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The Year Money Grew on Trees

Pat Frade

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Hawkins, Aaron. *The Year Money Grew On Trees*. Illustrated by Aaron Hawkins. Houghton Mifflin Books, 2010. ISBN 9780547279770. \$16.00. 293p.

Reviewer: Pat Frade

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fiction; Fiction;

Subject: Apple Growers--Juvenile Fiction; Farm Life--New Mexico--Juvenile Fiction;

Moneymaking Projects--Juvenile Fiction; Books--Reviews;

Jackson is about to turn 14 and his father has summer plans for him—working at the scrap yard with the owner’s son Skeeter, who is the school’s bully. Before they could talk to the scrap yard’s owner, however, Jackson’s next door neighbor, Mrs. Nelson, approaches him with another option—taking care of her neglected, over-grown, three hundred year-old apple orchard. Jackson does not want to spend his summer next to Skeeter, so he opts for the apple orchard. Jackson has done projects for Mrs. Nelson before, always thinking that she would pay him, which she never did. So this time Jackson asks Mrs. Nelson if they could get a legal contract. Mrs. Nelson agrees and they pay a visit to her lawyer. The agreement states that if Jackson gives Mrs. Nelson the first \$8000 of proceeds, she would give him the deed to the orchard. Jackson has his work cut out for him. He asks his sisters and his cousins if they would be willing to work with him in the orchard with the promise of money at the end of the season. None of them know what they are in for-- the pruning and weeding, the fertilizing, the irrigating, not to mention the harvesting. The children spend many long days working in the orchard. They have to work faster when it is time to harvest the apples, and sell them at a homemade stand on the road.

This delightful story teaches many lessons to young adults—hard work, enduring to the end, challenges, and team work.

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