

# THE FALL OF THE OLD GODS

A Chthonian Prehistory Serial

Anthony Hadley and "Avatar"

---

## CHAPTER ONE: TITAN'S FALL

*All of Icarus lies under the shadow of inevitable destruction. The behemoth that an hour ago stood leering over the gates of Necropolis is continuing its relentless advance on the city, cutting a swath of destruction across the once-proud Hadean capital. Foundries lie in ruins, the remains of the city's factories litter the cracked and broken streets, and citizens run screaming from their homes only to be cut down by the gargantuan walker and its flying, many-legged spawn. As Nexus stands on the balcony of the towering Colosseum, cradling in his hand the detonator that could cut down the monstrosity at the cost of the entire city, he knows something feels wrong. He pushes it to the back of his mind as he feels someone approach behind him.*

*"The hour of our destruction is at hand, my lord," Xyr says, his voice barely above a whisper despite the carnage around them. The strategist is cold as ever; it was Xyr who had concocted the plan that manifested itself in his hand, Xyr who had realized the might of the entire Hadean military was ineffective against the leviathan.*

*"Much as it pains me to make such a sacrifice, we both know this is the only way to save our people," Nexus replies. "We do what we must, as we have always done."*

*"I have received no word from the Olympians," Xyr continues. "Paternus and Karos both seem to be preoccupied, and no doubt Tallith has problems of her own."*

*Somewhere at the back of Nexus' mind, something is stirred by Xyr's words. The Olympians are the ancient enemy of the Hadeans, against whom they wage a centuries-long war of necessity. That war had continued until the day the moon had arrived in orbit and the planet had been bombarded by the horrors that now marched on Necropolis. No doubt if the enemy was vanquished, the war would continue anew. Two massive civilizations locked in an eternal combat that distracted them from the true threat. Xyr is still talking – something about the struggle of Yaphet and the Ularis – but Nexus isn't listening any more. The wheels of his mind are turning, that tiny candle of realization at the back of his mind burning brighter. Something isn't right. It doesn't happen like this. The Olympians – the Olympians are the key!*

*Suddenly, the candle becomes a raging inferno. The Olympians and Hadeans are at war no longer; the threat of utter annihilation brought the people of Icarus together in a way centuries of negotiation by the Ularis could not, and together they defeated the alien threat! The behemoth never marched on Necropolis; the city is whole! The four-legged gargantuan stands frozen outside the city, fused to a massive power generator, and the chthonian people are united in celebration!*

*Slowly, the illusion begins to fade, and Nexus is returned to his own world.*

Slowly, Nexus opened his eyes. He was in his chambers in the Colosseum, but the city outside was whole. The sounds of screaming and shearing metal still rang in his ears, but they were not of his world. In a moment of blazing glory and blinding unity, all of Icarus had united. Hadean, Olympian and Ularis had stood shoulder-to-shoulder and stared down the menace that threatened them all, and almost incomprehensibly, they had emerged victorious.

Nexus looked around him. His chambers held the nine most important people in all of chthonian civilization; in a world plagued by constant warfare, this was a moment of peace that had never been seen before. Each of the

# THE FALL OF THE OLD GODS

A Chthonian Prehistory Serial

*Anthony Hadley and "Avatar"*

---

chthonian leaders was flanked by two aides; Nexus by Xyr and Thanatos, his greatest strategist and general respectively, who between them had planned and orchestrated the deaths of many Olympians in the past. Both were awake.

Thanatos was standing outside the entrance to his chamber, an ever-loyal sentry... almost. True to the old adage, Nexus kept his friends close, but Thanatos was closer than anyone. Nexus was convinced Thanatos would one day make a grab for the throne of Hades, his vanity and lust for power overpowering his common sense.

For his part, Xyr was surprisingly trustworthy. Being tall and slim – rare given the typical short and stocky nature of his people – instantly gave one a suspicious appearance. Too much like an Olympian. The strategist was nowhere in sight; he was probably outside conversing with the Olympians, in whom he had taken an almost scholarly interest.

Nexus rose and left his bed, giving Thanatos little more than a cursory nod as he passed. The General instantly fell into step behind him.

Entering the regal living area, Nexus immediately spotted Paternus; the Olympian councilor was stood with his back to the wall, a cup of some hot beverage cradled in his slender hands. Nexus and Paternus had known each other since they entered office, but had never met in person until the previous day; each had been taken aback by the extremes of the other's appearance. Taking stock of the room, Nexus finally spotted Tallith as well, slumped across the furniture. She was a civilian leader of some sort; slim weak in appearance as the rest of the Olympians and no doubt incapable of holding her own in hand-to-hand combat.

Nexus had introduced all present to vanol the previous night; the strongest of Hadean alcohols. To their credit Paternus and Karos had almost matched the Hadeans drink for drink, but Tallith became inebriated somewhat quickly. What had started as a meeting to determine the future of their united peoples had ended with Nexus and Yaphet attempting to beat each other in a game of an Ularian game called petteia over mugs of vanol (though of course only once the meeting's purpose had been met).

Nexus soon spotted Karos outside, leaning over the balcony and staring out at the seething city of Necropolis. Xyr was standing beside him, and Nexus could hear fragments of their conversation drifting through the door on the gentle underground breeze as Karos marveled over the city and they shared strategy over more of the same beverage Paternus was drinking. Emperors forbid the chthonians should end up at war again with Karos and Xyr having swapped tactics. Icarus may never recover.

"And so Necropolis lives to see another morning," Nexus announced himself. "Good to see we are all still alive, Paternus."

The councilor looked up and gave him a small smile. The circumstances they found themselves in were strange, but once the difficulties of having the leaders of opposing nations in the same room had been smoothed over Nexus and Paternus had been able to return to their grudging admiration; a grudging admiration that Nexus could see slowly beginning to turn to friendship.

Noticing the distinct lack of Ularians in the room, Nexus spoke again. "I don't suppose you have seen Yaphet?"

"She is exploring your library, I believe," Paternus said, an undertone of laughter in his voice. Nexus was very protective of his studies.

# THE FALL OF THE OLD GODS

A Chthonian Prehistory Serial

*Anthony Hadley and "Avatar"*

---

The Hadean swiftly turned on his heel and headed for his academic wing. He knew he had nothing to fear from the Ularian, but there were some secrets the Hadean Crown was not ready to share.