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The Greater Mysteries of Demeter

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Spring Mysteries Festival- Subseries 01

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UUID: 33C4B444-C8DD-4BB1-47AA-B45C409176B2

Recommended Citation:

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The Greater Mysteries of Demeter

WEDDING RECEPTION

Demeter, Persephone, Hades, Zeus, Poseidon, Rhea, Hekate, Aphrodite, Artemis, Athena, Apollo, Ares, Hermes, Hephaistos, Hestia, Hera, Pan

<The theater is set up with a large table that holds a couple of punchbowls with cups and ladles for serving. The Gods are seated on stage at a long table, with another punchbowl off to the side. The doors close, and Zeus rises to toast the crowd.>

Zeus: Welcome everyone! We are here to celebrate the union of my beautiful daughter Persephone to her new husband, Hades! A wonderful compliment to each other, aren't they?

Persephone: Thank you Father. We do compliment each other! *<taking Hades' hand, who is a bit nervous, but clearly very much in love>*

Hades: *<kissing her hand gently>* Yes, we do. Very well indeed.

Aphrodite: *<sighs happily>* Isn't it romantic? I just knew it would work out. Artemis, how could you ever doubt me?

Artemis: I admit that I did have my doubts. After all, things didn't work out so well for Adonis, did they?

Aphrodite: *<rising to the bait>* That was not my fault! If Ares wasn't such a hothead sometimes...

Hermes: *<laughing>* Sometimes?????

Ares: *<crankily>* He didn't know his place! I taught him. At least I fight for what I want! *<gives Hephaistos a shove, who pushes him back and glares>* And Artemis, you aren't so sweet and innocent - tell us how you took out Callisto!

Artemis: That was different - she broke her vows to me! Athena, don't you dare look at me like that!

Athena: *<feigning innocence>* Like what? I have no idea what you are talking about!

Artemis: I am talking about Pallas - your friend...

<Apollo comes over to Artemis, to defend his sister>

Poseidon: and my granddaughter...

Athena: *<with a sad sigh>* Ah yes, well, that was an unfortunate training accident. May her memory live on as the Immortals do...

Apollo: With friends like you, Athena...

Athena: Apollo, you would be *wise* to not venture there. *[stands threateningly...reaches for spear??]*

Apollo: *<amused>* Ooooh, we are touchy about the subject, aren't we?

Athena: *[rising in anger]* You aren't as perfect as you would like everyone to think, Apollo! Or have you forgotten your dear Hyacinthus?

Hermes: *<practically dancing with glee>* This just keeps getting better all the time! And here I was all these years thinking that I was the black sheep of the family!

Athena: *[Turning on Hermes]* Father is still not happy about you killing his Cyclopes! Now Hephaistos has to make all of the thunderbolts himself!

Apollo: None of that would have happened if Father had not thrown one of those bolts at Asclepius!

Zeus: *<rising to his feet>* All right, all right, that is enough from all of you! Come now, let's not bicker and argue about who killed whom... A wedding should be a happy occasion!

<theater doors open with a bang, and in saunters Pan>

Pan: Here I am!!! Let's get this party started! Woo Hoo!

Rhea: *<bemused>* Well! Look what the cat dragged in!

<Demeter looks at him, alarmed, and rises from her chair>

Demeter: Pan! What are you doing here? Where is Zagreus? You are supposed to be with him!

Pan: Don't worry Mother Demeter, he's... around.

Demeter: I should have known better than to put him in your care!

Pan: Come now, the boy is, after all, a boy! There are some things a young man has to learn on his own... *<leering suggestively> <chuckles>*

Rhea: *<calming Demeter>* Daughter, he is right, if a bit crude.

Hestia: A bit? Quite a bit, I'd say!

Pan: Awww, Hestia - loosen your chiton a little! Have some fun!

Hestia: My chiton is just fine the way it is, thank you very much.

< Hera looks over at Ares questioningly, and he gives her a firm nod>

Pan: Hey, I am parched! Aphrodite! Do you have some ambrosia to spare for an old goat?

Aphrodite: *<with a laugh>* There's always some for you, Pan!

Pan: Woo Hoo! That's what I'm talking about!! *<He climbs up onto the stage and makes a general nuisance of himself, gets a glass and raises it up to Hades & Persephone>* A toast to the Brooding One, and his Blushing Bride!! May your wedding night be a wild, wild ride!!

<groans and eye rolling from the Gods>

Persephone: *<embarrassed, hiding her face with her hand>* Thank you, Pan... I think...

<theater door slams open again, enter Charon, just into the back of the theater> (Party goes silent as gods each notice him)

Charon: *(directly to Hades with a gesture)* You must come with me!

Hades: *<alarmed>* Charon? You left your post?

Charon: We have to go...now!

Hades: *<turns to Persephone>* I am sorry my love, I have to go ...

Persephone: But...

<Hades gets up, and hurries out the back of the theater with Charon>

Persephone: Mother, Father, I am sorry, but I have to go. Thank you, everyone, for this lovely celebration. I am needed...

<Persephone exits out the back of the theater>

YOU TAKE THE HIGH ROAD

Pan: What, do I stink or something?

Apollo: Yes, but that is not it this time. There is something else going on here. Can't you feel it?

