

MYTHOLOGY STUDY GUIDE

Famous Mythological Groups

THE NINE MUSES

The nine muses were the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory). Each muse was patroness of a different type of art. We get the word Museum from the word "muse". They were:

1. **Calliope** = muse of Epic Poetry
2. **Clio** = muse of History
3. **Erato** = muse of Love Poetry
4. **Euterpe** = muse of music & lyric poetry
5. **Melpomene** = muse of Tragedy
6. **Polyhymnia** = muse of sacred song
7. **Terpsicore** = muse of Dance
8. **Thalia** = muse of Comedy
9. **Urania** = muse of astronomy/ science

THE THREE FATES

These three old hags determined the "fate" of everyone:

1. **Clotho** = spun the thread of life
2. **Lachesis** = measured out how long each thread should be for each person
3. **Atropos** = cut the thread of life, causing people to die.

THE THREE FURIES

Also called the Dirae or the Eirynes, these old women were half human, half dog, and they chasing and terrorized people who had committed grievous sins

1. **Alecto**
2. **Tisiphone** (tis-sef-fo-nee)
3. **Megera**

There were also the three **Graeae** (gr-eye-eye), the "gray sisters" who had one eye and one tooth between the three of them. They were very wise, and heroes like Perseus went to them for help (Perseus stole their eye until they told him where to find the Gorgon Medusa).

There were also the three **Graces** (also known as the Charities) who were just the opposite of the Furies. They were: Aglaia, Euphrosyne & Thalia

Minor Gods & Goddesses

Janus—Roman god of Beginnings and Endings and doorways

Aesclepius (Aesculapius) - son of Apollo, god of healing

Aurora—goddess of dawn

Pan (Faunus) - half-man, half-goat, inventor of the Pan pipes, god of music

Aeolus—god of the wind (different winds had names like Boreas, Zephyrus, etc.)

Hecate (Trivia) - goddess of witchcraft and crossroads

Flora—goddess of flowers

Triton—son of Poseidon by his wife **Amphitrite** (am-fit-trit-tee); he had the power to calm the waves

Proteus—"old man of the sea" had the gift of prophecy and the ability to change shape—gives us the English adjective *protean* = able to change shape

Uranus = Oldest of all the gods, Father Heaven; his wife was **Gaea**, Mother Earth; their children were the twelve **Titans**, the first race

GOD GEAR

Caduceus—Mercury's staff wrapped with snakes

Cestus—Venus' special belt that caused people to fall in love

Mythical Creatures

Harpies—These creatures were half bird, half women; they were filthy, and the scratch of their claws poisonous. They harassed and tortured people.

Centaurs—half man, half horse; in general these creatures were wild and drunken; their was one wise and noble centaur, however, named Chiron, who was famous for teaching heroes like Hercules and Jason before he was killed in a brawl caused by drunken centaurs.

Satyrs—half men, half goat, like the god Pan; also called Fauns; they frolicked and partied in the woods.

Myrmidons—ants who had been transformed into soldiers; Achilles brought them to Troy to help fight

Dryades—female tree nymphs; each dryad lived in a tree and died at the same moment as her tree

Phoenix—beautiful Egyptian bird who lived 600 years in the Arabian desert; it built its own funeral pyre (bonfire) and laid upon it. Then it rose, now eternally young, from the ashes of the fire

Typhon—terrible monster with 100 dragon heads which breathed fire; his body was covered with serpents and he was taller than any mountain. He challenged the gods of Mt. Olympus, but Zeus defeated with his thunderbolts, and buried him under Mt. Etna in Sicily.

The Cup-Bearers of the Gods

The gods and goddesses always dined on **ambrosia** and drank

nectar. At first and young daughter of Zeus named **Hebe** was the cupbearer for the gods (the cupbearer poured nectar for the gods when they were thirsty. But one day at an important banquet, Hebe tripped and fell, ripping her dress in the process.

She was retired as cupbearer for this act of klutziness. Zeus swooped down to Earth in the form of an eagle and carried off a handsome youth named **Ganymede** who thereafter served as cupbearer.

Deucalion & Pyrrha:

Mythology's Noah Story

At the end of the Iron Age, Zeus sent a great flood to wipe out the wicked men of the world. The only two people to survive were a couple named **Deucalion** (man) and **Pyrrha** (woman), who escaped the flood by fleeing to the peaks of Mt. Parnassus. After the flood, they were instructed to repopulate the world by taking stones and throwing them behind their backs. The stones Deucalion threw became men, Pyrrha's, women.

THE STORY OF THEBES

The city of **Thebes** was founded by a fellow named **Cadmus**. Zeus had carried off Cadmus' sister **Europa** on the back of a bull, and carried her all over the world (giving Europe its name). Cadmus had gone in search of his sister, and along the way, killed a terrible dragon. He was instructed by the gods to sow the dragon's teeth into the ground like seeds, which he did. Up from the seeds grew enchanted warriors (called Spartae), who started to attack him. Cadmus threw a stone into their midst, and the stupid soldiers (they had grown out of teeth, after all) killed each other, except for five, who became Cadmus' allies, and helped him build the city of Thebes on the site.

In later history, Thebes is famous for another story, the story of **Oedipus**. There was in Thebes a king named **Laius**. Laius heard a prophecy that his son would kill him and marry his own mother. In an attempt to prevent this from happening, Laius had his newborn son's heels pierced with stakes and left him on a hillside to die of exposure. A shepherd took pity on the boy, and saved him. He named him "Oedipus", which means "swollen feet" and carried him off to a far of land and raised him. When Oedipus grew up, he fulfilled the prophecy by killing Laius (whom he did not know was his father and did not know was a king) in a freak brawl along a road.

