

***Apples to Oregon* by Deborah Hopkinson**

Setting

Where does the story take place? In what country or region does the story happen? Does the story happen in one spot, or does the action unfold across a wide area?

Among what kinds of people is the story set? What is their economic class? How do they live? Are they hopeful? Downtrodden? Depressed? Why?

When does the story happen?

In what season does the story take place?

In what time of life for the main characters do the events occur? Are they children? Are they just passing into adulthood? Are they already grownups? Does setting the story in this particular time of the characters' lives make the story better?

In what intellectual period is the story set? What ideas were prevalent during the period of the story? Does the author deal with these ideas through his characters?

Characters

Who is the story about?

Is the character sane or crazy?

Is the character kind, gentle, stern, emotional, harsh, logical, rational, and compassionate or exacting . . . ? Make up a list of adjectives that describe the protagonist. What words or actions on the protagonist's part make you choose the adjectives you do?

What does the character do for a living? Is he a professional, or a blue-collar worker? Is he wealthy or impoverished? Is he content with his lot in life, or does he long to improve himself?

What do other characters think or say about him?

Is the character a member of any particular religious or social group? If so, what do you know about this group? What motivates this group? What do its members feel to be important?

What does the protagonist think is the most important thing in life? How do you know this? Does the protagonist say this out loud, or do his thoughts and actions give him away?

Who else is the story about?

Is there a single character (or a group of characters) that opposes the protagonist in the story?

Conflict

What does the protagonist want?

Does he attempt to overcome something—a physical impediment, or an emotional handicap? Does he strive to overcome a physical obstacle outside of himself (An ocean, for example, like Christopher Columbus, or nature generally, like a Jack London character)?

Is the conflict an external one, having to do with circumstances in the protagonist's physical world, or is it an internal conflict, taking place in his mind and emotions?

Why can't the protagonists have what they want? Do physical or geographical impediments stand in their way?

Are the protagonists racing against time?

Is the conflict a man v. man struggle?

Plot

What happens in the story?

What events form the climax or highest point of tension in the story?

Does the protagonist solve his own dilemma? Is it solved by some external source or third party? Is he helpless in the end to achieve his goal (like Frodo in Lord of the Rings), or does he triumph by virtue of his own efforts (Odysseus in The Odyssey)?

How does the story end? How are the loose ends tied up? How does the solution of the conflict affect each individual character?

Does the ending or resolution of the story make any kind of judgments?

Theme

What is the main idea of the story?

Literary Devices

Does the author use the sounds of our language to create interest in his story?

Alliteration

Does the author use descriptions and comparisons to create pictures in the reader's mind? (Imagery)

Simile

Personification

Metaphor

Allusions

Context

Who is the author?

Apples to Oregon by Deborah Hopkinson: Story Chart

