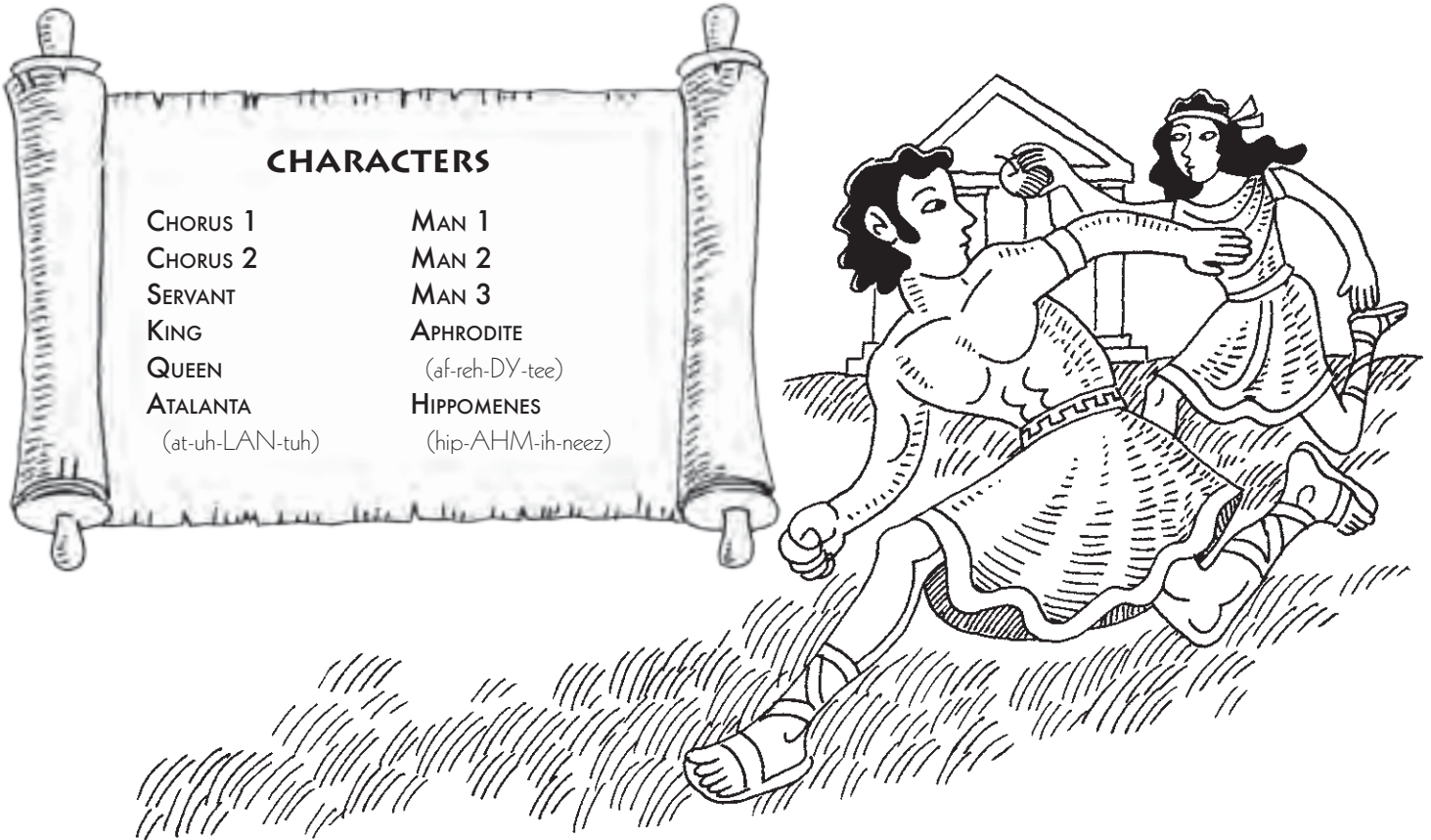


ATALANTA AND THE GREAT RACE



- CHORUS 1:** *(Like a sports announcer)* Ladies and gentlemen, it's time for another great race! Atalanta will race against Hippomenes.
- CHORUS 2:** If Hippomenes wins, he will get to marry Atalanta. And if Atalanta wins, well, that's another ending. And not a pleasant one for Hippomenes, if you know what we mean.
- CHORUS 1:** What? You don't know the story of Atalanta and the great race?
- CHORUS 2:** Well, let's start from the beginning, shall we?
- CHORUS 1:** It all started when a baby was born to the King of Arcadia.

SERVANT: Your highness, the baby has been born.

KING: And is it a son? My greatest wish?

SERVANT: No, your highness. It is a girl child.

KING: A girl? I only want a son. The child must be taken away. Bring me to my wife.

QUEEN: (*Cooing to baby*) Hello, sweet little girl. Hello. I will name you Atalanta.

KING: Give the baby to the servant.

QUEEN: Why?

KING: He must take her away to a mountaintop. Her fate will be up to the gods. A girl can give me nothing. I want a son!

QUEEN: But you can't do that!

KING: I can . . . I will.

CHORUS 2: The servant took the baby away as ordered.

CHORUS 1: But Atalanta did not perish on the mountain.

CHORUS 2: She was found by a mother bear who had two cubs.

CHORUS 1: The bear raised Atalanta as though she too were one of her cubs.

CHORUS 2: Atalanta grew strong in the forest. She learned to climb the tallest trees from her brothers, the cubs.

