**Quick History: The Trojan War and the Fall of TroyC:\Documents and Settings\ahurey\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\IS0QI9HA\MC900290361[1].wmf**

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Though it comes to a tragic conclusion—a city destroyed forever, the best and the brightest lying bloody on the battlefield, hundreds more lost at sea—the story of the Trojan War is a rich one. Within its basic framework—an alliance of Greek cities attempting to win back Helen by defeating the impenetrable city of Troy—the story features countless acts of valor, deception, betrayal, treachery, loyalty, compassion by the heroes on both sides—and of course, the famous Trojan Horse..

**Helen: The Face That Launched a Thousand Ships**

The events that led to the Trojan War began long before the war itself did. The ingredients included a treacherous beauty contest, a prized apple, an oath to protect a marriage, a bribe of love, an unfaithful wife, and an impenetrable wall. Together, they added up to a war that would last for a decade.

The wedding of Peleus and Thetis was a marriage made in heaven. Almost all the gods and goddesses attended Mount Pelion (in northeast Greece) for the wedding—for it was the rarest of occasions when a goddess married a mortal man. But Eris, the disagreeable goddess of discord, had not been invited. Angered at this slight, she tossed a Golden Apple, inscribed “For the Fairest,” among the goddesses. Immediately Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite started to fight over the apple. To decide the matter, Zeus appointed Paris, a Trojan prince and reputedly the handsomest of mortal men. Rather than trust the prince’s good judgment, all three goddesses attempted to bribe Paris. Hera promised him dominion over the whole world. Athena offered certain victory in every battle. Aphrodite, the goddess of love, merely offered the most beautiful woman in the world: Helen. Paris did not hesitate, quickly accepting the beauty and awarding the Golden Apple to Aphrodite.

Unfortunately for Paris, Helen was married to the Greek king of Sparta, Menelaus. Helen was so beautiful that nearly every Greek prince—more than two dozen—had wooed her. Each had sworn not only to abide by Helen’s choice, but to punish anyone who might steal the bride away.

Learning of Helen’s disappearance, Menelaus asked his brother Agamemnon for help. Agamemnon, who would serve as commander in chief of the Greek forces, rounded up the former rivals for Helen’s hand. Reminding them of their oath of allegiance, Menelaus demanded they join him in recovering Helen and punishing the Trojans. Despite the few who seemed reluctant, the Greeks in time assembled quite a rescue force: more than 1,000 ships from over two dozen different Greek kingdoms.

**The Long Siege of Troy**

Rather than mount a direct attack on the formidable fortress of Troy, the Greeks set out to destroy the surrounding towns and cities that supplied the city with both provisions and aid. The Greeks used their victories over these outlying regions not merely to cut off supplies to Troy, but to **plunder** food and provisions for their own armies.

After nine long years, the Greeks had seized, ransacked, and looted innumerable towns, but had come no closer to penetrating the impregnable walls of Troy. The tenth and final year would prove costly to both sides.

**The End of Achilles**

For a time, it looked as if Troy had gained the upper hand. Just when they needed it the most, the Trojans received reinforcements from foreign lands. Penthesileia, queen of the Amazons, was the first to arrive. Years earlier, King Priam had purified her after she had accidentally killed another Amazon queen, Antiope. To repay this favor, she fought alongside the Trojans, inflicting great damage on the Greek troops, until Achilles killed her.

Memnon, the king of Ethiopia, next joined the Trojans, bringing with him a formidable army of thousands. Memnon and his army killed many Greeks, including Antilochus, the young and brave son of Nestor. Nestor, the king of Pylos, who had led 90 ships and offered sage counsel to the Greeks, challenged Memnon to meet him on the field of battle so that he could avenge the death of his son. When Memnon refused, citing Nestor’s venerable age, Achilles offered to take the old man’s place. Memnon accepted the challenge—and also died at the hands of Achilles.

Paris, who had instigated the war, had never demonstrated a great deal of skill in combat. Though his arrows occasionally hit their targets, the wounds he caused were never fatal. But in the tenth year of the war, with Apollo guiding his bow, Paris shot an arrow that soared over the walls of Troy, pierced Achilles in the heel—the only vulnerable part of his body—and killed the great warrior.

**Beware of Greeks Bearing Gifts: The Trojan Horse**

Despite losing virtually all of its greatest champions, Troy still would not fall. The city’s walls, built by Apollo and Poseidon, were **impenetrable**.

