



In the beginning, there was nothing, only emptiness. Out of this emptiness, known as Chaos, emerged three immortal beings – the lovely earth, called Gaea, the dark underworld known as Tartarus, and the handsome spirit of love called Eros, whose presence allowed much of creation to occur.

Gaea, without any partner, gave birth to Uranus, the starry evening sky. All alone, Gaea also gave birth to Ourea (Mountains) and Pontus (Sea). In time, Gaea took Uranus to be her husband and together they birthed a generation of powerful beings. First, Gaea gave birth to a triplet set of Hundred-Handed Giants. Each giant had fifty heads and one hundred powerful arms. Uranus, who was fearful of his children's incredible strength, banished them to Tartarus, where they were bound in chains and kept in the dank darkness of the Underworld's caverns.

Soon, Gaea gave birth to another set of triplets. This time, the children were born in the figure of gods, but each had only one large eye set in the middle of his forehead. These three children were the first Cyclopes, an incredibly talented group of craftsmen. Uranus feared their potential power and, just as he had done with his other sons, cast them deep within Gaea's body to join their brothers in the confines of the Underworld. Deep in the bowels of the earth, the six sons grew to detest their father.

Gaea was outraged by her husband's actions and, though she pretended to understand and accept his fears, she secretly plotted for the day she could exact her revenge on him and free her captive sons.

The next immortal children born to Gaea and Uranus were the twelve Titans. They and their children became the oldest generation of Greek gods. The females were Mnemosyne, Tethys, Theia, Phoebe, Rhea, and Themis; the males were Oceanus, Hyperion, Coeus, Crius, Iapetus, and Kronos. Kronos married his sister Rhea, who was a goddess of the earth like her mother, and in time they became the parents of

several crucial Greek gods, including Zeus, Hades, and Poseidon.

Once her Titan children were of age, Gaea decided the time had finally arrived for her to take action against Uranus. From deep within her own soil, she took a large piece of flint and shaped it into a huge stone sickle with the edge of a razor. "Children," she announced while Uranus was away, "you know I have long detested your father's wicked ways. If one of you is strong enough, we now have this tool that can end his tyrannical rule. Which of you will lead us in removing him from power?"

The Titans grew pale at the idea of attacking all-powerful Uranus, until Kronos, the youngest of the set, stepped forward. "I will help you, mother," he announced. "You know I have nothing but hate in my heart for him and I ache to bring justice to our older brothers who have been unjustly imprisoned for far too long."

Kronos' courage emboldened the others and a plan was set.

That evening when Uranus returned and sought to lie beside his wife in want of her warm body, he didn't know that Kronos hid nearby with the sharpened edge of the sickle poised in the air. Quicker than thought, Kronos lunged and grabbed Uranus in his mighty hands. Slicing and slicing again, Kronos mutilated his father's body, deaf to the panicked screams of the elder. Immortality prevented Uranus from being killed, but he was not protected from the excruciating pain of not only the physical distress, but also the knowledge that his reign of power was at its end.

At his mother's direction, Kronos threw the severed pieces of Uranus' body into the ocean. In time, Uranus' blood seeped back into the earth and another group of monstrous beings was created, the Furies. These female creatures with eyes that dripped venom were disgusting, but just. Greeks believed that Furies would torment any child who killed a parent because they would stalk the murderer until he became insane.

From the same blood, Gaea also eventually bore another group of beings, powerful warriors simply called the Giants.

Once Uranus' rule was ended, Kronos' bravery was celebrated by his family. He claimed his destiny and took control of the world.

Adapted from *Theogony* by Hesiod. Used with permission.