

GRADED HOME READING BOOKS

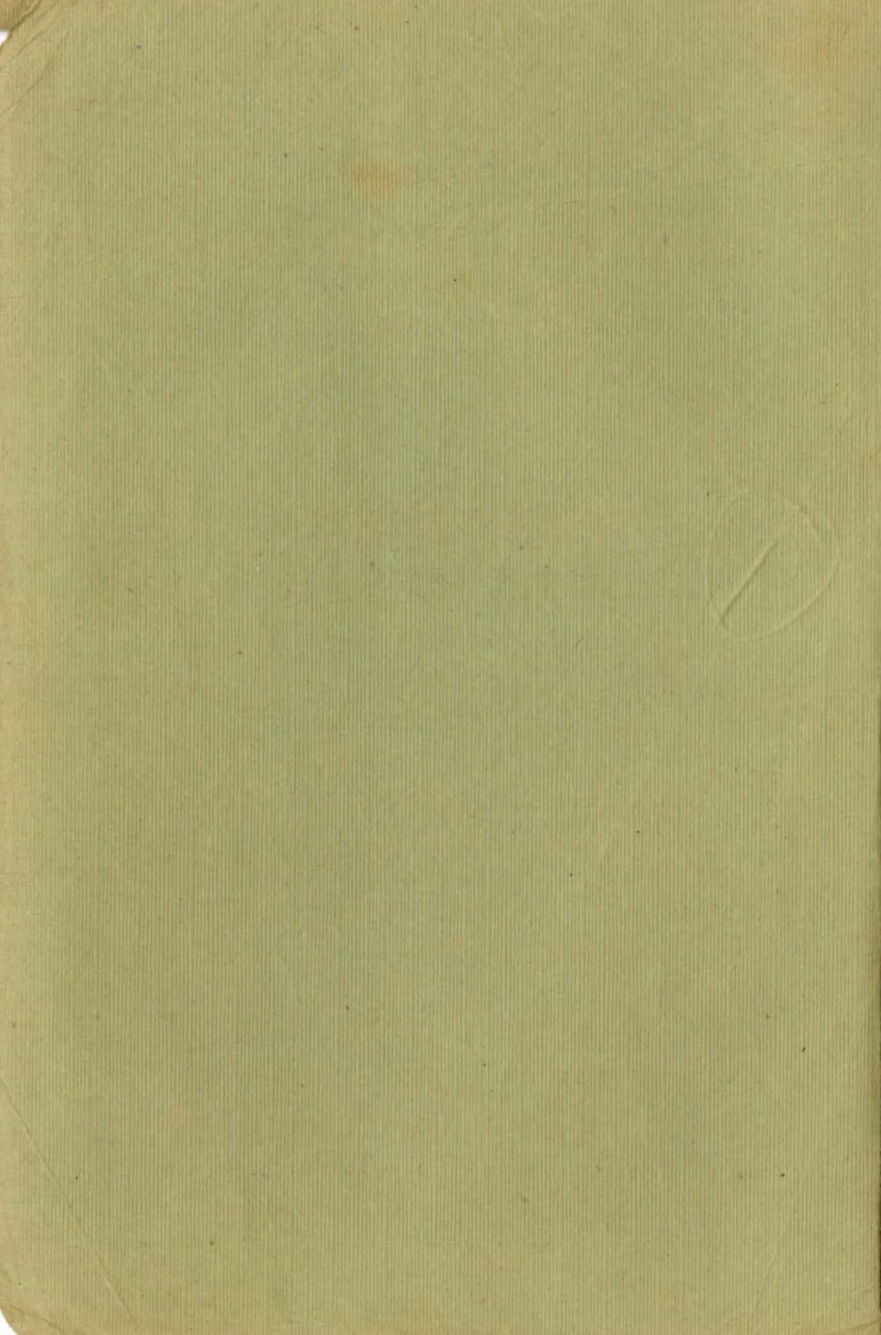
SECOND SERIES

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9 **MARPESSA**

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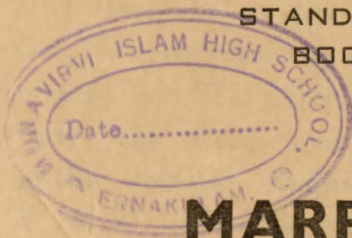
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GRADED HOME READING BOOKS

[SECOND SERIES]

STANDARD VIII

BOOK I



MARPESSA

Edited by

A. SANKARA PILLAI, M. A., M. Ed.

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GRADED
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[SECOND SERIES]

STANDARD VIII
BOOK I

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FOREWORD

'Marpessa' is the first of a series of six Greek stories retold in simple English for the use of Standard VIII pupils as home reading books. Only the words and sentence patterns used in the Detailed English Texts for Standard V to VII are used in this book. Special care has been taken to see that the number of new words introduced is limited to two or three in a page of about two hundred words. Whenever the meaning of a word is not clear from the context, it is given at the foot of the page.

