



ARES, god of war, was tall and handsome but vain, and as cruel as his brother Hephaestus was kind. Eris, the spirit of strife, was his constant companion. Eris was sinister and mean, and her greatest joy was to make trouble. She had a golden apple that was so bright and shiny everybody wanted to have it. When she threw it among friends, their friendship came to a rapid end. When she threw it among enemies, war broke out, for the golden apple of Eris was an apple of discord.

When Ares heard the clashing of arms, he grinned with glee, put on his gleaming helmet, and leapt into his war chariot. Brandishing his sword like a torch, he rushed into the thick of battle, not caring who won or lost as long as much blood was shed. A vicious crowd followed at his heels, carrying with them Pain, Panic, Famine, and Oblivion.

32 Once in a while, Ares himself was wounded. He was immortal but he could not bear to suffer pain and screamed so loudly that he could be heard for miles. Then he would run home to Olympus, where Zeus in disgust called him the worst of his children and told him to stop his howling. His wounds, treated with the ointment of the gods, quickly healed, and Ares returned as good as ever and seated himself on his throne, tall, handsome, and boastful, the plume on his golden helmet nodding proudly.

Aphrodite admired him for his splendid looks, but none of the other gods were fond of him, least of all his half sister Athena. She loathed his vain strutting and senseless bloodshed.