

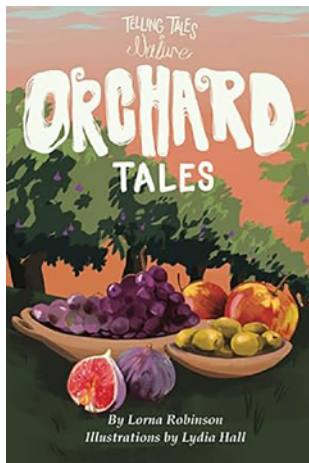
Book Review

Telling Tales in Nature: Orchard Tales

Robinson (L.) Pp. 60, Independently published, 2023. Paper £6.99. ISBN: 979-8852246370.

Alberto Regagliolo

Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, Warsaw, Poland
a.regagliolo@uksw.edu.pl



Written by Lorna Robinson, *Telling Tales in Nature: Orchard Tales* is part of her *Telling Tales in Nature* series, which also includes *Telling Tales in Nature: Underworld Tales* (2022) and *Telling Tales in Nature: Forest Tales* (2022).

The book presents four myths related to four different trees, narrated in the first person by the hamadryads themselves. As Robinson describes them, these hamadryads are nymphs that live connected to their trees. These are the last four myths,

with the first four having been recounted in *Telling Tales in Nature: Forest Tales*.

As with *Telling Tales in Nature: Forest Tales*, the book opens with an introduction that informs the reader about its structure and also explains its purpose. The four trees introduced here are: the apple

tree, the fig tree, the olive tree and the grape tree. For each tree, Robinson provides a description to familiarise the reader with the use of the various fruits under consideration. Each description spans two pages and proves to be genuinely useful, as well as interesting, offering insights for further research on the use of the fruit.

The central part of the book consists of myths related to the trees. Here, the reader is taken on a marvellous journey, brilliantly narrated through a fluid and rich writing style, creating suspense about how the retold myth will conclude. In *Apple Tree's Tale*, for instance, the apple is taken from the tree and given to the most beautiful goddess, according to Paris, as in the Greek legend of Troy.

At the end of each tale, Robinson presents Notes containing bibliographic references (sources) used, including explanations about the myth's rewriting.

The book and the series as a whole are materials suitable for classroom use, both with primary school children, secondary schools, and even adults in a university setting. I believe the book is also an excellent resource for creative writing courses, as well as for those interested in or studying botany, biology and the food sciences, with an interest in the world of myth and the use of fruits and fruit trees.

The reading is smooth, aided by the text's line spacing and font, which facilitate readability thanks to the spacing between paragraphs.

Each chapter features vibrant and beautiful illustrations of each fruit and its tree, along with a key scene from the myth being told. These illustrations, created by Lydia Hall, perfectly complement the text and guide the reader into the world of myth.

The book transports the reader into the realm of myth, guiding them through the illustrations and prompting reflection on the various perspectives of the characters. It can also evoke emotions, such as how, in the final myth (the story of Dionysus and Ampelos) the latter was transformed into a grapevine after his death. Wine can, 'if only for a while', make one forget the pain of losing a loved one.

doi: 10.1017/S2058631024000631