After this incident, Oedipus began to wander and came to the city of Thebes. Ever since the murder of Laius Thebes had been terrorized by creature called the **Sphinx**. She had the head of a woman, the wings of an eagle, and the body of a lion, and she sat on a hill above the entrance to the city and forced all who tried to enter to answer a riddle; all who failed, she ate. No one could answer the riddle, and the desperate Thebeans promised any who could rid them of the beast would become king of Thebes and marry Laius's widow, a woman named **Jocasta**. Oedipus decided to take up the challenge. When the Sphinx asked her riddle "Who walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at midday and three in the evening?" He guessed the correct answer, "Man" (She was referring to the fact that as babies we crawl, as adults we walk on our own two feet, and in old age, we use a cane). So Oedipus became king of Thebes and married Jocasta, never knowing that his wife was also his mother. He had several children, and for a long time had no inkling what had happened. Later, a blind wise man named **Tiresius** (Ter-ree-see-us) figured out what had happened, and when Oedipus found out, he blinded himself in shame and left the country; Jocasta hung herself.

The two sons of Oedipus, **Eteocles** (Et-tee-o-clees) and **Polynices** (Poly-nice-ees) became co-rulers. They agreed that each would rule for a year, and switch at the end of every year. Eteocles was the first to rule, but at the end of the year he refused to give up his throne. So Polynices went to a neighboring city, married the daughter of the king and came back to fight his brother. This fight between Polynices and the six allies he brought with him is called the *Seven Against Thebes*. Polynices and Eteocles killed each other in a duel and **Creon**, brother of Jocasta became king. Creon would not allow the sisters of Polynices to give Polynices a proper burial (because he was a traitor to Thebes by coming back and attacking it). But one of the sisters, **Antigone** (Ant-tig-go-nee) was determined to give Polynices a proper burial (it was very important in Greek culture), and she did, even though Creon killed Antigone because she disobeyed him by burying her alive. But Creon got what he deserved for his stubborn harshness with his niece, because it turned out his son **Haemon** loved Antigone and hung himself a result.

Terms to know:

Cadmus	Europa	Sphinx	Oedipus	Jocasta
Eteocles & Polynices		7 Against Thebes		Antigone

Mythology Study Guide

Gods & Goddesses: Their Lovers, Children, etc.

Lovers of Zeus:

Io- Zeus turned this princess into a cow to disguise her from Hera; Hera saw right through the ruse, and made Zeus give her the cow; she had the hundred eyed monster Argus guard the cow (until he was killed by Hermes & transformed into a peacock); Hera later tortured the cow with a gadfly

Leda- wife of Greek king Tyndareus; Zeus came to her in the form a swan; mother of Helen (born from egg) and Pollux by Zeus; mother of Castor & Clytemnestra by hubby Semele-mother of Dionysus; asked to see Zeus in all his glory & was incinerated; Zeus kept baby Dionysus in his thigh for the remainder of the gestation; Dionysus was raised by Semele's sister Ino

Aegina- after Zeus raped this princess (daughter of King Asopus), Sisyphus tattled on him to Hera and was condemned to death...you should remember the rest of his tale

Danae- mother of Perseus; Zeus came to her as a golden shower

Leto/Latona- mother of Apollo and Artemis

Maia – daughter of Atlas and mother of Hermes; she raised him on Mt. Cylene

Ganymede- Zeus formed an attachment to this handsome youth and kidnapped him in the form of a bird of prey & took him back to Mt. Olympus to serve as cupbearer to the gods

Mnemosyne- her name means Memory; she was mother of the 9 muses

Metis – mother of Athena; Zeus swallowed her in the form of a fly and Athena developed in Zeus's head

Lovers of Artemis:

Acteon- hunter who watched Artemis bathe; she punished him by turning him into a stag and allowing him to be ripped apart by his own hunting dogs

Orion- hunter whose first love was a nymph named Merope; her father would not allow them to marry & blinded Orion; Apollo healed him & they became friends until Orion & Artemis became an item & Apollo got jealous. Apollo either sent a giant scorpion to kill him or tricked Artemis herself into killing him

People Punished by Artemis:

Admetus- forgot to offer thanks to Artemis on his wedding night and found his bridal bed full of snakes

Oeneus- king who forgot to offer her thanks when collecting his harvest; she sent a wild boar to destroy his crops & lands

Niobe- Artemis took part in the killing of her and her 12 children

Agamemnon- killed a deer sacred to her while hunting; Artemis cursed his fleet with no wind to set sail to Troy; the only way to change this was to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia

Otus & Ephialtes- giants who try to pile up mountains to Olympus; they were punished for this, and because they tried to rape Artemis; she sent a deer to run between them, and when each tried to shoot it, they shot and killed each other instead

Lovers of Apollo:

Daphne- nymph who under the influence of Cupid's lead tipped arrow refused the advances of Apollo; her father saved her from his unwanted advances by turning her into a laurel tree

Cassandra – Trojan princess given the gift of prophecy by Apollo; when she rejected him as a lover, he cursed this gift so that no one ever believed her.

Marpessa was kidnapped by Idas but was loved by Apollo as well. Zeus made her choose between them, and she chose Idas on the grounds that Apollo, being immortal, would tire of her when she grew old.

