Name: _____ Date: _____

The Gods Grow Old

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 341 words

In Asgard lived a goddess named Idun. She looked after a box of golden apples. They were a secret of the gods.

When a god felt tired or old, he ate one. At once he felt young and fit.

No one else had apples like these. A god without them would grow weak.

One day, a giant named Thjasse caught Loki. The giant wore an eagle's feathers.

"Bring me Idun and her apples," said the giant. "Then I will let you go." Loki was afraid, so he promised.

Loki said to Idun, "I found some wonderful apples. Bring yours, and we will compare."

Idun trusted Loki, as everyone did. She took her box and followed him into the trees.

Then the giant dived down in his eagle coat. He took Idun and flew away to the cold north.

Back in Asgard, the gods soon felt different. Their hair turned grey. Their backs bent, and their eyes grew dim.

The gods met together. Odin asked, "When did anyone last see Idun?" Everyone looked at Loki.

"Bring her home," said Odin, "or we will be angry." Loki hung his head. He knew it was his fault.

Freyja lent Loki a coat of falcon feathers. Loki put it on. He flew north, over the hills and the waves.

At the giant's lonely house, Idun sat all alone. The giant was out fishing. Loki turned her into a nut and carried her off.

When the giant came home, Idun was gone. He pulled on his eagle coat. He flew after Loki.

A falcon is smaller than an eagle. The giant was catching up! But the old gods saw them coming.

They stood in a long row on the wall. "Fly over our heads!" they shouted to Loki.

Loki swooped over the wall and landed safe. The giant saw all the gods waiting. He turned back to the north.

Loki took off his coat, and there stood Idun. She opened her box, and every god ate an apple. Grey hair turned golden, and tired eyes shone.

Questions

1. What did the golden apples do?

A. Made the gods young and strong
B. Made them sleepy
C. Made them tall

2. How did Loki get Idun to leave Asgard?

A. He said he had found apples to compare
B. He said the giant was coming
C. He gave her a gift

3. Why did the gods grow old?

A. They stayed up late
B. Idun and her apples were gone
C. They lost a hammer

4. What did Loki wear to fly north?

A. A cloak of wool
B. A boat sail
C. A coat of falcon feathers

5. The gods' eyes grew dim. What does dim mean here?

A. Not bright
B. Very big
C. Full of tears

Words to know

goddess: a female god
giant: a huge person
falcon: a fast bird
dim: not bright

Answer key: The Gods Grow Old

1. A. Made the gods young and strong
2. A. He said he had found apples to compare
3. B. Idun and her apples were gone
4. C. A coat of falcon feathers
5. A. Not bright