



ATALANTA

BEGINNING

A girl named Atalanta was the fastest person in Greece, but she was in no hurry to get married. She loved her freedom too much. She loved racing and games and the outdoors. She did not want to change. She wanted things to stay just the way they were.

MIDDLE

One day, a boy named Hippomenes asked for her hand in marriage. Atalanta liked him, but she told him that she would marry him only if he could beat her in a race. She knew that could never happen.

Hippomenes looked for help from the goddess of love, Aphrodite. The goddess gave him three beautiful golden apples from her garden.

“Only with these apples,” she said, “can you win the race.”

“But how?” asked Hippomenes. The goddess told him how.

The next day, Atalanta and Hippomedes met at the starting line. The gong was sounded and Atalanta took off like a cheetah. She was far ahead of Hippomenes, but he was not worried. He took one of the apples from the pocket of his tunic and threw it ahead of her. She saw it rolling and stopped to pick it up.

Hippomenes threw another apple. She stopped and picked it up. He threw the third apple. She stopped, she picked it up, he passed her, and he won.

END

In the end, Atalanta found that marriage did not slow her down at all. She still played games. She could still run fast. And she still held the title of fastest runner.

THE CHARACTERS

Aphrodite (AF-ro-DI-tee)

Atalanta (AT-ah-LANT-ah)

Hippomenese (HIP-om-en-EEZ)