Hekate: Yes, there is. Something very different than anything I have felt before. I am not sure what is happening!

Zeus: Yes, Hekate, you're right.

<Demeter begins to sway a bit in her chair, then puts her head on the table>

Rhea: Demeter! You feel it too!

Demeter: I can't do this again, not so soon! My heart is being torn in two ...

Rhea: We should go now, you need to rest. Let me take you to your temple where your Priestesses can tend to you. Then I must go... I am called, but I know not where.

Aphrodite: I will go with Rhea.

Hekate: Rhea, Aphrodite...take one of my torches!

<Rhea, Aphrodite, and Demeter exit together by the other side door. The remaining Gods begin chattering asking questions, making noise>

Zeus: Silence, everyone! I need to think a moment! *<waits for a few beats>* Something has happened...there is a mystery unfolding here that affects us all. We must find out all we can!

Poseidon and Hephaistos go to the realms by the sea. Artemis and Athena go to the realms in the mountains. Ares, Hestia, and Hera, go to the realms in the lowlands. Find out anything you can about this strangeness that is happening.

Hekate: What is unfolding affects the mortals as much as the Gods. They are called to a deeper mystery, though the paths they walk this night are hidden even to me. I must go! *[Exits back of theater]*

Zeus: Apollo and Hermes, come here.

<Apollo & Hermes cluster around Zeus, and have an intense discussion about what needs to be done. All others except Pan exit by the 3 doors>

Pan: Hey! Hey! What about me??

Zeus: In a moment, Pan! Just try to stay out of trouble for two minutes!

<Zeus, Hermes, and Apollo resume their discussion, while Pan sits on the front of the stage mocking them, whistling, twiddling his thumbs.>

Zeus: Now, do as I ask, both of you!

Hermes & Apollo: *<quietly>* Yes, Father.

<Zeus rises from his chair and exits the theater. Hermes & Apollo exchange a significant look>

Pan: Well, what did he say? Where are we going?

Apollo: Pan! *[glowers]*

[Pan falls back and becomes suddenly calm and attentive]

<Hermes & Apollo stand on either side of the stage and address the audience>

Hermes: Citizens of Eleusis, we have a serious task before us tonight. Something is afoot in Erebus, and we must return to that place. But the borders between the realms of the living and the dead have been shifting and changing. You will be traveling on unseen paths, and none of the Gods can see the outcome. But this is clear: much more than your physical existence is at stake this time.

Apollo: We are about to step into a deeper Mystery. Only those initiated as Epoptai, for whom this is at least their second year attending these mysteries, can make this journey. All Epoptai must show proof that they have been through the initiation by wearing the red ribbon.

Hermes: Mystai! You have a great responsibility while the Epoptai are gone. You are to remain here, and hold our place in this realm so that we may return safely. It will be up to you to maintain the energy here for us, to be a beacon to the living when we pass beyond the mortal realms, so that they can find their way back. Pan!

Pan: *<comes up to Hermes, snaps to attention, and salutes>*

Hermes: As God of the pastures, fields, and woodlands, you are an anchor in the physical realm for us. And of course, your musical skills would be a great benefit to the Mystai, as they chant and sing, and dance to hold the energy.

Pan: I aim to please! *<does a little belly dance as he moves off to the side>*

Apollo: The paths through the realms have changed. Nothing is as it was. There is a chance that some of us may not find a path to Erebus. We will divide ourselves into two groups, each taking a different route. In that way, we will have a better chance of success.

Hermes: The Epoptai seated on the North side shall come with me. The path we will follow is the one of the Heart. Use your inner guidance as we find our way. Trust your intuition, listen to what it tells you. This is the way that we will find our path. We will make our way out the main doors of the theater.

Apollo: The Epoptai seated on the South side shall come with me. We will be traveling on the path of Mind. Use your intellect and your learning to find the way. Use every challenge, every obstacle as an opportunity to gain insight. In this way we will find our path. We will exit out the side door. *<indicates the side door with his hand>*

Hermes: But first, be sure that you are wearing your red ribbon, as you will not be allowed to enter into the Mysteries without it.

<He motions to the 3 Priestesses, one at each door, who hold up the red ribbons for those who need them>

Those Epoptai who are willing to make this journey, but are not able to travel the whole way on foot will exit through the main doors, where special carts are waiting for you. Please make your way to them now.

<we wait as the mobility impaired make their way out of the theater>

Apollo: People of the South, let us be on our way!
<Apollo leads them out the side door and down the road to 101. Hermes waits for them to exit>

Hermes: People of the North, follow me!
<Hermes leads his group out the back door and heads down the road straight past the dining hall>

< Apollo's group goes down the road past 101, turns by the youth hostel, and heads back up the main road. Hermes group goes down the road past the dining hall and barracks, then loops around the barracks and back up the other side. They converge at the parade grounds where we set up Delphi. Along each path are veiled "Beings" questioning them. The questions should relate to the paths - heart & mind>

DON'T PET THE PYTHON

Apollo, Hermes, Pythia, Triptolemos

<braziers are blazing, Pythia is on a platform with a chair and a cauldron.>

Hermes: Apollo! We could not find an entrance to Erebus. All the paths I know lead us here.

Apollo: *[starting to shift into prophetic mode]* It is the same with us. The path we must follow leads through Delphi.

