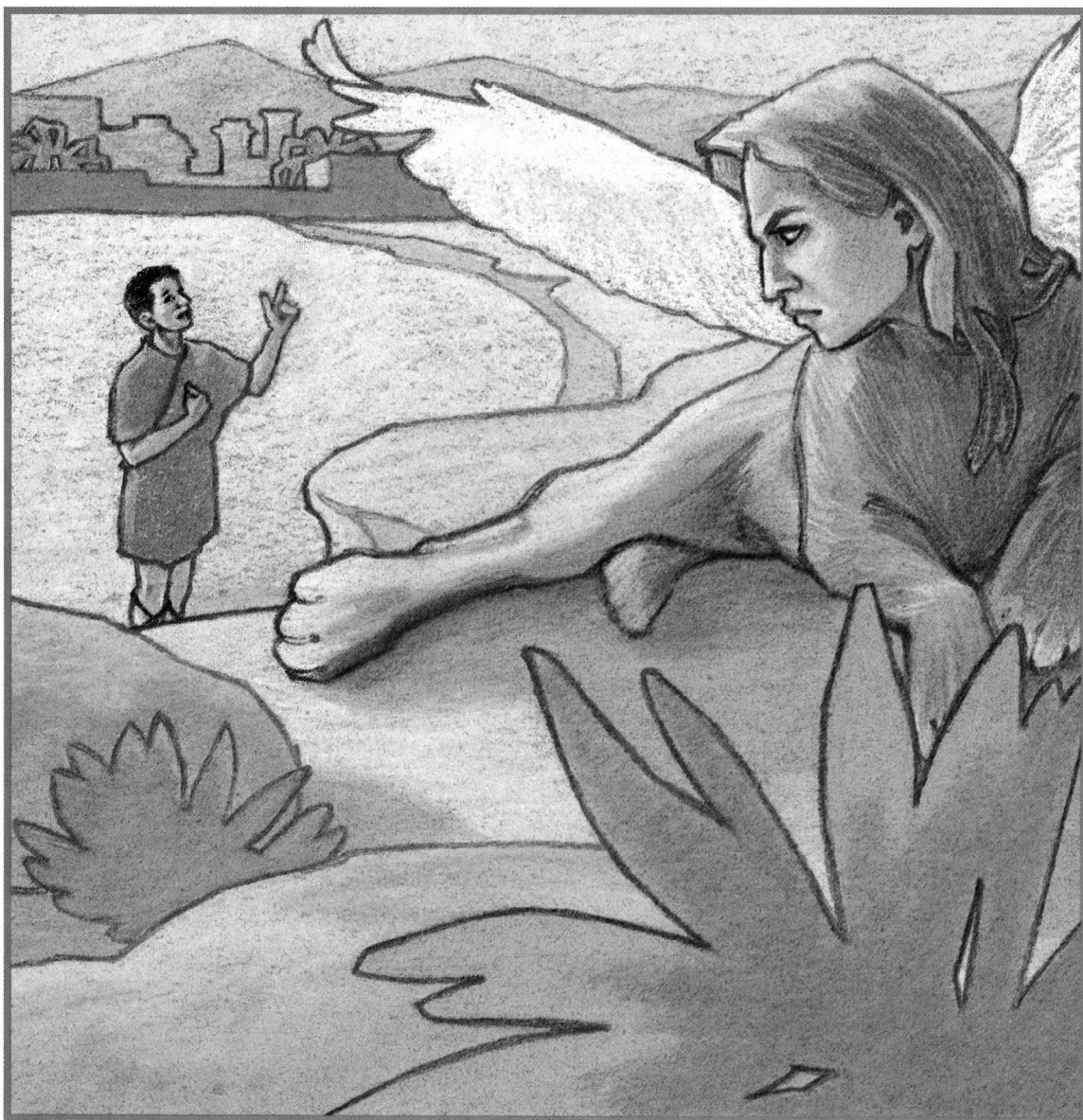


The Riddle of the **MONSTER**

by Allison Junkin



- 1 A long, long time ago there lived a monster. This monster was the Sphinx. She had the head of a woman and the body of a lion. She also had the wings of a large bird.
- 2 The Sphinx lived near an old, old city in Greece. The city was Thebes. The Sphinx sat on a rock just outside the city. When a man passed by her, she would ask him a riddle. The man had to give the right answer, or the Sphinx would eat him up.
- 3 Here is the riddle of the Sphinx: "What walks on four legs in the morning, on two legs at noon, and on three legs in the evening?"
- 4 No one could answer the riddle. Many people lost their lives. Everyone was afraid of the Sphinx. The people of Thebes didn't know what to do.
- 5 Then one day a clever man came by. His name was Oedipus. The Sphinx stopped him. She asked him her riddle: "What walks on four legs in the morning, on two legs at noon, and on three legs in the evening?"
- 6 "That's easy," said Oedipus. "The answer is *man*. A man crawls on all fours when he's a baby. He stands up on two legs when he's grown. And when he's old he leans on a cane—and that's like a third leg."
- 7 This was the right answer. The Sphinx was very angry. She was so angry that she jumped off a cliff and was killed.
- 8 Now it was safe to pass the rock. The people of Thebes were so glad that they made Oedipus their king.

COMPREHENSION

A Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a* or *b*.

- 1 This story tries to make you
a laugh.
b think.
- 2 The Sphinx could *not* have been real because she
a asked Oedipus a riddle.
b was part animal and part woman.
- 3 The people of Thebes were in trouble because
a no one could answer the riddle.
b the monster was always hungry.

- 4 Oedipus must have
a been an intelligent person.
b known that the Sphinx would ask him an easy riddle.
- 5 The people made Oedipus king because he
a was a good person.
b had helped make Thebes safe.

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

B Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 puzzling question (2)
- 2 the middle of the day (3)
- 3 bright; intelligent (5)
- 4 bends over; places his weight on (6)
- 5 go by; walk by (8)

C Read the words you wrote. Which one best fits in each sentence below? Write the word.

- 6 People had to _____ the Sphinx to get into the city.
- 7 The sun was very hot at _____.
- 8 The Sphinx was more _____ than most people.
- 9 When he's tired, Oedipus _____ against a tree to rest.
- 10 Only Oedipus could answer the Sphinx's _____.

THINK ABOUT IT

- D** A story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. A story has a problem. A story is about how someone tries to solve the problem.

Parts of a Story

Beginning tells

- Who
- Where
- The problem

Middle tells

- How someone tries to solve the problem

End tells

- How the problem is solved

Read each sentence. Does it tell about the beginning, the middle, or the end of the story? Write *beginning*, *middle*, or *end*.

- 1 Oedipus answered the Sphinx's riddle.
- 2 The Sphinx sat on a rock outside Thebes.
- 3 Many men tried to answer her riddle.
- 4 Thebes was a city in Greece.
- 5 The Sphinx jumped off a cliff and was killed.

- E** Read the sentences. Look at the pronoun in **bold type**. Which answer tells *what* or *whom* the pronoun stands for? Write *a* or *b*.

- 6 People were afraid of the Sphinx. **She** guarded the road to the city.
a The Sphinx
b The people
- 7 The monster asked many men the riddle. But **they** could not answer it.
a Many men
b The monster
- 8 The Sphinx saw Oedipus go by. She told **him** to stop.
a Oedipus
b The Sphinx
- 9 Oedipus listened to the riddle that the Sphinx asked. Then **he** answered it.
a Oedipus
b The Sphinx
- 10 The people made Oedipus their king. "I will try to serve **you** well," he said.
a Oedipus
b The people