Castalia -was a nymph whom Apollo loved. She fled from him and dived into the spring at Delphi, at the base of Mt. Parnassos, which was then named after her. Water from this spring was sacred; it was used to clean the Delphian temples and inspire poets.

By Cyrene, Apollo had a son named Aristaeus, who became the patron god of cattle, fruit trees, hunting, husbandry and bee-keeping. He was also a culture-hero and taught humanity dairy skills and the use of nets and traps in hunting, as well as how to cultivate olives.

With Hecuba, wife of King Priam of Troy, Apollo had a son named Troilus. An oracle prophesied that Troy would not be defeated as long as Troilus reached the age of twenty alive. He was ambushed and killed by Achilles.

Calliope- this muse & lover of Apollo became the mother of Orpheus

Coronis, daughter of Phlegyas, King of the Lapiths, was another of Apollo's liaisons. Pregnant with Asclepius, Coronis fell in love with Ischys, son of Elatus. A crow informed Apollo of the affair. When first informed he disbelieved the crow and turned all crows black (where they were previously white) as a punishment for spreading untruths. When he found out the truth he sent his sister, Artemis, to kill Coronis (in other stories, Apollo himself had killed Coronis). As a result he also made the crow sacred and gave them the task of announcing important deaths. Apollo rescued the baby and gave it to the centaur Chiron to raise. Phlegyas was irate after the death of his daughter and burned the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. Apollo then killed him for what he did.

Stories of Transformation:

Procne = swallow (see story elsewhere in packet)

Daphne = laurel tree

Philomela = nightingale (“ “)

Adonis = anemone (“ “)

Argus = peacock

Atalanta & Melanion/Hippomenes = lions

Niobe = weeping rock; her story:

A queen of Thebes and wife of Amphinon, Niobe boasted of her superiority to Leto because she had fourteen children (Niobids), seven male and seven female, while Leto had only two. Apollo killed her sons as they practiced athletics, with the last begging for

his life, and Artemis her daughters. Apollo and Artemis used poisoned arrows to kill them, though according to some versions of the myth, a number of the Niobids were spared (Chloris, usually). Amphion, at the sight of his dead sons, either killed himself or was killed by Apollo after swearing revenge. A devastated Niobe fled to Mount Sipylos in Asia Minor and turned into stone as she wept. Her tears formed the river Achelous. Zeus had turned all the people of Thebes to stone and so no one buried the Niobids until the ninth day after their death, when the gods themselves entombed them.

Hyacinth = flower of same name; his story:

Hyacinth (or Hyacinthus) was one the male lovers of Apollo. Hyacinthus was a Spartan prince, beautiful and athletic. The pair were practicing throwing the discus when a discus thrown by Apollo was blown off course by the jealous Zephyrus and struck Hyacinthus in the head, killing him instantly. Apollo is said to be filled with grief: out of Hyacinthus' blood, Apollo created a flower named after him as a memorial to his death, and his tears stained the flower petals with *αί αί*, meaning alas.

Cyparissus = cypress tree; his story:

Another male lover of Apollo was Cyparissus, a descendant of Heracles. Apollo gave him a tame deer as a companion but Cyparissus accidentally killed it with a javelin as it lay asleep in the undergrowth. Cyparissus asked Apollo to let his tears fall forever. Apollo granted the request by turning the sad boy into the Cypress named after him, which was said to be a sad tree because the sap forms droplets like tears on the trunk.

Clytia = sunflower; her story: Apollo had an affair with a human princess named Leucothea, daughter of Orchamus and sister of Clytia. Leucothea loved Apollo who disguised himself as Leucothea's mother to gain entrance to her chambers. Clytia, jealous of her sister because she wanted Apollo for herself, told Orchamus the truth, betraying her sister's trust and confidence in her. Enraged, Orchamus ordered Leucothea to be buried alive. Apollo refused to forgive Clytia for betraying his beloved, and a grieving Clytia wilted and slowly died. Apollo changed her into an incense plant, either heliotrope or sunflower, which follows the sun every day

Callisto = bear; her story:

Callisto was a nymph (or, according to some sources, the daughter of Lycaon) who was associated with the goddess of the hunt, Artemis. Young women who were devoted to the goddess hunted with her regularly, and remained virgins, like Artemis herself. Callisto had upheld these ideals faithfully, and she quickly became Artemis' favorite. While Callisto spent her days and nights with Artemis' other followers, she caught the eye of Zeus. Knowing that the maiden had taken a vow of chastity, Zeus resorted to deception to get at Callisto. He came to her disguised as Artemis, and the young huntress let down her guard. Seizing the opportunity Zeus raped her. Callisto became pregnant, and tried desperately to conceal her condition from the goddess. After all, she had, in a way, broken her vow to the goddess and she feared her anger. Callisto had been successful for a time, but then a day came when all of the young women who followed Artemis disrobed to bathe together in a spring. By now Callisto was beginning to show, and once she was naked her secret was revealed. Artemis was furious and she banished the young woman from her fold. Callisto wandered off to have her child alone. Hera decided that this was the time to exact her revenge. She gripped Callisto's hair and threw her to the

ground where the new mother was transformed into a bear. The hunter became the hunted. The child that Callisto had by Zeus was spirited away by Hermes to be raised by his mother, Maia. He was named Arcas, meaning "bear," and he grew up to be a fine hunter himself. Some sources have the bear captured and taken to Callisto's own father, Lycaon. According to some sources Artemis herself killed the bear that was once Callisto, but it is usually accepted that when Arcas was out hunting as a young man he encountered the bear. Callisto recognized the handsome youth as the son she could not raise herself. Forgetting her present form, she tried to come near him, but her loving mother's arms were now strong, furry paws, and her once soothing voice was now a rumbling growl. The bear scared Arcas, and he took aim at her with his spear. Zeus took pity on his former victim and intervened. He placed Callisto in the sky as the constellation Ursa Major, or "great bear," and then took Arcas and placed him in the sky near his mother as Ursa Minor, the "little bear."