Hermes: Those beings along the road, did you hear them too?

Apollo: We heard them. They are *gepherismoi*: the restless dead; souls who have lost their way.

Hermes: They weren't there by accident. They were trying to tell us something.

Triptolemos: Like what?

Apollo: My Pythia *[motions to her]*... Priestess, tell us!

Pythia: *<beginning to sway back and forth>* I see I see

A wound so deep, though body be whole
Will never heal 'til there be peace in the soul.

A body so torn that life does depart
Will become whole again when true to the heart.

No first without last, no future without past
No cloth without loom, no seed without bloom
No dawn without night, no dark without light
No crop without rain, no growth without pain

Breathe in deep the truth of this night
Hear without ears and see without sight

In darkness be born and to darkness return
On the path of three ways are the torches that burn...

Triptolemos: I hope you can understand what she is saying ...

Apollo: *<sharing Pythia's vision>* A new cycle has begun...something holds it back. Find the path of three ways...

Triptolemus: Path of three ways? The crossroads! Yes! Of course! Hekate Trevia is Lady of the Crossroads.

Pythia: *[another rhyming prophesy, which reflects the (1) Heira (2) Maze (3) sacrifice] [Miss Erin should help with this one]*

Apollo: The time is ripe! Go now! I will remain with my Pythia.

Pythia: *<with mounting frenzy> I see I see... one is lost, but knows the way...one knows the way but will not see ... [change to reflect four colors, four elements, four deities.]*

red is anger and black is fear, purple madness ... go! Go ... now!!!!!! NOW!

<she shrieks the last words, and collapses against Apollo, who gently sits her back down.>

Hermes: We must look for the three torches to find Hekate.

CROSSROADS

Hekate, Hermes, Artemis, Athena

<platform is set at the usual place, with three torches burning. Hermes comes up on to the platform. Hekate is relieved to see him.>

Hermes: Lady Hekate!

Hekate: Greetings Lord Hermes! *<they both turn to face the crowd.>* Hail, Initiates. Here where you stand lies the crossroads, leading you from all that you know, filled with comfort and ease, taking you into the unknown, challenge, and sacrifice.

Awake! Forces put to rest, and lend us your protection once again. *<raises her wand, and Hermes raises his hands to lend his energy to hers>*

Eurus, sovereign guarding the East, be with us now.
Notus, sovereign guarding the South, be with us now.
Zephyrus, sovereign guarding the West, be with us now.
Boreus, sovereign guarding the North, be with us now.

We do summon, stir and call you forth to witness and protect our rites. Guide us, and guard us. So mote it be! *<she moves the wand in a full circle>*

Artemis: *<calling from the back of the crowd> Hekate! Hermes!*

<Artemis & Athena make their way through the crowd and up onto the platform>

Artemis: *<out of breath>* We were headed to the mountains, as Zeus had bid us - as we crossed the Plains of Nysa...

Athena: ...It looked as if a great battle had been fought. The soil was gashed, there was blood on the ground...

Artemis: and we found this! *<holding up a bloody torn piece of robe>*

Hekate: *<with a sharp intake of breath>* No! What treachery is this? Have you told Zeus of this?

Athena: Not yet, Lady. We were on our way to find him when we saw your torches, so we came straight here.

Hermes: This is not mortal blood. Something happened here that should not have been possible.

Hekate: Tonight it seems that the rules no longer apply. Reality as we know it shifts and changes. Hermes, it is more urgent than ever that you find your way to Erebus. Use the light of my torch to guide you. The answers may be found beyond the Gates of the Underworld, for both the mortals and the Gods. Travel swiftly and silently.

[Hekate grabs two torches, holding them out as if to show the way]

Hermes: Epoptai, we enter now into the Greater Mysteries of Demeter. This is first journey, though you may have traveled the paths before. Each time, the journey is different. Each time, YOU are different. The Mystery will speak to you in a new voice. Be a support for your fellow travelers, but each must experience this on their own. Enter into this with an open mind and open heart, and know this truth, children of the Gods: No one who enters into these rites will emerge unchanged. As Hekate said, we must travel swiftly and silently. Initiates, follow me now!

TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

Charon, Hermes

<Charon's platform is set at the corner of the berm, with torches on either side. He is pacing back and forth>

Hermes: *<coming up to the platform>* Charon! I have brought another group...

Charon: *<pushing Hermes off to the side>* Silence Hermes! *<shoots a glare in Hermes' direction>* Those who think me a fool will find that they are bigger fools themselves. I know that you are not dead. There have been many strange things happening here, and my patience wears thin. You are called by the changing tides. There will be a price to pay if you dare to enter, and it will be higher than in the past.

<Here the Dadouchos comes up to Charon and offers a purse of coins. Charon takes it and throws it on the ground.>

Coins will not pay your passage this time. You must part with something far greater - a part of yourself, that part which resists change: your fear, your anxiety, your resentment, your hold on the past, that which you cling to, but which no longer serves you. You know of what I speak. That part must die! That is your payment tonight. Throw that sacrifice into the baskets which wait beyond the gates! *[pause]* Go!

Hermes: *<in an urgent stage whisper>* Well, you heard him - let's go! Before he changes his mind!

