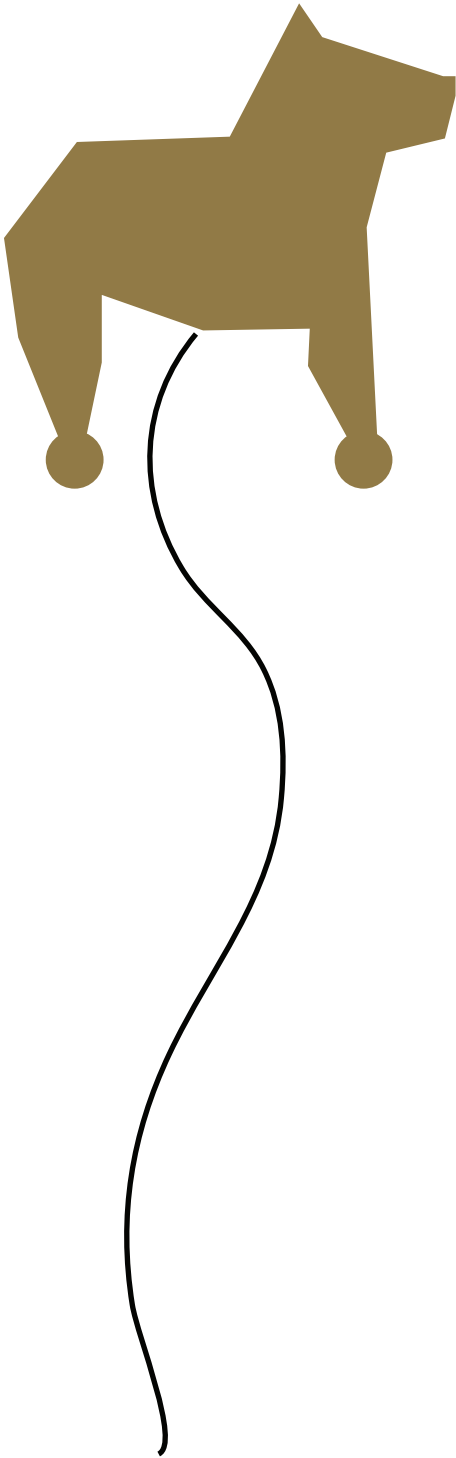


THE TROJAN HORSE



Long ago, the mighty cities of Troy and Athens went to war. No one could remember exactly how or why the war had started, but after ten years of fighting, neither side wanted to back down. The vast armies of Athens had sprawled out their campsites at the foot of Troy's walls, laying siege to the poor inhabitants. Everyone was affected by this decade-long war that showed no sign of ever ending.

Then one day, the men and women of Troy woke up to a pleasant surprise. They looked out their windows, expecting to see the tents and soldiers of their enemy, but instead saw nothing. The lands surrounding Troy were, for the first time in years, completely empty. First, the Trojans were confused, but their confusion quickly turned to celebration. The war was over! The Athenians must have given up.

As King Priam of Troy celebrated with the rest of the royal family, Trojan guards rolled in a massive wooden horse that they had found sitting outside the city gates. It must be a peace offering, the Trojans decided happily. "The Athenians have left behind a gift to apologize for the trouble they have caused us."

The Trojans, however, were very, very wrong. The Athenians had not given up. Instead, they had built the great wooden horse to trick the people of Troy. As Troy celebrated their presumed victory, Athenian soldiers hid inside the wooden horse, waiting to attack.

At dawn, while the city of Troy slept, the wooden horse began to creak. Some of the wooden boards slipped aside and Athenian soldiers poured out. By noon, the city of Troy had fallen. The ten-year war was over.

Comprehension Questions

1. Why would the people of Troy think their enemy had given up?
2. What is a peace offering?
3. How should King Priam have dealt with the wooden horse?
4. Why did the Athenian soldiers wait till dawn to attack?

