

**2026 NJCL
DRAMATIC
INTERPRETATION
Level ½ and 1
Passage 1**

The Tragic Story of Phaethon

Phaethon est filius Phoebī. Amīcus Phaethontis dē fāmā dīvīnae orīginis dubitat: “Nōn es filius deī. Nōn habēs dōna deōrum. Nōn vēra est tua fābula.”

Magna īra Phaethontem movet. “Fīlius deī sum! Phoebē, dā signum!” vocat Phaethon.

Phoebus puerum auscultat et sine morā volat dē caelō.

“ō mī filī, quid dēsīderās?” Phoebus rogat. “Pecuniam? Sapientiam? Vītā sine cūrīs?”

Respondet Phaethon, “Habēnās habēre et currum sōlis agere dēsīderō.”

ō stulte puer! Malum est tuum cōnsilium. Nōn dēbēs officia deōrum dēsīderāre. Phoebus filium monet, sed puer magna perīcula nōn videt. Equī valent; nōn valet Phaethon. Currus sine vērō magistrō errat in caelō. Quid vidēmus? Dē caelō cadit Phaethon. ō mala fortūna!

From 38 *Latin Stories* pg 4-5

Phaethon is the son of Phoebus. A friend of Phaethon doubts the rumor of his divine origin: “You are not the son of a god. You do not have the gifts of god. Your story is not true.” Great anger moves Phaethon: “I am the son of a god! Phoebus, give a sign! Phaethon calls out. Phoebus hears his son and flies from the heaven without delay. “Oh my son, what do you desire?” Phoebus asks “Money? Wisdom? Life without care?” Phaethon responds, “I want to have the reins and drive chariot of the sun.” Oh stupid boy! Your plan is bad. You ought not to desire the the business of the gods. Phoebus warns his son, but the boy does not see the great danger. The horses are strong; Phaethon is not strong. The chariot goes astray in the sky without the true master. What do we see? Phaethon falls from the sky. Oh bad fortune!

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DRAMATIC

INTERPRETATION

Level ½ and 1

Passage 2

Ulysses and the Cyclops

Post bellum Trōiānum venit Ulixēs cum duodecem virīs ad terram Cyclōpum. Cyclōps Polyphēmus in eandem cavernam magnās ovēs dūcit et Graecōs videt: “Quid vōs facitis in meā cavernā? Poenās dabitīs.”

“Trōiā nāvīgāmus,” Ulixēs eī dīcit. “Quid tū nōbīs dabis?”

Polyphemus autem exclāmat: “Stulte! Quid vōs mihi dabitīs?” Sine morā paucōs virōs capit editque! Tum rogat, “Quid tibi nōmen est?” Ulixēs respondet, “Nēmō.”

Dum somnus Polyphēmum superat, Graecī insidiās faciunt. Tignum in flammā acuunt et in oculum istius mittunt. ō miser Polyphēme! Aliī Cylcōpēs veniunt, sed vērūm perīculum nōn sentiunt.

“Nēmō mē necat!” Polyphēmus vocat.

“Bene!” iī dīcunt. “Valē!”

Graecī igitur ex cavernā fugere possunt. Caecus cyclōps haec verba audit: “Valē! Ego nōn Nēmō, sed Ulixēs sum!”

Modified from *38 Latin Stories* pg 18-19

After the Trojan war Ulysses comes to the land of Cyclops with twelve men. Cyclops Polyphemus leads a herd of sheep into the same cave and sees the Greeks: “What are you doing in my cave? You will be punished. “We sail from Troy,” Ulysses says to him. “What will you give to us?” However, Polyphemus shouts: “Fool! What will you give me?” Without delay he takes a few men and eats them! Then he asks, “What is your name?” Ulysses answers, “Nobody.” While sleep conquers Polyphemus, Greeks make an ambush. They sharpen the trunk of a tree on the flame and stab it into his eye. Oh miserarble Polyphemus! The other Cyclopes come, but they do not sense the true danger: “Nobody kills me!” Polyphemus calls out. “Well!” they say. “Good bye!” therefore Greeks can escape from the cave. The blind Cyclops hears these words: “Good bye! I am not nobody, but I am Ulysses!”

