

Delos

by James Baldwin *from Old Greek Stories*

This story from Greek mythology uses many of the Roman names for the gods. Zeus is called Jupiter, Hera is called Juno, and Neptune is the Roman name for Poseidon.

Long before you or I or anybody else can remember, there lived with the Mighty Folk on the mountain top a fair and gentle lady named Leto. So fair and gentle was she that Jupiter loved her and made her his wife. But when Juno, the queen of earth and sky, heard of this, she was very angry; and she drove Leto down from the mountain and bade all things great and small refuse to help her. So Leto fled like a wild deer from land to land and could find no place in which to rest. She could not stop, for then the ground would quake under her feet, and the stones would cry out, "Go on! go on!" and birds and beasts and trees and men would join in the cry; and no one in all the wide land took pity on her.

One day she came to the sea, and as she fled along the beach she lifted up her hands and called aloud to great Neptune to help her. Neptune, the king of the sea, heard her and was kind to her. He sent a huge fish, called a dolphin, to bear her away from the cruel land; and the fish, with Leto sitting on his broad back, swam through the waves to Delos, a little island which lay floating on top of the water like a boat. There the gentle lady found rest and a home; for the place belonged to Neptune, and the words of cruel Juno were not obeyed there. Neptune put four marble pillars under the island so that it should rest firm upon them; and then he chained it fast, with great chains which reached to the bottom of the sea, so that the waves might never move it.

By and by twin babes were born to Leto in Delos. One was a boy whom she called Apollo, the other a girl whom she named Artemis, or Diana. When the news of their birth was carried to Jupiter and the Mighty Folk on the mountain top, all the world was glad. The sun danced on the waters, and singing swans flew seven times round the island of Delos. The moon stooped to kiss the babes in their cradle; and Juno forgot her anger, and bade all things on the earth and in the sky be kind to Leto.

The two children grew very fast. Apollo became tall and strong and graceful; his face was as bright as the sunbeams; and he carried joy and gladness with him wherever he went. Jupiter gave him a pair of swans and a golden chariot, which bore him over sea and land wherever he wanted to go; and he gave him a lyre on which he played the sweetest music that was ever heard, and a silver bow with sharp arrows which never missed the mark. When Apollo went out into the world, and men came to know about him, he was called by some the Bringer of Light, by others the Master of Song, and by still others the Lord of the Silver Bow.

Diana was tall and graceful, too, and very handsome. She liked to wander in the woods with her maids, who were called nymphs; she took kind care of the timid deer and the helpless creatures which live among the trees; and she delighted in hunting wolves and bears and other savage beasts. She was loved and feared in every land, and Jupiter made her the queen of the green woods and the chase.

Questions

1. Describe Delos.
2. What does *bade* mean here: "Juno forgot her anger, and bade all things on the earth and in the sky be kind to Leto"?
3. What is one of the names given to Apollo?
4. Jupiter made Diana the queen of what?