



Hades The Unseen One

(Greek Myths #1)

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Category: Fantasy

Description: Hades was the eldest son of the Titans, Cronus and Rhea. He was born in darkness and kept in darkness when his father, Cronus, swallowed him. After a ten-year war between the Titans and the Olympians, Hades found himself again unseen and in darkness.

He became the Keeper of Souls. Lord of the Dead. The Unseen One. He was a God to be feared and revered. Hades was content in ruling the Underworld until he wanted more.

A prequel to Hades and Persephone.

Total Pages (Source): 9

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What kind of God lives in darkness from birth?

I saw a glimmer of a searing bright light before I caught a glimpse of my mother. She looked ethereal—a Goddess. There was a moment of loss and sadness when my father took me and swallowed me whole. His angry words didn't make sense, but I heard my mother cry out my name .

“ , my son .”

I glided downward toward my murky destination.

My prison .

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I existed in a dreamlike state within my father, Cronus. At times, I could hear what lay on the outside, but the dark abyss became a comfort to me. It was all that I knew. Through time, I listened to snippets of words from my sisters' whispers before my brother joined us. I could hear their whispers, but I never responded to them. Their names remained with me, but they grew anxious and began to irritate my solitude. We grew stronger, and our senses became heightened. I learnt how to suppress all my senses and the little emotion I had.

Our father feared his children, so he ate us to prevent anyone from overthrowing him as he had done to our grandfather, Uranus. I remained silent and learned what I could. At times, I could hear my mother's sorrow. She had a soothing voice and talked to us often when Father slumbered. This eventually stopped, and I was glad for it. Her tears made me uncomfortable.

There came a time when my brother and sisters grew restless. There was talk of being free from the dark cocoon wrapped around us. It awakened me, but thoughts began to plague me.

Freedom . Did I want to be free? To leave the comforting darkness?

It would seem I was given no choice. My mother's voice came back, and she was happy. I knew it was time when the contractions began, and shortly after, I was hurled out into the piercing bright light. There was a great stone that came out of Father before I did. I could see it falling before me.

My father's head reached the skies, and I turned to see the fury in his black eyes. His hair and beard were almost white, which was a contrast to the darkness in his eyes. I

felt a moment of sorrow for the loss of my darkness until I swung around to face the land.

The fall was long, but when I saw the colours of the land. A gentle wind was ushering me away from Father and his home. There were too many vibrant colours, and I shielded my eyes as I approached the land, bracing myself as I reached the soft soil. While I knelt with one knee and hand on the dark soil, a hand reached out for me.

“My brother, I am Zeus. I freed you from your prison. Will you join me to rule our world?”

As my other siblings landed around us, I took Zeus’s hand and stood up. He was as light as I was dark from appearance and our energy.

“A war against father?” I asked quietly, but my voice was devoid of emotion compared to Zeus’s. It felt as dead as my core. The truth was that I felt nothing.

“Yes, I have great plans for this world, and we will have many who will worship us. The world will be free from the Titan's tyranny. Gods and mortals. The golden age is gone.”

“And our mother?” I asked curiously, wondering if the queen of the Titans would go against her king.

“She is with us for now,” he said with a strange smile.

I glanced at Hestia, Demeter, Hera and Poseidon. They didn’t deserve death or an eternal prison of darkness. I released my brother’s hand and studied the ambition blazing in his eyes. Out of all of us, it was ironic that he resembled our father the most. We were born from the Gods, and we were immortal perfection. It was how we survived inside Father.

“I am with you, Zeus,” I said, sighing.

“Good, we need to move before Cronus recovers,” he said with a grin before he went to the others.

As I stretched my body, getting ready to move, I watched my sibling's relief morph into anger. Father was still spewing curses and coughing.

I missed the peace already .

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From Chaos came the primordial, who went on to birth the giant Titans. The Titans ruled only because Cronus castrated his father. The prophecy given to Cronus was that one of his children would overthrow him. Zeus was not wrong in wanting to build a new world, as he said the Titan's golden age era was over. The earth required new life with what Zeus called mortals.

Zeus knew his mission from a young age and convinced many allies to fight by his side. I watched Hera study Zeus briefly before he sat beside her as we discussed the plans. Something was going on between Zeus and Hera that I didn't understand. Zeus was his charming, optimistic self but I remained aloof with everyone. Talking did not come easily to me.

I remained silent and only spoke when a question was directed towards me. Poseidon was looking forward to the fight, but we all had much training to go through. Combat would be something worthwhile.

For all my love of darkness, I enjoyed the air and freedom of movement. This was not something I wished to lose. After studying everyone, I noticed that it was Demeter who kept a calm disposition. She didn't hunger for vengeance but was drawn to the

earth in a way that I couldn't fathom. She wanted to create more on the landscape of the world.

Hestia wasn't as mature in her build or manner, and there would be brief moments of darkness in her eyes. Hera harboured much resentment towards her capture. She had a childlike demeanour.

