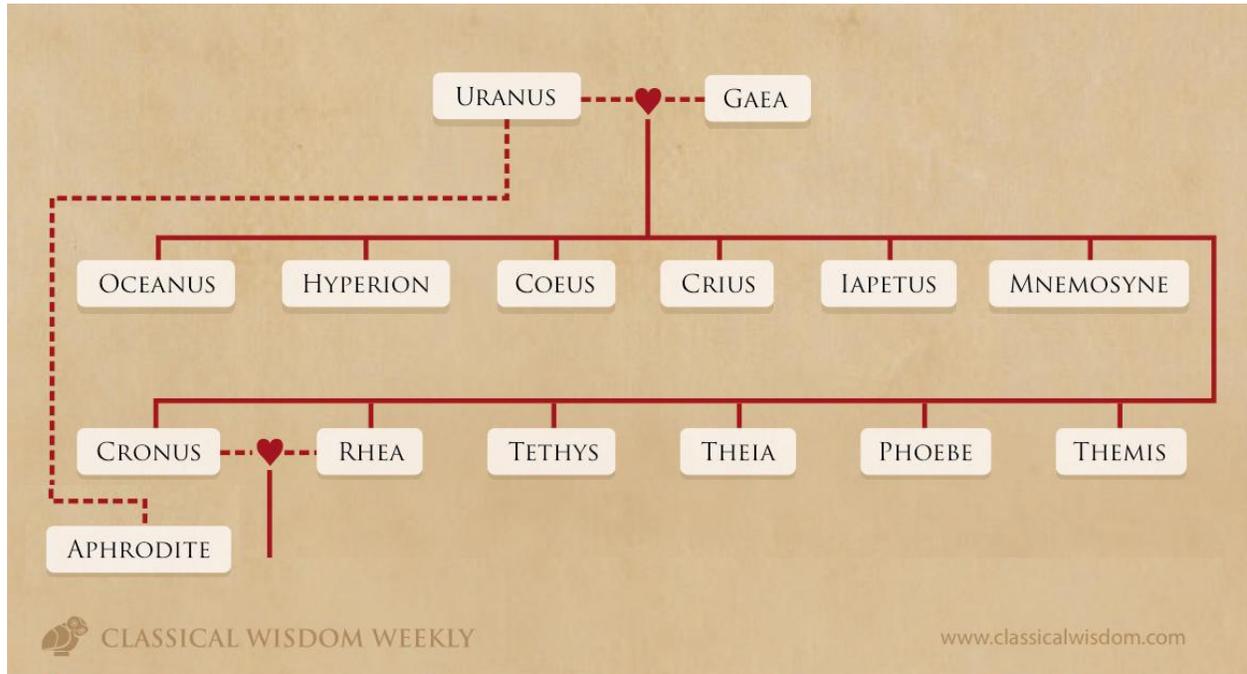


The Creation of the World:

