



# infernus

Tales from the ancient Greek  
and Roman Underworld

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# About CLASSICS4KIDS



[www.classics.kids](http://www.classics.kids)

In today's world, fewer people are learning about the classics, yet the field holds immense value for all, even those who may choose to not pursue it academically. CLASSICS4KIDS aims to cultivate and inspire curiosity for the Ancient Mediterranean in youth from an early age.

## Our Carpe diem! Magazine

In Carpe diem!, we bring the world of Ancient Greeks and Romans to life for elementary school readers. Through retellings of ancient myths, tricky puzzles, and exciting book recommendations, our kids magazine makes learning about the classics accessible and fun for young readers. Brave heroes, clever leaders, and brain-teasers are just a page away!

## Our Carpe diem! Team

What about the people behind this magazine? We are a group of writers, designers, artists, and editors from the CLASSICS4KIDS staff, consisting of high schoolers from across the country dedicated to spreading interest in the classics. We hope you enjoy!



Sebastian



Lily



Eric

## Editor's note

"Infernus" is what the Romans called their underworld. Though you might think it's all doom and gloom, a dive deeper reveals glorious yet tragic stories and fascinating Greek & Roman culture. I hope you have fun with our stories and fun activities!



Chelsea

# Conquer the Classics

## Reading recommendations!

### **Greeking Out; Tales from the Underworld**

*Kenny Curtis & Jenny Hughes, illus. by Javir Espila*

Heroes, hell hounds, hysteria. Take a wild journey through tales about the afterlife from the Greeks, Norse, Egyptians, and more!

Reading level: 1

### **Greek Mythology: Kingdom of Hades**

*Michael Defosse*

Dive into this guide to the Underworld from ancient writings!!

Read about Underworld gods, division of its lands, and more!

Reading level: 3

### **Cerberus (Monsters of Mythology)**

*Bernard Evslin*

Written by a famed author of modern myth retellings, this story is told from three-headed guard dog Cerberus's perspective during Hercules's Twelfth Labor.

Reading level: 2

### **Persephone**

*Sally Pomme Clayton & Virginia Lee*

This lyric retelling illustrates Persephone's love story and explains the changing of the seasons as perceived by the Greeks.

Reading level: 1



# Orpheus & Eurydice

## A tragic love story

*“Where’s Eurydice?” Orpheus asked.*

The day of the wedding finally arrived. Everyone was here – except Eurydice. Orpheus looked far and wide, but she was nowhere to be found. Suddenly, he heard cries. A group of Naiads, Eurydice’s bridesmaids, were wailing in the forest. Orpheus rushed over.

On the floor lay a dying woman, a snake biting her heel – his beloved Eurydice.

Devastated by his loss, Orpheus mourned and grieved without end. For seven days, he sang and played his lyre with such beautiful misery that everyone, including the gods, stopped and listened. Moved by the power of his song, the gods allowed Orpheus the chance to go to the Underworld and retrieve his wife.



All along his journey he kept singing. No obstacle stood in his way. His music lulled Cerberus to sleep. His song brought tears to the Furies’ eyes for the first time ever. At last, Orpheus stood before Hades himself and sang,



“  
Oh Hades, king of the Underworld and lord of the dead, I have not come for Persephone or Cerberus, not to meet dead prophets or heros, but to save my wife. I tried to accept what the Fates have done, and I fought my emotions. But love won. I know love struck you too all those years ago, so from one victim to another, please let her go.”

His words flooded the fields of Asphodel and the pits of Tartarus. Tantalus no longer reached for the water, Ixion's wheel stopped spinning, and Sisyphus sat still upon his rock.

Moved by his music and touched by his words, Hades released Eurydice on one condition: Orpheus could not look at her until they both reached the land of the living.

So, step by step, they walked out of the Underworld, Orpheus leading and Eurydice following. As soon as he stepped into the land of the living, Orpheus turned around to embrace her. But Eurydice had one last step to take. She rushed to cross before Orpheus laid eyes on her, but it was too late. As she faded away, only one word escaped her lips for Orpheus to hear:

“Goodbye.”