Zeus was a natural-born leader. He watched and assessed us with a keen eye, while I simply observed in order to understand. His confidence and ambition would not be swayed. The world would need a new ruling class over the old Titans' ways to suit the new landscape Demeter envisioned.

The Titans would not relinquish their positions without a fight. It made me wonder what death would taste like if it were possible.

Would there be eternal darkness with a touch of despair?

I almost smiled at the thought.

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Within days, Zeus had us all training and sent word to all corners of the world. His message was a call to arms and a warning of severe punishment if anyone chose the opposing side.

“These are the Titans. Study them all. Knowing their strength and weaknesses will assist us in our battle against them. However, we might require aid from the prisoners in Tartarus depending on the number of alliances who heed my call,” Zeus said as he glanced at Poseidon before he looked at me.

This was a dangerous feat since we might be unable to control their actions. Yes, they had been imprisoned by the Primordials and Titans, but this might not be enough to guarantee their allegiance to Zeus.

“I heard whispers about the one-eyed brothers and the hundred-armed giants,” Hestia said with a touch of sadness tinging her voice. “Our forefather, Uranus, hated his children more than our father.”

“Indeed, but they have the potential to become the perfect allies should we need them,” Zeus said with his unhinged enthusiasm.

I studied his energy in the aura surrounding him. His shone the brightest, but perhaps that was because the rest of us had been in the darkness for so long. The more time passed, the stronger we became, but we needed more to win a war against such dangerous opponents.

“Where are they, and how can we reach them?” Poseidon asked with a frown as he pondered on his question.

“They are trapped in Tartarus,” Zeus said before he cleared some papers and put a map on top of them. “Mother Earth, Gaia told me how to access Tartarus by following the River Phlegethon. It is also known as the river of fire, and its entrance will take us to the deepest part of the Underworld.”

The Underworld .

My body and mind became heightened and I realised that I looked forward to seeing the deepest, darkest place beneath this earth. The skies were too bright for me.

“When do we leave?” I asked, causing everybody to stare at me before the surprise became speculation. It was only then that I remembered his words. I would need to bide my time before I could see the Underworld.

“It seems something finally caught your attention,” Zeus said as a silver glimmer flashed in his eyes. “We won’t go there unless we need them.”

Poseidon grunted in disappointment as his initial spike of energy dampened.

“The journey would have made a fine quest,” he said, mumbling to himself.

I didn’t consider the quest to free the prisoners. My mind was still imagining how Tartarus and the Underworld would appear. Instinct told me we would all have a part to play in forging the new world, but it would be wise to remember that Cronus was the King of the Titans with a formidable force behind him.

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“Again,” Zeus bellowed at Poseidon.

Zeus exuded power and strength. I couldn't help but admire his tenacity. Our strength

made the ground tremble each time we fought with one another. After fleeing from Cronus and his fury, I knew our battle would be a difficult one. Had he not been consumed by coughing and vomiting, we might not have escaped.

Aren't you fighting today?

Hera's voice filtered into my mind. I didn't give her the satisfaction of looking at her. Zeus held his hand out to help Poseidon up.

Come, Hades, I know you can hear me . Hera said, but my focus was on Zeus and Poseidon. He groaned but pulled himself off the ground. Hera seemed to enjoy trying to get a reaction out of me.

"Take me down," Zeus said before he grabbed two swords and threw one toward Poseidon, who gracefully caught it in mid-air.

Demeter had a soft approach toward the sun and earth. She was able to manipulate plants as easily as I could manipulate the shadows and their accompanying darkness. Hestia was more inclined to toy with fire, showing her dark side, yet she fussed around us, looking after all of us.

As the clashing of metal against metal began, I glanced at Hera, who was watching Poseidon and Zeus. Hera had the same shape-shifting power as Zeus and Poseidon. We were all honing our powers in a variety of ways.

The tussle intensified as both fought at a speed that few could see with the naked eye. I glanced at the large axe that I would be fighting with. I had been wounded several times, but my body healed as quickly as it was wounded. The pain of having my skin sliced open helped me feel grounded, and I found myself enjoying the discomfort. It was a far cry from being in an ageless void of existence.

My powers were more nuanced than that of my siblings. I began to sense a being's moral intentions from seeing energy auras. The evening black skies and the shadows called to me. I could not rest until the sun began to sink into the horizon. Poseidon's guttural war cry brought my attention back to them.

The fine dirt was in the air, and Poseidon brought his sword down. It hit Zeus's until it flew out of his hand and onto the ground. While Poseidon lifted his sword in the air and howled, my eyes were on Zeus, who pushed his long hair back. His smile was wide as he watched Poseidon celebrate.

It was nice of Zeus to let him win for a change .

When I saw the rock fall out of Cronus's mouth, I didn't think anything of it. Zeus told us how our mother, Rhea, managed to save him. She swaddled a stone and gave it to Cronus, who never glanced at the 'child' before swallowing it. Her mother, Gaia, aided her daughter against the cruelty of her son.

