

# Ancient Greek Myths for Kids

## What really caused the Trojan War

*As the story goes .....*

As far as Aphrodite was concerned, there really was no comparison between Aphrodite and her half sister, Helen. Poor Helen was married to the king of Sparta. How boring for her. Aphrodite had no interest in being married at all. Both girls were probably Zeus' daughters. But Helen's mother was only a mortal. Everyone knew that Aphrodite's mother was probably a goddess. Helen was attractive certainly. But the truth was, as Aphrodite would tell you herself if you asked her, Aphrodite was the most beautiful goddess in the land.

You can imagine Aphrodite's surprise when she heard that Paris, a lowly prince of the city-state of Troy, had proclaimed her half sister Helen as the fairest in the land. Aphrodite was not at all pleased.

A short time later, a wedding was announced in the Greek god world. [Eris](#), the spirit of disagreement, had not been invited. Eris made a surprise and most unwelcome visit to the wedding reception. She threw a golden apple of discord on the feasting table. "This apple is for whomever is the fairest," Eris proclaimed haughtily, hoping to cause trouble.

Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena all grabbed for the apple. "It's mine," insisted the three goddesses, Aphrodite loudest of all.

Zeus thundered, "Enough. Paris will decide who is the fairest. [Hermes](#), go tell Paris he has a job to do."

"Paris!" Aphrodite muttered. "Well, well."

Paris found himself facing three of the most powerful goddesses in the world, all clamoring for his attention. "Paris will decide! Which one of us is the loveliest, Paris?" they demanded to know.

Paris could have said they were *all* the most beautiful. But Paris was as foolish as he was handsome. Paris told all three goddesses that whomever offered him the best bribe would be declared the fairest.

Aphrodite, wise in the ways of foolish men, promised Paris that his brothers would be so jealous when the king of Sparta's wife, the beautiful Helen, fell instantly in love with him. Paris loved the idea. His brothers were always showing him up and making him feel foolish. This would show them!

Foolishly, Paris took the bribe. He declared Aphrodite the fairest of them all.

Aphrodite kept her promise. That very day foolish Paris and Helen (enchanted) left Greece behind. They traveled together to the city of Troy, where they expected to live happily ever after.

No one knows exactly how, but somehow the king heard that his wife, Helen, had been kidnapped by Paris, a prince of Troy. The king of Sparta went after his wife to rescue her. When the king of Sparta called on the other kings of Greece to help, they rallied to his side. A huge navy of Greek warriors set sail for Troy. That was the beginning of [the Trojan War](#). And the end of Troy.

Ever after, and for all time, Queen Helen of Sparta, the woman who caused the destruction of an entire city-state, was no longer known as the half sister of Aphrodite. She was known simply as Helen of Troy.