

Demeter's Winter  
by  
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SECOND DRAFT

INT. DEMETER'S CABIN - EARLY MORNING

DEMETER sits on a chair beside a table in the centre of a barren cabin. The wooden floors and stone walls lay bare and the room dark and cold. Demeter sits wrapped in a dress and shawl with a veil covering her face, staring vacantly at the wall.

UNKNOWN MALE VOICE (V.O.)

There are few things in this world as strong as that of the love between a mother and her daughter. Demeter, the goddess of the harvest, felt her first heartbreak when her daughter Persephone was stolen to the underworld by Hades. Demeter's depression plunged the earth into its first winter, until a deal was struck with Hades to ensure Persephone's return. However, Hades' trickery ensured that Persephone would still return to his side in the underworld for 6 months of every year. Now the earth blossoms when Demeter has her daughter by her side but withers when she is gone. Every year Demeter sits in her chair waiting for her daughter to return, and the long winter waits with her.

As the voiceover speaks we pan around Demeter sitting in her chair, unmoving. The light from the square glass pane window behind her grows bright and then dark again in a continuous cycle. Demeter's eyes remain fixed on the board on the wall. The board has tally marks written in chalk on them, beginning with one, then 10, then 20, and so on... Demeter's demeanour only becomes more downtrodden.

As we pan around Demeter sitting stagnant in her chair, we can see there is a bear staring in at Demeter from the window behind her. Each time we pan by Demeter with the faint sight of the window behind her, we can see more and more animals joining the bear to look in the window at Demeter.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEMETER'S GARDEN - DAYTIME

A group of animals gather outside Demeter's window staring in at her, a bear, a fox and two squirrels.

FOX

Oh dear, oh dear, my friends I fear,  
our beloved Demeter is particularly  
low this year.

SQUIRREL #1

The nights are so dark and the  
mornings so cold.

SQUIRREL #2

The worst winter in 200 years is what  
I was told!

FOX

Demeter needs our help, we must raise  
her spirit, this winter rages on lets  
not waste one more minute.

CUT TO:

INT. DEMETER'S CABIN - DAYTIME

Demeter sits in her chair, there is a knock on the door and the Hedgehog lets himself into the cabin, holding a wreath of flowers.

FOX

Demeter, I do not mean to intrude, I  
bring these flowers in hopes to  
lighten your mood.

The hedgehog places the flowers on Demeter's table. As the flowers are placed on the table they begin to wither and grow dry, instantly dying right in front of our eyes.

DEMETER

Your efforts are kind fox, but without  
my beloved Persephone here by my side,  
no flowers shall bloom in this cabin.

Demeter begins to weep, and as she does heavy rain begins to slam against the window, the fox leaves discouraged and the dead wreath of flowers lie decaying on the table.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEMETER'S GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

We see the animals are still gathered around the window peering in at Demeter crying, the hedgehog joins.

FOX

Our wreath couldn't survive the sharp chill of her cabin, we must expand what possibilities our minds can imagine.

BEAR

Might I suggest a solution for her serotonin shortage, we wake her in the morning with a fresh bowl of porridge.

ALL ANIMALS

Murmur in agreement.

CUT TO:

INT. DEMETER'S CABIN - EARLY MORNING

We see Demeter still on her chair, her appearance looking even more dishevelled, her hair untidy and her clothes unkept, the board on the wall now has 50 tally marks.

A knock on the door, the bear enters holding a bowl.

BEAR

Good morning Demeter I come baring a present, this fresh bowl of porridge shall make you feel pleasant.

DEMETER

Bear, you are kind, but I am afraid I do not eat much these days, it takes time from my mourning.

BEAR

Mourning is tiring you surely need fuel, accept this meal to aid your renewal.

Demeter bows her head in agreement and accepts the bowl off the bear. She takes one spoonful of the porridge to her mouth and spits it out.

DEMETER

Bear, this food is rotten!

BEAR

My beloved Demeter please accept my pardon, I picked berries and oats fresh from your garden.