I didn't want the burden of being a leader to the Gods and would be content to leave these matters in Zeus or Poseidon's hands. Zeus was as shrewd as he was wise. Poseidon was full of energy to work hard towards creating a new world. I remained silent and in the shadows. My preference was still the same. I was content in my own company.

There was little that I had in common with my siblings. The one factor that united us all was our fight for freedom against Cronus and a new dawn on Mother Earth.

Time had little meaning to me. I had no idea of how long I had been imprisoned for, but I came to learn the bravery of Zeus and his insightful wife. Had it not been for his wife Metis's advice and foresight, we may have remained imprisoned much longer. He had disguised himself to hide his identity and fed Cronus a potion that Metis had provided to him. The Oceanid nymph had been resourceful.

I inhaled a long breath of air. It didn't matter that I was indifferent to my siblings. The clean, crisp air was filled with a variety of scents from nature and our camp. It was better than the grotesque insides of Cronus. The simple ability to move and breathe unhindered was liberating.

Yes,

I would fight to the bitter end to retain this newfound freedom .

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When word came back, it embodied hope in everyone around us. The Goddess Styx of the River was the first to go to Zeus's call, and with her came four of her children. Styx could prove vital for us because any deity who swore an oath by her water was bound to their word, or they would suffer for a period of ten years. There was no word from Pallas, her husband and son of the Titan, Cruis. He was the God of War and Strategy and would have been resourceful.

Themis would actively aid Zeus with her prophecies and divine law. The great Goddess of the Night, Nyx, would not partake in the battle, but Zeus had her blessing. Oceanus would remain neutral, and I wondered if the God whose river spanned across the world was doing so to keep a balance or in favour of his daughter Styx.

This left Cronus, Iapetus, Coseus, Hyperion, Cruis and potentially their offspring. Our mother would not be involved, and it seemed that the rest of the Titanesses would remain neutral. It was disappointing that Atlas disagreed with Zeus because, according to Zeus, he was more powerful than every other Titan except for Cronus.

The lines were being drawn, but once the violence ensued, the situation could alter. No matter what was ahead of us, losing was not an option.

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The bustling noise and excitement within our camp became too much for me, and I sought solace in the middle of the night by taking a chariot. The images of maps were memorised, and I knew how to avoid enemies. The only light was that of the moon and the stars.

The silence was soothing, but the darkness fed into my core energy. It wasn't long before I came across River Cocytus. There was no danger since Oceanus and Tethys did not threaten us. I saw a small nymph beside the river and heard the faint crying sounds.

After glancing around and not seeing anyone close to the nymph, I halted the chariot. She was but a child, and like all Naiad nymphs, she had pixie-like features. I stepped down from the chariot as she stood up. She sniffled and rubbed her tiny nose. Under the light of the moon, I saw tears in her eyes.

“Who are you?” she asked, but her hands trembled.

My appearance was foreboding, and I didn't do anything to mask my darkness. It was where I thrived. She wore a child's white dress with a green sash across one side. Her sand-coloured hair was braided with greenery and small white flowers.

I kept my distance because she was a child, but I knelt down so she wouldn't feel as afraid. This was when I realised why I didn't like her tears. They reminded me of the sounds my mother made. The nymph's blue eyes widened when I knelt before her, and her head dipped toward the grassy bank. There was no coyness within her, and her aura radiated shyness.

“I am Hades. Why are you out here on your own?” I asked, unable to restrain my disapproving tone because these were dangerous times.

Her head snapped up, and to my surprise, the fear left her before she gave me a flashing hint of a smile before sadness filled her eyes with tears. Emotions must be exhausting.

“Our father warned us about the war, and I wanted to come to the River of Lamentation, but no one would take me, so I snuck out,” she said before she wiped

her eyes. "Father told us about you too."

"Who is your father?" I asked curiously.

"His name is God of the Cocytus," she said before she turned away from me and walked towards the river.

She dipped her hand into the water, and the water followed her as she brought it up. The water swirled in the air before she shaped it into a large fish. It appeared to be riding the upward-flowing water.

The little girl's aura changed again, and it was accompanied by a delighted giggle as she moved the fish around. I was glad she had a childhood and hoped it wouldn't be cut short by the upcoming war.

My childhood was spent in a void. All I could do was sleep, but as I grew older, I began to remain awake for longer spells. Perhaps the misery would never leave me. With a heavy heart, I stood up to watch the playful nymph continue to create various animal and plant shapes.

"Come, I will take you home," I said, but the words were flat and emotionless.

"Oh," she said in dismay as the water collapsed when she pulled her hands away. It didn't stop her from dancing past me and climbing onto my chariot.

Children were strange creatures. Crying one minute then laughing and playing the next.

"My name is Minthe," she said.