**2026 NJCL
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Level 2
Passage 1**

The Judgement of Paris

Dea Discordia, quae sōla ad nūptiās Pēleī Thetidisque nōn erat vocāta, irā mōta est. Iēcit igitur in rēgiam immortalīum deōrum mālum aureum, in quō scrīptae erant hae litterae: “BELLISSIMAE.”

Cui mālum darī dēbet? Iūnōnī aut Venerī aut Minervae? Etiam Iuppiter ipse iūdicium facere timet!

Itaque ad Paridem, filium rēgis Trōiānī, illae trēs deae veniunt.

“ō cāre adulēscēns,” dīcunt, “quis nostrum tuā sententiā bellissima est? Magnum dōnum tibi parābitur ab eā deā quam ēligēs.”

Quem Paris ēliget? Quō dōnō animus iūdicis movēbitur? Iūnō eum rēgem, Minerva ducem facere potest.

Venus autem eī Helenam, bellissimam omnium fēminārum, dare potest.

Paris amōre victus est et Venerī mālum aureum dedit. Itaque (sī certa fāma hōrum factōrum) Helena capta et ad novum locum, Trōiam, ducta est. Quod bellum gestum est propter istam fēminam?

From 38 *Latin Stories* page 34-35

The goddess Discordia, who alone was not called upon to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, was moved by anger. She therefore threw into the immortal palace of the gods a golden apple, on which these letters were written: “TO THE MOST BEAUTIFUL.” To whom ought the apple be given? Juno or Venus or Minerva? Even Jupiter himself is afraid to make the judgement! And so to Paris, son of the king of Troy, these three goddesses came. “O dear young man,” they say, “who is the most beautiful by your wisdom? A large gift will be given to you by the goddess whom you choose.” Whom would Paris choose? By which gift will the spirit of the judge be moved? Juno can make him a king, Minerva a leader. Venus can give him Helen, the most beautiful of all women. Paris is conquered by love and gave the golden apple to Venus. And so (if the report of these deeds is true) Helen is taken and led to a new place, Troy. What war is carried out on account of that woman?

**DRAMATIC
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Level 2
Passage 2**

Saved by the Geese

olim Gallī ex finibus excesserant ut oppida vicōsque Etrūscōrum ruerent. Etrūscī perterritī auxilium ā Rōmānīs petīverunt.

Gallī urbem intrāverunt. Cīvēs Romānī cum uxōribus līberīsque in arcem ascendērunt ut sē ibi omnī modō dēfenderent.

Silentiō noctis Gallī in arcem ascendere clam cōnātī sunt. Complūrēs ad sumum collem tantō silentiō pervēnērunt ut cūstōdēs nihil sentīrent. Sed subitō anserēs Jūnōnis sacri Gallōs audīverunt et clāmōre suō Mānlium excitāverunt.

Manlius aliōs cūstōdēs vocans statim p̄imum Gallum dē saxō dējēcit. Hostēs facillimē repulsī sunt. Sīc arx Rōmāna ab ānsēribus sacris servāta est.

Abridged from *Our Latin Heritage II*, pg

Once the Gauls had withdrawn from the boundaries so that they might overthrow the cities and villages of the Etruscans. The terrified Etruscans sought out help from the Romans. The Gauls entered the city. The citizens of Rome with their wives and children climbed onto a citadel so that they might all defend themselves in this manner. In the silence of the night, the Gauls secretly tried to climb the citadel. Many arrived at the top of the hill in such silence that the guards sensed nothing. But suddenly the sacred geese of Juno heard the Gauls and aroused Manlius with their shouts. Manlius, calling the other guards, at the same time threw the first Gaul from the rock. The enemies were easily pushed back. Thus the Roman citadel is saved by sacred geese.

