BRIGHT STORY READERS

OLD GREEK STORIES

No. 8

Grade P

BOOKS IN THIS SERIES

Grade			
P	for ages 5 to 7	35	books
1	,, 6 to 8	69	,,
2	,, 7 to 9	72	,,
3	,, 8 to 10	77	,,
4	,, 9 to 11	44	,,
5	,, 10 to 12	37	,,
6	,, 11 to 14	34	,,
S	for Seniors	30	,,

Additions to the various Grades in preparation

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OLD GREEK STORIES

RE-TOLD BY E. M. WHITAKER

ECHO

I WANT to tell you some very pretty stories, which, I think you will all like to hear.

Now-a-days it is most often only the children who believe in fairies, but, a very long time ago, many of the people who heard these tales really thought that they were true.

We know now that they could not have been; but, all the same, we like very much to hear them. Listen!

There was once upon a time a fairy girl called Echo. She was happy and gay, but she had, alas! one great fault. She talked a very great deal too much.

"Echo must be punished for chattering," said a great queen called Juno, "for she is always talking, and of very foolish things."

So she called Echo to her, and said—

"You have used your voice so very much, that now I will give it a rest; you shall only be able to say the last one or two words of all that you hear."

Echo looked at her in great surprise, and said—

"You hear."

And when the queen said, "Do you understand?" she could only say—

"Understand."

Poor Echo! Away she ran to the

woods, and there she played all by herself.

She hid behind trees, and in quiet places, and was able to say only the last word or two of what she heard others saying.

One day, she saw a lovely boy shooting with his bow and arrow. He looked so happy and strong, that Echo loved him more than anyone she had ever seen before.

She longed, more than for anything else, to play with him, but she hid herself from his sight, for she did not wish him to know that she could not talk like other people.

When he shot his arrow, she peeped from behind the tree trunks; and when he ran along the woodland

paths, she ran after him, but always taking great care that he should not see her.

After a time, the boy began to wonder where his friends had gone, for, in the early part of the day, he had been shooting with them.

So he called in a loud voice—

"Where are you?"

To his great surprise a sweet voice quite near at hand said—

"Are you!"

Then he called again—

"Who is there?"

"Is there!" answered Echo.

The boy could not in the least understand what this meant, so he called again—

"Tell me who you are."



'She peeped from behind the tree"—*Page* 3

"You are!" came back in answer.

Then he peeped behind the tree trunks, and even up into the branches, but *still* he could see no one; so he called—

"Please let me see you."

And answering, "See you!" Echo came out from her hiding place and and stood before him.

Her heart was so full of sadness because she could not tell how much she loved him, that she ran right up to him, and threw her arms around his neck.

Now this boy did not love anyone, as you will hear in the next story; and he was not very kind to Echo. Indeed, he only pushed her

NURUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL

away, and went off to search for his friends.

This made her so sad, that she ran away and hid herself again where no one could find her.

She was always thinking about the lovely boy, and she grew pale and thin, and did not eat enough food to keep her strong.

Indeed after a little while, she did not eat anything at all, and there, all alone, hidden in a lonely part of the wood, poor Echo died!

Her body faded quite away, and only her voice was left. Even now, *that* can still be heard, as I dare say many of you children know.

THE FACE IN THE WATER

I TOLD you in the first story how unkindly poor Echo was treated by the beautiful boy whom she loved.

He must have been very handsome indeed, for there were many other happy fairy girls besides Echo, who loved him very dearly.

But he was not kind or friendly to any of them. Indeed, he was a very selfish boy, and cared only for one person in the whole world.

Do you know who that was? It was himself.

He never thought about Echo, or whether he had made her sad by sending her away and not talking to her. And he treated the other girls in just the same way.

ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL

However pretty or kind they were, he would have nothing to do with them.

He always wandered away by himself, and played with his bow and arrows in the woods.

Often he made them very sad, but that did not seem to trouble him in the least; he was quite happy in his own selfish way.

"I am very tired," he said to himself one day. "I will lie down by this little pond, and rest." He threw himself down on the soft grass which grew by the side of a pool of clear water.

