Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Hades Learns to be Fair (Taki and Toula Time Travelers, 4) by Josef Hill, Elena Paige", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/922. Entry version as of November 01, 2026.

Josef Hill , Elena Paige

Hades Learns to be Fair (Taki and Toula Time Travelers, 4)

Australia

TAGS: Cerberus Cynics / Cynic Philosophy Hades Hermes Persephone Zeus





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Hades Learns to be Fair (Taki and Toula Time Travelers, 4)
Country of the First Edition	Australia
Country/countries of popularity	Australia
Original Language	English
First Edition Details	Elena Paige, *Taki and Toula Time Travelers Book 4: Hades learns to be fair*. Angelos Publishing. Kindle edition 2018, pp. 37
ISBN	9781925557541 ebook
Genre	Didactic fiction, Fiction, Illustrated works, Mythological fiction, Time-Slip Fantasy*
Target Audience	Children (5–10 (primary school age))
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com
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This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators



Josef Hill (Illustrator)



Elena Paige (Author)

From her website: “Elena Paige is a children's and teen author with a background in counselling psychology.” She has written numerous series for children; among them *Taki and Toula Time Travelers*, *The Magicians*, *Evie Everyday Witch* and more.

Source:

Official website (accessed: September 24, 2019)

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Additional information

Summary

In this time-traveling series fourth installment, two modern day Greek children from Crete, Toula (8 year old girl) and Taki (6 year old boy) find strange traditional Greek shoes called tsarouhia in their mother's chest. They find out that wearing these shoes enable them to time-travel to ancient Greece (see here).

In this book, the children find themselves in the petrifying underworld. Hades, who resents the children for assisting Zeus in their previous adventure (Paige, *Zeus Tames his Temper*) and prevents them from leaving his realm. Because Persephone feeds them pomegranate seeds, Hades insists they cannot leave. When Hermes arrives to take Persephone to her mother, he hears of their plight. In the end, Persephone and the children succeed in persuading Hades to let them go so that he can prove he is actually kind and fair.

Analysis

This installment combines the recurring theme of the series, child empowerment, as well as that of facing one of the greatest fears, that of death. Taki and Toula accidentally arrive in the underworld. While Toula is scared, Taki is excited, taking Polaroid photos. Taki's high spirits encourages Toula. The younger of the two exhibits more courage and self-assurance than his older sister, yet she quickly regains her strength as well.

Hades and the underworld are frequent in children's adaptations of myths, mostly in an attempt to portray the underworld as perhaps a bleak place but not a place one should dread too much. Unlike some other children's books, this book does not connect the Greek underworld with the Christian Hell.

The underworld is described in various forms in juvenile literature. For example, in *Goddess Girls* series, by Joan Holub and Suzanne Williams, Hades is a kind adolescent who works in the underworld; in the *Myth-o-Mania* series by Kate McMullan, the underworld is portrayed as a cool and quite fun place to live in. Various authors attempt to present the underworld not just as a dark sphere, but a place with its own uniqueness. This correlates with the intricate ancient view of the underworld, as containing numerous layers, including the Elysian fields.

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As for Hades, the ruler of the underworld is a mysterious figure. Aside from the abduction of Persephone, there are few myths about Hades; the ancients seem to prefer not to mention him too much, probably out of respect and fear. Thus the relatively scarce evidence on Hades leaves more room to modern authors' imagination. As noted above, Hades is usually not portrayed as cruel, but as a lonely man, who must forever reside in the sunless underworld. In *Sephy's Story* by Julia Green (2013), while Sephy initially resents Hades for abducting her, she gradually begins to understand him and pity his loneliness.

In the present story, it is unclear how long Persephone has dwelt in the underworld. Persephone is described as "sad and sullen" since she is lonely in the underworld. She also tells the children that Hades abducted her from her mother and that Cerberus prevents anyone from leaving. She seems familiar with the surroundings, yet when Hermes comes to take her to her mother, Hades announces that she already ate in the underworld and therefore cannot return. Hence, our young protagonists witness the unfolding of Persephone's abduction story. We do not know when Persephone ate, and if she still did not know about Hades' rule of eating in the underworld.

Interestingly, Persephone offers the children pomegranate seeds to eat. Was she honestly giving them food, or was she trying to trick them, like she was doomed by Hades, so that they remain with her? Her act is up to interpretation. Perhaps she honestly did not know about the rule since Hades claims it when Hermes arrives.

Yet it appears that although she described Hades quite negatively at first, Persephone does care for Hades, since she later hugs and kisses him. Hades appears to be kind under his rough exterior. He tells the children, "I can't be nice. I'm the God of the Underworld. What chance do I ever have to be liked? None!" (p. 21). It seems as if Hades is acting in the way he thinks is expected of him, as the ruler of the underworld, yet he is hurt that the people think he is unfair and frightening. In a way, he is a victim of his own circumstances and therefore initially he is reluctant to even try to change his manners and soften his behaviour.

Taki's camera plays a significant role in the exchange between the children and Hades. The instant Polaroid photos allow Hades to have a glimpse of himself: "Hades looked at the photos. He didn't look so mean in them. Taki's photos made the Underworld look warm and inviting." (p. 24). The photos affirms that many things are a matter of

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perception. The camera does not have any bias, Taki takes a picture of what he sees, not of any prejudice linked to the underworld. There are positive aspects even to the harshest of settings. Hades, in truth, is not bad and the camera apprehends his internal kindness. He agrees that Persephone should stay with her mother an equal pat of the year as with him. His decision deviates from the ancient myth in which Persephone spent only a third of the year in the underworld. Perhaps the author was misinformed about this part of the myth. Or as Lisa Maurice notes, this is the result of the great influence of Hawthorne, *Tanglewood Tales*, "The Pomegranate Seeds". An online link to this tale can be found here (accessed: December 3, 2019).

In the end, Taki leaves his camera with Hermes; thus the new and the ancient mix together to create wonderful new pictures and new stores! This is the essence of this whole series. The modern sensitivities of the children, especially their kind demeanor and kindness emotionally moves the ancient gods and heroes they meet, and although some of the ancient deities are bound to certain behavior (being the ruler etc.), they adapt to the new ways the children sow them. The children use their skills from the modern world to solve problems, whether by discussing them yet also by using everyday items, such as cameras or drinking straws (as in the book about Hades).

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Cerberus Cynics / Cynic Philosophy Hades Hermes Persephone Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Conflict Reconciliation Success and failure

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