<Dadouchos motions for all to follow him. They round the corner, and the Hierophant's Pavilion is set up in the center of the area in front of the Gates. Lighting will be designed for this scene>

THE HIEROPHANT

Hierophant (Eumolpus), Dadouchos, Theano, Lysimache, Iphigeneia

<The Hierophant is standing in the middle of the platform. Theano stands at the foot of the platform holding the Demeter plaque. Dadouchos steps up onto the platform, followed by Lysimache & Iphigeneia. Hierophant reverently picks up the basket, uncovering the Hiera. Each represents one of the Big 4: Hierophant=Dionysos, Dadouchos=Hades, Lysimache=Persephone, and Iphigeneia=Demeter>

Hierophant: Here we gather tonight, in the space between the realms. This place is not a place, this time is not a time. The Great Mystery lies before you, and within you. You took an oath not to reveal anything of these rites to the uninitiated. Do you stand by that oath?

[await "yes!"]

[motions to the basket]

These are the Hiera, the sacred objects. These are gifts from the Gods themselves. They are but physical representations. To accept the true gifts, you must strip away that which separates you from the Divine. For the holiest gift, the most sacred of all, lies within you.

The meaning of these objects is known only to you. No one can explain this to you, for their answer would not be your answer. Look at what is here. And what is not here.

<slowly the Heirophant displays each Heira in turn, so that all gathered can have a moment to see the objects>

You enter now into a new realm. You have been told of the sacrifice you must make. Baskets await your sacrifice as you enter the gates of Erebos. You will be given something in exchange for this sacrifice, but you must not look at it until the time is right - you will be told when that time has arrived. I will lead you now into this Mystery. Do not speak - unless addressed by a God. If asked to identify yourself, say this:

“I am a child of Earth and Starry Heaven”

All: *I am a child of earth and Starry Heaven.*

Heirophant: “I am a child of Earth and Starry Heaven”

All: *I am a child of earth and Starry Heaven.*

Heirophant: “I am a child of Earth and Starry Heaven”

All: *I am a child of earth and Starry Heaven.*

<Hierophant leads people into the maze. Dadouchos is the last to enter. Maze stations are set and lit, each a representation of the “before” and “after” of the Four. The texturing has been removed from the straight part of the maze, and perhaps is lit by a red or purple light. At the final station before participants enter the Anaktaron, there is a basket with tokens for the participants, wrapped in scraps of cloth. The Four will each make tokens, and participants won’t know whose token they are getting until they unwrap the token, to ponder the mysteries later. The Heirophant or one of the other Heira attendants can motion people to choose a token.>

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Hades, Persephone, Rhea, Zag/nysos, Hekate

<as people enter from the maze, the Anakteron is dimly lit. Hades is on the upper stage, hovering over a shrouded body on a bier. Rhea is near the back wall, hidden in shadow. Sound FX? The center platform between the poles is empty. Rhea steps out of shadow and lights come up when Dadouchos enters>

Hades: This is very strange. I feel as if I know who is lying here. It is as if we had met in another time, in another place. Do you feel it too?

Rhea: Something is happening here that I have not seen before. I know who he was. Aphrodite and I searched the plains of Nysa, and by the light of Hekate's torch I found him, torn to pieces. I gathered them up and tried to put them together, and I brought him here. I hoped that his soul could be renewed here. *<Rhea hold her hands over Zag/nysos, waiting for something to happen>*

Hades: Why is nothing is happening, is there something wrong?

Rhea: This is your realm, my son, not mine. Yours and Persephone's. We need her touch to bring light into the darkness inside him.

Hades: Yes, that is it! Look! She is coming now...and Hekate is with her.

Persephone: *<entering from the maze with Hekate>* Hades, I thought I heard you call... Grandmother Rhea!

<comes up to the upper stage to embrace Rhea, and give Hades a kiss>

<turns to see the bier, and Zag/nysos>

Who is this? I know him, don't I?

Rhea: This is...was, Zagreus. You may be the only one who can help him, Persephone.

Persephone: I will do what I can. Hades...remember the transformation that I went through...he too has died to who he was. As for what he will be, I cannot say.

Hekate: Each soul has its own journey to make...each experience leaves its impression, as clay is shaped by a potters hands. Persephone, you know what to do. We will be here beside you, holding the energy. Rhea, Hades - are you ready?

<Rhea & Hades nod their assent, then join hands and stand next to the bier. They hold their free hands in benediction. Persephone raises her arms up, drawing energy down through herself. She slowly puts her hand over Zag/nysos' heart>

Zagnysos: <with a sharp intake of breath> Ahhh...ohhhh <thrashing on bier> Pain!!! <sitting up in bloody shredded robes> Blood! Noooo! Stop! Someone help me!

<Persephone reaches out for him>

No .. don't TOUCH me! Where am I? Who are you?..... Who ... am I? <turns back to look at Persephone,>I know you, you're...you're... < to Hades, & Rhea> You? YOU! I am ...I am dead?? NOOO! <reliving the ordeal again > NO! STOP! DON'T! ... I... BLOOD, BLOOD, PAIN, STOP! STOP!!

[Zag/nysos flees into the maze...followed by Hekate. Spiritual Director should be there ready to support the Priest through this.]