Marpessa is the story of a Greek princess who had to choose between a man and a god and she chose the man because he would honour her and take care of her in her old age.

Self-administering tests are given at the end of every chapter. Readers are requested to test themselves before they proceed to the

next section. A final test covering the whole book is given at the end. Teachers are requested to check up the library work of the pupils by making them write down the answer in their library note books.

4847



MARPESSA

1. THE PRINCESS

In olden days there lived in Greece a king called Evenus. Though he was a strong and brave man, he was very selfish. So the people did not like him. But they were afraid of him very much.

Evenus was a clever and skilled horsemen. He had a wonderful chariot. He had a number of beautiful horses to draw it. They ran like the wind. There were no other horses in Greece which could run so fast and were so fine looking. So Evenus was very proud of his horses.



The king had a beautiful wife whom he loved dearly.

They lived happily for many years. But for a long time they had no children. Then a little daughter was born to them. She was a sweet little baby and they called her Marpessa.

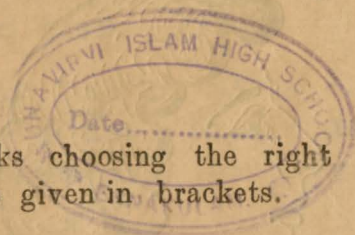
Soon after this the queen died. Evenus was very sad. He did not marry again. Marpessa was his only child and he loved her dearly.

The years went by and Marpessa grew up into a beautiful girl. People said that she was the most beautiful girl in all Greece.

There were many young men who wished to marry the princess. Among them were great kings and heroes. It was said that even the gods loved her and wished to marry her.

But the king was unwilling to give his daughter to anyone.

"Marpessa is my only child," said he to himself. "If she gets married, her husband will take her away from me. Then there will be no one to take care of me in my old age. I cannot even think of leaving my Marpessa."



TEST:- Fill up the blanks choosing the right words from those given in brackets.

1. Evenus was a — king.
(Roman, Greek, English).
2. He had a daughter called —.
(Marissa, Marpessa, Paressa)
3. She was the most beautiful girl in —.
(Greece, Rome, Spain).
4. Many young men wished to marry the —.
(queen, princess, god).
5. Even the — loved her.
(kings, queens, gods).

2. IDAS

At that time there lived in Greece a young man named Idas. He was born in a noble family and was very strong and brave.

Idas was a hero. He was a fearless man who wanted to do noble deeds. So everybody loved him and honoured him.



Idas had heard of Marpessa. He heard people say that she was very beautiful. Then he said to himself, "Every-

body says that Marpessa is the most beautiful girl in all Greece. I wish to make her my wife. I will go to Evenus and ask him to give me his daughter. I hope he will accept me as his son-in-law."

So he went to the city where Evenus lived. "I wish to see your king," said he to the people. "Please take me to him."

They led Idas to the palace where the king lived. Evenus was sitting in the hall when Idas came.

"Come in," said the king when he saw the young man.

Idas went up to the king and said, "O king, I am Idas and I have come to ask for your daughter."

Marpessa saw the young man who wished to make her his wife. She saw that he was very handsome and her friends told her that he was a great hero.

Then she said to herself, "He is certainly a handsome young man and I like him very much. He loves me and will take good care

of me. If he asks me to be his wife, I will surely say 'yes'."

But she knew that her father was selfish. So she feared that he would not allow her to marry him. How then was she to overcome her father's selfishness?

When Marpessa came to the room, Idas saw her. "My friends are right," said he. "Marpessa is the most beautiful girl I have ever seen. I wish to make her my wife. I think she likes me and will agree to be my wife. O gods, help me in this."

But he too knew that the old king was very selfish. So he was afraid that he would not agree to give him his daughter.

