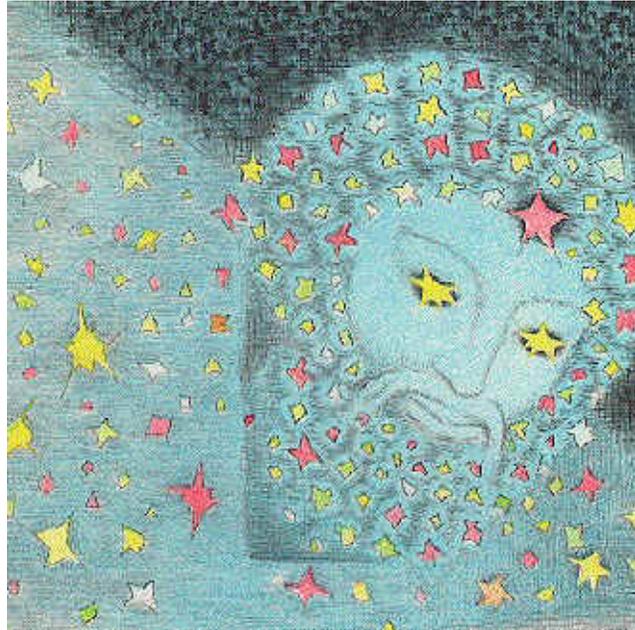


Uranus



In the beginning, there was only emptiness, and the emptiness was called Chaos. From Chaos, emerged the first three immortal beings: Gaea (Mother Earth), Tartarus, who ruled the deepest, darkest region of the Underworld, and Eros (Love), whose great beauty inspired the creation of many of the deathless gods. Then Gaea, without any partner, gave birth to Uranus (Father Sky). She made him her equal, so that he would surround her on all sides and would provide a home for the immortal beings. Gaea also gave birth to Ourea (Mountains) and Pontus (Sea).

Gaea then married Uranus, and he ruled over all that came into being. The first immortal children of Gaea and Uranus were the three Hundred-Handed Giants. Each Giant had fifty heads and fifty arms extending from each shoulder. Their next immortal children were the three Cyclopes. Each Cyclops had only one eye, set in the middle of his forehead. They were expert craftsmen, and they later built the palaces for the gods on Mount Olympus.

Uranus feared the terrible strength of these six children, and he hated them because they terrified him. So as each child was born, Uranus took him from his mother, bound him, and hurled him deep into Gaea's being, the earth. Each child fell for nine days and nine nights, finally landing in the region named after its ruler, Tartarus, on the tenth day. There, Uranus kept the Hundred-Handed Giants and the Cyclopes, far from the surface of the earth and the light of the sun. His eyes now shone with pride and satisfaction, for he ruled without fear of any challenge to his authority, and he expected to rule forever.

Gaea was outraged by her husband's actions. She longed for her children, and she hated Uranus for what he had done to them. However, she buried her feelings deep in her heart and quietly waited for the time when she could take revenge.

The next immortal children born to Gaea and Uranus were the twelve Titans. They and their children became the oldest generation of Greek gods. Helios was the god of the

sun and drove it across the sky in his chariot. Selene was the goddess of the moon. Oceanus was the god of the river that surrounded the earth. Like her mother, Gaea, Themis was the goddess of prophecy at Delphi. Kronos married his sister Rhea, who was a goddess of the earth like her mother, and in time they became the parents of the Greek gods. Later, Atlas, by far the strongest of the Titans, held up the sky so that it would not fall upon the earth. Soon thereafter, Prometheus, the most intelligent and clever Titan, created mortal man out of clay and water. His brother, Epimetheus, married Pandora, the first mortal woman.

Gaea decided to use her Titan children as her means of revenge against Uranus. She took a large piece of flint and shaped it into a huge, sharp stone sickle. Then, she approached her sons and said, "I want you to punish your father, for he is very cruel. He has imprisoned your brothers in the land of Tartarus against my wishes and against their will."

Almost all of Gaea's sons were so terrified of Uranus that they listened to her command in silence and refused to obey her. But Kronos, the youngest Titan, was very similar to his father in temperament, and he was much more courageous than his brothers. When he saw their reaction, he said, "If no one else will help you, Mother, I certainly will. If our father has been cruel to you and to our brothers, we should take revenge!"

When she heard Kronos' words, Gaea's heart overflowed with pride and satisfaction. It was gratifying to have one son who had the courage to help her. Now, Uranus would learn what it was like to endure endless suffering!

So Gaea put the great flint sickle into Kronos' hands. She warned him to be careful with its sharp, curved blade. Then she told him where to hide and what she wanted him to do. Later, when Helios had drawn the chariot of the sun across the sky and had retired for the night, Uranus joined his wife by the shore of the sea and lay down to sleep with her.

Selene shed the light of the moon upon the sleeping figure of Uranus as Kronos, from his place of hiding, raised the huge, stone sickle and mutilated his father. Then, he quickly threw the severed pieces into the sea and said, "Your reign is over, Father! Now I shall reign in your place. You may challenge me, but my power is clearly greater than yours. I advise you to submit to your fate."

Uranus, being immortal, could not die. However, he screamed in agony, for his immortality did not prevent him from feeling excruciating pain. Part of his anguish came from the realization that his power had suddenly ended.

From Uranus' blood, which flowed into the earth, Gaea brought forth the three black-clothed Furies. With eyes that dripped poisonous tears and breath that was too foul to bear, these immortal goddesses drove to insanity any child who killed one of his parents.

From the same blood, Gaea also brought forth another group of terrible beings, who were simply called the Giants. They looked fearsome, with their hairy heads and faces and their dragon-like feet. When they wore their shining armor and carried their long spears, they appeared to be invincible.

The severed pieces of Uranus' immortal body remained in the sea, where a white foam surrounded them. In time, Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and desire, was born from them, and she was often called the foam-born goddess.