Stories Relating to the Zodiac:

Aries = the Ram

Aries is a zodiacal constellation representing the ram of the Golden Fleece sought by Jason and the Argonauts. The ram had originally been presented to Nephele by Mercury when her husband took a new wife, Ino, who persecuted Nephele's children. To keep them safe, Nephele sent Phrixus and Helle away on the back of the magical ram, who flew away to the east. Helle fell off into the Hellespont (now the Dardanelles) between the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara, but Phrixus safely made it to Colchis on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. Phrixus sacrificed the ram and presented the Golden Fleece to the king, Aetes.

Capricorn = The Sea Goat

This zodiacal constellation, like Pisces, depicts the result of the sudden appearance of the earthborn giant Typhoeus. Bacchus was feasting on the banks of the Nile at the time, and jumped into the river. The part of him that was below water was transformed into a fish, while his upper body became that of a goat. From this point of view, he saw that Typhoeus was attempting to tear Jupiter into pieces; he blew a shrill note on his pipes, and Typhoeus fled. Jupiter then placed the new shape of Bacchus in the heavens out of thanks for the rescue.

Cassiopeia was the beautiful wife of Cepheus, king of Ethiopia, and the mother of Andromeda. She is most famous in connection with the myth of her daughter, Andromeda. The queen made the mistake of bragging she was more lovely than the Nereids, or even than Juno herself. The goddesses were, needless to say, rather insulted, and went to Neptune, god of the sea, to complain. Neptune promptly sent a sea monster (possibly Cetus?) to ravage the coast. The king and queen were ordered to sacrifice their daughter to appease Neptune's wrath, and would have done so had Perseus not arrived to kill the monster in the nick of time. As a reward, the hero was wedded to the lovely Andromeda. By most accounts, Cassiopeia was quite happy with the match. In some versions of the myth, however, the queen objects to the marriage and is turned to stone when Perseus shows her the head of the Gorgon Medusa.

Cygnus = the Swan

As is the case with so many of the constellations, there are a number of possible explanations

for the presence of the swan in the heavens. Some myths state that the swan was Cionus, son of Neptune, who was wrestled to the ground and smothered by Achilles. To save his son, Neptune immortalized Cionus as a swan. Another story says the swan is Orpheus, who was murdered by the Thracian women while under the influence of Bacchus. Upon his death, the celebrated musician was placed in the heavens to spend eternity by his harp, Lyra. Yet another variant says that the swan represents the form taken by Jupiter when he deceived Leda and fathered Pollux. According to Ovid, the swan was once Cygnus, son of Sthenele and a close friend of Phaethon. Phaethon died in the river Eridanus after attempting to drive the chariot of the sun, and Cygnus was overcome with grief that Jupiter could have struck down his friend: "As he mourned, his voice became thin and shrill, and white feathers hid his hair. His neck grew long, stretching out from his breast, his fingers reddened and a membrane joined them together. Wings clothed his sides, and a blunt beak fastened on his mouth. Cygnus became a new kind of bird: but he put no trust in the skies, or in Jupiter, for he remembered how that god had unjustly hurled his flaming bolt. Instead, Cygnus made for marshes and broad lakes, and in his hatred of flames chose to inhabit the rivers, which are the very antithesis of fire (*Metamorphoses* II 374-382)."

The Pleiades (a group of 7 sisters transformed into a group of 7 stars); these sisters were: Halcyone, Asterope, Maia, Celaeno, Merope, Electra & Taygete. One day the great hunter Orion saw the Pleiads (perhaps with their mother, or perhaps just one of them; see Merope above) as they walked through the Boeotian countryside, and fancied them. He pursued them for seven years, until Zeus answered their prayers for delivery and transformed them into birds (doves or pigeons), placing them among the stars. Later on, when Orion was killed (many conflicting stories as to how), he was placed in the heavens behind the Pleiades, immortalizing the chase.

A good online guide is: <http://thanasis.com/homewk01.htm>

THE TROJAN WAR

One of the most famous stories in ancient mythology is the story of the Trojan War. The story comes down to us in the great Greek poem, the *Iliad*, written by the blind poet **Homer**. The war is a complicated story full of mythical and semi-mythical figures. To best understand it, it helps to know the mythical story that got the whole mess started.

It all began with the wedding of a sea nymph named **Thetis** to a mortal hero, named **Peleus**. The wedding was a huge event, with all the gods and goddesses and mortal heroes being invited. All the gods and goddesses except **Eris**, that is. Eris was the goddess of Discord (discord = arguments, fighting, etc.) The happy couple had not invited the unpleasant goddess because they were afraid she would ruin the event. Unfortunately for them, Eris decided to ruin it anyhow, because she was so upset at being left out.

Eris sneaked up to the edge of the festivities at Mt. Pelion. Then she tossed a golden apple, labeled with the tag "*To the Fairest*" into a crowd of gossiping goddesses. When the goddesses saw the beautiful apple, they began to fight over it, each claiming it rightly belonged to her. Soon a full fledged cat fight had broken out. Minerva, Venus and Juno were all determined to have the apple. The ladies decided to go to Jupiter and have him settle the affair.