Then the king turned to him and said, "O young man, have you come to take away my daughter from me? Know then that I won't give her to anyone. I want her to

be with me in my old age. I won't let her get married and I won't allow any man to come and take her away from me."

When Idas heard this he was very sad. He said to himself, "I love Marpessa, but her father won't give her to me. What shall I do to get her? This is very cruel of her father."

Marpessa was also very unhappy when she heard her father's words. But what could she do against the wish of her powerful father?

"I love Idas," said she to herself, "and wish to become his wife. But my father won't give me to him. I wish Idas would come and carry me off."

She sent one of her friends to Idas with her message of love.

The friend said, "O Idas, Marpessa loves you and wishes to

become your wife. So, think of a plan to carry her off."

TEST:- Fill up the blanks choosing the right words from those given in brackets.

1. Idas was a great ———
(king, hero, god)
 2. He wished to make Marpessa his ———.
(wife, sister, friend)
 3. But Evenus would ——— him his daughter.
(gave, give, not give)
 4. This made Idas very ———
(happy, unhappy)
 5. ——— was also very unhappy.
(Evenus, Marpessa, Idas)
-

3. THE GOD

When Idas heard that Marpessa loved him, he was very happy. He said to himself, "I love Marpessa and she loves me. But her father won't give her to me. So I must carry her off. I will ask her to run away with me in spite of her father's wish to keep her with him."

Idas knew that she would gladly agree to run away with him. Her message had assured him of that.

But he also knew that Evenus would try to stop them. Then what would happen ?

"The king will be angry," he said to himself, "when he learns that Marpessa is gone. He will, no doubt, get into his chariot and pursue us. His are the swiftest

pursue—go after,

horses in the world. So the king will surely overtake us. Then he will kill me and take Marpessa back to the palace. So it is not easy for me to carry her off."

Idas did not know what to do. He came out of the palace and went away sadly.

Marpessa saw him go and felt very sad. All her thoughts were about him.

But Idas did not give up hope. He thought over it for a long time. At last he found out a way of taking the girl away. It was a bold plan.

Now, Idas was a hero and the gods were his friends. One of his best friends was the sea-god. The Greeks called the sea-god, Poseidon.

Poseidon had a wonderful chariot. It was drawn by very swift horses. There was no other horse

which could run as quickly as they. Even the horses of Evenus could not run so fast. Idas knew this.

So he went to Poseidon. The god received him kindly and asked, "What can I do for you? I am ready to help you."

Then Idas said, "Give me your chariot. I want to carry off Marpessa whom I love dearly." He told the God everything about Marpessa and her love for him.

Poseidon loved Idas very much. So he made up his mind to help his friend.

"I shall give you the chariot," said the god. "My horses are so swift that even Evenus cannot overtake you. Go to Marpessa and ask her to get into the chariot. Then drive away quickly and Evenus won't be able to overtake you."

"Thank you, O god," said Idas. "Yours are the swiftest horses in

the world. No one can overtake me when I carry off Marpessa in your chariot."

Then Poseidon ordered his servants to bring the chariot. When it was brought he gave it to Idas.

"Take the chariot," said he, "and carry off the beautiful princess. May God give you joy."

Idas thanked Poseidon again and took leave of him. Then he tied the horses to the chariot and jumped into it. The horses ran fast. They were faster than the wind. Idas was very much pleased when he saw how swift they were.

"Now I am not afraid of Evenus," said he, "and I am sure I can carry off Marpessa easily."

Then he drove the chariot to the city where Evenus lived.

"The king must not see me," said he to himself.

So he did not enter the city by daylight. When night came and all men had gone to sleep he entered the city.

— —

TEST:- Fill up the blanks choosing the right words from those given in brackets.

1. Poseidon was the god of the ———
(sky, sea, lake)
 2. He was the ——— of Idas
(friend, enemy, teacher)
 3. Poseidon had a wonderful ———.
(garden, chariot, bird)
 4. It was drawn by the ——— of horses.
(oldest, slowest, swiftest)
 5. The god gave them to ———.
(Evenus, Idas, Marpess)
 6. Idas made up his mind to ——— off Marpessa.
(marry, carry, kill)
- —

4. IDAS AND MARPESSA

Idas came to the garden outside the king's palace. There were many big trees in it. He got down from the chariot, untied the horses and sat down under the tree.

