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Opening extract from

Persephone: A Journey From Winter to Spring

Written by

Sally Pomme Clayton

Illustrated by

Virginia Lee

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For my aunt Anwyl, who makes things grow – S.P.C.

For my mother, Marja Lee Krüijt,
who has guided me through life's changing seasons – V.L.

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PERSEPHONE

A JOURNEY FROM WINTER TO SPRING

Sally Pomme Clayton
Illustrated by Virginia Lee

FRANCES LINCOLN
CHILDREN'S BOOKS



Persephone was playing in the fields, running, laughing, chasing her friends. The sun was warm on her bare arms, the long grass tickled her legs. It was spring. Everything was growing. A feast of flowers spread before her. She followed them, greedy for their bright colours, gathering blossoms into the folds of her gown.

Brilliant crocuses, violets like gems, narcissi nodding their heads, green shoots of barley pushing out of the ground – Persephone picked and picked and picked, leaving her friends far behind.

Suddenly there was a rumbling sound. The earth trembled and the ground opened up. A golden chariot appeared, pulled by four horses, black as night. Hades, King of the Underworld, shook the reins,

"Whoaa, my beasts! What beauty is this? A living girl to be my bride?"

And he reached out, plucked Persephone from the ground and pulled her into his chariot.

"You will be Queen and light up my kingdom."

Persephone began to cry. But Hades cracked his whip and the horses galloped off.



They rode and rode, until they came to a pool. A sparkling spring of water bubbled up from underground – a gateway to the Underworld. Hades pulled his horses to a stop.

But a water nymph with flowing hair and dripping dress rose up from the pool.

"This is my home," she said. "No one enters here by force." And she stretched out her watery arms to block their path. "You cannot make this girl go with you."

But Hades threw his golden whip into the water. It struck the bottom of the pool and a door appeared. Then Hades, chariot, horses and Persephone hurtled down, down to the Underworld.