<LIGHTS fade down hard, but not completely out. Hades, Rhea and Persephone go to the lower platform. Light FX? Bring lights up just enough for cast to see, then bring lights up on Hades, Rhea & Persephone>

SHE CHANGES EVERYTHING SHE TOUCHES

Demeter, Persephone, Rhea, Hekate(Hades)

<lights fade up on lower platform as Rhea and Persephone arrive on their marks>

Rhea: Persephone? My child... [moves to comfort her]

Persephone: It was so difficult to bear witness...so like my own transformation, only his was so ... <almost whispering> painful. I couldn't take that pain away!

Rhea: It is *his* journey, and he has to discover it and himself alone. Neither I nor you or anyone else can intervene. We can only give what he chooses to take, and not force our own will on his discovery.

Persephone: We have done our best for him - he has our love and healing energy to use as he will.

Rhea: And you! You have grown so much - becoming a Queen in every sense of the word. Your strength and wisdom will make your mother so proud!

Persephone: Mother I think of her often, and I can't help but worry about her. I know that she feels such profound loss when I am in my own realm, so far away from her. But I am of this place now, and this is who I am.

Rhea: It is hard to accept when those we love must go their own way, finding their unique place in the world. It takes a great amount of courage to let go of our ideas of what should be. We may fight against change, but it happens regardless of our desires. We can choose to resist, or to engage fully in life's endless dance of transformation.

<Demeter enters from the maze, disoriented and confused>

Demeter: Where ... how.... Am I in Erebos...? Why? Persephone?

Persephone: Mother! I am here!

<Demeter comes down the stairs and up onto the center platform to stand beside Persephone. She then notices that Rhea is there too.>

Demeter: Mother! What are you doing here?

Rhea: Waiting for you, my dear!

Demeter: Waiting for me? But I don't even know why I am here!

Rhea: Look deeper, Demeter.

Demeter: *<getting cranky>* Deeper? You don't know what you are talking about. I should not be here, where nothing grows!

[Persephone exchanges meaningful looks with Rhea, who nods, slowly]

Persephone: Mother, your task is here, in Erebos. We devised a means for the mortals to survive when I am here in my realm and nothing grows on the Earth. But mother, how will YOU survive? You have to find a way, even when I am not with you, to thrive and flourish.

Demeter: Daughter, you ask too much. I don't have the will or the desire to do anything when you are gone. Don't you understand that I can never be whole without you?

<Hekate enters from the maze, remains on the stairs while delivering her lines>

Hekate: *<chiding gently>* Demeter, that is quite a heavy burden to put upon anyone, even the Queen of the Dead. You are and always have been perfectly whole, strong, and complete - just as you are. But you do not recognize this!

Demeter: *<getting angry>* I just have to recognize it, Hekate? So simple, is it? But what do you know of it? What children have you lost? When I look inside myself, all I can see is pain, loss, betrayal, abandonment. How can I be anything but broken and empty inside without my child?

Rhea: You are so much more than that. Search deeper, beyond the pain. Look beneath your sorrow and you will find something else.

Hekate: Within you, there are hidden treasures far richer than any hiding in the deepest caverns here in Erebos.

Persephone: Mother, Hekate speaks truth; only you know the power that lies within you. Our love binds us wherever we are. When I am here in my realm you are still whole, though your sense of being is different. When I return to the sunlit world, together we will make the Earth burst forth in a glorious wave of bounty! It will be ... reborn.

< Here Demeter turns away and refuses to accept the encouragement she is receiving >

<Hekate slips back into the maze after this scene >

HE IS RISEN!

Demeter, Dionysus, Persephone, Rhea

<Dionysus sneaks onto the stair landing in the dark >

<lights fade up on the landing >

Dionysus: Reborn. Yes. Reborn. From death ...

< Hekate moves to the side of the maze entrance as Dionysus starts up the stairs, still in torn bloody robes. Maenads follow a bit behind him >

Rhea: Demeter! Look!!

Demeter: My son!

Dionysus: No! Not death. YES! I know! I SEE! I FEEL! I LIVE!

Demeter: Zagreus?

Dionysus: Zagreus is dead. But I live! I know who I am. I KNOW WHO I AM!

<two Maenads begin stripping off the bloody robes, two put the purple cloak on his shoulders, and the other hands him the thyrsus>

I can taste it on my tongue! I can feel it in my bones, and in the pulsing of my blood! I know myself!

Demeter: You know yourself? Zagreus, I don't understand!

Persephone: Mother, Zagreus is dead.

Demeter: But ... no! See? He lives!

Dionysus: I have died, and yet I live ... I was torn apart and yet I am whole!

Demeter: You died? No! But ... yes... I felt it in my heart, yet could not bear to face the truth.

Dionysus: They set upon me on the Plains of Nysa ... the Titans ... I felt my soul ripped from my body, felt my flesh torn open and flung across the fields. I knew the pain and yet my soul expanded across the sky ... lost ... lost to myself, swirling in madness, in fear, in pain, in darkness. Until I felt myself called here.

Rhea: It was I who called you, my child, I who gathered the pieces of your body from the fields where you died.

Dionysus: Yes, yes it was your love, shining as constant as the stars in the heavens, that guided me back.

Persephone: And it was I who called you to your true self.

