



Name: _____

Date: _____

Dads, Greek God Style

Once upon a time or so the story goes, the ruler of the Heavens was Uranus, the sky itself. He locked up all of his children deep inside their mother Gaia, who was the Earth. Maybe Uranus did this because he thought his children looked strange or perhaps he was scared of their power. Whatever the reason, he did not let them out.

Many years later Gaia let Uranus' youngest son, Cronus, escape. Cronus attacked his father and took over as ruler. Cronus knew exactly how bad a kid could be to his dad. To avoid that sort of trouble, he had a simple solution. He swallowed his children whole!

His wife Rhea could not stand the idea of losing another child. When her fifth baby - Zeus - was born, she hid him. Rhea gave Cronus a rock wrapped in baby blankets instead. Without a glance, Cronus gulped it down.

After he had grown up, Zeus returned and made Cronus spit out his other children. Together, Zeus, his brothers, sisters and their friends forced Cronus from his throne. Zeus then became the ruler of the Heavens.

Zeus had many children. Fortunately, he was a better parent than his father and grandfather had been.

One of Zeus' favorite and most famous sons was Heracles. You might know him by his Roman name, Hercules. Today, people think of Hercules as a hero. The old stories say Hercules was incredibly strong. They also tell us Hercules had a bad temper. Once he tried to take a special object called a tripod from a temple. The tripod and the temple belonged to the god Apollo, another son of Zeus. The two half - brothers wrestled ferociously. Eventually Zeus broke up the fight using thunderbolts.

These are just a few of the often deadly, always interesting stories the ancient Greeks told. Next time you don't see eye to eye with your dad, just be glad he isn't a Greek god!