Reading Guide – Trojan War
from Edith Hamilton’s Mythology

Characters

The Gods

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Neutral
Zeus (though he does help the Trojans at first)

The Trojans

Priam – King of Troy, old and wise
Hecuba – Queen of Troy
Hector – son of Priam, Troy's best warrior
Paris – son of Priam, chooses Aphrodite for the apple, wants to marry Helen

The Greeks

Menelaus – King of Sparta, married to Helen
Agamemnon – brother of Menelaus, commander of Greek army
Achilles – greatest Greek warrior
Odysseus – Greek warrior
Diomedes – Greek warrior
Ajax – Greek warrior

Questions

Read from Edith Hamilton’s Mythology pages 256-290 before answering the accompanying questions.

1. Why did the evil goddess of Discord, Eris, decide to cause trouble? What did she do?

2. Which three goddesses were at odds with one another due to Eris’ actions?

3. Who was Paris? Why was he living in the countryside with the nymph Oenone? Why did Zeus send the goddesses to him?

4. What did each goddess offer to Paris? Whose offer does Paris accept?
5. Who was Helen? Who was she married to?

6. What sacred bond did Paris break when visiting Sparta? How did he break this bond?

7. Which two Greek chieftans did not immediately set sail for Troy to retrieve Helen and wage war against the Trojans?

8. How did each initially avoid the call to duty?

9. Why was Artemis preventing the Greek army from setting sail? What did she demand?

10. Who was the first Greek soldier to die? How did he die?

11. What did Achilles and Hector share in common?

12. How many years did the Greek and Trojan armies remain deadlocked in battle?

13. What did Agamemnon do to anger the god Apollo?

14. What did Agamemnon take from Achilles as compensation for appeasing Apollo?

15. How does Achilles react to this wrong?

16. Whose side is Hera on?

17. What prevents Menelaus from defeating Paris when they are left to fight each other?

18. With Achilles gone, who were the two greatest champions on the Greek side?

19. Which god was fighting alongside Hector? What happens to this god?

20. To which god does Hecuba, Queen of Troy, pray to spare the Trojans? What does she offer?
21. Describe the scene between Hector, his wife (Andromache), and his son (Astynax).

22. Who of all men on earth was dearest to Achilles?

23. What does Hera do to trick Zeus in order to turn the war in favor of the Greeks?

24. What did Patroclus do when the Trojans advanced close to the Greek ships? How does he die?

25. What does Achilles’ mother, Thetis, gift to him before he goes back into battle?

26. As Hector and Achilles face off in their final battle, what request does Hector make of Achilles? How does Achilles respond?

27. What did Achilles do with Hector’s dead body? How did the immortals (gods) react to this?

28. How many days did the Trojans mourn Hector’s death before cremating his body?

29. How did Achilles die?

30. Which two men were considered worthy of receiving Achilles’ armor?

31. What circumstances lead to Ajax’s death? How does he die?

32. What sacred artifact did the Greeks steal from the Trojans? Why?

33. Describe Odysseus’s plan for entering the city gates and invading Troy.

34. Name the two Trojans who warned against trusting Sinon’s story.

35. Who was the only god that helped the Trojans the night it was sacked by the Greeks?

36. What did the Greeks do to Hector’s little son, Astynax? To Priam/Hecuba’s daughter? What is your reaction to this? How do you suppose the Gods reacted to the Greeks’ savagery?