Dionysus: In the moment of my death, as my soul took flight across the sky, I sensed something more. Something beyond...life. But the possibility..., so vast, amid so much pain ... it terrified me. But when Rhea called, I felt it ... I felt it stir within me. My truth ... awakened when Persephone touched my broken body. I am no longer Zagreus, though he still lives on within me.

Demeter: My son! Who are you, if not Zagreus?

Dionysus: I am the vine that is cut and yet grows again! I am the Lord of the winding ivy! I AM DIONYSUS! *<looks out to the audience, sees Keleos entering from underneath the high platform>*

<maenads begin winding ivy around the railing of the upper platform>

I know who I am! But who are you? *<waits a beat>*

Who are you??

Keleos: <first mouthing, attempting to speak, gasp, then> *I am a child of earth and Starry Heaven*
<Members of the Royal Family audibly gasp in fear, sorrow, sad-joy for seeing the King>

Rhea: Who are you??

All: *I am a child of earth and Starry Heaven*

Persephone: WHO ARE YOU?

All: *I am a child of earth and Starry Heaven!!!*

Rhea: [*to Dionysos*] And so you have returned to us, transformed as grapes that have been crushed but are reborn as wine!

Demeter: Oh Zagreus, I understand - I feel that despair, that hopelessness that consumes my whole being. I am so lost, and I don't know who I am!

Dionysus: Do you live?

Demeter: I do not know anymore. I am dead to whom I was! When my daughter is gone from me, my power goes with her. Even when she returns, and the Earth again bears fruit, I am not who I was. Even then I am in pain, in fear!

Dionysus: Who will you be? <*maenads begin swaying, building energy*>

Demeter: How can I know that? I have no light to guide me in the dark! What you ask of me is madness!

Dionysus: Light? There is light everywhere! It surrounds you. It shines as bright as the sun, or as a candle within the darkness. It grows as big as the universe and as small as the tiniest sound. It's the breath of the wind and the voice of a child. It is within you Demeter. Can't you see? It is a part of you. Feel it shine. Embrace the death of who you were, and be reborn to who you will become!

Demeter: Have I not embraced enough suffering? Endured enough pain? Wandered through this dark labyrinth in fear, lost? What more could be asked of me? I have nothing left!

Dionysus: Nothing? Look within. You will find the truth, your truth, and with that you buy freedom from this pain.

Demeter: *<puzzled>* Truth?

Dionysus: The truth to know yourself. Demeter, know that your darkness is as much a part of you as the light. Deny that, and the madness will overtake you.

Demeter: But where do I go from here? Knowing and doing are not the same thing - and I am afraid!

COME TO THE DARK SIDE

Demeter, Dionysus, Hades, Hekate, Persephone, Rhea, Zeus

<Zeus enters followed by Hekate. Zeus sees Dionysus on upper platform, and goes to him>

Zeus: Dionysus! You are back! You have returned again!

Dionysus: Returned? I am but newly born!

Zeus: You are Dionysus, the Twice-Born. The cycle has turned again ...

Demeter: *<getting angry again>* Cycle? This has happened before? Zeus! You knew about this? And you let it happen? How could you?! Do you enjoy seeing those you supposedly care for die in pain and agony??

Zeus: This was one of many possibilities, Demeter. The choice was his to make, not mine: to remain in madness and in darkness, or to find a way through it. Hades, my brother, thank you for caring for him so well.

Hades: I did what I could for him, with Rhea's help, of course. But it is really Persephone who you should be thanking.

Zeus: My daughter, it is good to see you again! It makes me proud to see what a great Queen you have grown to be.

<Persephone smiles and gives her father a Queenly nod>

Demeter: *<anger still rising>* No thanks to you, Zeus, or to Hades either! Because of the two of you, she was ripped from my side and forced to grow up ...too soon ... my little girl is gone ...

Hades: <trying in vain to hold back his own anger> Do you think that you are the only one who suffers, Demeter? Is your pain more important than anyone else's? I love her, and you would take her from me! What of my pain when she is gone from me? And what of the souls who need her here?

Zeus: Demeter, look around you - where are you right now?

Demeter: <confused> uh ... Erebus?

Zeus: Yes - you don't seem to understand that this realm is also of the Earth, though not ON the Earth. It is true that you must travel through darkness to get here, but it is only your own fear that keeps you from doing so.

Demeter: My fear?? You would blame this on me? Make my sorrow my own fault? I had NO CHOICE in what happened. YOU - and Hades, took my choices away from me!

Zeus: The choice you speak of was not yours to make. Look at things as they really are, Demeter, not through the eyes of a helpless victim.

Demeter: You dare... after what has been done to me? Where can I go from here?

[Hekate moves over toward Rhea]

Hekate: Demeter! Everything is as it is...and as it should be - almost. There is another step for you to take on this path. You have found your way here, wandering in darkness. Like Persephone, like Dionysos, you must seek the light that will lead you to your own transformation! We can be as guides to you, but you must walk the path yourself!

Rhea: As must we all!

Demeter: *[significant pause]*...Hekate, Mother...I do want to change. I need to change! I can't stand the ... wounded creature I have become! This is not who I am!

Hekate: Then you must forgive. Whatever wrongs you think that Zeus and Hades have dealt to you, let them go.

