Name: _____ Date: _____

Atalanta and the Three Apples

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 283 words

In Greece, there was a girl named Atalanta. When she was a baby, a mother bear found her. Then hunters took her in.

In the woods, she learned to hunt with a bow. She also learned to run. She ran so fast that the deer paused to watch.

One day, Atalanta made a rule. "Beat me in a race," she said. "Then I will be your friend for life."

Young men came from towns near and far. They raced her, one at a time. Atalanta won every race.

A boy named Hippomenes came to watch. He saw Atalanta run, and he was amazed. "I will race her," he said.

Atalanta smiled at him kindly. "Go home, you will lose," she said. But Hippomenes stayed right where he was.

That night, he asked the goddess Aphrodite for help. "I cannot run as fast as she can," he said. The goddess heard him.

She gave him three apples made of gold. Each one glittered in his hand. "Drop them in front of her," she whispered.

The next day, people lined the track. The two runners stood side by side. Then they were off!

Atalanta shot ahead. Hippomenes rolled the first apple. It flashed, and she stopped to get it.

Hippomenes ran past her. But Atalanta was so fast that she soon caught up. So he rolled the second apple.

Again she stopped. Again he ran ahead. Then he tossed the last apple into the grass.

Atalanta looked at the apple, and she looked at Hippomenes. Then she went to get it. Hippomenes crossed the line first.

Atalanta shook his hand. "Well run," she said, with a laugh. They became friends, and she kept on running.

Questions

1. Who found baby Atalanta?

A. A king
B. A mother bear
C. A fisherman

2. What did Atalanta say to the boys?

A. If you beat me in a race, we will be friends
B. Come and hunt with me
C. Stay out of my woods

3. Who helped Hippomenes?

A. The hunters
B. The mother bear
C. The goddess Aphrodite

4. Why did Hippomenes roll the apples in her path?

A. So she would stop to pick them up
B. So she would run faster
C. So the crowd could see them

5. Atalanta soon caught up. What does "caught up" mean?

A. Fell down
B. Got back to the boy
C. Went home

6. What does the story show about Hippomenes?

A. He ran faster than Atalanta
B. He was afraid of the race
C. He won with a clever plan, not with speed

Words to know

goddess: a woman god
amazed: very surprised
track: race path
kindly: gently

Answer key: Atalanta and the Three Apples

1. B. A mother bear
2. A. If you beat me in a race, we will be friends
3. C. The goddess Aphrodite
4. A. So she would stop to pick them up
5. B. Got back to the boy
6. C. He won with a clever plan, not with speed