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Adv.

Prose--Passage 1

heus tu! promittis ad coenam, nec venis. Dicitur ius; ad assem impendium reddes nec id modicum.

Paratae erant lactucae singulae, cochleae ternae, ova bina, halica cum mulso et nive (nam hanc quoque computabis, immo hanc in primis, quae perit in ferculo), olivae, betacei, cucurbitae, bulbi, alia mille non minus lauta. Audisses comoedum vel lectorem vel Iyristen vel, quae mea liberalitas, omnes.

At tu apud nescio quem ostrea, vulvas, echinos, Gaditanas maluisti. Dabis poenas, non dico quas. Dure fecisti; invidisti, nescio an tibi, certe mihi, sed tamen et tibi. Quantum nos lusissemus, risissemus, studuissemus!

Potes apparatus coenare apud multos, nusquam hilarius, simplicius, incautius. In summa experire et, nisi postea te aliis potius excusaveris, mihi semper excuse.

Vale.

Pliny's *Epistulae* I.15

What a fellow you are! You promise to come to dinner and then fail to turn up! Well, here is my magisterial sentence upon you. You must pay the money I am out of pocket to the last as, and you will find the sum no small one. I had provided for each guest one lettuce, three snails, two eggs, spelt mixed with honey and snow (you will please reckon up the cost of the latter as among the costly of all, since it melts away in the dish), olives from Baetica, cucumbers, onions, and a thousand other equally expensive dainties. You would have listened to a comedian, or a reciter, or a harp-player, or perhaps to all, as I am such a lavish host. But you preferred to dine elsewhere, where I know not, off oysters, sow's matrices, sea-urchins, and to watch Spanish dancing girls! You will be paid out for it, though how I decline to say. You have done violence to yourself. You have grudged, possibly yourself, but certainly me, a fine treat. Yes, yourself! For how we should have enjoyed ourselves, how we should have laughed together, how we should have applied ourselves! You can dine at many houses in better style than at mine, but nowhere will you have a better time, or such a simple and free and easy entertainment. In short, give me a trial, and if afterwards you do not prefer to excuse yourself to others rather than to me, why then I give you leave to decline my invitations always. Farewell.

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Prose--Passage 2

Irascor, nec liquet mihi an debeam, sed irascor. Scis, quam sit amor iniquus interdum, impotens saepe, μικραΐτιος semper.

Haec tamen causa magna est, nescio an iusta; sed ego, tamquam non minus iusta quam magna sit, graviter irascor, quod a te tam diu litterae nullae.

Exorare me potes uno modo, si nunc saltem plurimas et longissimas miseris. Haec mihi sola excusatio vera, ceterae falsae videbuntur.

Non sum auditorus 'non eram Romae' vel 'occupatior eram'; illud enim nec di sinant, ut 'infirmior'. Ipse ad villam partim studiis partim desidia fruor, quorum utrumque ex otio nascitur.

Vale.

Pliny's *Epistulae* II.2

I am angry; whether I ought to be I am not quite sure, but I am angry. You know how affection is often biassed, how it is always liable to make a man unreasonable, and how it causes him to flare up on even small provocation. But I have serious grounds for my anger, whether they are just or not, and so I am assuming that they are as just as they are serious, and am downright cross with you because you have not sent me a line for such a long time. There is only one way that you can obtain forgiveness, and that is by your writing me at once a number of long letters. That will be the only excuse I shall take as genuine; any others you may send I shall regard as false. For I won't listen to such stuff as "I was away from Rome," or "I have been fearfully busy." As for the plea, "I have not been at all well," I hope Providence has been too kind to let you write that. I am at my country house, enjoying study and idleness in turns, and both of these delights are born of leisure-hours. Farewell.

