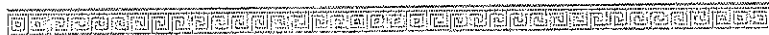


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# CREATION



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Before there was land or sea, people or gods, nothing existed, except Chaos. Chaos was a space of neither order nor disorder. During Chaos's reign, there was no organization of any kind in the universe. There was no sun or moon. There were no mountains or rivers, nor any such features on earth. In fact, there was no earth at all. It was a period of vast emptiness. Even time did not exist. Eventually, Chaos divided itself into the earth, the sky, and the sea. When the division was complete, everything was peaceful and perfect.

After Chaos divided into the earth, sky, and sea, one goddess came into being without being born to any mother. Her name was Gaia, which means earth, and she took control over the earth as it took shape. Mountains became separate from the plains, and rivers and oceans were formed. Like an artist at a canvas, Gaia was busy creating a beautiful masterpiece. Soon, however, the goddess began to long for children to help populate and rule this magnificent new world.

Gaia's desire for children was so great that eventually she became pregnant by herself. The child she bore was named Uranus, and he became the ruler of the sky. In every way, Uranus was the equal of his mother, and soon Gaia and Uranus had children together.

## *Gods and Goddesses in Greek Mythology*

Gaia's first three children were monsters, called the Hundred-handed Ones. They were giants, and each had fifty heads and a hundred hands. Although Gaia loved her children and was proud of them, Uranus was afraid that someday one of these children would overthrow him. Because of this fear, Uranus hated the children and forced them back into Gaia's womb.

After the hundred-handed monsters had been born and were pushed back into their mother's womb, Gaia gave birth to three more monstrous children. These were giants called the Cyclopes. Each had but a single eye, which was positioned directly in the middle of his forehead. Although they were frightening to look at, these young gods were exceedingly strong, and they were excellent craftsmen who made thunder and lightning for



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their mother to use as tools and weapons. Unfortunately, Uranus was afraid of these children, too. So, in order to get rid of them, Uranus tied the Cyclopes up and threw them into a deep cavern called Tartarus. Tartarus was far, far away, and Uranus felt safe in believing that he would never see these monster-children again.

Saddened by the loss of the Hundred-handed Ones and the Cyclopes, and angry at the cruel Uranus, Gaia gave birth to a third group of children. These were called the Titans, and there were twelve of them—six goddesses and six gods. They were very different from their older siblings. The Titans were beings with human characteristics, and they were not monsters at all. The goddesses' names were Tethys, Theia, Mnemosyne, Rhea, Themis, and Phoebe.



## *Gods and Goddesses in Greek Mythology*

The gods' names were Oceanus, Hyperion, Iapetus, Cronus, Crius, and Coeus.

Uranus was still afraid that one day one of his children would overthrow him. Because of this fear, he pushed the Titans back into Gaia's womb alongside their siblings, the Hundred-handed Ones. Gaia was enraged by Uranus's refusal to allow her children to live freely. She desperately wanted her children to live without restraints and to enjoy the world. Finally, she came up with a plan that would allow her children to be born into the world and remain there.

Gaia could speak to the children in her cavernous womb, and she had no trouble convincing them to help with her plan. Cronus, the youngest of the twelve Titans, was the most eager to help his mother. So, the two set out to trick Uranus and free the Titans and the Hundred-handed Ones from their mother's prison-like womb.

Cronus and Gaia waited for the perfect opportunity to enact their plan. Finally, one night, when Uranus came to Gaia's bed, Cronus crept out of Gaia's womb and stabbed his cruel father with a sickle, a curved knife used to harvest crops. As Uranus lay dying, his fears of being overthrown by one of his children having come true, Uranus leaned forward and cursed his son: "Cronus," he pronounced, gasping for breath, "it will come to pass that one of your children will do to you what you have just done to me." Then, with a final shudder, Uranus died, a look of anger and betrayal in his eyes.

After Uranus died, Gaia and her children felt free for the first time. The Titans and the Hundred-handed Ones were reborn from their mother's womb, and the Cyclopes were freed from Tartarus. All of Gaia's children decided to make Cronus their king. Cronus married his sister, the Titan named Rhea, and ruled over the universe for a long, peaceful time.