

1 **Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the Iliad**

2 Excerpt from: “The Golden Apple”

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7 In the high and far-off days when men were heroes and walked with the gods,  
8 Peleus, king of the Myrmidons, took for his wife a sea nymph called Thetis,  
9 Thetis of the Silver Feet. Many guests came to their wedding feast, and among  
10 the **mortal** guests came all the gods of high Olympus.

11

12 But as they sat **feasting**, one who had not been invited was suddenly in their  
13 midst: Eris, the goddess of **discord**, had been left out because wherever she went  
14 she took trouble with her; yet here she was, all the same, and in her **blackest**  
15 mood, to **avenge** the insult.

16

17 All she did—it seemed a small thing—was to toss down on the table a golden  
18 apple. Then she breathed upon the guests once, and vanished.

19

20 The apple lay gleaming among the piled fruits and the **brimming** wine cups; and  
21 bending close to look at it, everyone could see the words “To the **fairest**” traced  
22 on its side.

23

24 Then the three greatest of the goddesses each claimed that it was hers. Hera  
25 claimed it as wife to Zeus, the All-father, and queen of all the gods. Athene  
26 claimed that she had the better **right**, for the beauty of wisdom such as hers  
27 surpassed all else. Aphrodite only smiled, and asked who had a better claim to  
28 beauty’s prize than the goddess of beauty herself.

29 They fell to arguing among themselves; the argument became a **quarrel**, and the  
30 quarrel grew more and more **bitter**, and each called upon the **assembled** guests  
31 to judge between them. But the other guests refused, for they knew well enough  
32 that, whichever goddess they chose to receive the golden apple, they would make  
33 enemies of the other two.

fairy

home of the gods

presence

king of all gods

exceeded

# Teacher's Guide

Name of Text: *The Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the Iliad*

Excerpt from: *"The Golden Apple"*

Question Composers: Carissa Hoover, Diana McIntyre, Sarah Flynn, Gloria Filicchia

Nevada State Standards: HI.[6-8].16 Identify the characteristics of a civilization.

CCSS: RL.6.1, RL.6.4, RL.6.5, RL.6.10; W.6.2, W.6.9; SL.6.1; L.6.1, L.6.4

*Teacher Note: This close read could be taught within an Ancient Civilization unit that addresses the sixth grade social studies standards.*

Text Dependent Questions	Teacher Notes and Possible Textual Evidence For Student Answers
What are three things you learned from lines 7-10?	This question orients students to the text and characters. Students should notice that the setting is a wedding feast, and the guests are mortals and gods. The feast is celebrating the marriage between Peleus, a mortal king and sea nymph Thetis.
Why does Eris feel the need for revenge, and what were her intended outcomes by throwing the apple into the air?	She was not invited to the wedding, because wherever she went she took trouble with her.  Outcomes can include underlying motives to cause discord and quarreling, although she claims to make an innocent gesture. These questions support the culminating writing activity.
The word "discord (line 13)" contains the root "cord." "Cord" can mean an agreement or harmony. Based on this root, what do you think the word <i>discord</i> means?  List at least three other words or phrases from the reading that demonstrate <i>discord</i> .	Depending on students' knowledge of vocabulary, they may or may not already know the definition of "dis." Students may refer to lines 12-15  They should find clues that demonstrate how the people have arguments or quarrels with one another. Possible responses may include "took trouble with her (Line 14)," "blackest mood (14-15)," "avenge the insult (15)," bitter (30)," and "guests refused (31)."

**Text Dependent Questions**

**Teacher Notes and Possible Textual Evidence  
For Student Answers**

The word “fairest” is used in line 21 and lines 24-28 provide several possible meanings for this word. Using evidence from the text, what is the intended meaning?

Students may refer to lines 24-28. The three goddesses (Hera, Athene, and Aphrodite) have different perspectives on what qualifies as the fairest: Hera as “the queen of all gods”, Athene with her “beauty and wisdom such as hers surpassed all others”, and Aphrodite as “the goddess of beauty herself.” *Fairest* then can refer to beauty, power, or wisdom depending on the perspective of the one doing the deciding.

Using evidence from the text, explain, in detail, the various consequences that occurred as a result of Eris’s tossing the Golden Apple on the table.

- The three greatest goddesses each claimed that the apple was hers.
- They fell to arguing among themselves
- The argument became a quarrel and the quarrel became more and more bitter
- The guests refused to side, for they knew well that they would make enemies of the other two
- Eris got her revenge by causing discord because she was not invited to the wedding feast

*OR, if students need a further scaffold:*

Using evidence from the text, complete the cause and effect chart to explain why Eris tossed the golden apple onto the table and various consequences that occurred as a result.

