

# THE WOODEN HORSE

- 0. THE WOODEN HORSE Story Preface
- 1. ACHILLES
- 2. HELEN AND PARIS
- 3. THE TROJAN WAR
- 4. THE PLOT THICKENS
- 5. DEATH OF HECTOR
- 6. DEATH OF ACHILLES
- 7. THE WOODEN HORSE
- 8. RUINS OF TROY AND MYCENAE



This vase—from about 675-650 BC—depicts a horse on wheels. If you look closely, you can also see something else: Greeks inside (and outside) the object. Image copyright Mykonos Archeological Museum, all rights reserved, and online via Beazley Archive at Oxford University. Provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

Still unable to subdue the Trojans, <u>Odysseus</u> and the Greeks (Achaeans) needed to find a way to surreptitiously enter the fortified town. They learned, from Helenus—a Trojan seer—that in order to defeat Troy, <u>Neoptolemus</u> (Achilles' son) would have to join the Achaean forces.

Helenus also told the Greeks they would not win the war unless they stole the sacred Palladium—a wooden statue of Athena (called Minerva by the Romans)—which was said to have fallen from heaven. As long as that

statue stood in Troy, the Greeks could not take the city take the city.

On a dark night, <u>Diomedes</u> (with the help of Odysseus) climbed a wall of Troy. Once inside the city, Diomedes <u>stole the Palladium</u>, thereby weakening Troy's defenses.

Epeios (it is said) <u>created a wooden horse</u> big enough to hide many Greek warriors. Leaving <u>the horse</u> outside the gates of Troy, and moving their ships out of view, the Greeks fooled Priam and his subjects into believing their enemies had given up.

Thinking the siege was finally over, the Trojans (ignoring the warnings of a suspicious few) brought the <u>horse</u> <u>inside</u> the gates. They, in other words, did to themselves what the Greeks had been unable to do for ten years.

At night, while the Trojans were sleeping-off the effects of their drunken celebration, Odysseus and his fellow warriors, including Achilles' son Neoptolemus, exited the wooden horse and opened the city gates. The remaining Greek warriors entered the city and overran the former stronghold.

Too late, Priam and his subjects realized that they themselves had opened the door to ruin. <u>Neoptolemus</u> found <u>Priam near the altar</u> of Zeus and <u>killed the old man</u>. He also hurled Hector's young son, Astyanax, over the city's wall.

After Troy was sacked, Neoptolemus also <u>took</u> Polyxena <u>prisoner</u>. Carrying out his father's wishes, he <u>sacrificed</u> the <u>Trojan princess</u> on the <u>tomb of Achilles</u>. The scene is famously <u>depicted</u> on a <u>Greek vase</u>. (Note, however, that <u>Philostratus, in *Heroica*</u> [at 18, 20], says Polyxena fled to the Greeks after Achilles' death and committed suicide on his grave.)

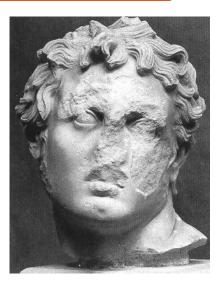
With the death of Polyxena, the Trojan War (also memorialized by Ovid) was finally over.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at: <a href="http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-WOODEN-HORSE-Troy">http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-WOODEN-HORSE-Troy</a>

### See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-WOODEN-HORSE-Troy

## Media Stream



Diomedes - Ancient Greek Hero Image online, courtesy Sperlonga Sculptures. PD View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Diomedes-Ancient-Greek-Hero



## Diomedes - Stealing the Palladium

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<u>Trojan Horse - Depicted in Ancient Art</u> Artifact, now maintained at the Mykonos Archeological Museum (2240). View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Trojan-Horse-Depicted-in-Ancient-Art</u>

<u>Trojan Horse - Procession to Troy</u> Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons. PD

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# Neoptolemus - Son of Achilles

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## <u>Polyxena - Prisoner of the Greeks</u> Image online, courtesy the <u>University of Vermont</u> website. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Polyxena-Prisoner-of-the-Greeks

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