I didn't recall asking her, but I remained quiet as I climbed onto the chariot beside

her. She could barely see over the chariot. She didn't stop chattering until she indicated where her home was. Luckily for me, her destination wasn't far from the river.

Once we reached her enclosure, she thanked me. Then, she jumped off the chariot and vanished into the shadows of the woodland. As I continued my journey, the encounter made me realise how much was at stake for all beings. The gravity of the upcoming war weighed heavily on me, and we needed a strategic location to ensure fewer casualties.

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Cronus's fury could be heard for miles. The ground shook, and his rage vibrated through the air until it sounded like the rumbling thunder over our heads. The first giant boulder came flying through the air. While I was calculating where to strike it to break it up, Zeus jumped into the air and smashed it with his fist. Dust and broken rock fragments as Zeus landed back on the ground. The dull thud and sound of his metal armour along with him.

My eyes widened when I looked across the plains of Thessaly. Atlas and Iapetus led the hordes, but behind them were giant beasts. It hadn't been Cronus shaking the ground like I thought. It was the monstrous beasts.

“Themis advised me this would be a possibility. We stick to the strategic plan and keep our formation,” Zeus shouted before he roared an ugly battle cry.

Kratos, Nike, Bia and Zelus were backing us. Their father, Pallas, was the God of Warfare, yet he would meet his children on the battlefield. Had he taken the side of Styx and his children, it would have been more palatable. He was no better than Cronus.

We had our weapons and sped towards them, keeping our formation as planned until we drew closer and split up into teams. The clashing of shields, swords, axes and pounding of flesh upon flesh ensued. I aimed for the dragon-footed giant.

The beast was slow to move, and I worked on slicing through its thick skin. When I glanced up, it shot something out of its mouth. It darkened the skies, and as the substance began to fall on me, I raised my shield over my head. It made me cough, and I realised it was poisonous.

“Watch out for the venom,” I said as I held my breath. This was something I learned living inside Cronus. I didn't have to breathe.

Our speed was no match for them. They had brute strength but didn't have our speed or Zeus's strategic planning behind them. We often swapped opponents to throw them off as we learned how and where they were likely to strike.

After hours of gruelling battle, we toppled one of their two gigantic allies, but it hadn't taken long for the beast to stand up again. The Titans blew a trumpet before they began to retreat. It wasn't the victory that we hoped for on our first day, but as I looked around at the destruction, I knew Mother Earth was scorched and scarred.

Little did I know this was the beginning of a decade-long clash.

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By the fourth year of the war, I couldn't remember the optimism that moved me forward. I could see the strain on my siblings' faces and energy auras. Zeus was the only one who remained steadfast in the face of it all.

It didn't help that Hera had sought refuge with Oceanus and Tethys by retiring in their underground cave. She was a bundle of contradictions, swaying from revenge on Cronus to avoiding them entirely, but it was her choice.

Hestia proved fierce and would circle our opponents with rings of fire. My strength was battling in the dark, where I could easily manoeuvre myself through the shadows and attack my enemies. Poseidon could crack through the crust of the earth and launch his attack. Zeus could fight mid-air when he shifted into various animals. Demeter used trees and vegetation to attack and tangle her opponents, but her sword skills had improved immensely.

The incessant, violent battling fed the darkness within me. There would be days at a time when I wouldn't utter a word. If we were tiring, I could only hope the Titans were, too. Cronus had yet to meet with us face to face. He seemed to cower behind his brothers and allies.

The good news was that Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus had defected from the Titans and had come to fight with us. When he foretold that Zeus would triumph, it was the moral boost we all required.

There was much to rebuild in the aftermath, but the war seemed never-ending. In the meantime, Zeus talked about carving a base into a mountain similar to what the Titans had. His grandeur plans always astounded me, yet he always managed to keep his word.

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It was in the eighth year when we sealed our first victory against the Titans and their hoard. The knowledge Prometheus had brought with him aided us. He knew the ins and outs of Mount Othrys, but it would be impossible to enter their base. Zeus had set up a grand fort on Mount Olympus. It rivalled the Titan's Mount Othrys in size. We had not only succeeded in fending off their attack, but we chased them off using our stockpile of weapons. It was time for our major counterattack. Zeus assured us that he had a cunning plan laid out.

Only time will tell .

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The plan turned out to be a journey to the Underworld. Zeus transformed into a winged creature and flew us to our destination. Poseidon teased him for becoming our transportation. Some of my siblings had strong personalities coming forth. Our powers were manifesting after the long battle and strength training. The ease of use was like second nature.

For now, we were united, but there would come a time when my brothers and sisters would fight amongst themselves. I had witnessed too many heated moments over the years. My indifference to everyone kept me out of their squabbling.

The journey made me wonder what Zeus ' s final vision was for our world—soaring through the skies so high that it made me wary that the Titans or their spies could see us from Mount Othrys. The land was vast, but much of it had become barren with charred areas.

