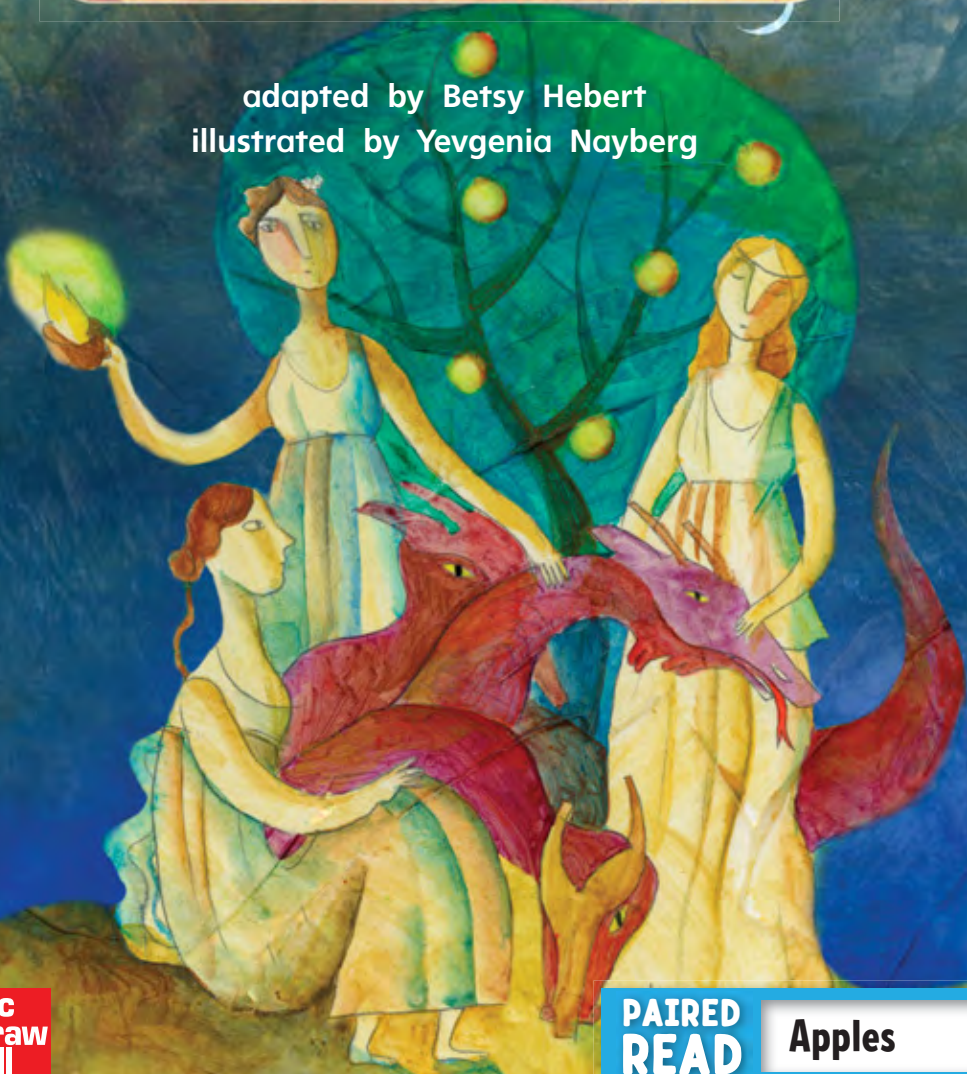


Hercules

and the

Golden Apples

adapted by Betsy Hebert
illustrated by Yevgenia Nayberg



STRATEGIES & SKILLS

Comprehension

Strategy: Reread

Skill: Theme

Phonics

Closed Syllables and

Open Syllables

Vocabulary Strategy

Sentence Clues

Vocabulary

appeared, crops, develop,
edge, golden, rustled,
shining, stages

Content Standards

Science

Life Science

Word count: 751**

**The total word count is based on words in the running text and headings only. Numerals and words in captions, labels, diagrams, charts, and sidebars are not included.



Education

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A



Essential Question

What do myths help us understand?



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CHAPTER
1

Hercules



Long ago in Greece, a powerful hero lived. His name was Hercules, and he was the son of the mighty god Zeus.

Even as a baby, Hercules had great strength. As a man, he was stronger than any other.

But the goddess Hera did not like Hercules. She cursed the strong man and caused him to go crazy. Hercules did terrible things in his madness.





At last, Hercules returned to normal. He saw the damage he had done, and he begged for forgiveness. He asked the gods to let him earn back his honor.

The gods agreed, and sent him to work for a king. The king gave Hercules twelve very difficult tasks to perform. He disliked Hercules, and he wanted the hero to fail.



No one thought Hercules could complete all twelve tasks. They seemed impossible. But Hercules did complete them, one by one. He used all of his strength and many tricks, and he refused to give up.

This is the story of one of those tasks.

Looking



The king was a weak and greedy man. He wanted three of Hera's golden apples, but he knew he could not get them himself. He gave Hercules the task of finding them.

The apples were not just golden in color. They were made of gold, and they had special powers. The tree had been a wedding gift to Hera from Mother Earth.

Hera loved the tree and kept it hidden in a secret garden. Three nymphs, nature spirits, guarded the tree. A dragon with many heads lay below as the leaves rustled.



