

The Greek legends appear in many different mythological works, and not all the authors agree about which deity gave birth to whom when. The major accounts include Hesiod's *Theogony*, Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and, of course, Sophocles, Homer, and Virgil.

TITANS AND THE ELDER DEITIES THAT EXISTED BEFORE THE OLYMPIC GODS

Nox (Night) and Erebus (Darkness) gave birth to a variety of beings that beautify the night sky or that torment humans. The Three Fates were so powerful that not even the gods could avert their decisions. Clotho wove the cloth of life, then Lachesis measured its length, and Atropos cut the thread of life when it was time for mortals to die. Collectively, they are called the Moira or the Parcae. An alternative genealogy has them born from a union of Zeus with Themis.

Out of the spinning chaos before time began three forces or beings emerged. One was Erebus, or darkness. The next was Gaea, the Earth-Mother. The third was Eros, or irrational desire. In some myths, Eros is equated with Cupid, and he is instead considered the son of Aphrodite.

Key:
Black: Primordial Forces of Night
Green: Primordial Forces of Nature
Red: Monsters
Blue: Titans
Gold: Gods
White: Lesser Deities

When Chronos overthrew and murdered his father, Uranus, he feared that his own children would treat him in the same way. To prevent his children from ever doing so, he ordered his wife Rhea to swallow her children whole as soon as they were born. She smuggled one son, Zeus, to safety. He later grew up and overthrew Chronos, at which point Rhea vomited up the other godlings she had swallowed.

The three cyclopes (singular cyclops), one-eyed giant monsters, were among Gaea's first children. Their names, Brontes ("thunderer"), Steropes ("flasher"), and Argos ("brightener"), show that they were associated with storms. They later aided Zeus by helping Hephaestus forge lightning bolts for Zeus to use as javelins against the titans. They are not related to the cyclopes that plague Odysseus in *The Odyssey*. Those cyclopes descend from Poseidon's line.

Like the cyclopes, the hecatoncheires were abused by the titans because of their ugliness. They were monstrous giants each possessing one hundred arms and limbs. Argus, however, was a giant monster with one hundred eyes. These monsters willingly served Zeus in exchange for their freedom from imprisonment in Tartarus.

As the ages passed, the feminine force Gaea (Earth) either split in half or gave birth to Uranus, the sky. The Earth and the Sky became lovers, and they spawned a series of children. In some versions, Pontus, the primeval sea, is another lover of Gaea. Between the three of them, Earth, Sky, and Sea manage to give birth to both marvels and monstrosities.

The sirens and Scylla were some of the monsters Odysseus faced on his voyage to Ithaca. The Gorgons were snake-headed creatures so ugly their appearance petrified men. Perseus killed one of the Gorgons, Medusa, and used her head as a weapon to petrify his enemies.