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Poetry--Passage 1

Death of Icarus

Hos aliquis tremula dum captat harundine pisces,
aut pastor baculo stivave innixus arator
vidit et obstipuit, quique aethera carpere possent
credidit esse deos. Et iam Iunonia laeva 220
parte Samos (fuerant Delosque Parosque relictæ),
dextra Lebinthos erat fecundaque melle Calymne,
cum puer audaci coepit gaudere volatu
deseruitque ducem caelique cupidine tractus
altius egit iter. Rapidi vicinia solis 225
mollit odoratas, pennarum vincula, ceras.
Tabuerant cerae: nudos quatit ille lacertos,
remigioque carens non ullas percipit auras,
oraque caerulea patrium clamantia nomen
excipiuntur aqua: quae nomen traxit ab illo. 230
At pater infelix, nec iam pater, "Icare," dixit,
"Icare," dixit "ubi es? qua te regione requiram?"
"Icare" dicebat: pennas adspexit in undis
devovitque suas artes corpusque sepulcro
condidit, et tellus a nomine dicta sepulti. 235

Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, VIII.217-235

Some angler catching fish with a quivering rod, or a shepherd leaning on his crook, or a ploughman resting on the handles of his plough, saw them, perhaps, and stood there amazed, believing them to be gods able to travel

the sky. And now Samos, sacred to Juno, lay ahead to the left (Delos and Paros were behind them), Lebinthos, and Calymne, rich in honey, to the right, when the boy began to delight in his daring flight, and abandoning his guide, drawn by desire for the heavens, soared higher. His nearness to the devouring sun softened the fragrant wax that held the wings: and the wax melted: he flailed with bare arms, but losing his oar-like wings, could not ride the air. Even as his mouth was crying his father's name, it vanished into the dark blue sea, the Icarian Sea, called after him. The unhappy father, now no longer a father, shouted 'Icarus, Icarus where are you? Which way should I look, to see you?' 'Icarus' he called again. Then he caught sight of the feathers on the waves, and cursed his inventions. He laid the body to rest, in a tomb, and the island was named Icaria after his buried child.

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Poetry--Passage 2

The Flood

Nec caelo contenta suo est Iovis ira, sed illum
caeruleus frater iuvat auxiliaribus undis. 275

Convocat hic amnes. Qui postquam tecta tyranni
intravere sui, “non est hortamine longo
nunc” ait “utendum. Vires effundite vestras:
sic opus est! aperite domos ac mole remota
fluminibus vestris totas inmittite habenas!” 280

Iusserat; hi redeunt ac fontibus ora relaxant
et defrenato voluntur in aequora cursu.

Ipse tridente suo terram percussit: at illa
intremuit motuque vias patefecit aquarum.

Exspatiata ruunt per apertos flumina campos 285
cumque satis arbusta simul pecudesque virosque
tecturae cumque suis rapiunt penetralia sacris.

Siqua domus mansit potuitque resistere tanto
indeiecta malo, culmen tamen altior huius
unda tegit, pressaeque latent sub gurgite turre. 290

Iamque mare et tellus nullum discrimen habebant:
omnia pontus erant; deerant quoque litora ponto.

Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, I.274-292

Jupiter’s anger is not satisfied with only his own aerial waters: his brother the sea-god helps him, with the ocean waves. He calls the rivers to council, and when they have entered their ruler’s house, says ‘Now is not

the time for long speeches! Exert all your strength. That is what is needed. Throw open your doors, drain the dams, and loose the reins of all your streams!' Those are his commands. The rivers return and uncurb their fountains' mouths, and race an unbridled course to the sea. Neptune himself strikes the ground with his trident, so that it trembles, and with that blow opens up channels for the waters. Overflowing, the rivers rush across the open plains, sweeping away at the same time not just orchards, flocks, houses and human beings, but sacred temples and their contents. Any building that has stood firm, surviving the great disaster undamaged, still has its roof drowned by the highest waves, and its towers buried below the flood. And now the land and sea are not distinct, all is the sea, the sea without a shore.