Jupiter refused, since he knew the whichever of them he did not choose would be very angry with him. Instead he passed the decision on to an unsuspecting shepherd who was tending sheep on a nearby hillside. This shepherd's named was **Paris**, and he was a prince of **Troy**. Now, you might be wondering what a prince was doing tending sheep. Well, the king and queen of Troy, **Priam** and **Hecuba**, had 50 sons and a dozen daughters. When you have that many little princes in the family, they can't all be living the high life in the royal palace.

Now although Paris was supposedly judging purely on appearance, the three goddesses were not willing to leave matters entirely up to chance. Each one offered Paris a bribe. Juno, the queen of the gods, promised him he would be the most powerful man in the world. Minerva, goddess of wisdom, promised him he would be victorious in every battle. And Venus, goddess of love, promised him the most beautiful woman in the world. Paris does not appear to have been a particularly bright or ambitious fellow, merely a lustful one. He chose Venus.

THE START OF THE TROJAN WAR

When Venus promised Paris the most beautiful woman in the world, she neglected to tell him about one little complication: that the woman was already married. The most beautiful woman in the world was **Helen**, wife of **Meneleus**, King of Sparta. But Paris was determined to claim his hard won prize. So he sailed to Sparta and visited Meneleus. Now Meneleus did not know of Paris' mission, and as was customary in Greece, received him as an honored guest. All went well for a few days, until Meneleus went away on an errand. Paris took advantage of the opportunity and stole Helen away during the night and sailed back to Troy. Meneleus was furious and immediately made plans to retrieve his wife. He called on all the princes of Greece to help him. All of the princes gathered with their ships and warriors at the port of Aulus. Meneleus, and his powerful brother, **Agamemnon**, king of Mycenae, led the forces.

Things did not get off to a very good start for the Greek forces. The Greeks were all set to go, but favorable winds would not blow, and the Greek ships were stuck in the port. Finally an oracle proclaimed that Agamemnon had offended the goddess Artemis. The oracle said that the only way that Artemis would be satisfied was if Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter, **Iphigenia**. Agamemnon was horrified, but knew he needed to do as the goddess wished, or else the whole mission would be ruined. He told his wife that Iphigenia was to marry one of the princes on the

mission, and thus tricked her into bringing the unsuspecting girl to the port. Some say Artemis rescued her from the altar at the last minute, some say poor **Iphegenia** was actually killed as a sacrifice, but whatever happened, Agamemnon's wife, **Clytemnestra**, never forgave him for the trickery and the sacrifice of their child.

The Greek heroes who gathered to go to Troy were some of the most famous men the world had ever seen. These heroes included **Achilles**, **Odysseus**, **Diomedes**, **Ajax**, **Nestor**, and many others. They all sailed to Troy and laid siege to the city. For nine years, neither side could clearly win. **Achilles**, who was the greatest of the Greek heroes rallied the Greek troops. **Hector**, the son of King Priam and Queen Hecuba, led the Trojans. Many heroes distinguished themselves in the fighting; to read about some of them, see the box below.

The fighting came to its climax when Achilles became angry with Agamemnon, the Greek leader and refused to fight. With Achilles out of the picture, the Trojans began to have the upper hand. The Greeks began to get very discouraged because their greatest hero would not fight. The best friend of Achilles, **Patroclus**, thought it was shameful that Achilles was letting down his countrymen. Patroclus decided to redeem Achilles' honor by dressing up in his armor and fighting in his place. But **Hector**, the great Trojan hero, killed Patroclus and took Achilles' golden armor as a prize.

THE WRATH OF ACHILLES

Achilles was furious at Hector, and vowed to seek revenge for his friend's death. He took to the field in fearsome new armor made for him by Vulcan. He fought with such fury he had soon killed dozens of Trojan warriors. Achilles threw the corpses of each of the men he killed in the **Scamander River**, the river which flows around Troy. Soon the river god became furious at having his river filled with dead bodies, and rose up to flood the plains where Achilles fought. Achilles was only barely saved from drowning by Vulcan, who dried up the river with a flash of fire. Soon Achilles had chased all the Trojan warriors inside the walls. Only **Hector** would come out and fight. Achilles felled the hapless Trojan hero with his spear. Then, because he was so angry with Hector for being his friend's murderer, he did a terrible thing. He tied Hector's body to his chariot and dragged it around the walls of Troy three times.

Not long after, Achilles' himself was killed. By now, you may have forgotten about **Paris**, the man who had started the war in the first place. Paris was not much of a fighter and had done very little since. But with Apollo guiding his bow, Paris shot a fateful arrow from behind the walls of Troy. His arrow sailed up over the walls and struck Achilles in his mortal heel and killed him. But even now, with the greatest heroes on both sides dead, the war was still a stalemate.

THE WAR ENDS

By now, the war had dragged on for ten years, and many of the Greek wanted to return home. The Trojan troops were decimated, but Troy still would not fall. The walls of Troy had been built by Apollo and Neptune, and they were invulnerable. The Greeks had taken the steps outlined by **Helenus** (see below) which were necessary for Troy to fall, but they still needed a plan of action. It was Odysseus who finally came up with this plan.

Odysseus was famous for being sneaky and clever, and this idea of his was definitely that. Odysseus knew that the Greeks must trick their way inside the walls of Troy. He plan had two parts. The first part of the plan involved constructing a huge, hollow wooden horse. Odysseus and a small band of brave soldiers hid inside the horse. Now all the Greeks needed was to convince the Trojans to take the horse into the city.