In a little while he sat up, and leaned over the bank. Then his eyes grew big with surprise, and, for a

moment or two, he did not speak. At last he said softly—

"Oh, how beautiful, how beautiful! What a face! How blue the eyes are, how rosy the cheeks, what pretty golden hair, and what a lovely mouth!"

He could not say enough in praise of the face at which he was gazing.

Was it a pond fairy peeping up through the clear green water? No. indeed! the boy was not thinking of anyone else; he had never done that.

He was looking at his own face, and he thought that he had never seen anything in the world half so beautiful.

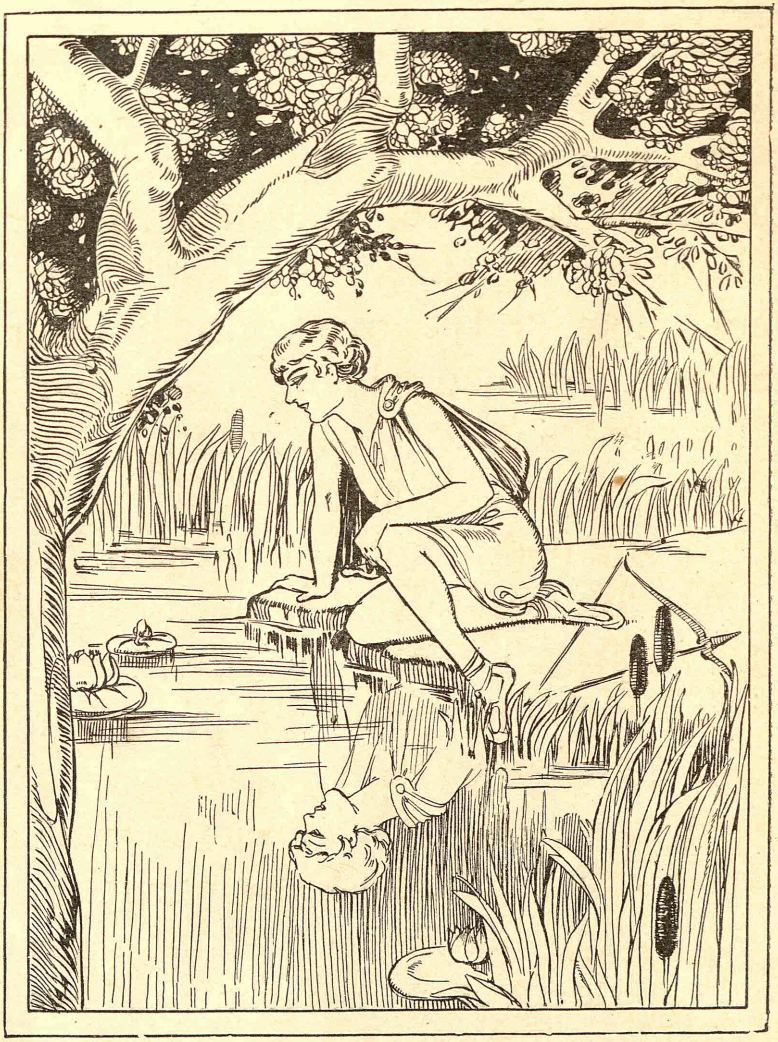
This was the first time that he had ever seen it, for in those days

no one had looking-glasses as we have now.

He was so surprised to find it so beautiful that he could think of nothing else; and, while he knelt there, he fell in love with himself, just as Echo had fallen in love with him, when she first saw him.

His bow and arrows lay by his side, but he did not touch them. He had no longer any wish to run down the paths and find his friends; he just stayed by the pond, gazing, gazing at his own face.

The more he saw it the more he loved it; until, at last, he thought it so beautiful that he could not bear to take his eyes away from it, even for one moment.



'He stayed by the pond, gazing at his own face'—*Page* 11

Although it was almost dark, still he stayed peering into the pond, and the next morning he was *still* there; and the day after that he was there; and day after day he knelt by the pond, until at last, still gazing at his own face, he . . . . died.