Demeter: Why should I do that? HOW should I do that? They don't deserve my forgiveness!

Rhea: As long as you hold on to anger, you can never find peace. Do this for yourself, not for them. Whether they deserve it or not is irrelevant.

Dionysus: This is your true choice Demeter. Anger and fear are what feed the madness. Acceptance and forgiveness are what heal it. So I ask you: Who will you be? *<maenads respond again, building energy higher and higher>*

[Demeter quails...]

Rhea: Who will you be?

Demeter: *<takes a deep breath, closes her eyes, visualizing herself as whole>*
I will be ... I will ... *<begins to weep, shudder, struggling with herself>*

Persephone: Mother, it is all right, we are here with you, and we love you ...

Rhea: These are not tears of grief, Persephone. These are tears of release, of cleansing and renewal.

<she takes Demeter's hands in hers, tilts up her chin to look into her eyes. Demeter draws in another breath, dries her eyes, and looks back at Rhea>

There is a new light that shines in your eyes, my child. I have seen it before. It is the light of self-knowledge. Do you know who you are now?

Demeter: I ... I think so, Mother. At least I am beginning to.

Rhea: Give yourself time. It won't happen all at once, but will be revealed as you continue on your journey to yourself.

Demeter: *<looking around, as if for the first time>* I do feel something ...something different. It is ... this is what hope feels like. The pain is not gone, but something else is beginning to take its place. The darkness is still there, but it doesn't frighten me the way it did before.

Dionysus: Your darkness will always be there because it is part of you. As is your light! When the balance is lost, the madness returns. Indeed I am Dionysos, chthonic god of death and rebirth. But I am also Lysios, bearer of light! I walk on the edge of light and dark, both at once but neither entirely!

Demeter: I see now. The wounds that I nurture inside cause the darkness to grow. And it is created by me, not by Zeus or Hades, or anyone else. But I couldn't see it ... until now.

Hades: I too felt hurt, and I blamed you, Demeter, when Persephone left my side to join you. But the abandonment, the isolation, grief, and loneliness that overwhelmed me was not caused by you. It came from within me.

Persephone: And I felt helpless, loving both of you but caught in between. I couldn't make things right for either of you; I was powerless to mend the rift. But now I see that it wasn't my responsibility. I can only tread my own path, not yours.

Dionysus: Yes, trying to reconcile two worlds can drive you mad. It can tear you apart, and leave you to bleed. But no wound remains unhealed forever.

[Enter Aphrodite]

Aphrodite: Indeed not, Dionysos!

Demeter: Aphrodite! You...in Erebos?

Aphrodite: Where there is love, Demeter, I am always present. Until Persephone came to Erebos, I had no reason to venture here, cold and unchanging as it was. But with the love that has grown between Hades and Persephone, I too walk the dark paths as well as the light.

Persephone: And mother, our love for you is what drew you to this realm tonight. And you have found your own path, lead by the love you have for me, for us all...and for the mortals.

Aphrodite: For now you have learned a great lesson: that love is what opens us up to the possibility of change.

Dionysos: [*Turning to audience*] Ask yourself this - What can I become, when I see through the pain, the loneliness, the helplessness the ... Madness? When I cease to be the wounded creature within, what lies beyond? Can you see it? Can you taste it? Can you touch it? Can You BE it???

Hades: Know that truth, and though you may die to who you were, you will be reborn to whom you will be!

Persephone: The key to renewal!

Dionysos: To rebirth!

Demeter: To life and growth!

Aphrodite: To Love!

Rhea: <*softly*> yes, to love. And to learn. You were given a gift when you entered into this most sacred place. You may now uncover that gift, and learn of the Mystery it reveals.

<Lighting fades down as the Four move to their High Ritual Positions. Hekate, Rhea, Aphrodite, & Zeus move to the upper platform and fade to the back wall>

HIGH RITUAL

Demeter, Dionysus, Hades, Persephone

<Lights come up on the Four as they reach their positions. Their lines are directed to the Audience>

Demeter: I know who you are. You are a part of me. I see myself reflected in your eyes. Give your soul what it needs to grow, leave behind the death and decay within you. All things flourish like a garden beneath my careful hand. Nothing is neglected, and old roots will bear new fruit once more.

Persephone: I am the choice that lies before you. Remain as you are and nothing can change. The past will hold you captive in a prison of your own design. Truth is my light, illuminating the pathways once hidden from view. They will open before you like a blossom in the morning sun, revealing the road to your future.

Hades: Do not turn away from me, for I am always beside you. The things that you refuse to see will come knocking at your door in the night. I am the watcher within who knows all that you are. Hide from yourself, and though you hold the Universe in your hands, you will have nothing. Look into my face and see your potential, your strength, as solid and stable as the earth itself, and build a new future on the foundations of the past.

Dionysus: Do you know who I am? I am your true nature, revealed only when you look in the mirror of your mind. Self-deception distorts the mirror, and enslaves the soul. In that distortion lie your nightmares of madness, your isolation, your shadows. But raise my light of self-knowledge on high, and fear not what the darkness conceals - for it is the gateway of dreams and visions, the creative flame, the power of regeneration, of life itself, that lifts you to the heights of beauty and ecstasy.

Hades: You cross into the abyss knowing now that a new freedom awaits within.

