Name: _____ Date: _____

The Strongest Man in Greece

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 315 words

There was once a Greek named Hercules. Nobody was stronger than he was. He could uproot a tree with his hands.

King Eurystheus was a nervous man. He feared Hercules. So he gave him hard jobs.

Hercules had to clean a stable in a day. It was full of cows. Nobody had cleaned it for thirty years.

Hercules looked at two rivers close by. He did not pick up a shovel. He dug two long ditches.

The rivers rushed through and carried the mess away. By sunset the stable was clean. Hercules was not even dirty!

Next, he had to catch a deer with golden horns. It was faster than a flying arrow. Hercules must not hurt it.

So Hercules did not rush. He followed the deer slowly, all year long. At last it got tired and stopped to drink.

Hercules picked it up gently. He showed it to the king, then let it go. Some jobs need patience.

Then the king wanted three golden apples. They grew in a faraway garden. Only a giant named Atlas could fetch them.

Atlas stood holding up the sky. "I will fetch the apples," he said. "Please hold it till I come back."

Hercules put the sky on his back. Atlas returned with the apples, smiling. "I will take them myself," he said.

"You can stay here," said Atlas. Hercules thought fast. "Of course," he said.

"Just hold the sky while I make a pad." Atlas took it back. Hercules took the apples.

Last, he went under the ground to fetch a dog. It had three heads, and its name was Cerberus. Hercules held it tight but never hurt it.

The king looked at the three heads. Then he hid inside a jar! "Send the dog back!" he called.

Hercules took the dog home. The king gave him no more jobs. Strength and a clever mind had won.

Questions

1. Why did Hercules use the rivers?

A. To wash the stable clean
B. To catch a deer
C. To cool the cows

2. How long did Hercules follow the deer?

A. One day
B. One hour
C. All year

3. What did Atlas hold up?

A. A river
B. The sky
C. A golden deer

4. Why did Hercules say he needed to make a pad?

A. He was cold
B. He wanted Atlas to take the sky back
C. He was hungry

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

A. Being able to wait calmly
B. Running very fast
C. Lifting heavy things

6. What is the story's main idea?

A. Kings are always kind
B. Dogs hate jars
C. Tricks and patience can beat plain strength

Words to know

stable: a barn
patience: calm waiting
arrow: a pointed shot
giant: a huge man

Answer key: The Strongest Man in Greece

1. A. To wash the stable clean
2. C. All year
3. B. The sky
4. B. He wanted Atlas to take the sky back
5. A. Being able to wait calmly
6. C. Tricks and patience can beat plain strength