CHORUS 1: She learned to find food by following the mother bear.

CHORUS 2: But most of all, Atalanta learned to run faster than the wind by racing with the deer of the forest.

ATALANTA: I love my forest home. But I'm curious about the village below. I think I'll take a trip down there.

CHORUS 1: Atalanta entered the village and walked around. Soon the people began to notice her.

MAN 1: Hey, check out the new girl!

MAN 2: She's beautiful!

MAN 3: I'd give anything to marry her!

CHORUS 2: Even your life?

MEN: Huh?

CHORUS 1: You'll see.

CHORUS 2: Word got to the king about the strange new girl.

KING: A girl who lives on the mountain?

SERVANT: Yes. It is said she was raised by a family of bears.

KING: That must be Atalanta, my long-lost daughter! Bring her to me for I must apologize for what I did.

CHORUS 1: The servant brought Atalanta to the king.

ATALANTA: You wanted to see me?

KING: Yes. For you are my daughter, and I beg your forgiveness for leaving you on the mountain.

ATALANTA: Why should I forgive you?

KING: I am old. I am alone now. My poor wife has died, and we had no more children. Please, I beg of you.

ATALANTA: Oh, all right. But you must promise that there will be no hunting in the forest, for the animals are my real family.

KING: Done. Thank you. And now, as princess, you must be wed.

ATALANTA: Wed? I want no man!

KING: But a princess must have a husband!

ATALANTA: I will wed on one condition. Whoever can beat me in a race will become my husband. But whoever loses will die.

KING: Ouch. That's harsh.

ATALANTA: You left me on a mountain when I was a baby, and you're saying I'm harsh?

KING: Touché! (*too-SHAY*)

CHORUS 2: So many men jumped at the chance to race Atalanta, even though they knew the terrible risk.

CHORUS 1: (*As announcer*) And now, the first runner will try to beat Atalanta.

CHORUS 2: On your marks, get set, go!

CHORUS 1: Atalanta wins easily.

MAN 2: (*To Man 1*) Oooh. Tough luck, chum.

CHORUS 2: And now, for the second race. On your marks, get set, go!

CHORUS 1: Again, Atalanta wins without effort.

MAN 3: (*To Man 2*) Bye-bye, now!

CHORUS 2: Next victim . . . er, racer. On your marks, get set, go!

CHORUS 1: Surprise, surprise . . . Atalanta wins again.

MAN 3: Yikes!

ATALANTA: (*To King*) You see, father, I will not marry, for no man can beat me.

CHORUS 2: The King shakes his head sadly as he and Atalanta head back to the palace.

CHORUS 1: Meanwhile, Hippomenes, a handsome mortal, and Aphrodite, the goddess of love, were cooking up a scheme.

HIPPOMENES: Atalanta is so beautiful and smart. I must win her hand. But she is too fast a runner for me to beat.

APHRODITE: Hippomenes, I like you. And I love to see mortals in love and married. I have a plan to make you win. (*Handing three apples to Hippomenes*) Take these golden apples. Three times during the race, throw them in front of Atalanta. She will stop to pick them up, and you will win.

HIPPOMENES: But what if she doesn't pick them up?

APHRODITE: Would the goddess of love steer you wrong? Trust me, she will be unable to resist them!

HIPPOMENES: Thank you, Aphrodite! I'll do it!

CHORUS 2: As Hippomenes gets ready for the race, Atalanta is having second thoughts.

ATALANTA: I won't do it!

KING: But why not? Are you afraid you'll lose?

ATALANTA: No. I am afraid I'll win. And Hippomenes is such a good man. Cute, too.

KING: A deal's a deal. You will race.

CHORUS 1: Hippomenes double checks to make sure the golden apples are hidden in his tunic. He and Atalanta line up to race.

CHORUS 2: On your marks, get set, go!

CHORUS 1: (*As announcer*) The two runners are neck and neck. But look! Atalanta is pulling ahead.

CHORUS 2: (*As announcer*) What's this? Hippomenes has thrown a golden apple in front of Atalanta. She's stopping to pick it up! She looks like she's under a spell!

ATALANTA: Oooh!

CHORUS 1: Hippomenes is speeding ahead!

CHORUS 2: But wait! Here comes Atalanta again. She's in the lead!

CHORUS 1: Another golden apple is thrown.

ATALANTA: (*Like a zombie*) Shiny!

CHORUS 2: And Hippomenes is back in the lead!

ATALANTA: (*Snapping out of the trance*) Those darned apples are so beautiful. I can't resist them! But I must win.

CHORUS 1: Atalanta is in the lead once again. She is sure to win.

HIPPOMENES: (*To Atalanta*) One last apple and the chance to save my life and win your love!

CHORUS 2: There goes another apple. And there goes Atalanta again.

ATALANTA: (*Back in a trance*) Pretty apple!

CHORUS 1: And the winner is . . . Hippomenes!

HIPPOMENES: Atalanta, will you marry me?

ATALANTA: (*Back to normal*) I will.

CHORUS 2: The King places Atalanta's hand in Hippomenes's, and they are wed.

CHORUS 1: So that's where the story ends, right?

CHORUS 2: Wrong! You see, the two lovers forgot to thank Aphrodite for her help. They were turned into lions, but they still lived and loved happily ever after.

**ATALANTA AND
HIPPOMENES:** ROAR!

APHRODITE: (*To audience*) Don't mess with the goddess of love!

THE END