There was a well nearby. He knew that Marpessa would come to the well everyday to look at her image in the clear water. So he hid himself behind the tree and waited for her there.

Before long Marpessa came to the place. She was walking towards the well. She was alone. Idas saw her and went up to her.

"Dear Marpessa, I love you," said he. "If you come away with me, I shall take you home and make you my wife. We shall live together in happiness."

Marpessa was surprised to see Idas there.

"I wish to come with you," said Marpessa. "But I am afraid to do so. If I run away with you, my father will come and kill you. He has the swiftest horses in the world and you can't escape from him. I don't want you to be killed."

"I am not afraid of your father," said Idas. "I too have swift horses. I have got Poseidon's wonderful chariot. His horses are swifter than those of your father. Come, don't be afraid."

Marpessa was glad when she heard this. She knew well that Poseidon's horses were swifter than her father's.

"I am ready," said she, "take me to your chariot and we shall go away from here right now. There is no time to waste."

Idas took her to the chariot.

"Get into the chariot," said Idas when they came to it.

Marpessa quickly got into the chariot.

"Go," cried Idas to the horses when she had got in.

And the horses began to run.

They ran very fast and in a few minutes they were far away from the palace.

TEST:- Fill up the blanks choosing the right words from those given in brackets.

1. Idas hid himself near the ———.
(temple, market, well)
 2. Marpessa came there to ——— water.
(drink, draw, get)
 3. Then Idas asked Marpessa to ——— away
with him. (go, run, come)
 4. She got into the ——— and they rode off.
(well, charot, horse)
-

5. EVENUS

The people who saw Idas carrying off Marpessa, cried out, "Idas is taking off the princess."

Many men and women came running out to see them. By the time they came out, the chariot was far away, almost out of sight.

"They are gone," said they, "and Evenus can't overtake them. They are far ahead."

The king's men heard the cry and came out to see what it was.

"What are you doing?" they asked.

"She has gone away," they said.

"Who?"

"Marpessa."

"With whom?"

"With Idas."

When they learned that Marpessa had gone off with Idas, they ran to the king and told him about it. Evenus was very angry when he heard the news.

"Bring the chariot," cried he, "I will catch Idas and put him to death."

The king's men tied the horses to the chariot and got it ready for the king.

"Mine are the swiftest horses in Greece," said he, "and it won't be long before Idas is in my hands."

So saying, he drove the chariot as quickly as he could. The horses ran like the wind and before long he saw Idas and Marpessa driving off.

"Stop," cried the old king as loudly as he could, "stop, I say."

But Idas did not turn back or stop.

"My father is coming," said Marpessa. "If he catches us, he will surely kill both of us. He will show no pity for us."

"Don't be afraid," said Idas.

"Though your father's horses are very swift, mine are swifter. He can never overtake us."

All day long Evenus drove after them. But he could not overtake Idas. Poseidon's horses were swifter than his and he could not get near them. At last Idas came to a river. He crossed it safely and drove off with Marpessa.

Before long Evenus also came to the river. By that time Idas had gone so far off that he could not overtake them.

"This is a broad river and it is overflowing" said he, "and my horses are very tired. They can't cross it safely."

So he made up his mind not to go forward.

He turned angrily to his horses and cried, "Up till now I was proud of my horses. I thought they were the swiftest in the world. Now I see that I am wrong. And I know people will laugh at me."

The king did not wish to return home.

"My daughter has run away from me," said he, "and my horses have been beaten by those of Idas. I don't wish to live after this and I don't want any other man to get my horses."

So he drew out his knife and killed both the horses. Then he broke the chariot to pieces and threw the pieces into the river.

The proud king knew that people would laugh at him if he

went back to the palace without his daughter."

"Even the women who go to draw water from the well will laugh at me," said he to himself. "I don't want to go back without my daughter."

So saying he jumped into the river and put an end to his life.

This was the end of king Evenus and his famous horses.

TEST:— Fill up the blanks choosing the right words from those given in brackets:—

1. Evenus was —— when he learned that Idas carried off his daughter.
(sad, angry, happy).
2. He got into his —— and tried to overtake them.
(car, chariot, ship).
3. But his horses were not as —— as those of Idas.
(clever, swift, strong)

4. So he killed his — and broke his chariot.

(men, horses daughter).

5. He jumped into the — and killed himself.

(chariot, river, sea).

6. APOLLO

When Idas saw the king coming after him, he drove off as fast as he could.