Poseidon quietened as we reached the edge of the dark blue waters of the ocean. I gazed over at the dark depths of the water to watch for Oceanus—the eldest Titan who ruled over the sea and other freshwater sources. Poseidon's energy was the brightest near the ocean but didn't seem to beacon to Oceanus.

The sun's warmth made me glance at the sky, but the piercing bright light pained me enough to close my eyes. Thea, the Titaness of sun and light, was not a threat, yet this felt personal. Regardless, I was grateful that my mother and her sisters were safe from the battlefields.

Zeus picked up speed, and I held onto his white fur. His beast was large and vicious-looking, but his eyes remained the same. He had eluded Cronus for many decades but

transformed from his most vulnerable state as a babe into Cronus's greatest foe. Through the help of the Gaia, the nymphs and his guards, Kouretes, his existence was hidden away from the eyes and ears of Cronus. Destiny had it all in place.

I opened my eyes when the warmth of the sun dissipated. The pain that funnelled into my core was sudden and unexpected. The flash of deep envy against Zeus filled me with fury and anguish. I observed the sudden black clouds that smeared the sky. The overcast skies turned everything cold and dreary. My fury lessened as the familiar darkness comforted me. The powerful winds pushed us towards our destination. A breeze picked up and moved my hair onto my face, but I focused on inhaling the fresh yet salty air of the sea. I was given a unique opportunity to be part of the greater good. My petty emotions were not correct.

No, Zeus was not my antagonist .

I couldn't resent Zeus for his freedom. If not for him, we would have remained lost and trapped inside Cronus. The war had changed me—forced me to enact countless forms of brutality. Cronus was the enemy and a threat to us all. I would focus every last malevolent sentiment on destroying my captor and anyone else who opposed us.

We followed the river until I sensed the hollow earth ahead of us. The gentle hum of the trickling water became stronger as the currents became more volatile. It was babbling, but there was more as we drew closer to the earth's centre—a cascading sound as the water plunged down somewhere. I frowned at the length of the river because I could see its length running across the land.

“There is an opening close by. I can feel it in the water,” Poseidon said as he lifted his hand out of the water.

“Your natural senses with water have grown stronger,” Zeus said, but my attention was not on him because I was peering into the shadowing woodland.

The water was much darker, and when I glanced up, within the shadows of the trees, I saw an opening. Unable to hold back, I walked straight into the bleak nebulous. The cavern was sunless and sombre, which suited the Phlegethon river. The river of fire brought relief and instant peace to the residual conflict that was within me.

I grazed my fingertips along the rocks and dirt as I sunk deeper into the black tunnel until the last light was extinguished. From my abdomen to my head, energy surged throughout me. I soaked it in while the route to Tartarus formed. My touch along the tunnel revealed every source hidden deep within the ground below us and the wall of stone my fingertips grazed.

“Follow me,” I said and walked briskly towards our destination.

Beneath the earth, where it had been hot and cold over the ages, had left many metals, gems and minerals. I could sense each layer beneath me, and it called to me. In a way, it reminded me of the moment Cronus swallowed me. The only difference was that I had the indulgence of choice to sink deep into the Underworld.

“You can navigate beneath the earth?” Zeus asked me.

“I see it all,” I said, reluctantly moving my hand away from the marble, gypsum, limestone and salt.

There was warmth below us. I ignored Poseidon and Zeus’s conversation because my fixation was on discovering and seeing more. The pitch-black tunnels were nothing like my prison because I could breathe and move freely. The deeper we travelled, the more I could see. The fleeting sensation of familiarity coursed through me, yet to my knowledge, I had never travelled to the Underworld before.

“How is he able to see where he is going?” Poseidon asked. Since I didn’t talk, he was unaware of my abilities.

“We have been gifted with various powers. If we were all the same, then we would not be able to rule once the war had been won,” Zeus replied.

Zeus would reward all who stood by his side, and the Titans would suffer for all eternity.

“It seems both of you have been greatly gifted,” he muttered, but in the silent darkness, the words were not hidden.

“Do you not feel the power of the earth and sea?” Zeus retorted.

“Yes,” Poseidon said grudgingly.

I switched off to them again because the closer I got to the centre, the greater my core energised. After walking for some time, we approached a sudden drop, and I held my arms out to stop Zeus and Poseidon.

“This is close enough,” Zeus said.

I swung around to look at him.

“I can communicate with the brothers from here,” he said, patting me on my shoulder. “They will sense our natural powers and forge our weapons accordingly.”

I was so close, and there was so much to explore. The Underworld was as vast as the land and skies to me. I suppressed a sigh, but my shoulders drooped down. Poseidon began to talk excitedly about what kind of weapon he wanted. I saw a large boulder and sat down, leaning against the rock.

There was a nagging sensation before I stretched my fingers and lifted my palm. The marble shifted within the cavern wall. I paused and tugged on the iron deposits,

smiling when I felt them shift. This was a new power.