Only one person on Earth knew where to find the garden. That was Nereus, the old man of the sea. Hercules found the sea god and grabbed him. Nereus did not want to tell where the garden was.

So Hercules squeezed Nereus tighter. Nereus used his own powers. He changed into many different animals and tried to get away. But Hercules held the sea god firmly. Finally, the old man told Hercules what he needed to know.





On his way to the garden, Hercules heard mighty groans. It was the Titan god Prometheus, chained to a rock by Zeus. Every day, an eagle appeared to peck the giant god.

Hercules felt sorry for Prometheus and set him free. To thank Hercules, Prometheus told him not to pick Hera's apples himself. Only a god could touch the apples and live.

CHAPTER
3

Finding



Hercules traveled over land and sea to the edge of the earth. Finally, he came to the secret garden. But how could he pick the apples?

Nearby, Hercules saw the Titan Atlas. This god had been forced by Zeus to hold the world on his shoulders.

Hercules formed a plan to trick Atlas. He offered to hold the world while the god picked three apples.

Atlas quickly agreed, but he feared the dragon. He asked Hercules to kill the beast.



Hercules drew his bow and shot the creature, and then he took the world from Atlas. The nymphs guarding the tree begged and cried, but Atlas picked the shining apples. Then he refused to take the world back from Hercules.



CHAPTER
4

Tricking



But Hercules was ready. "Very well," he said to Atlas. "I will hold the world while you take the apples to the king. But first I need to make a pad for my shoulders. This world is very hard and heavy. Will you hold it while I get ready?"

Atlas agreed. He put down the apples and took the weight of the world again. "Thank you," Hercules said, and he hurried off with the apples.





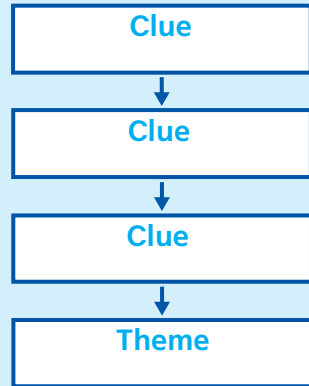
Hercules gave the apples to the king. But the king was afraid of making Hera angry. He gave the apples back to Hercules! The goddess Athena agreed to return the apples to the garden.

And so Hercules completed another task. He was one step closer to gaining forgiveness and honor.

Respond to Reading

Summarize

Use the chart to help you summarize *Hercules and the Golden Apples*.



Text Evidence

1. What kind of fiction story is this?
How do you know? **Genre**
2. What is the author's message about Hercules? **Theme**
3. Which sentence clues helped you figure out the meaning of *tasks* on page 4? **Sentence Clues**
4. Write about why the gods couldn't be trusted. **Write About Reading**

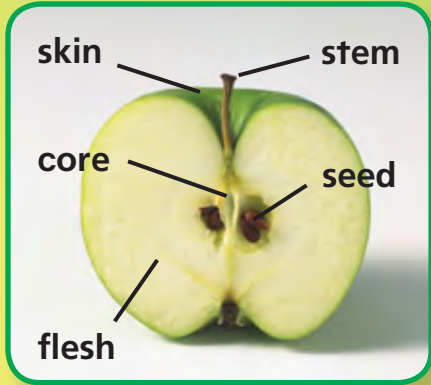
Compare Texts

Read about real apples.

Apples

Apples grow on trees all over the world. Apples can be red, yellow, or green. They can taste sweet or tart.

This tree grows yellow apples called Golden Delicious.



A group of apple trees is called an orchard.

Look at the different parts of an apple.

An apple grows in stages. First, a bud forms on the tree. In spring, the bud blooms into a flower. Part of the flower will develop and grow into an apple.

Most apples are grown from a process called grafting. A farmer follows steps:

1. Cut a bud from a tree.
2. Make a cut in the bark of another tree.
3. Peel back the bark.
4. Put the bud's stem under the bark.
5. Tape the bud and bark together.





Apples are a healthy snack.

People have eaten apples since prehistoric times. Apples probably grew first in southwest Asia. Colonists brought apples with them to America. They are one of the world's favorite crops.

Today, China grows the most apples, and the United States is the second-biggest apple grower. It grows about 5 million tons of apples per year.



Make Connections

What can we learn from the myth of Hercules? **Essential Question**

How are real apples different from Hera's apples? **Text to Text**

Focus on Genre

Myth A myth is a type of folktale. It might tell a story about gods or goddesses. It might tell how something came to be.

What to Look for In *Hercules and the Golden Apples*, Hercules is god-like because he is so strong. Atlas holds the whole world on his shoulders. Hera's apple tree grows apples that are made of gold.

Your Turn

Plan your own myth about a god or goddess. Give your character a name and tell what powers he or she has. Write where the story takes place, and what your character needs to find or do.

Thinkmark

Setting

Where does *Hercules and the Golden Apples* take place?

When does it take place?

Characters

Who are the main characters in *Hercules and the Golden Apples*?

Which characters help Hercules? How?

Sequence of Events

What happened at the **beginning**, **middle**, and **end** of *Hercules and the Golden Apples*?

Make Connections

How is Hercules like a real person?

How is he different?