

GREEK MYTHS

ZEUS KING OF THE GODS



Some of the world's most exciting myths and legends came from Ancient Greece. Incredible stories of gods, goddesses, heroes and monsters have survived for thousands of years, and these tales from Greek mythology are still as thrilling today. NG Kids dives into the *Treasury Of Greek Mythology* and uncovers the amazing story of the king of all the Greek gods... Zeus!

Zeus ruled over all the other gods and goddesses of ancient Greece. But he had to defeat his father, Cronus, to gain power. Years before, Cronus had swallowed Zeus' brothers and sisters – Hestia, Poseidon, Hades, Demeter and Hera – until they were rescued. The siblings banded together against Cronus and his brothers and sisters, called the Titans. This is the story of their epic battle.

War began. And continued, as wars will do. For 10 years the battle scorched the Earth, smoked the skies, sullied the waters. Bitter as bile, it wore away at everyone's spirits. Until Gaia, the earth mother who had started all life, told Zeus he would win if he liberated her other children – his misshapen uncles and his one-eyed uncles – all cast by his father, Cronus, into the Underworld.

Zeus never wasted a moment on second thoughts. He freed the three brothers with 50 heads and 100 hands each. He freed the three Cyclopes (giants, each of whom had a single eye).

In surprised gratitude, the Cyclopes gave Zeus the spitting lightning bolt and deafening thunder with which to split the skies and flame the Earth. They gave Zeus' brothers gifts, too. On Poseidon they bestowed a sharp, gleaming trident with which to smite the seabeds and raise massive

waves. To Hades they gave a helmet of invisibility with which to disappear.

The 100-handed and one-eyed brothers fought beside their nieces and nephews. No longer was the battle simply hurling rocks and spears, and crushing the enemy with axes. Oh, no. Zeus hurled bolts and burned the forests. He cast flames so hot the seas boiled and parts of the Earth melted. Poseidon shook the Earth so rivers crashed through their sidewalls. Hades raced unseen among all, causing chaos and destruction.

As Zeus saw it, the war was old against young, and the young gods won. Zeus had the Titans sealed in the Underworld with the 100-handed ones as guards.

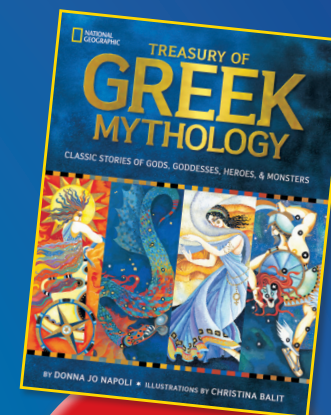
Gaia was flummoxed. What was the point of locking away the Titans? Why did Zeus have to be as vengeful as his father? And so she gave birth to her last child,

the monster, Typhon.

From his shoulders sprang 100 serpentine heads with flickering black tongues. Typhon's eyes flashed fire. Everyone fell back in terror. Except Zeus. He had lightning. He destroyed Typhon's heads and banished him to become wild winds that cursed sailors on the high seas. Zeus was the undisputed king.

The brothers divided up the universe. Poseidon took the seas; Hades, the Underworld; Zeus, everything else. The sisters were left out entirely. But that was typical of Zeus. He was brought up to believe he was entitled. Nothing ever changed his mind.

Zeus used a thunderbolt to defeat the 100-headed beast, Typhon.



This story is taken from National Geographic's *Treasury Of Greek Mythology: Classic Stories Of Gods, Goddesses, Heroes & Monsters*, by Donna Jo Napoli.