This is where part two of the plan came into play. The Greeks attached an inscription to the horse, explaining that they were sick of the fighting and that the horse was a offering to Minerva (so

she would forgive them for having stolen the Palladium). After dragging the horse outside the walls of Troy, the rest of the Greek army pretended to set sail for home (they really just hid out on the neighboring island of **Tenedos**). One Greek, fast-talking son of Sisyphus named **Sinon**, was left behind to convince the Trojans to take the horse into the city. You'll read how he did it in just a bit.

When the Trojans found the horse, they were very suspicious of the offering. Some wanted to destroy it, but others wanted to bring it into the city, to replace the lost Palladium (the sacred statue of Minerva stolen from Troy by the Greeks).

One wise priest named **Laocoon**, was particularly suspicious of the horse. He warned the Trojans that they could never trust a gift brought by the Greeks. To emphasize his point he took his spear and hurled it into the side of the horse. The horse (or more accurately) the startled Greeks inside let out a suspicious groan when the spear hit but still the Trojans were not certain what to do. Just after Laocoon struck the horse, two enormous sea serpents slithered out the sea and attacked Laocoon's two sons. When Laocoon tried to stop the snakes, he was killed along with his sons. The snakes then slithered off to the temple of Minerva and curled up around the base of her statue. The horrified Trojans thought Minerva must have sent the snakes to punish Laocoon for harming her gift. (In reality, Minerva, who sided with the Greeks, had sent the snakes to shut him up).

After the snake incident, the Trojans were leaning towards accepting the gift, since none of them had a particular desire to become the snakes' next victim. What finally convinced them to accept the horse was the story told by **Sinon**, whom they found beaten and shackled outside the walls.

Sinon pretended to be enraged at the Greeks. He said they had planned to sacrifice him to Minerva to appease her anger over the stealing of the Palladium. He claimed he had just barely managed to escape and had been left behind as a traitor. He told the Trojans the horse had been designed to be an offering and a replacement for the Palladium. It had been built so large on purpose, Sinon claimed. That way it would be too big to bring into the city. For if the Trojans brought it into the city, he continued, it would bring them victory. This well crafted lie was all the convincing the Trojans needed.

The Trojans immediately tore down a chunk of the walls so they could bring the precious horse into the city. Now they had the horse in the city and the Greeks truly did appear to be gone. It seemed the long war had ended at last. Wild with joy, the Trojans hung the horse with garlands of flowers and celebrated with drunken partying long into the night. Once the Trojans were asleep, Sinon let the Greek soldiers out of the horse and lit a beacon to summon the troops waiting on Tenedos. The Greeks soldiers threw open the gates for their comrades and attacked the stunned, wine bleary Trojans.

In the course of one savage night, the Greeks captured and destroyed Troy. They burned the city and killed or captured all who were inside. They were extremely ruthless. Priam, the king of Troy, who was an old man, was dragged from a sacred altar, where he had sought refuge, and slaughtered by Neoptolemus. His wife and daughters were sold into slavery, except for one princess, **Polyxena**. Neoptolemus claimed his father's ghost had demanded her sacrifice, so he dragged her to Achilles' tomb and sacrificed her there. Odysseus (or some say Neoptolemus) took, **Astyanax**, the baby son of Hector, and threw him off the walls of Troy. With the death of Astyanax, all the princes of Priam's line were dead.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE TROJAN WAR

Although Troy was destroyed forever and its people killed or sold into slavery, the Trojans may have had the last laugh. The one Trojan hero who escaped was **Aeneas**, who fulfilled his

destiny to found an even greater race of men: the Romans. The Romans eventually conquered Greece and avenged their Trojan ancestors.

As for the Greeks who fought at Troy, very few of them lived happily ever after. **Odysseus** struggled for ten years to get home to his wife and son, and when he got there, he had to fight off hordes of suitors who had come to marry Penelope (assuming him dead).

Agamemnon returned home with the Trojan princess and prophetess **Cassandra** as his mistress. His wife, **Clytemnestra**, had never forgiven him for the sacrifice of Iphigenia and presences of the Trojan mistress made her even angrier. Just to top things off, Clytemnestra had taken on a lover of her own. Together with her lover **Aegisthus**, she plotted to kill Agamemnon. Just after Agamemnon arrived home, she stabbed him to death as he climbed out of the bathtub.

As for **Helen**, the woman whose beauty had started the whole thing, Meneleus had planned to kill her when he finally captured her. But when Helen cried and pled for mercy, Meneleus was so overcome by her beauty, he forgave her and took her back to Sparta as his wife.

Trojan War Key terms

Pelius—mortal king and hero who married Thetis; became the father of Achilles

Thetis—sea nymph (Neriad) who married Pelius

Eris—goddess of discord; she threw the golden apple which started the dispute between goddesses

Paris— Prince of Troy, promised the most beautiful woman in the world by Venus

Helen—the most beautiful woman in the world; wife of Meneleus

Meneleus (MEN-A-LAY-US)—Husband of Helen, King of Sparta in Greece

Agamemnon (AG-A-MEM-NON)— King of Mycenae, brother of Meneleus

Troy-- city in Asia Minor ruled by King Priam

Iphigenia (IF-EH-GEN-EYE-A) - Agamemnon's daughter whom he sacrificed to appease the goddess Artemis and bring favorable winds for the Greek fleet

Achilles—son of Peleus and Thetis, greatest of the Greek heroes at Troy

Patroclus—best friend of Achilles, died trying to protect Achilles' honor

Hector—son of Priam, King of Troy and his wife Hecuba, greatest of the Trojan heroes

Diomedes - This prince of Argos was the second greatest Greek warrior at Troy. Diomedes killed many Trojans and even wounded Mars and Venus in the fighting.