Zeus began to radiate light, and I saw him cross-legged while floating in the air. My lips tightened at the white light, which irritated my eyes. I glanced at Poseidon to get a read on him. His sole focus was on Zeus. There was a mixture of admiration and envy, but I could not judge when I encountered similar emotions not so long ago.

This was the beauty of the blanket of darkness—one remained unseen.

After a while, Poseidon's incessant pacing began to grate on my nerves. In the end, I dug deep to recall how I'd blocked them all out inside Cronus before I mentally scoped out the layout of the underworld. Everything I sensed was set out in a large circular shape. Rivers of water and fire flowed, but there were large pockets of unused space. The sinister void of Tartarus was as close as it was far.

"Hades, Arges needs you to push forth some metals," Zeus said as his light dimmed, and I heard him stand on his feet.

I nodded but kept my face devoid of any expression. How he knew what I could do with the earth and its elements when I only discovered these powers was beyond my comprehension. Zeus was, without a doubt, our commander.

It took me a few moments, but I pushed various metals through the ground once I located the three brothers. Some extremely resilient metals took me longer to move through the rock formations. The more I used my power, the easier the task became.

"That will do. The Cyclopes have all they require," Zeus said.

When the time came to leave, I strolled along to enjoy the last of the peaceful environment. Luckily, Poseidon wasn't as inquisitive on the way back, and I hoped he would not lock horns with Zeus. When we left the Underworld, there was an

inexplicable feeling of loss.

Why was the Underworld calling to me?

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We camped beside the Phlegethon River while the Cyclopes worked on our weapons. The time gave me some time to scrutinise Poseidon. We all have complex characteristics, with some stemming from our incarceration from birth. I watched from the sidelines but remained focused on our goal. His attitude wasn't belligerent in a wicked way. It was simply his way of dealing with his demons.

Although the physicalities of fighting helped vent the frustration out, I still felt lost in my new world. I left my brothers to do as they willed while seeking peace in the dusky evening. I knew there would be no peace when we returned to Mount Olympus.

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“The weapons are ready to be collected, and it is time to free the Cyclopes,” Zeus said as he stood up. He paused before he continued. “Hecatoncheires also reside in Tartarus, but we must get past a guard first.”

The brothers must be master blacksmiths if they completed our weapons within two days. I wasn't too concerned about the guard because, after years of war, one more monster didn't phase me.

“I knew there was a catch,” Poseidon said with a groan.

“All you need to do is distract her, and Hades will be able to break through the barrier. I will take care of ,” Zeus said confidently.

Arges, Steropes and Brontes were the offspring of Uranus and Gaia, as were the

Hecatoncheires. It was our father and their brother who kept them imprisoned. The irony was that his actions were replicas of Uranus's—a God he hated wholeheartedly.

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When we reached the centre of the Underworld, we travelled down the endless pit on Zeus's winged back. The lower we sank into the depths of the pit, the warmer the Underworld got. There was an incredible amount of power down here. My brothers didn't seem affected.

Did it come from the abyss of Tartarus?

"Can you feel it?" I asked as our free fall continued.

"Yes, it feels sinister and perilous," Poseidon said with a frown. "Open the pit as soon as has been removed from her post."

I nodded absently because I'd begun to analyse the various rare deposits hidden deep beneath the earth's crust. Layer upon layer of earth. I glanced upward and wondered how much further there was left.

Zeus must have gotten impatient because he tilted downward and suddenly nosedived towards our destination. We gripped onto him as we sped into the deepest, darkest depths of the Underworld.

My core hummed, and my body buzzed with unhindered excitement. In the pitch-black environment, I closed my eyes and pictured the lower caverns. The vast span of the lower level made me understand that the Cyclopes and Hecatoncheires prison was described aptly as the abyss.

"We are almost there, Zeus," I said. "Be careful. There are jagged rocks that spike

upward.”

Zeus made a strange noise from the back of his throat, acknowledging my words. It wasn't long before he began to hover over the ground. We jumped off him, avoiding the spiked rocks. There was a little light coming from random spurts of hot oozing lava.

I touched the living, breathing ground of Tartarus, created by Chaos, the ancient Goddess who we all came from. After years of bitter war, my spirit felt rejuvenated from a simple touch. It wasn't sorcery because I could see my brothers weren't as affected as I was. Since leaving Cronus's belly, this was the first genuine connection I felt in this world.

“We must hurry and find the Drakaina,” Zeus said, taking his weapons from Poseidon.

My hand lingered on the ground before I stood up.

This damned war needed to end .

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I guided my brothers' path while controlling the darkness. My powers were as natural as breathing down here.

“Who awakens my slumber?” A voice screeched with rage vibrating and echoing around us.

“It is I, Zeus, I come to free your prisoners,” Zeus shouted back but began to look around.

began to laugh to the point of sounding hysterical.

Had the darkness driven her mad, or the loneliness?

Poseidon and Zeus stood back to back while I attempted to locate her energy in the dim cavern.