# Punishments

The Underworld is the Greek and Roman place for the dead. Those who had sinned against the deities, they were be imprisonment and punishment in Tartarus. Which punishment do you think is the worst?

## Sisyphus – rolling a boulder uphill for eternity



After Sisyphus died, he asked Hades to resurrect him for a proper funeral, and Hades, reluctant, allowed it. However, Sisyphus simply refused to die again – he even trapped Thanatos, the god of death. Later, he was punished in Tartarus by rolling a boulder that rolls back down the hill right before he reaches the top.

## Tantalus – never being able to eat or drink

While dining with the gods, Tantalus cooked his son Pelops to test them. When they found out his horrible deeds, they banish him to Tartarus, where he stands in a pool with water below his chin and fruit above his head. But, whenever he tries to drink the water or eat the fruit, they are just out of reach.



## Ixion – Bound on a wheel of fire



Ixion killed his father-in-law and was exiled from society. Zeus took pity on him and invited him to dine with the gods, but Ixion tried to flirt with Hera, Zeus's wife. Furious, the gods tied him to a fiery wheel that rolled around Tartarus.



# Tombs



While the ancient Romans lived thousands of years ago, many things are constant throughout the centuries,

including the problem of death and, importantly, where to bury the bodies. Romans did not allow burials within the city, both for spiritual and practical reasons (burying the dead in the city would become unsanitary). They buried the dead in a sacred area known as the pomerium. While cremation initially became popular among Romans, burial rose to popularity during the 2nd century, leading to the creation of tombs.

The tomb you were buried in often reflected your social status. The poor were often placed in wooden boxes, while the rich were buried in grand tombs and decorated coffins to show their importance. Regardless of wealth, families created inscriptions, called cippi, that described the important things in your life.

Roman emperors often built massive tombs, or mausoleums, like the Mausoleum of Hadrian and the Mausoleum of Augustus. Over time, exceptions to the pomerium increased as Christianity rose and traditional Roman rules relaxed. Though Roman burial practices no longer continue, their many tombs remain, offering insight into how people lived and died 2,000 years ago.



ACHERON RIVER

STYX RIVER

FIELDS OF ASPHODEL

LETHE RIVER

ELYSIUM



COCYTUS RIVER

STYGIAN MARSH

PHLEGATHON RIVER

TARTARUS

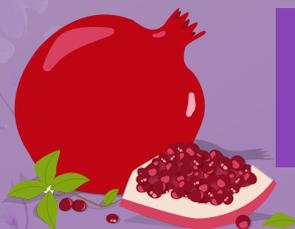
ISLE OF THE  
BLESSED

# Map of the Underworld



# Riddles/Anagrams

Unscramble the anagrams to find the answers to these riddles!



I reach for fruit but can never eat. I reach for water but can never drink. Who am I?

**SULTTANA**

I am past, present, and future. I am birth, life, and death. I never sleep as I guard the gates of the Underworld. Who am I?



**SCUBEER**

I am one of the most cunning men ever. I betrayed Zeus. I escaped death, twice. Who am I?



**SUSHISPY**

I outsang the sirens with my voice. I made the Furies cry with my songs. I almost rescued my wife Eurydice from the Underworld. Who am I?



**USHERPO**

# Travel the Underworld

Imagine you are a classical hero, and you are journeying through the underworld. Where would you go? If you should meet the formidable Cerberus, what would you say to convince him to allow you to go in and out? Who would you want to meet? What would you say to them?

## Option 1: Draw a map

Try to draw a map using what you've learnt about the Underworld, and illustrate what you'd encounter in this journey.

Here are some heroes in the Elysian Field:

- Achilles
- Odysseus
- Aeneas
- Hector
- Cicero



Look at Page 6 for an example of some villains in Tartarus!

## Option 2: Write a story

You could think about what you would say to them, and how they would respond to you if you should have a conversation with them. You could also use a few of the Latin phrases and words you've learnt!

Once you've finished drawing a map or writing a story about your own travels to the Underworld, submit it to this link to be featured in the next issue of *Carpe Diem!*

<https://bit.ly/traveltheunderworld>

# Learn more!



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www.classics.kids