If you could walk through that wood until you came to the pond, and if you could find the very place where the boy had knelt, do you know what you would see there?

A lovely flower called Narcissus!

For that was the boy's name, and that is the name of the flower which sprang up on the spot where he died.

THE RACE

"HURRAH! Hurrah!" A very large crowd of people were gathered on either side of a long, smooth strip of grass.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" they shouted, "now the race is going to begin." And they waved their hands at the people who were ready to start.

Surely this was a strange race, and not at all like the kind *we* see, when there is a whole row of little boys or girls waiting to be off.

No, indeed! in this race there were only two people. One was a very lovely lady, and the other a slim, strong young man.

"I do hope *he* will win," said a girl in the crowd, "I *do* hope he

will. Then he can marry her and be happy."

A very funny race indeed! For now the young girl has told you why it was to be run.

This was not the first time that the crowd had gathered together to watch one of these strange races. There had been quite a number of them lately.

"The man whom I marry must be able to beat me in a race," the lady had said. "I will run with anyone; but, if I win, the loser must lose his life also."

And in every race that had taken place, the *lady* had won, and the poor man had been killed.

No wonder that the one who was

running on the day of which I am speaking, had been trying very hard to find some way in which he could win the race.

But he could think of nothing, and, at last, he went to a very clever queen, called Venus, and begged her to help him.

The queen was very good to him, and listened kindly to his story of the strange race in which he was to run.

He told her why it was that he was so very wishful to find some means by which he would be sure to win.

When he came away from her, his face was smiling and happy, and yet he knew that *he* was not the faster runner of the two.

Then why was he happy? You will see as you read the story, for under his cloak he was carrying something that the queen had given him.

"One! Two! Three!" Like a flash the two runners darted away over the smooth grass.

At first the lady did not trouble to run her fastest. She felt so sure that she could win in the end, that she let the man get in front of her.

She smiled and waved her hands to her friends as she passed them.

"*Now!*" said the man to himself, "now I will drop one, and oh! *may* she stop to pick it up!"

And, drawing quickly from under his tunic a sparkling golden apple,

he tossed it on the grass, and raced ahead.

That was his little plan, children, and you will see how it worked, for Queen Venus had given him three golden apples.

It is very easy to drop something on the ground when one is running, but it takes much more time to stoop and pick it up.

The man knew this well, and he knew, too, that ladies love bright pretty things; and a golden apple, lying on the green grass, would be quite enough to make even a racer long to stop and pick it up, wouldn't it?

"Oh dear, oh dear, what a lovely apple! a golden one!" said the lady,

as she ran along. "Oh, I *must* have that; it won't take me a moment to pick it up."

And, when she came to it, she bent down and snatched up the pretty apple.

"Ah, good! good!" said the man, "I have gained well by that." And he ran harder than ever, feeling very happy that he was still further on in front.

Then his hands slipped once more under his tunic, and another golden apple rolled down on to the grass.

"Another!" said the lady, as she came up to it. "Oh, how lovely! I *must* have it!" And again she stooped and picked up the apple.