<here lights fade down to darkness. A silent pause for a few beats, and then:>

Persephone: *<whispering> And death shall have no dominion.*

Demeter: At any moment, be willing to sacrifice what you are for what you could become.

Dionysus: *<whispering> And death shall have no dominion*

Persephone: You are the seed which will bloom into a thousand wondrous manifestations.

Hades: *<whispering> And death shall have no dominion.*

Dionysus: The soul that lies asleep to itself dreams not of what it will be.

Demeter: *<whispering> And death shall have no dominion*

< here light begin ever so faintly begin to rise, growing brighter with each round of statements>

Hades: When all who pass are as one
With the sea and the sky, with the stars and the moon
When your bodies are dust, and taken by the wind
The light that remains still shines as bright

Dionysus: Though you go mad you still shall be sane,

Demeter: Though you fall like the wheat you shall rise again;

Persephone: Though lovers be lost love shall not;

All: And death shall have no dominion.

Dionysus: Beneath the sea, and beneath the blade
You long suffering shall not die without hope;
In pain or in fear, or by the hand of another;

Demeter: Faith in your hands shall not be lost,

Persephone: And though life may leave you alone;

Hades: In your hearts, the new path will be found;

All: And death shall have no dominion.

Persephone: The bud would remain closed tight,
but that the risk of blooming should be less painful;
Where grew a flower once, a flower is no more,

Dionysus: And though you be mad and your heart beats no longer,

Hades: All will again rise through earth;

Demeter: And break into the sunlight once more to live again,

Dionysus: And death shall have no dominion.

<Rhea and Maenads begin a drumming heartbeat, building intensity>

Hades: and death

Persephone: shall have

Demeter: no dominion.

ALL: And Death Shall Have No Dominion!

<drumming continues to build and just before the doors are opened, Zeus speaks>

Zeus: drum and dance back to the Theater, to rejoin those who wait for our return!

<Doors are opened, drumming & dancing circling the fire, then up the hill to the Theater, where Pan & Aphrodite have been keeping the energy going with the Mystai>

THE FINAL GROUNDING

<The Royal Family leads everyone into the theater, then goes up on the stage. Hierophant motions for all to be silent. Pan comes up onto the stage with the rest of the Gods>

Hierophant: Hail Mystai! Hail Eoptai! Fellow initiates of Demeter's Mysteries!

Pan: Hey, wait a minute? Who said you could crash this party?

Aphrodite: Now Pan, don't be like that! *<sidles up to Hierophant, teasing him>* He could be a lot of fun... with a little encouragement!

Hierophant: *<getting flustered>* Uh.. well .. Lady Aphrodite, I am honored, I think ..wait.. I'm not sure.. *<Trip ... being the 'man of the world' tries to support his tongue tied brother>*

Aphrodite: I will take that as a compliment ... I do seem to have a strange effect on mortals sometimes.

Pan: *<laughing>* I hear you! I've been told that I do too! *<snorts>*

Aphrodite: I don't think it is the same thing Pan! Anyway *<looks @ Hierophant>* You were about to say something?

Hierophant: Was I saying ... what was it?

Dadachous: *<interrupting >*: - We have been successful! Our Lady Demeter and Queen Persephone stand with us, and there is a new hope that grows in our hearts.

Hermes: There have been many lessons received and many challenges faced. The journey has not ended. Oh no! It has just begun.

Hekate: You have traveled many roads through these past days, and all have led you back here, to this place, where you have come together once more, in unity, love, and strength.

Apollo: To honor the new bonds that have been created between the Gods and the mortals, we have an offering to share with you all.

<Royal Family brings out the cakes from backstage>

Demeter: These are made of the grain from my fertile fields that will feed and sustain the body - however, no one can survive on grain alone ...

<motions to Aphrodite, to bless the cakes>

Aphrodite: - I bless these cakes with the love that heals all wounds, that inspires great works of beauty, and nurtures the Spirit in times of need. For it is love that allows growth and transformation to begin. Each of you, take a cake, and may you never want for the love that nourishes your soul!

<Royal Family passes cakes out to everyone. Then →

Dadachous: The time is drawing near to end these rites. Before we conclude, I give you the Director of these Mysteries of Demeter!

<Director speaks as he is so moved to do. When finished, he invites the Spiritual Director to speak.>

Spiritual Director: Over the weekend we have raised vast amounts of energy. Properly grounding that energy is the responsible thing to do. I would like to ask ATC Archpriestess Deborah Hudson to lead us.

Arch Priestess: You have seen and heard much; you carry the sacred truths of this rite for the rest of your days, and beyond - you are the children of Demeter!

By our will we have made this place Eleusis, where the timeless rites are continues even as one season follows another. We have summoned great energies and touched the Heart of the Mystery. It is time now to let the forces that have been with us to pass from us and return to the Earth, the body of our Mother. In passing, let these energies heal us and leave behind new wisdom and insight.

<To the Winds:> The earth of our bodies will be healed and growing
The tides of our souls will sing truths beyond words.
The fire of our spirits will burn with renewal and transformation.
The breath of our voices will speak the sacred words.

<continues chant two or three times, to a small peak>

<Raises staff.> Those who wish, come join me now. Help me send these energies through Demeter's staff and back into the Earth from whence they came.