DEMETER

I see your intention, but with my daughter not here, I do not tend to my garden, my crops have all withered and with it my spirit, please leave me bear.

Bear leaves the cabin discouraged as Demeter resumes her position staring at the board.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEMETER'S GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Bear joins the animals gathered around the window.

BEAR

Alas my porridge brought not joy but misfortune, we need a remedy of greater proportion.

FOX

I have one suggestion it always helps me feel better, a song from our hearts surely would not upset her?

SQUIRREL #1

A song! A song! Oh what a joy that would be!

SQUIRREL #2

A song will raise her spirits that I guarantee!

The animals disperse from the window as we see Demeter through the glass, sitting in her spot staring at the board.

CUT TO:

INT. DEMETER'S CABIN - NIGHT TIME

We see Demeter still sitting in her chair, the tally on the board now nearing one hundred. A knock on the door, this time a number of animals enter the cabin and surround Demeter.

DEMETER

Animals while I appreciate your attempts at raising my spirits I assure you there is no-

ALL ANIMALS

1, 2, 3!

Demeter is cut off mid sentence as the animals count themselves in and on three, music soars through the cabin, a plucky guitar rhythm accompanied by a lively drum as the animals begin to sing.

ALL ANIMALS

(Singing)

*Demeter this winter seems barren and cold,*

*This cabin creaks with the weight of your mourning,*

*Your seasons are feeble they do what they're told,*

*But light often comes bright and with no forewarning.*

*Demeter this frost has joy under its surface,*

*You cannot see beauty if you keep your eyes closed,*

*Do not let her absence strip you  
of your purpose,*

*Your strength and your virtues must  
remain composed.*

*Demeter, Demeter, this winter is not  
your foe,*

*Demeter, Demeter, do not drown in your  
sorrow,*

*Remember the brightness, in time let  
the light in,*

*Hold on to springs likeness, find  
things to delight in,*

*Demeter, Demeter, where is that woman  
we all know?*

The song ends and Demeter bursts into applause, we hear her laughing for the first time, and it seems as though the animals have finally succeeded in changing her mood until her laughter turns to sobs and she places her head in her hands.

FOX

Demeter we apologise we did mean to make you upset, we were hoping our song would help you forget.

DEMETER

Do not apologise, your song was beautiful and I am so grateful for your efforts, it is not the song that is the root of my woes. As I savour your music, I cannot help but wish my daughter was by my side to share with me my joy. I am sorry animals, my sadness comes in such colossal waves, no flowers or porridge or song could keep me afloat.

BEAR

If our gestures of grandeur will not help stop your suffering, may we keep you company in your cabin as you're recovering?

Demeter pauses and looks around the room at the animals who stare back at her awaiting her response.

DEMETER

You may.

CUT TO:

INT. DEMETER'S CABIN - DAYTIME

Demeter sits in her chair in her cabin, however now she is not alone, she is joined by the animals. We begin to pan around Demeter in her chair again as the tally's on the board continue to rise into the one hundreds.

We see Demeter talking with the animals, telling stories and even laughing. As we pan around Demeter the room gets a little bit brighter and brighter, until a gold hue illuminates the room. Each time we see the table, the wreath of flowers gifted by the fox seems to be a little bit brighter and livelier, until finally it is a fresh and vibrant wreath again. Demeter is no longer slouched in her chair but instead sits upright and speaks animatedly with the animals.

We stop panning and are stationary on Demeter in her chair, the same position we first saw her in, but a different woman, no longer downtrodden and vacant, but she looks fresh and well rested. The animals sit by Demeter's side and they all stare now at the door, as if waiting for something.

DEMETER

My friends this winter began without hope, your company taught me a mother can cope. The cold and despair left without warning, now in the eve I look forward to morning. One more thing I must ask of you all, next winter please promise to come when I call.

ALL ANIMALS

(in unison)

Demeter, Demeter we promise next winter we will return, now promise us you will flourish without concern.



There is a knock on the door. Demeter rises from her chair and walks toward the door, as she passes the board she wipes it clean.

DEMETER

I promise.

CUT TO BLACK.