

Name One Hero Who was Happy in the End: Agency, Grief, and Regret in Hades

In 2018, Supergiant Games, a small independent video game development studio released *Hades*. It is their first game adapted from Greek mythology, and they hope that “those familiar with Greek myth” would find their take on it “to be true to the spirit of the source material [...] stories of ancient gods and heroes filtered through new points of view,” while remaining accessible to those unfamiliar with Greek myth (“Hades FAQ,” 2021). *Hades* has reached a wide audience on multiple gaming platforms, and it was named 2020’s Game of the Year by several publications, including Polygon and The Washington Post.

The narrative of *Hades* centers around the young god Zagreus and his attempts to break free from the underworld and the clutches of his father, Hades. A key plot point of the story revolves around Zagreus’ attempt to reunite the lovers, Achilles and Patroclus, after death. The two heroes have been separated through the actions of Achilles after his death, as he traded his ‘life’ and services to Hades in exchange for ensuring Patroclus’ place in Elysium. The game is intentional in labeling the relationship between them as romantic, with Achilles saying “yet, I am unmade, unwhole, here in this place; alone, without the one with whom I shared my life when we were flesh and blood” (*Hades*, 2018). In a separate scene, Zagreus overhears Patroclus grieving in his isolated corner of Elysium, “when we were both alive, I... thought you were invincible. I knew of no one, nothing stronger, other than the love we shared. Was I deceived, in thinking this of you, of us?” (*Hades*, 2018)

This paper will look at how the intimate relationship between the Achilles and Patroclus of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* has been interpreted and constructed for a modern audience through the characters of *Hades*. I am particularly interested in exploring questions about agency and grief in relation to Achilles and Patroclus within *Hades* through textual and visual analysis.

Works Cited

Supergiant Games. *Hades*. Supergiant Games. PC/Mac/Switch. 2018.

“Hades FAQ.” *Supergiant Games*. Last modified, August 12, 2021.

<https://www.supergiantgames.com/blog/hades-faq>