Ajax (the Greater) - he was the tallest of all the Greek warriors; he and Hector fought to a draw and were so impressed with each other's fighting they exchanged weapons. Towards the end of the war, Ajax went mad with jealousy when he was not awarded Achilles' armor. In his madness he killed all the Greek cattle. When he regained his sanity he used Hector's sword to kill himself in shame.

Teucer—greatest Greek archer; if Jupiter had not broken his bow string he would have killed Hector long before Achilles did

Stentor - he had the loudest voice of all the Greeks; his job was to shout out orders and messages

Philoctetes— As a boy he had helped build a funeral pyre for the dying Hercules; in thanks Hercules had given him his bow and arrows; thereafter, he was the greatest Greek archer. On the way to Troy he was wounded and his festering wound smelled so bad, the Greeks left him on an island. Later the Greeks retrieved him from the island when a prophesy said his bow and arrows were necessary to win the war.

Scamander— river that flows near Troy

Cheiron-noble centaur who was a mentor to many heroes

Pyrrhus/Neoptolemus-son of Achilles by Deidameia

Myrmidons– ant men who fought for Achilles

Odysseus– cleverest of the Greek heroes; he came up with the idea of the Trojan horse

Palladium–ancient statue of Minerva that the Trojans believed protected their city

Sinon– wily Greek left behind to convince the Trojans to accept the horse

Laocoon (LAY-AK-OO-ON)Trojan priest who did not trust the Greek gift, and urged the Trojans to destroy it. He and his sons were eaten by sea serpents sent by Minerva.

Achilles: The Story of a Hero

Achilles is one of the more interesting heroes of Ancient mythology. His life was short but exciting, and true to prophesy, he was more famous than his father Peleus...

The Early Years

Achilles was the son the Peleus and Thetis. Thetis, his immortal mother, very much wanted her son to be immortal as well. There are various accounts of the technique she used to make him immortal (burning, boiling, etc.) but the most commonly told story says she dipped baby Achilles in the River Styx. She succeeded in covering all of him in the protective water except the heel she held him by. At Troy, Achilles was killed when Paris struck him with an arrow in that heel.

A Broken Home

According to some stories, Peleus walked in on Thetis cheerful boiling baby Achilles (she was trying to cook off his mortality). Horrified, Peleus snatched the baby out. Thetis was so offended by his lack of trust, she left the family and returned to the sea. When Achilles got a bit older, Peleus sent him off to study with **Cheiron**, the noble centaur who taught many great heroes. Cheiron taught him many things and shaped him into a fine fighter.

Hero in Drag

When Thetis found out that Achilles would die at Troy if he went there to fight, she tried to block fate. She sent teenage Achilles to live at the court of King Lycomedes on the island of Scycsus. To make him particularly hard to find, Thetis arranged to have him disguised as a girl, and as such, he was called *Pyrrha*. When Odysseus was sent to see if Achilles was hiding on Sycsus, he suspected the young hero was hidden among the women. Odysseus tricked him out of hiding and Achilles quite happily (he was a red blooded young *hero* after all) joined the Greek cause.

Son Out of Wedlock

Not long after Achilles left Sycsus, Deidameia, the daughter of Lycomedes, gave birth to Achilles' son, whom she named **Pyrrhus** in honor of the 'girl' who had fathered him. The boy was later called **Neoptolemus**, which means "new war".

Strange Troops

When Achilles came to Troy, he brought with him a force of fierce warriors called the **Myrmidons**. These warriors were supposedly ants who had been transformed into men.

THE ODYSSEY

In the previous chapter we read about the Trojan War. You might remember how it was the clever trick (i.e. the Trojan horse) of the Greek hero **Odysseus** that ended the war. Well, unfortunately for him, that wasn't the end of adventures for Odysseus. Even after the war was over, it took Odysseus ten years to get home to Ithaca, the island he ruled. His adventures along the way were written down in one of ancient literature's great epic poems, *The Odyssey*.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS...

After the end of the war, Odysseus set out for home along with twelve ships filled with his men. Along the way they stopped and made a pirate raid on a town called Cicones, and it was after that the bad luck began. After being blown off course by a storm, Odysseus and his men arrived in the land of the **Lotus Eaters**. The Lotus Eaters were men whose only food was the lotus fruit. This fruit was highly addictive. It made all who ate it forget their homeland. The only thing these men wanted to do was stay in Lotus land and eat more Lotus fruit. Once Odysseus and his men figured out what a dangerous place this was, they made a hasty departure. But several of Odysseus's men had made the mistake of eating the Lotus fruit, and they had to be left behind.

After their adventures in the land of the Lotus Eaters, Odysseus and his men arrived on a pretty, peaceful shore in an unknown land. Odysseus and a few of his men decided to investigate. They set out from the ship with a wineskin filled with strong, sweet wine, which they planned to offer as a gift to anyone who showed them hospitality. In their wanderings, they found a shepherd's cave which was full of buckets of fresh sheep's milk and rounds of homemade cheese. The wanderers hadn't seen food this good in a long time. They decided to wait in the cave for the shepherd to return, in hopes that he would share some of his rich bounty with them. When the shepherd returned, however, he was no ordinary man, but a **Cyclops** (a one eyed giant). This Cyclops, named **Polyphemus**, was not in terribly good humor either. He had no interest in entertaining guests and displayed his complete lack of hospitality by promptly bashing out the brains of several of the men, and eating them. After that, the huge brute shoved a rock over the entrance of the cave, to keep his future dinner prospects from escaping, and went to sleep. While the Cyclops was sleeping, Odysseus formulated a plan to save his little crew. He found a sturdy olive wood pole in the dark corners of the cave and instructed his men to sharpen it and harden the point in fire. Then they hid the weapon under sheep dung.

