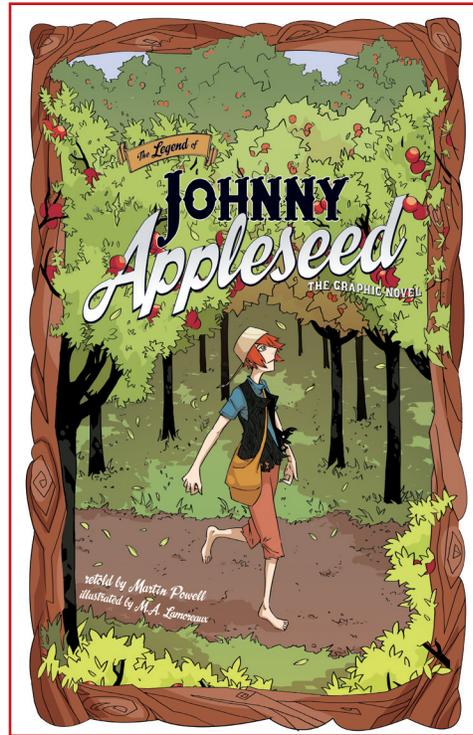




READER'S THEATER



The Legend of Johnny Appleseed retold by Martin Powell

Characters:

- Narrator** - reads above grade level
- Dad** - reads at grade level
- Mom** - struggling reader
- Johnny Appleseed** - reads slightly below grade level
- Stranger 1, 2, 3** - reads above grade level
- Soldier** - reads slightly above grade level
- Boy** - reads below grade level

Genre: Tall Tale

Ages: 8-13

The Legend of Johnny Appleseed page 1

Narrator: Long ago in Massachusetts, a legend was born.

Dad: What should we name our beautiful baby boy?

Mom: We'll call him John.

Dad: John Chapman. That's a good strong name.

Mom: Isn't he cuter than an apple seed?

Dad: He certainly is, my dear. And sweeter than its fruit.

Narrator: But life for little John Chapman would not always be so sweet. A few years later, his mother died. She was buried under a beautiful apple tree.

Johnny Appleseed: These apple blossoms sure are pretty, Dad.

Dad: They were your mother's favorite.

Narrator: John's father taught his son to remember his mother and celebrate nature's gifts. Even as a young man, John knew what he wanted to do with his life.

Johnny Appleseed: I'll plant apple trees everywhere I go!

Narrator: Johnny traveled the land, happily planting his seeds wherever he went. Soon, it seemed almost everyone knew his name. John had a special knack for making friends wherever he went. Children especially loved his funny stories.

Johnny Appleseed: . . . and I woke up with a whole bird's nest in my hair!

Narrator: John's kind heart became as well-known as his tall tales.

Stranger 1: Sorry, but we don't have any money for apple trees.

Johnny Appleseed: Nature gave me the seeds for free, Mr. Hackley. Here you go, Hannah and Jack! New trees for both of you!

The Legend of Johnny Appleseed page 2

Narrator: As Johnny Appleseed traveled, he saw pioneers and American Indians fighting over land. Johnny didn't understand why everyone couldn't get along. He helped anyone who needed it.

Johnny Appleseed: There! You should be better in no time!

Soldier: We saw you helping our enemies, Johnny. Why would you do such a thing?

Johnny Appleseed: They are suffering, just like you. Why wouldn't I help them?

Narrator: Johnny Appleseed never had a real home of his own. He spent his life traveling the country, planting seeds, and helping people in need. One day, Johnny met a young man.

Johnny Appleseed: That's a beautiful horse you have there.

Boy: He's very old, sir. He can't pull the plow anymore, so we can't afford to keep him. Nobody wants to buy an old horse. I don't know what to do.

Johnny Appleseed: Here, young man. I'll happily buy him from you.

Boy: Thank you, Johnny Appleseed!

Narrator: Johnny walked off with his new horse, chatting as he went.

Johnny Appleseed: Some people insist on paying me for my seeds and apple trees, even though I don't ask for money. I've saved all that money I didn't need. I bought this big stretch of land just for my four-legged friends! Welcome home! Let me introduce you to all the others.

Narrator: Johnny had become a real, living legend. People loved sharing the stories they had heard about Johnny Appleseed — and each time the tales were told, they grew bigger and taller!

Stranger 2: I heard that one time, Johnny woke up from a nap and found a rattlesnake with his fangs stuck in his heel! Johnny never wore shoes, so his feet were tough as leather. The snake couldn't hurt him even a little bit. They say that he tamed the snake and taught it to eat grapes!

The Legend of Johnny Appleseed page 3

Stranger 3: It's been said that some hunters once ran to rescue a man being attacked by grizzly bears, but Johnny Appleseed was simply wrestling with grizzlies.

Johnny Appleseed: Haha! Okay, okay, you win! Let me up!

Narrator: Even the most dangerous of creatures were friends with Johnny Appleseed. Then there was the story about Johnny's big fish . . .

To learn what happens with this tale, and the rest of Johnny's adventures, read *The Legend of Johnny Appleseed*, a graphic tall tale from Stone Arch Books.