

The Story of the Greek Adonis

written by Leanne Guenther based on the Greek Mythology texts by Beren and Baldwin

Once upon a time, a baby boy named Adonis had no mother to take care of him. He was so beautiful that everyone who saw him said so.

Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, found him and felt sorry for him.

"Poor little one," she said. "Somebody must look after you."

She tucked him safely into a beautifully carved chest and carried him to Persephone, the queen of the underworld.

"Please keep him safe for me," said Aphrodite.

"Of course I will," said Persephone.

She lifted the flower-covered lid and peeked inside. Adonis looked up at her and smiled, and Persephone smiled right back.

Adonis grew and grew, and Persephone grew fonder of him every day. At last Aphrodite came to take him home.

"Thank you for looking after him," said Aphrodite. "I will take him now."

"Oh, no," said Persephone. "I am keeping him."

"But I brought him to you!" said Aphrodite.

"And I have loved him ever since!" said Persephone.

They argued and argued, and neither would give in. So they went to Zeus, the king of the gods, and asked him to decide.

Zeus listened to both of them. Then he said, "Adonis will spend four months of every year with Persephone. He will spend four months with Aphrodite. And he will spend the last four months any way he likes."

Persephone nodded, and so did Aphrodite.

Adonis thought it over. He liked Aphrodite best of all.

"I will spend my four months with Aphrodite, too," he said.

So Adonis spent eight months of every year with Aphrodite, and she was very happy.

Adonis loved to hunt. Every morning he whistled for his hunting dogs, and they raced ahead of him into the forest.

"Be careful," Aphrodite would say. "The forest can be dangerous."

Now Ares, the god of war, was jealous of Adonis. He did not like how much Aphrodite cared for him.

One fine morning, Ares was waiting. He sent a wild boar crashing out of the trees. The dogs barked, and Adonis turned to face it, but the boar was too strong. Adonis was killed by the boar and few drops of his blood sprinkled onto the white pure anemone flowers in the forest staining them forever red.

Aphrodite cried and cried. She cried for so long that Hades, the ruler of the underworld, began to feel sorry for her.

"That is enough tears," said Hades gently. "Adonis may spend six months of every year with you."

And so it was. Half of every year, Adonis stayed on earth with Aphrodite. The other half, he stayed in the underworld with Persephone.





