

THE ODYSSEY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Legendary war between the Greeks and the city of Troy was caused by the abduction of Helen, wife of the Greek King Menelaus, by Paris, a Trojan prince.

Bent on revenge, the Greek Kings gathered their men and ships and set sail for Troy.

The Greeks were led by Agamemnon, King of Mycenae, who was brother of Menelaus. His army comprised the finest warriors, including Odysseus.

The war dragged on for year after year. Many brave deeds were done and many champions died, but both sides were too proud to end the fighting.

One of the war's most decisive battles was between Achilles, a Greek champion, and Hector, champion of the Trojans. Achilles won, and triumphantly dragged the body of Hector around the walls of Troy.

With no end in sight, the Greeks turned to their most cunning leader, Odysseus. He suggested that the army build a giant wooden horse and hide a group of armed men within it. The rest of the men should hide out of sight of the walls of Troy and wait.

The Trojans assumed that the large wooden horse that the Greeks had left behind was an offering to a god. They dragged it inside the city walls. At night, the men hidden inside the horse crept out and opened the gates to the rest of the Greek army. Troy was utterly destroyed.

When King Menelaus found his wife Helen, he was on the verge of killing her, until Odysseus pleaded for her life. With her lover Paris long since dead, Menelaus forgave her and took her back to Sparta .

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