUS has his morals wrong, but being timid, is a little too afraid to say anything about it. He is desperately in love with PERSEPHONE. (the kind of kid that the classmates love but white suburban soccer moms disapprove of)

[Ella] JUDGE: A man who thinks a little too much of his power, and spends time admiring it in his mirror at home. He loves his job to the point where it becomes annoying but does so excellently at it that nobody can find the time to complain. (the guy who compliments himself in public bathroom mirrors)

SETTING: A regular court room, present day. Use COURTROOM BACKGROUNDS or any kind of plain, monochrome background you can find.

CLOTHES: Should be relatively modern with a touch of "millionaire fancy". PERSEPHONE should be wearing stereotypical teenager clothes but still with a fancy vibe. JUDGE should wear all black, and preferably a black suit jacket.

The JUDGE is the first character to appear on screen.

JUDGE: Hello all who have come to witness this trial. We are gathered here today to judge if the defendant Hades, God of the Underworld and Lord of the Dead is indeed guilty of kidnapping one Persephone from her mother, Demeter. Thank you.

All characters appear on screen. They appear majestic and graceful.

JUDGE: First, we will hear testimony from the defendant and his...

ZEUS: *stands up* Yes hello, I'm Zeus, King of the Gods and-

JUDGE: Lawyer, then.

Zeus sits down with a grumble.

HADES: *stands* Your Honor, ever since I saw this beautiful young goddess here -

JUDGE: *chuckles* Quite the compliment!

HADES: No, no, we're actually all gods and goddesses.

JUDGE: *after a shocked pause* Continue.

HADES: Right, as I was saying, I've been in love with this young goddess ever since I first saw her. Therefore, I went to ask permission for her hand in marriage from her father, which is what any proper Ancient Greek would do, as you all know.

DEMETER: So you went to ask her father? What about me? The REAL parental figure in this relationship, Zeus!!!

ZEUS: *with a sly smirk* Your Honor...

JUDGE: Continue please, Hades.

HADES: I went to ask permission and I was given it! During our time together at my place, I could see that Persephone was not suffering at all – I made sure she wasn't. Sure, she refused to eat and could have starved herself to death if she hadn't been a goddess, but look at her! She's fine! But all things cast aside, she willingly ate those six pomegranate seeds. And according to Underworld rules –

JUDGE: According to Underworld rules, if you eat food that has been produced in the Underworld, you must stay there forever.

DEMETER: We all know the rules... (*glares*) VERY. Well.

HADES sits, hoping that what he has said is enough.

ZEUS: *stands up* Your Honor, as my brother here has said, I gave my permission to Hades to marry my beloved daughter. As her father and (*next part said with dramatic flair*) the King of the Heavens, Lord of the Skies... I think that Hades should have twice the reasonable permission to take Persephone as his bride.

DEMETER: Objection, Your Honor! On the ground of-

JUDGE: Objection denied.

HADES: *quietly* What do you have to say, Persephone?

PERSEPHONE: *looking up from her phone* Hm? Oh well... you know... I mean... *laughs nervously*

DEMETER: *yelling* My daughter was forcibly taken! Why don't you tell them how you took her, Hades?

HADES: I... well, I...

DEMETER: *pantomiming* Didn't you lure her away from safe guardians using flowers, and then as she pulled one up from the ground GRAB HER, pull her into a chariot, and drag her down into the Underworld with you while she screamed and cried for her mother? Wouldn't you call that kidnapping?

ZEUS: Gods almighty, Demeter, this is the... the... Your Honor, what century is this?

JUDGE: The twenty-first.

ZEUS: *extremely surprised* Really? Oh wait, I remember! I was in a dreadful mood with China and I asked Apollo to shoot his most interesting plague arrow at them! But it ended up breaking into a million pieces in mid-air – I told him to get a new bow, that one must be four thousand years old by now - and it ended up spreading that nasty Corona disease across the world. My, what a chaotic year for the mortals, eh? The Three Fates must have woken up on the wrong side of the bed for the entirety of 2020 A.D. Anyway... this is the twenty-first century, Demeter! Surely things have changed since then!

HADES: Not really.

ZEUS: Hades, you're not helping me out here.

HADES: *sarcastically* Sorry!

PERSEPHONE: I have something to say!

JUDGE: You may speak.

HADES: *smiling* Yes, what do you have to say?

PERSEPHONE: I mean, you've all been talking really loudly for a while now. And I'd know, I've been trying to make a TikTok for the past half hour and you keep talking over the audio I'm trying to use. So like, maybe I should have something to say to if you're going to be so loud? I'm the one who got "kidnapped" [*uses air quotes*] right?

ZEUS: Go ahead, my daughter! *smiles, but gets shot down by a glare from DEMETER*

PERSEPHONE: Well, I guess Hades was kinda uncool about the whole kidnapping part, and you know, it sucked down there. I mean, no cell phone service? AND no Starbucks? It could use some updates. But like, I don't know, Hades is pretty rich – I mean, Mom, have you SEEN the jewels I got for the holidays these mortals celebrate?

DEMETER: *through gritted teeth* Oh yes, I did.

PERSEPHONE: *not noticing* Right, so... I mean, Hades isn't all bad vibes.

DEMETER: You ate. Only six pomegranate seeds, and they say that I can only have you for half of the year! Do you know how many pomegranate seeds can be in a pomegranate, Hades? OVER SIX HUNDRED! I WOULD KNOW, AS I AM THE GODDESS OF THE HARVEST!!!

ZEUS: Now hold on just a second-

DEMETER: Oh, don't you try to MANSPLAIN to me, you... you... GLUTENOUS PIECE OF PASTA!

All characters gasp at this insult, with one or two ad-libbed shocked comments. DEMETER breathes heavily with a look of anger.

JUDGE: Order! I will have order in this court!

DEMETER: *heavily breathing* Your Honor, with all due respect, I was swallowed at birth by my own father. I later had to defeat my father after being saved from being inside of his stomach for years. Gods and other creatures alike competed for my hand in marriage. It was torture, knowing that everyone is constantly in love with you for your beauty and not your incredibly large knowledge in grain and proper crop techniques! My life was filled with misery until this child came along. She was the light of my life and still is, with her beautiful eyes, little laugh, and passion for flowers, just like her mother! Then this god came along and swallowed her up into the earth, taking away the reason for my existence. I have to fight to win her back because she swallowed some small, tiny parts of a fruit from the place where she was abducted. All I'm asking for is my daughter back, then Hades can marry whatever being he pleases, be it a nymph, dryad, or very, very minor goddess. Would it be too much to ask?

HADES: Demeter, I do genuinely love your daughter. I will treat her with the utmost respect and make her the Queen of the Underworld, grant her every wish her mind may think upon, even if it is just for a second. I even would be willing to offer Persephone my hand properly this time... if you will allow it.

DEMETER: You're asking for... my permission?

HADES: You are the dominant guardian in her life. Right Zeus?

ZEUS: Hm? *checking his face in a compact mirror* Oh yes, yes, yes. Demeter, you're the domino-thingy. Very true, very true.

DEMETER: I... well, thank you for asking this time around. Persephone...

PERSEPHONE: Yes, yes, yes! A million times, yes! There's going to be a ring though, right?

HADES: Yes of course, my love.

All characters go off screen except for the JUDGE.

JUDGE: Thank you all for gathering here today. I think a valuable lesson that can be learned from today's events is that that... is precisely why you should never eat a pomegranate seed.

JUDGE goes off screen.