CAUSE	EFFECT
Eris took trouble with her wherever she went	She was not invited to the wedding
Eris arrived uninvited to take revenge	Eris tossed the golden apple onto the table
The apple had the words ‘to the fairest’ written on its side	The three greatest goddesses each claimed that the apple was hers
The three goddesses fell to arguing among themselves over who deserved the apple	The goddesses asked the guests to judge who best deserved the apple
The guests did not want to upset any of the goddesses	The guests refused to answer
The quarrel continued	Eris got her revenge by creating discord at the wedding celebration

**Writing Prompt:** A moral is the lesson on what is right that can be derived from a story. In ‘Black Ships Before Troy’, the author states in lines 17-18, “All she did—it seemed a small thing—was to toss down on the table a golden apple. Then she breathed upon the guests once, and vanished.” Why did Eris use the statement, “to the fairest” on the golden apple and what impact does this have on the wedding party? What moral might we draw from the goddesses’ behavior? In a three-paragraph response, do the following: First paragraph, use at least two pieces of evidence from the text to explain what caused Eris to leave the golden apple. Second paragraph, use at least two pieces of evidence from the text to describe the effects of Eris’s decision to seek revenge. In your conclusion, make concluding statements connecting the stated evidence in order to support a claim about the moral of the story.

**Paragraph one could include the following:**

*Lines 12-13: one who had not been invited was suddenly in their midst.*

*Lines 13-14: she was the goddess of discord and wherever she went she took trouble with her.*

*Line 14-15: in her blackest mood, to avenge the insult.*

**Paragraph two could include the following:**

*Lines 24-28: Each goddess gave competing reasons why she was “the fairest”*

*Lines 29-30: The goddesses “fell to arguing among themselves” and the argument became worse*

*Lines 30-31: The guests were asked to decide which was the most fair*

*Lines 31-33: No guest was willing to provide a decision on which goddess was the most fair because the guests did not want to upset any of the powerful women*

**Concluding paragraph could include the following:**

*A discussion of how the evidence in the first two paragraphs creates a lesson about the uselessness of arguing over beauty and/or the perils of vanity.  
(Explanation of how Eris’s action impacted wedding party guests to create discord.)*

*Lines 17-18: All she did—it seemed a small thing—was to toss down on the table a golden apple. Then she breathed upon the guests once, and vanished.*

*Line 21: everyone could see the words, “To the fairest” traced on its side”*

**Possible Extension Activity:** In what ways the goddesses betray what they considered their ‘fairest’ attribute in their fight over the golden apple?

Paragraph could include the following:

- Athene not being “wise” enough to see past the intentions of Eris
- Hera using her power as “queen of all the gods” to contribute to discord rather than solve the conflict
- Aphrodite debasing her beauty and becoming “more and more bitter”

#### SAMPLE STUDENT WRITING

At the wedding of Peleus and Thetis the guests included mortals and gods from Olympus. However, Eris was not invited because “she was the goddess of discord and wherever she went she took trouble with her” (lines 13-14). Eris was angry at not being invited and so came to the wedding party to take revenge. Her revenge was in the form of a golden apple with “the words ‘To the fairest’ traced on its side” (lines 21-22). Eris left this apple and phrase because she knew it would cause trouble among the women goddesses at the wedding when they fought over whom most deserved the golden prize.

After Eris left the golden apple, the goddesses gave competing arguments for why each was the fairest: Hera as “queen of all the gods” (line25), Athene as the most beautiful and wise, and Aphrodite as the goddess of beauty. This argument became worse and worse as the goddesses “fell to arguing among themselves; the argument became a quarrel, and the quarrel grew more and more bitter” (lines 29-30). However, no guest was willing to provide a decision on which goddess was the most fair because the guests did not want to upset any of the powerful women. Eris’s decision to take revenge was successful because it spoiled the wedding party as the goddesses fought and fought over who was ‘the fairest’.

The moral of “The Golden Apple” is that nothing good can come from vanity. Eris’s hurt pride at not being invited caused her to take advantage of the goddesses’ vanity as they fought over who was the most beautiful. In both Eris’s leaving of the golden apple and in the goddesses’ fighting over it, vanity led to terrible conflict.

## Vocabulary

<b>These words merit <u>LESS</u> time and attention</b> (They are concrete and easy to explain, or describe events/ processes/ideas/concepts/experiences that are familiar to your students )			<b>These words merit <u>MORE</u> time and attention</b> (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, and/or are a part of a large family of words with related meanings. These words are likely to describe events, ideas, processes or experiences that most of your student will be unfamiliar with)		
Page #	Word	Definition	Page #	Word	Definition
10	mortal	Living individuals who can die	13	Discord	Disagreement between people, groups, or ideas
12	Feasting	To enjoy a big and fancy meal in honor of someone or something	15	avenge	To cause harm in return for a harm done to oneself, relations or honor
29	Quarrel	An argument full of anger	20	Brimming	So full as to spill over (objects versus emotions)
30	Assembled	People brought together for a common purpose	21	fairest	As meeting an expectation of "the best," which could be either morally, or in terms of beauty
30	bitter	Angry and non-pleasant	14	Blackest	Darkest, angriest, most foul
			26	right	In the phrase, "the better right" does not refer to correctness but rather entitlement.