

After the gods overthrew their parents the Titans, the three brothers Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades gathered to divide the world into lots, over which they would rule. Zeus, the youngest brother, but also the liberator of his siblings and the slayer of their father Chronus, took the sky and the celestial realm of Olympus as his domain. Poseidon chose the mysterious depths of the seas, while dark Hades inherited the underworld and the deep places of the Earth. Since that time, Hades became bitterly jealous of his younger brother, now patriarch of a new generation of gods who ruled over Mount Olympus, while Hades ruled over nothing but the shades of the dead in his dark and lonely kingdom.

Hades chanced to see Persephone, the lovely daughter of the goddess Demeter. Taken by her beauty, he abducted her to be his queen. Although Zeus and Demeter insisted upon her return, Hades countered that Persephone had eaten the food of the dead in the form of some pomegranate seeds. So Zeus was forced to rule that Persephone remain Hades' queen and dwell in the underworld with him for half of the year. The lovely queen of the domain of the dead has been the sole mitigating force on Hades over the years. For much of the time, the King of the Underworld has sought to usurp the power of his fellow gods and extend his domain through death and destruction in the mortal world. He has made dupes of his nephews Ares and Hermes on occasion, and used various mortal pawns and monsters to serve his purposes.

One particular mortal who earned Hades' displeasure was Daedelus, when he spurned the gods' gift of immortality. Since then, Hades has claimed Daedelus' soul for his own, although Zeus has forbidden the God of the Dead from striking Daedelus down personally. Instead, Hades has worked through agents and intermediaries over the centuries in plots to kill Daedelus and end his immortal existence. The knowledge Hades awaited him in Tartarus may have very well kept Daedelus from seeking death at times when his life seemed to have lost meaning.

In recent years, Hades has used the Murder Spirit known on Earth as Jack-A-Knives as one of his primary agents; an entity stripped of everything except the will and desire to kill. Hades granted immortality to Daedelus' foe the Minotaur, with the caveat that the man-bull must sacrifice thirty souls each year to Hades to sustain himself. The Lord of Tartarus has also dealt with the likes of Medea and the brass man Talos, although the latter prefers to have as little to do with Hades (and the other gods) as possible.

When Daedelus adopted his public identity as a superhero in Freedom City, Hades took it as a personal affront. He massed an army of the dead and invaded the city with the unwitting aid of an amateur mortal wizard seeking unlimited power. Instead, all he received was a place in Hades' undead legions as they stormed Freedom City. Various heroes, including Daedelus, united to oppose Hades and his forces, and successfully drove them back to Tartarus. Angered by Hades' presumption, Zeus forbade his brother to ever so directly

HADES, LORD OF THE UNDERWORLD

VILLAIN PROFILE: HADES

Power Level: 28

Concept: Dark God of the Underworld

Name: Hades

Other Aliases: Pluto, Dis

Base of Operations: Tartarus, the Underworld

Affiliation: The Olympian Gods

Nationality: Greek

Age: Immortal

Height: 6' 3"

Weight: 350 lbs.

Eyes: Black

Hair: Black

CAPERS

The Cult of Death: Working through human agents, Hades has built up a cult of followers in Freedom City and elsewhere. The cult might be entirely new or it might use an existing group or organization as cover (such as the Pinnacle Path or the Midnight Society from *Freedom City*). The members of Hades' cult serve as his agents in the mortal world. Their goal is to bring the Earth under the dominion of Tartarus. They're under the impression they will be spared and given positions of power and influence in the death-god's new regime (they are sadly mistaken, of course). The death cult can be a source of new villains and plots, as the heroes try to track down its leaders and headquarters to shut it down once and for all.

Journey to the Underworld: Hades captures the soul of a hero. It might be an NPC like Centurion or a member of the Freedom League like Daedelus. If a player character dies, Hades might capture his soul instead. The hero's spirit manages to reach out to send the heroes a message in a dream or vision. The heroes must go to Tartarus to retrieve their fallen comrade's soul from the clutches of Hades. Of course, the death god is willing to challenge the heroes to a contest. If they pass the trials he offers, they can leave with their friend. If they fail, however, their souls are also forfeit, and will remain in the land of the dead forever!

invade the Earth again. Daedelus and his allies went on to found the Freedom League, a target of Hades' wrath ever since.

For years after the formation of the Freedom League, Hades bedeviled Daedelus and other heroes with his plots and schemes. Unable to invade the world of the living, he still caused considerable trouble through the use of various pawns, granting temporary powers to ambitious mortals, unleashing mythological monsters, or attempting to draw heroes into his underworld domain to entrap them forever (such as when the Freedom League switched places with the condemned souls of Tantalus, Sisyphus, and others). Each time, heroes thwarted Hades' plans, occasionally with the aid of Persephone, who did what she could to curb her husband's excesses.

When Daedelus left Earth for a time, Hades lost track of his old foe and fell into a long period of brooding in Tartarus. Daedelus' return during the Terminus Invasion both drew Hades' attention and inspired the dark god. Where Omega had nearly succeeded in drawing Earth into the Terminus, Hades would use other supervillains to do his work, leading humanity toward destruction and bringing them under the shadow of his kingdom of death. Then Hades, Lord of the Underworld, would reign as the supreme god of Olympus and the world!

USING HADES

Hades is a villainous prime mover, a mastermind who operates behind the scenes and can be responsible for any number of threats for the heroes to overcome. He considers himself cheated of his rightful due by his exile to dark and dismal Tartarus and Zeus' decree that the gods will no longer directly interfere in the affairs of mortals. Where once he was due worship and respect, now he is largely forgotten and overlooked, while mortals revere and worship these brightly clad fools they call heroes. Hades has seen their like in the form of Achilles, Heracles, Jason, Bellerophon, and others. They all succumbed to their own hubris and mortality in time, and so will these modern heroes.

Hades reserves a particular hatred for Daedelus because the immortal inventor is the embodiment of every indignity Hades has been forced to endure for millennia. His spurning of the gods' gift of immortality (which Hades was opposed to from the start) shows a lack of respect. His dedication to science over mysticism is a slap in the face to tradition and the gods' own powers. He has foiled Hades plans innumerable times and his alliance with mortal heroes has been a continual thorn in the death god's side. Hades longs for the day when he has Daedelus' soul in his clutches, to torment in Tartarus for all time.

Hades also plans to extend the dominion of his kingdom of death by causing destruction and mayhem on Earth. Although he is forbidden to act directly, he can still work through many agents, both mortal and mythic, to achieve his ends. The deaths caused by Hades' agents feed his power and the legions of the dead under his rule.

TACTICS

As his power level makes clear, Hades is a formidable foe. Fortunately for the heroes, he rarely intervenes or confronts his opponents directly. Indeed, he is largely forbidden to do so. Therefore, Hades' tactics tend to revolve around misdirection and the use of various minions, such as the Murder Spirit, Jack-a-Knives, Cerberus, various creatures of myth, spirits of the dead, and monsters like zombies and skeletons. Hades is known for granting powers to mortals in exchange for their service. He does so using his godly powers, by investing the mortal with a ghostly spirit, or by lending items of power (such as his helm of invisibility).

On the rare occasions when he directly confronts his foes, Hades prefers to raise as many of his minions as possible, sending them in waves at the heroes. He uses his own powers to defend himself as needed. He much prefers to imprison defeated foes in Tartarus, tormenting them alongside Sisyphus, Tantalus, and other condemned souls for all eternity.



Storn