

THE FALL OF THE OLD GODS

A Chthonian Prehistory Serial

Anthony Hadley and "Avatar"

PROLOGUE: THE BEGINNING OF THE END

"Order! The council will have order!"

Nexus sighed to himself, knowing Paternus' cries would have no effect on the massed crowd in the hall. He stepped forth onto the dais.

"Silence!" he cried. The noise began to die down.

"I called for silence!" he repeated, and the hall finally fell silent.

"Thank you, my friend," Paternus said, resting a hand on Nexus' arm as he stepped forward.

"Gathered friends," he began, his voice projected across the massive assembly hall. "It is with heavy heart that I bring this news. You may have noticed that many of our number are not amongst us. The Ularians you have walked amongst for the past decade are no longer with us, and Yaphet is not standing beside my brother and I.

"I know many of you have already been asking why this is; why have our friends withdrawn so? The abrupt departure of so many friends and colleagues will no doubt bring great confusion and difficulty into our lives, and well are Nexus and I aware of the tensions that still exist even now between our peoples, but I ask that you, Olympian and Hadean alike, can co-operate and support each other through this difficult time.

"With that I shall pass you over to my brother, who wishes to explain the loss of our Uliarian friends."

Nexus allowed his mind to wander as he delivered his speech to the assembled chthonians. He knew well what he was telling them; the end of the war against the massive planetoid that had settled in Icarus' orbit; the fourth planet, around which no travel was allowed; the part the Ularians played in chthonian society; and finally the effect the decision to cease the Aegean Project had had on Yaphet.

The past decade had been... strange. No, strange didn't even begin to cover it. Invaders from the skies, a centuries-old war ending in a moment of blinding unity, the formation of a central government and then... peace. Nothing but peace for an entire decade, something the chthonians had never known.

Eventually, Nexus found his thoughts drifting back to the end of the Titanomachy, when the Crown and Council took their first tentative steps as a united entity.