Odysseus came up with an ingenious plan to get inside the city. With Athena’s help, Epeius, an artisan, constructed an enormous wooden horse. Led by Odysseus, a small army of the boldest Greek warriors hid themselves inside. The Greek fleet then sailed away—but only as far as the far side of the offshore island Tenedos.

When the Trojans found the horse, which had an inscription dedicating it to Athena, some wanted to burn it or push it off a cliff. But others argued that if they brought it inside the city walls and used it to replace the stolen Palladium, the horse would bring them luck. The prophets Cassandra and Laocoön explicitly warned the Trojans that Greek troops were hidden inside the horse—but of course no one believed them.

Laocoön underscored his warning by hurling his spear at the wooden horse. At that moment, two sea serpents rose out of the sea and attacked Laocoön’s sons. The serpents killed the boys and Laocoön, who rushed to his children’s defense. Though Athena sent these serpents to shut him up for good and thereby bring about the destruction of Troy, the Trojans who witnessed this horrifying tragedy assumed that the priest was being punished for desecrating the wooden horse.

With the Trojans already inclined to bring the wooden horse inside the city, the Greek Sinon gave them the last push they needed. The Trojans found him outside the Trojan walls, with his arms tied and his clothes torn to shreds. Apparently enraged at his comrades, Sinon claimed that he had escaped being sacrificed to Athena, who had become angry at the Greeks for stealing the Palladium. The Greeks, Sinon added, had built the enormous horse to appease the goddess—and had designed it so that it would not fit through the city’s gates because they knew that placing it in the citadel would bring the Trojans victory. Harming it, Sinon warned, would turn the wrath of Athena on the Trojans.

Persuaded by Sinon’s lies, the Trojans breached their own city’s walls in order to secure the wooden horse. That night, Helen—suspicious of treachery—walked around the horse and, mimicking the voices of their wives, called out the names of some of the most renowned Greek warriors. But Odysseus kept the men quiet.

After the Trojans had fallen into bed following a drunken celebration of their impending victory, Sinon freed the Greek warriors and sent a beacon to the Greek fleet, which quickly returned. Those inside opened the gates and the Greeks seized the city in a single bloody night.

The Greeks did get their comeuppance, though. The sacrilegious massacre of the Trojans and the desecration of the temples angered the Gods so much, they decided not to let the Greeks return home. The Gods besieged the returning Greek fleet with storms, which wrecked nearly every single ship. It was little consolation to the Trojans, though, as their city had been burned to the ground.

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“History of the Trojan War” Questions

1. The Trojan war began at the wedding of
   1. Helen and Paris
   2. Aphrodite and Paris
   3. Peleus and Thetis
2. The wedding was a rare occasion because
   1. Weddings were rarely public
   2. A mortal man was marrying a goddess
   3. A mortal female was marrying a god
3. Victory in every battle was a bribe offered by
   1. Athena
   2. Hera
   3. Aphrodite
4. Menelaus was the
   1. Brother of Zeus
   2. Husband of Helen
   3. Priest who was at the wedding
5. The Greek’s plan of attack was to
   1. Recruit help from all of the towns surrounding Troy
   2. Attack Troy at night when no one suspected it
   3. Destroy the cities surrounding Troy so Troy could not get supplies
6. In the section titled “The Long Siege of Troy”, the last sentence in the first paragraph states “but to plunder food and provision for their own army.” A synonym for **plunder** would be
   1. Steal
   2. Eat
   3. Store
7. Antilochus was
   1. A Greek
   2. A Trojan
   3. Neither – he did not get involved in the war
8. Achilles was
   1. A Greek
   2. A Trojan
   3. He helped both sides by giving advice in battle in exchange for gold
9. In the section titled “Beware of Greeks Bearing Gifts”, the second sentence states “the city walls were **impenetrable**.” An **antonym** for **impenetrable** would be
   1. Hard to break through
   2. Easy to break through
   3. Solid
10. Helen tried to trick the Greek soldiers into coming out of the horse by
    1. Promising to marry them
    2. Pretending to be their wives by imitating their voices
    3. Pretending she wanted to go back Menelaus
11. On the lines provided and in your own words, explain how Sinon convinced the Trojans to bring the Trojan horse into their city walls. Your answer should be 3-5 sentences. Your first sentence will be a topic sentence and it must explain the purpose of the short paragraph. It does not count as one of your 3-5 sentences. This is worth 5 points.

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