After some time he turned round and looked back. He did not see the king's chariot.

"The king has gone back," said he to Marpessa, "and we are safe. No one can take you from me now."

When Idas said this he did not know that he had another enemy

who wanted to take Marpessa from him.

It was the god Apollo.

Apollo had seen Marpessa. She was so beautiful that even the god fell in love with her and wished to make her his wife.

Apollo was the sun-god. He was the son of Zeus and was the most beautiful of all the gods. He was very young and as he was a god, he would never grow old. He was also very strong and brave. He always carried a bow and arrows with him. The bow was made of silver and there was nothing which he could not shoot down. He was also the god of song and when he sang, the whole earth was filled with joy.

When Apollo saw Idas carrying off Marpessa, he said to himself, "I will go and stop Idas. Then I

will take her from him and make her my wife."

Just then Marpessa saw a bright cloud coming towards them.

"Look," cried she pointing to it.
"What a bright cloud!"

Idas looked up and knew that it was a god coming towards them.

"It is a god coming down to the earth," said he.

By this time the cloud came down and stopped in front of them. Then a shining god came out.

"Apollo! The sun-god," said Idas.

The god jumped down from the cloud to stop the chariot.

"Stop," cried he to Idas.

Idas stopped the chariot.

Then Apollo turned to him and said, "I am the god Apollo. I have come to take Marpessa from you.

Give me the girl or come down from the chariot and fight with me."

Now, Idas was a brave hero. He was not afraid of Apollo. "If you want to fight with me, I am ready," said he. "But I won't give Marpessa to you."

So saying he jumped down from the chariot and the brave hero and the great god stood facing each other ready to fight.

TEST:- Fill up the blanks choosing the right words from those given in brackets.

1. Idas thought that no one would take
—— from him.
(the chariot, Marpessa, the horses)
 2. But the Cod —— wished to make her
his wife.
(Zeus, Hermes, Apollo)
 3. He stopped the chariot and asked
Idas to give him the girl or —— with
him.
(worship, fight, go)
 4. Idas would not give up Marpessa and
was ready to fight with ——.
(Evenus, Zeus, Apollo)
-

7. 'LET THE WOMAN CHOOSE'

When people heard that Apollo and Idas were going to fight, they were afraid. Apollo was a great god and no man could stand against him. Idas was a brave hero, and everybody honoured him. So they wanted to stop the fight.

The other gods also heard that Apollo was going to fight with Idas for the hand of Marpessa. They knew that Idas was a great hero and they did not want him to die. So they made up their minds to stop the fight.

Then the gods went to Zeus. Zeus was the king of the gods. All men and all the gods feared and obeyed him. Zeus was the father of Apollo and so they knew that he would obey Zeus.

"O Zeus," said they, "Apollo is about to fight with Idas for the

hand of Marpessa. If they fight, Idas may die. Please put a stop to the fight.

"Apollo and Idas should not fight with each other," said Zeus who honoured Idas. "It is not right that the god should fight against the hero. So I will go and stop the fight."

By this time Apollo and Idas were about to begin the fight.

"Give the girl to me," cried Apollo, "or I'll kill you."

"Come on," said Idas, "and let us fight it out."

With these words they rushed at each other.

Just then Zeus came there.

He saw the angry Apollo fitting an arrow to his bow to shoot down Idas.

The brave Idas was ready to meet the god.

"Zeus!" cried Idas and stood back.

"Father!" cried Apollo as he fell back.

"Stand back," cried Zeus. "Don't move from where you are."

Both Apollo and Idas obeyed him and moved back.

Then Zeus turned to Idas and asked, "Why are you fighting with Apollo?"

"Apollo wants to take Marpessa from me," said Idas. "That is why I fight with him."

Then he turned to Apollo and asked, "Why do you want to fight with Idas?"

"I love Marpessa," said Apollo, "and want to make her my wife."

"Both of you want to marry the same girl," said Zeus, "but she can have only one of you. Let her say whom she will have and

he shall have her. Let the woman choose."

Everybody was pleased when he heard the words of Zeus.

"Zeus is wise," said they, "and he has done the right thing.

"But whom will she choose?" some people asked.

"She will choose the god," said one of them.

"She will chose the hero," said another.

"It won't be easy for her to choose between them," said all of them.

"Let us see what she will do," said they.

