Name: _____ Date: _____

The Giants' Contests

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 318 words

Thor was the strongest of the gods. He believed no giant could ever defeat him. One morning he went to the giants' land.

His friend Loki, a trickster, came too. They walked for days across a lonely, empty moor. At last they saw an enormous city of towers.

The giant king smiled at Thor. "I hear you are tremendously strong," he said. "Let us have some contests."

First, he held out a long drinking horn. "Empty it in a single swallow," he said. Thor took an extremely long drink.

Thor's face turned red as he drank. But the horn was hardly any emptier. The giants began to laugh.

Next, the king pointed at a gray cat. "Lift my cat," he said. "Even a small child could manage it."

Thor put his arms under the cat and pushed. The cat went up and up. But only one paw left the floor!

Thor grew furious. "Let any giant wrestle me!" he said. "My old nurse, Elli, will try," said the king.

A bent old woman came forward slowly. Thor gripped her. The more he pushed, the firmer she stood.

At last Thor sank down on one knee. The contest was over. Thor went to bed feeling embarrassed.

At dawn the king walked them to the gate. "Now I will tell you the truth," he said. "It was magic, all of it!"

"The horn ran down to the sea. You drank so deeply that the sea sank. People call that the tide."

"The cat was the great snake that circles the world. You lifted it!" Thor could hardly believe it.

"The old woman was Age. No one beats Age. You lasted against her longer than anyone."

Thor lifted his hammer. But the king and his city had disappeared! Thor stood in a green field, and he laughed.

Thor had not been beaten. Magic had tricked him. He and Loki walked home.

Questions

1. Who walked with Thor?

A. Skrymir
B. Loki
C. Elli

2. What was the big hall they slept in?

A. A glove
B. A boat
C. A cave

3. How much did the cat rise?

A. It flew away
B. It did not move
C. One paw left the floor

4. Why was the horn hard to empty?

A. It was made of iron
B. Thor was not thirsty
C. It was joined to the sea

5. In this story, what does "contest" mean?

A. A kind of hall
B. A game to see who is best
C. A long walk

6. What did the king show Thor at the end?

A. He was fooled by magic, not beaten
B. He was weak
C. He was lost

Words to know

trickster: a prankster
contest: a test of skill
wrestle: fight by holding
magic: a spell

Answer key: The Giants' Contests

1. B. Loki
2. A. A glove
3. C. One paw left the floor
4. C. It was joined to the sea
5. B. A game to see who is best
6. A. He was fooled by magic, not beaten