The Wooden Horse

from

Usborne Greek Myths

for young children



For many days, the Trojans watched from the tops of their city walls as the Greeks collected huge piles of wood on the beach. They sawed, chopped and hammered it, while the Trojans wondered what the Greeks could be making.

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Then, one morning, as the Trojan guards on the walls looked out at dawn, they were amazed to see that the beach was empty. The Greek camp and all the ships pulled up on the beach had **vanished**. Nothing was left but an enormous wooden horse. “They’ve gone. The war is over. We’ve won. We’ve won,” the Trojans shouted. They opened the city gates and rushed down to the beach.

They stared at the wooden horse, walked all around it and tapped it. “Why have the Greeks left this?” one man asked. “It must be a gift for the goddess Athene,” replied another. “We’ll take it into the city.”

3

The Trojans dragged the wooden horse into the city square. That evening, they all had a huge party, with masses of food and wine, to celebrate the end of the war. Then they sang and they danced until, at last, tired out, they went to bed.

4

When the whole city was quiet, the wooden horse creaked and a secret door opened. Inside were ten Greeks. “Don’t make a sound,” whispered Odysseus to his soldiers, and let down a rope. They slid down it, ran silently through the city, knocked out the sleepy guards, and opened the city gates.

5

In the night, the Greek fleet of ships had sailed back to Troy and the army was waiting on the beach. When the gates were opened, they rushed into the city. Before the Trojan men could get out of bed and grab their weapons, the Greeks killed them.

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They rescued Helen, made the women and children their slaves, stole all the treasure and set fire to the city. Odysseus’s plan had worked and the war was over. At last, they could go home, taking Helen with them. The Greeks divided the Trojan’s treasure between them, loaded up their ships, and joyfully rowed away from the ruined city of Troy.

8

Odysseus and his men set sail and, in a great storm which lasted for days, became separated from the other ships. When the sea was calm again, they were alone.

9

They sailed on, stopping at islands where sometimes the crew had to fight battles to escape, and sometimes were welcomed and given food and water. Storms drove their ship across wild seas, and past rocky shores where they couldn’t land. When the wind dropped, they had to row until they were too tired to go on.

10

Unit 6 Assessment

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Part A

What does the word **vanished** mean as it is used in the sentence, “The Greek camp and all the ships pulled up on the beach had vanished.” (RL.3.4)

* A. appeared
* B. sunk
* C. disappeared
* D. moved

Part B

Which statement best supports Part A? (RL.3.1/RL.3.4)

* A. “They opened the city gates…”
* B. “…the Trojans watched from the tops of their city…”
* C. “The slid down it, ran silently through the city…”
* D. “Nothing was left but an enormous wooden horse.”

What is the central message of this myth? (RL.3.2)

* A. Make friends with your enemies.
* B. Just because you want to believe in something, doesn’t mean you shouldn’t examine it carefully.
* C. Don’t take things that don’t belong to you.
* D. It’s okay to accept things that are given to you.

In the myth “The Wooden Horse” the Trojans accepted the horse without considering the enemies’ reasoning for giving the gift. Do you think the Trojans should have accepted the gift or not accepted the gift? Write an essay that explains your opinion. Be sure to use evidence from the passage. (RL.3.1/W.3.1)