The Beginning of the Titans



WORD BANK

According to - as said by

Chaos - complete disorder, no organization

Form - shape

Purpose - the reason to do something

A Being - any living creature

Gaia - the Earth

Uranus - the Sky

Primordial - existing from the beginning of time, primitive

Titans - the first set of ancient Greek gods, children of Gaia and Uranus

Cyclops - a creature with one eye

Hideous - very ugly

Hecatonchires - a creature with 50 heads and 100 arms

Imprisoned - to put in jail, captive

Immortal - to live forever

Revenge - to get someone back, to hurt someone because they hurt you

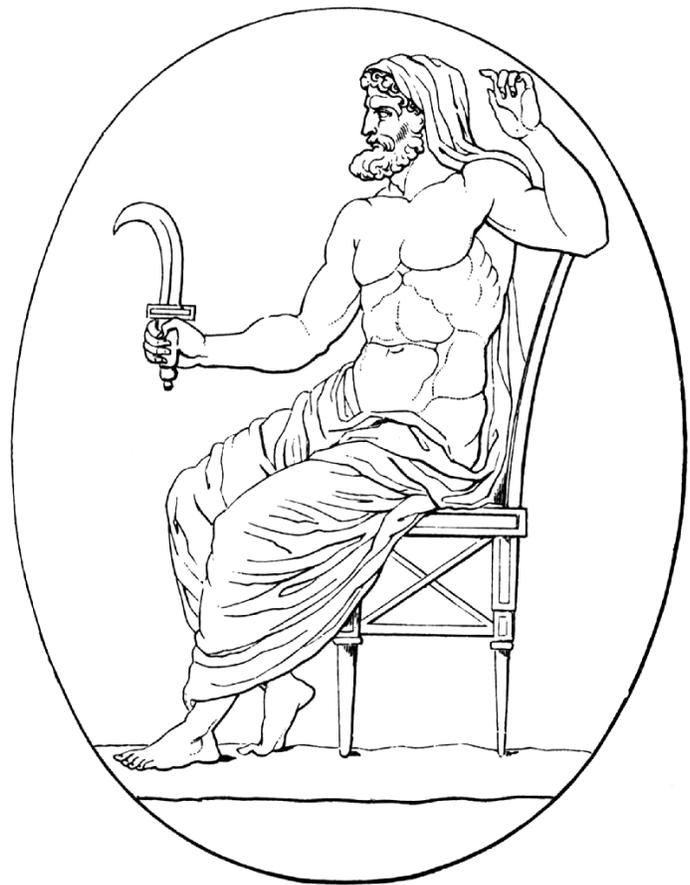
Sickle - a short curved knife, a tool for cutting

Prediction - a guess as to what will happen in the future

According to Greek Mythology, in the beginning of time there was Chaos. Chaos existed without form or purpose. From chaos, came Gaia, who was the earth and who created all the land.

She was the primordial being of the earth and she gave birth to the heavens, known as Uranus. Gaia and Uranus, who were the earth and the sky, became husband and wife and together had many children.

First, Gaia gave birth to the mighty Titans. There were many and they were immortal and had great strength and power. These included six male Titans and six female Titans. Including Rhea, on the left, and Cronus, on the right, below:



Then Gaia gave birth to the Cyclops, who were monsters with one big eye in the center of their foreheads. Next Gaia birthed the hideous Hecatonchires, who were creatures with fifty heads and one hundred arms. Uranus saw the Cyclops and the Hecatonchires as monsters and imprisoned them underneath the earth.

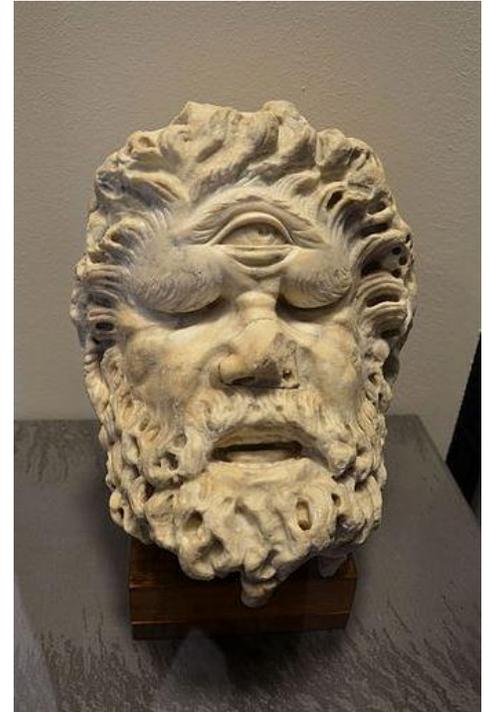
The imprisonment of her children made Gaia sad, so she wanted revenge against Uranus.

(Image: A first century AD head of a Cyclops from the Roman Colosseum)