In the morning the Cyclops ate several more men for breakfast and then went out to herd his sheep. But when he returned for the evening and herded his sheep into the cave for the night, Odysseus called out to him, and introduced himself again. He told the Cyclops he was a poor wanderer named "Nobody" and just wanted to offer a bit of hospitality in hopes of better treatment. Then he offered the Cyclops some of the fine wine he had brought from the ship. Now Polyphemus had a soft spot for wine, and immediately snatched the wineskin and guzzled down the entire contents. The wine was extremely strong, and Polyphemus immediately fell into a drunken sleep.

As soon as the giant was asleep, Odysseus ordered his men to uncover the sharpened stick, and together they rammed it into the Cyclop's one large eye. The blinded Polyphemus immediately woke up and began to howl

with pain and rage. He tried to catch his attackers, but since he couldn't see them, they were able to evade him. Polyphemus yelled to his brother Cyclops to come and help him. They came and stood outside the cave, and asked what the problem was. When Polyphemus replied that he was being attacked by "Nobody", his brothers thought he was drunk or crazy and went back home to bed.

For the moment, Odysseus and his men were safe from the Cyclops, but they still could not get out of the cave, because the stone that covered the door was too heavy to budge. When morning came, Polyphemus needed to let out the hungry sheep. He did not want his attackers to escape, so he stood at the door, and felt the back of each sheep he let it out the door. Odysseus came up with a plan to fool Polyphemus one more time. He grouped some sheep into pairs three wide and tied his men to their underbellies. The men were able to slip by the angry giant undetected. When all the rest of the men were safely out, Odysseus himself clung to the underbelly of a huge ram and rode him to safety.

Odysseus and his men ran for their boat and immediately put to sea with the rest of his ships.

As they rowed away from the shore, Odysseus couldn't resist calling out the Cyclops and taunting him. He shouted that Odysseus, son of Laertes was the "Nobody" who had tricked the mighty Cyclops. Now this mockery was a bad idea on a number of counts. First, it let the enraged giant know where his enemies were. Once he'd sounded out where they were, Polyphemus immediately began to throw large boulders in the direction of the ships. But even worse, now that Polyphemus knew that the man who had blinded him was Odysseus, he could ask his powerful father to curse the man. And considering the father of injured Cyclops was Poseidon, the god of the sea on which Odysseus needed to sail, this was a very bad thing indeed!

After getting on the wrong side of Poseidon by injuring his son, it was almost inevitable that things were going to take a turn for the worse. At first however, things seemed to be getting a bit better. In the course of their wandering, they happened upon **Aeolus**, the god of the winds. Aeolus and Odysseus had dinner together, and as a parting gift, Aeolus gathered all the unfavorable winds into a bag, and gave them to Odysseus with the instructions that he not open the bag until he was safely home. With the unfavorable winds bagged up, the only wind blowing would be the wind that would carry Odysseus home, and he would be able to arrive in good time. Unfortunately, when Odysseus got back to the ship with his precious bag, it aroused the curiosity of the crew. Odysseus told his men what it contained, and instructed them not to open it. But some of his men thought that was only a lie to keep them away from some particularly valuable gift. So that night, when Odysseus was sleeping, they crept up, and opened the bag. Immediately all sorts of unfavorable winds rushed out and blew the ships horrendously off course.

Now this was particularly unfortunate, because the land the winds blew them to was about the most inhospitable place around. When Odysseus and his fleet were sailing towards the shores, they saw signs of habitation and were encouraged. But all too soon they realized the creatures who lived in this land were a race of man-eating giants, called the **Laestrygones**. The monsters grabbed ships right out of the water and dashed them on shore, and grabbed sailors and ate them in bunches. Odysseus immediately told his men to turn and flee, but while his ship escaped, all the remaining eleven boats were destroyed.

ON CIRCE'S ISLE

Odysseus and the crew of his one remaining ship sailed away from the land of the Laestrygones as quickly as possible. They sailed for days on the open sea and were completely exhausted when at last they arrived at a pleasant island called **Aeaea** (eye-eye-a). Odysseus could see smoke rising from a dwelling on the island, and sent a few of his men to investigate. The men did not return. Odysseus sent a few more men to see what had happened, but they did not come back either. As Odysseus himself went to investigate, the god **Hermes** appeared to him to provide warning and help. Hermes told him that a woman named **Circe** lived on the island. He explained that she was a sorceress, and had turned all of his men into pigs with her magic staff. Hermes warned Odysseus, that he too would be turned into a pig unless he protected himself with a magical plant called **moly**. Odysseus ate the herb and went to retrieve his men. When he got to Circe's house, the sorceress received him kindly and spread a good dinner out before him. When the dinner was done, she touched him with her magic staff, and was shocked to find that he did not turn into a pig like he was supposed to. Odysseus snatched Circe's staff and forced her to restore his men to human form. Since it was clear to Circe that Odysseus had some powerful forces on his side, she did not mettle further, but sent the group on their way after a fine feast.

A MOTLEY MIX OF MEN AND MONSTERS