Again the man gained on her,

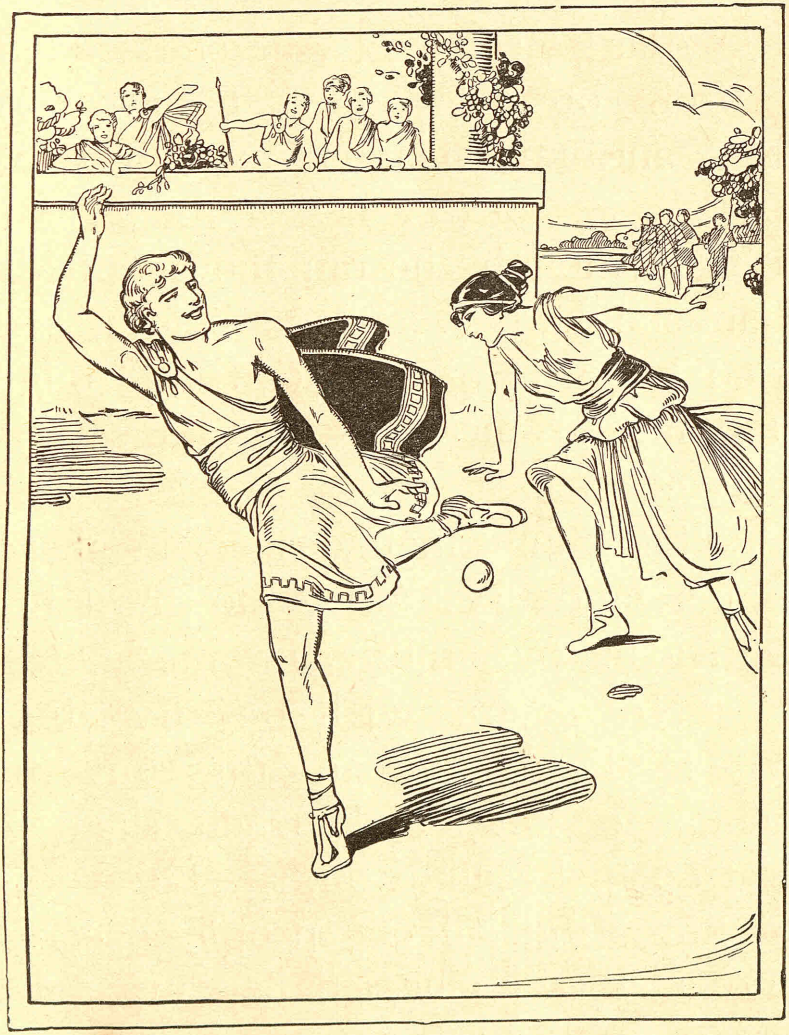
and a happy, hopeful smile stole over his face.

"The last!" he said to himself, a little later, and again a golden apple lay shining in the sun on the bright green grass!

"Oh, dear me!" thought the lady, "there is another. I really *should* like to have it. I wonder if there is time for me to pick it up. I'm afraid there is not, I'm afraid I had better. . . ."

And just as she was thinking that she had better race on, and not stop, she came up to the apple, and this one looked prettier than ever, as it lay sparkling in the sunlight.

Forgetting that she ought not to take it, she stopped, stooped down, and picked it up! Then—



'She bent down and snatched up the pretty apple'—*Page* 19

"Alas!" she cried, as she looked in front of her, "alas! I have lost time, and now I must make up for it."

But, though she ran more quickly than she had ever done before, and tried her very hardest to win, through stopping to pick up the apples she lost the race.

The young man dashed in ahead of her, and then turned to meet her with a happy smiling, face.

"Now you will be my dear wife!" he cried, holding out his hands to her; and, when she saw that he had really won, she ran gladly to him, and all the people cheered and laughed as he led her away.

Perhaps, some day in autumn,

when you are playing in the garden, you may see a lovely large butterfly with a bright band of scarlet across its black wings.

Do you know that it is called Atalanta, because it is so graceful, and flies so very quickly? It was called so after the lady who ran in that race.

QUESTIONS

ECHO

1 Why did the Queen punish Echo ?
2 Where did she go to hide ?
3 What did she do to the boy when he wanted to see her ?
4 Why did she run away and hide herself again ?

THE FACE IN THE WATER

1 What did this beautiful boy do all day ?
2. Where was he when he saw his own face ?
3 Why did he stay there ?
4 Which flower grew beside this pond ?

THE RACE

1 Who were the people running in the race ?
2 To whom did one man go for help ?
3 What did the man drop as he was running ?
4 Why did the lady not win the race ?
5 What is it that has the same name as this lady ?

...VIRUL ISLAM HIGH SCHO...
Date .....
...ENN...

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106	The Adventures of Ulysses
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108	The Story of Theseus
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201	The Story of Beowulf
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203	The Story of Sigurd
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205	Cadmus and Europa
206	In the Long Ago
207	The Story of Persephone
208	The Castle of Make-believe
209	Stories of Olden Times
300	The Golden Apple
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