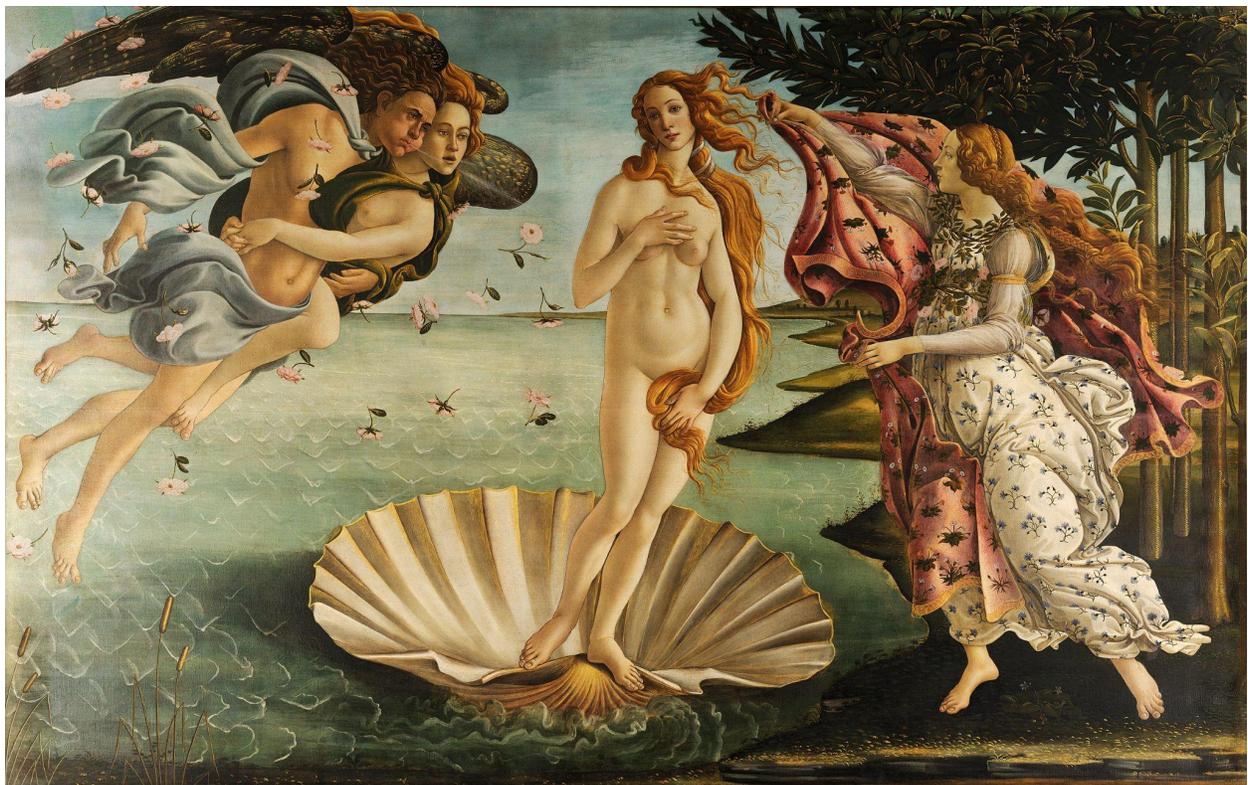
Gaia gathered her other children, the mighty Titans, and told them of her plan. However, the Titans were very afraid of their father; at first, no one would help. Then Cronus, the youngest of the Titans agreed. Gaia gave him a sickle and told him to wait for Uranus.

While Cronus hid away, Uranus was crossing the earth, bringing the night. When Uranus came to Gaia, Cronus jumped out and hit Uranus. Part of him flung across the earth before landing in the sea. From the waters rose a beautiful person. She was a goddess with beauty and grace, she stepped upon the land and the flowers grew around her. She was Aphrodite, one of the original Greek Goddesses.

Cronus was now the king of heaven. He took his father's place as ruler of the universe. However, with the last breath of Uranus, he predicted that one of Cronus's children would take him over one day, just as he had taken over his father. A prediction that one day would come true...



The Birth of Venus (Aphrodite) 1483-1485 by Sandro Botticelli:



Review:

What was there in the beginning, according to Greek Mythology?

What were the original gods from which everything came?

What type of children did Gaia and Uranus have?

What happened to Uranus?

What goddess was born from the former ruler of the universe?

Who was the ruler in the end?

Discussion:

Why did the Greeks create this story?

Do you think they believe it to be true?

Why did Gaia have different types of children? Why were some good and some monsters?

Can you think of other creation stories from other places and mythologies? What do they have in common? What is different?

Activities:

Make Your Own Creation: Gaia and Uranus made 12 Titans but also many strange monsters and creatures... so try making a strange creation of your own. Take a piece of paper and at the very top draw a head (or many!), then fold the top section over so it's hidden. Let the next person draw the next section of your creation. Fold again and pass it along! See what bizarre creature you are left with... Make sure to name it and give it a story.

Try it again to make a Titan! What special powers does it have?

Act it Out! Make a short play on the ancient Greek creation story. You can use stick puppets, shadow puppets, hand puppets or dress up as the characters.

Color it in! Can you color in Botticelli's famous "The Birth of Venus"?