“You have come to meet your death, Zeus,” hissed.

“To your right,” I shouted as a giant scorpion tail swished through the air.

Zeus stood his ground and stuck his sword into ’s tail. Poseidon used his strength to hold her tail up.

“Split up, I've got her,” Zeus said as screamed with pain.

Poseidon positioned himself, ready to distract , while Zeus faced her head-on. I knew the prison's location from pulling out so much material for our weapons. It was rare for Zeus to be wrong, and my rancour left me. For whatever reason, Zeus had not pursued the brothers or our weapons until now.

We had Themis and Prometheus with their prophecies. All I needed to do was trust in Zeus. This was the right time. I left them to deal with , gliding through the shadows until I saw the seal over the pit.

After taking a deep breath, I moved the stiff formation of the rocks at the entrance of the pit, ignoring the scuffling sounds and the odd scream of fury from . I stepped back as the ground began to shake and crumble, but I didn't stop. We had left the battlefield and needed to return before the next wave.

When realised what I was doing, she darted toward me. I reflected all the light in the

area onto her until she covered her eyes with her arm. Cronus had picked the perfect warden to oversee his prisoners.

's head was covered with numerous serpent-like creatures, but each tip had a different beast on it. In place of her legs, she had larger serpents. Her chest and face resembled a female, but her torso was covered in fish-like scales.

Zeus sliced through one of her legs, causing her to scream and swipe at him with her talons. While she turned away from me, I released the spotlight from her and continued breaking through the pit's seal.

The rest of the ground crumbled away, leaving a huge hole in the area. I quickly moved back as the earth fractured beneath me. The Cyclopes came out first. Their hands gripped the edges before they heaved their lofty bodies up, helping one another to pull themselves out. Their size and strength had not waned beneath the earth. They had one large eye in the middle of their forehead that seemed to blink slowly as they looked around.

The entire rim of the pit was covered with countless hands and fingers as the one-hundred-armed Hecatoncheires. This was only one because the numerous head was attached to one body. They needed no assistance to climb out of the pit.

There was no need to read their energy. Briareus, Cottus and Gyges were burning with a desire to fight. One by one, they ran towards , but Zeus had her pinned to the ground with Poseidon throwing him the sharpened spear. With a mighty roar, Zeus drove his spear into 's neck.

The Hecatoncheires began to slam their multiple arms on the ground in fury as the earth beneath my feet shook. These brothers were ripe for war. I glanced at the Cyclopes, who stood to one side. Their demeanour was much calmer, and I noticed the weapons they held.

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The Hecatoncheires left after Zeus gave them instructions. The Cyclopes were conversing with Poseidon while I studied Campe's corpse. During the war, there were countless corpses to clear away, but in the Underworld, death felt—different. We were Gods and immortal beings. I would never taste this endless slumber. To live for all eternity didn't appeal to me at this moment.

“Hades,” Zeus called, breaking me away from my trance.

I closed Campe's lifeless eyes before I stood up.

Arges, Brontes and Steropes stood silently as I approached them. They were large and looked destructive, but their energy flow was gentle. I glanced at their bulky hands and knew how they had the patience to work with metals to craft such fine weapons.

One of them opened their palm and there was a crackling light in it. He handed it to Zeus, and it lengthened to resemble a bolt of lightning that should have been in the sky. I thought of the destruction when lightning hit the earth during a storm. This was indeed a mighty weapon.

Poseidon frowned at the lightning bolt. My brother would never stop his competitiveness, and Zeus's ego encouraged it. His eyes lit up and sparkled with excitement when he received his Trident. He grabbed it and pointed it in the air before twirling it around with the palm of his hand.

Zeus was testing the lightning bolt out, causing it to flash rays of light as the crackling lightning hit the corner of the cavern. I ignored the crashing of broken rocks

falling from the ceiling and walls.

Brontes held out a black helmet. The craftsmanship was exquisite, as it had tiny grooves decorated the edges with fine lines of gold. Black and gold, the colours were perfect. I lifted it from his hand.

“The Helm of Darkness,” he said. “This will give you invisibility. Unlike the shadows you work with, this helmet will shield you entirely from all beings.”

The possibilities were endless. I could use this in many different ways on the battlefield. Poseidon suddenly slammed the end of his trident on the ground, causing us to stumble away from the pit as the earth shuddered.

Between our weapons and the brothers, we were sure to win .

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After much planning and training, Zeus called for a battle to end all battles. We worked almost every day to train the Cyclopes and the Hecatoncheires. They improved their fighting skills, and we used our weapons. Each side gained more knowledge. Time flew past, making the two years seem like a few months.

My mission before we began the final battle had been crucial to our success. With my Helm of Darkness, I infiltrated Mount Othrys and destroyed the Titans' weapons. The satisfaction of returning to my place of birth and imprisonment to destroy Cronus's chances of winning against his children was cathartic. I left Mount Othrys in a state of chaos, and it was enough to shake the Titan's confidence.