All eyes were turned to Marpessa who had to choose between a god and a hero.

TEST:— Fill up the blanks choosing the right words from those given in brackets:—

1. ——— heard that Idas and Apollo were going to fight with each other.
(Evenus, Zeus, Marpessa).
 2. He wanted to put a stop to the ———.
(marriage, fight).
 3. He said that ——— should choose one of them and he would have her.
(Evenus, Marpessa, Apollo).
 4. Everybody felt ——— when Zeus said this.
(happy, unhappy, angry).
-

8. MARPESSA CHOOSES

When Idas heard the words of Zeus he was happy.

"Marpessa loves me," said he to himself, "and I am sure she will choose me."

Apollo was also pleased when he heard the words of Zeus.

"I am a god," said he to himself, "and there is no woman in the world

who does not wish to be my wife."

The gods were happy as Zeus had stopped the fight between the hero and the god.

All eyes were turned to Marpessa when Zeus said, "Marpessa, look at the god and the hero who are ready to fight for your hand. Both of them love you and want to marry you. Choose one of them and you shall be his wife."

Marpessa looked at Apollo who was the son of Zeus. He was the most handsome among the gods. When he sang, even the birds and beasts came to hear and they were filled with joy. He was very young and she knew that he would be always young.

When she looked at Apollo, she saw that the god loved her and wished to make her his wife.

Then she turned to Idas. He was brave and handsome and she knew that he was a true hero. He loved her dearly and had carried her off from her father. He was ready to fight with Apollo for her hand.

"He loves me truly," said she, "and will die for me."

Marpessa stood looking from one to the other. Some people thought that she would marry Apollo. But some thought that Idas would have her.

For a long time Marpessa did not say anything.

Then a new thought came to her.

"The years will go by," said she to herself, "and I shall grow old. But Apollo is a god and he will never become old. Will he love me in my old age? Won't he turn away from me when I am no longer beautiful?"

She thought about it well. "Apollo loves me," said she to herself, "because I am beautiful. When I grow old, I won't be so beautiful and then he won't love me."

"But," said she, "Idas is a man who will grow old like me. When I am old, he too will be old and he won't turn away from me. He loves me dearly now and will love me more when I am old. So I will choose the man and not the god."

Then she turned to Zeus and said, "You have asked me to choose between a god and a man. I have thought about it well and I choose the man. Give me Idas as my husband."

Zeus was pleased when he heard her words. He gave her to Idas and asked Apollo to go away. So the sun-god had to go away without her.

Then Zeus blessed Idas and Marpessa and sent them home.

When they were alone, Idas asked her, "Why did you choose me and not the sun-god?"

Then she told him the reason.

"When I am old," said she, "you will be old too and you will honour me and take good care of me. But Apollo will never grow old and in my old age he will turn away from me and take another wife."

TEST:- Fill up the blanks choosing the right words from those given in brackets.

1. Apollo was a god who would never grow ——. (up, old, tall).
 2. Marpessa thought that the god would turn away from her in her ——. (younger days, old age).
 3. So she chose —— as her husband. (Zeus, Apollo, Idas).
 4. Apollo had to go away —— her. (with, without).
-

FINAL TEST

Complete the following sentences choosing the right words from those given in brackets.

1. Marpessa was the beautiful daughter of king ——. (Zeus, Evenus, Paris).
2. Idas was a great —— who wished to marry her. (god, king, hero)
3. But Evenus would not give him his ——. (sister, friends, daughter).
4. So Idas carried her off in the chariot of ——. (Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon).
5. Evenus tried to catch them but he —— do so. (could, could not, would not).
6. So he jumped into the river and killed—. (Idas, Poseidon, himself).
7. Idas felt that no one could take —— from him. (the chariot, Marpessa, the horses).

8. But —— loved Marpessa and wished to marry her.

(Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon).

- 9 He stopped —— and told him to give Marpessa to him or he would kill him.

(Evenus, Poseidon, Idas).

10. Idas answered that he would —— with him. (talk, fight, live).

11. But the —— did not want Apollo and Idas to fight with each other.

(men, gods, women)

12. So —— ordered them not to fight.

(Poseidon, Zeus, Evenus).

13. He told —— to choose one of them as her husband.

(Apollo, Marpessa, Idas).

14. She chose —— because he would grow old like her and would take care of her in her old age.

(Idas, Apollo).

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This is a good book.



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