



the apple wars

WHEN people marry, the party attended by a lot of guests – family and friends – usually becomes just that: a party! But sometimes things can go horribly, horribly wrong.

In ancient Greece, a goddess called Thetis was to marry an everyday bloke called Peleus. All of the gods were invited to the wedding, except one – a nasty, ugly old aunt-goddess called Eris. She was the goddess of mayhem, mess and really bad manners. She probably wore purple.

But Eris came to the wedding anyway. She was in a foul mood. Having snarled at everyone, she took from the table a golden apple stamped with the words ‘To the fairest’, and threw it into the crowd.

The apple landed at the feet of three beautiful goddesses gossiping about the latest *chitons* (something like bedsheets which the Greeks wore). These dish-chicks were called Aphrodite, Hera and Athena. Everyone at the party knew them to be beautiful, but who among them was the most gorgeous? Who could claim the golden apple?

Zeus, the king of the gods, said only a shepherd prince called Paris, who lived with his sheep in the boondocks, could decide which of the three goddesses was the most ‘to-die-for’.

Appearing before Paris, each goddess promised him many extravagant things. But it was Aphrodite who promised the shepherd the beautiful Helene of Troy – seriously, the most drop-dead-gorgeous woman in the world. Paris legged it to Troy, gave Helene the golden apple, and then kidnapped her, starting the Trojan Wars. Which proves that old aunt-goddess. Eris really was what today we call ‘a bad apple’.