I no longer feared the monster who sired me. We were ready for him and his army.

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The fight was like no other. The mighty Hecatoncheires threw the stockpiled projectiles at our enemy's heads. It took strategic planning to position our attacks until the Titans were surrounded by every one of us. The Cyclopes had forged Demeter a golden sword, which she used fiercely. Poseidon ripped the earth and sea apart with his Trident and ushered the Titans to the dedicated area.

The air was full of smoke and dust. The scent of rotting and ancient blood surrounded me as I used my helmet to launch further attacks on the Titans, but Zeus signalled for us to stand down as Hecatoncheires moved in for the kill.

“Nooooooooo! You will not best me, Zeus,” Cronus roared, but the Hecatoncheires became incensed at their captor and bombarded him with trees, boulders and anything else their combined force of three hundred hands could reach.

Zeus flew up into the air as the skies groaned and rumbled. He held his lightning bolt in the air to light up the dark, ominous clouds.

“Your time is over, Cronus. You are banished to Tartarus,” Zeus roared, but his face was twisted with such intense fury it created a wicked look in his eyes and face.

His energy lit up with an aura so dark that our siblings and allies moved back. I was too fascinated to move. When he threw his bolt, I watched it land on Cronus with so much force that the ground ripped open. We were coughing as the dust and fragments of the earth hit us. When I looked at where Cronus stood, to my surprise, he was gone.

The Hecatoncheires took off running away from the battlefield, and I realised what happened. A hint of a smile curled my lips upward for the first time in my existence.

Was I happy? Who knew?

Zeus had banished Cronus to Tartarus, and the Hecatoncheires went to ensure he didn't escape until a new seal was in place.

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Taking care of the aftermath took time, but Zeus set everyone to task and imprisoned the tyrants. The punishments he doled out were as harsh as he'd promised. With the new rule came the rewards for the ones who never left his side. He re-created Mount Olympus from a war forte to a home fit for the Gods.

For our share, Zeus had us draw lots. As we pulled our stones out of the sack, I saw Zeus holding a white stone and Poseidon holding a blue gem. When I opened my palm, an obsidian stone was as dark as my father's insides.

"This decides our realms. I will rule the skies, Poseidon, the Sea and Hades. You will rule the Underworld. Prometheus is creating the humans, and when the mortals die, you will rule them in death in the afterlife," Zeus said quietly. "I would trust no other, but you, Hades."

Was this a reward or punishment? I had an infinity for the dark, and the Underworld called to me, but could I live in darkness again?

The maelstrom of thoughts crashed against one another as I tried to digest his words.

"You will receive a guard to protect your realm. No living being will leave the Underworld. We must keep a balance at all times," he continued as I glanced at Poseidon, who looked solemn.

I clenched the black stone in my fist.

"Mount Olympus is no longer your home," Zeus said firmly, causing me to snap my head away from Poseidon to stare at him. "The Underworld is your only home."

Something inside me fractured. I couldn't say what it was, but a coldness spread across my body. I nodded, and without uttering a word, I left Mount Olympus. I heard my brothers talking as I left, but nothing could penetrate the shocked haze on my head. I didn't care to find out how the rest of the world would be divided. The news would reach me eventually.

I was born in darkness, lived in darkness, and now my eternity would be served in the perpetual darkness. The stone crumbled in my fist, and I released it on the white marble floors of my previous home. If I had a heart before, it was now dead, shrouded in the ice that coursed through my entire being.

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When I reached the Underworld, I was still in a sombre mood. After crossing the rivers, a giant beast came leaping towards me. Anger made me draw my fist back to beat the beast to death, but I didn't get a chance as the three-headed beast toppled me over.

They growled and snarled viciously, snapping their teeth at one another. I gazed at the three-headed dog in confusion because they weren't trying to bite me. They were fighting with one another, trying to lick my face.

Cerberus .

I lay back on the ground, and their heads followed me as I stared at the dark brown and black ceiling. They took turns licking my face, and I stroked their heads before rubbing their slobbering jaws. Their black serpent-like tails were wagging in all directions. I relaxed, knowing I wouldn't be completely alone in the Underworld.

I wouldn't be beaten by any God or the Fates. The Underworld was mine to redesign, and I would create a world that suited me and my role as God of The Underworld. Zeus could keep his siblings and progeny beside him because I didn't need anyone.

I worked day and night on my palace, pulling every piece of marble, gold, bronze and obsidian to create a home superior to Zeus and his chosen Gods. Hour after hour, I fashioned every inch of my home. Messengers came and went, but I ignored them all until I was ready.

Rest was for the feeble, not for me. Once my home and world were shaped, I was ready for any challenge that came my way. I would complete my duties and never be swayed by petty desires. This was my world and my rules. Anyone who dared to break them would meet the severest of consequences.

I whistled for Cerberus, and we stepped into my palace.

The End.