

## The God of a Thousand Names

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Darkness was falling slowly over Alexandria. There was silence and focus of the April twilight. In the thicket of trees and flowers, a round, marble one was white temple of Eros.

Xantos, the young priest of the Radiant God, was leaning against a pillar, thinking that maybe he was watching over the secrets of the temple for the last night, a small, forgotten temple, nanny almost. One by one, the temples of the Hellenic gods were destroyed. Holy books and parchments were burned, beautiful statues were destroyed, whose perfect, mathematically exact proportion of shapes reminded the initiates of the law of harmony governing the universe, and the qualities which the neophyte must acquire. White deities and heroes were put in place large wooden crosses on which an image was roughly carved, a man with a face drawn in pain, with nails in his hands, and feet pierced.

The dusk was thickening. Xantos's eyes hung for a moment on the subtle profile of the marble Apollo, when suddenly, out of the violet evening shadows, a slim and white figure emerged, with fair hair, in large rings on the shoulders. The stranger looked at Xantos' face and in a soft and deep voice asked:

"Do you recognize me, Xantos?"

He recognized him, Xantos: the Stranger's narrow white hands were black bleeding stigmata and dark, frozen drops, like a pomegranate flower, hung on the forehead and temples.

"Thou art Christos Rex, Lord, the new God of the Romans."

The man smiled. It was a smile exceedingly sweet and exceedingly sad.

"You recognized me, Xantos."

The priest bowed his head in homage.

"You must come, Lord, to destroy the temple of the god I serve. Your followers say that you are the only god and that you are not there should be temples other than those dedicated to you. I'm ready to die where I lived and loved."

"You called me Christos, Xantos," said the man softly. "I have but other and older names, and my eternal name is Love..."

"Love, did you say?" This is the name of the god I serve - Eros, Everlasting Youth, Forever Young".

Repeated the Stranger thoughtfully:

"I was - when the first spark of divine fire, called the soul, enlivened the body human. I was - from the beginning of creation. People love me or hate me beyond measure. I am whom they slay with their own hands to worship under a new name. I have a thousand names, Xantos. Christ is one of them and another is Eros."

"Lord", whispered Xantos, bent at his knees.

"Lord, God, sunny, radiant Eros, why then do you allow your temples to be torn down, your statues to be thrown into the dust?" -----

"Each new temple is dedicated to a different name of mine, Xantos. People honor the name rather than the one who bears it. My shrine is the Universe, and my Host is the Sun. There I submit The Eternal Sacrifice of which all other sacrifices are but a reflection. Every human heart is also my temple, Xantos. And any what people call Love - know that it is my name. And if thou hast loved

me as Eros, who loves joyfully, then love me in sorrow and suffering. My name will be Christos - Rex, Xantos.”

When Xantos looked up, he was alone. The big golden stars lit up the clear sky. The petals fell silently into the blackness of the bushes roses, like white, fragrant flames.

And then Xantos, priest of the god Eros, began to pray:

“I have understood You, O Inconceivable, whose eternal name is Love. You are Life, and Death, and Resurrection. You are the eternal Ring of Being. Eros and Orpheus, Krishna and Horus, Ormuzd and Christos. And over your forehead purple roses or drops of blood burn - You are the Way, the Truth and the Beloved. Your arms have been open for ages in the eternal sacrifice of Love and giving, on the visible or invisible Cross.”

“I adore you, Who has cast away the white wings of Eros to bleed feet on the sharp stones of earthly ways, Who took off Shri's lotus wreath Krishna and put on a crown of thorns; you have replaced the seven-stringed harp of Orpheus at the words of pain and anguish, from the starry ways of Horus, you descended upon the way of Calvary.”

“Hail, Eros, whom I shall henceforth call Christos-Rex.”

The priest of Xantos rested his burning forehead against the feet of Marbled Eros and continued in prayer. The pale ray of a new moon glided precariously up the steps of the Temple.

And the next day, over the white altar of the Sun God, Xantos the priest placed a large rosewood cross that he himself had made in the morning.

Among the flowers, on the marble of the Eros altar, like black embroidery, the elegant letters of the Helenian script composed the words:

Christos - Rex - God of Love.

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