



The Year Money Grew on Trees

By Aaron Hawkins



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An unusual and captivating novel brimming with a sense of can-do and earned independence.

With frostbitten fingers, sleepless nights, and sore muscles, fourteen-year-old Jackson Jones and his posse of cousins discover the lost art of winging it when they take over an orchard of three hundred wild apple trees. They know nothing about pruning or irrigation or pest control, but if they are to avoid losing the \$8,000 they owe on an unfair contract with their neighbor, Mrs. Nelson, they just have to figure it out.



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The Year Money Grew on Trees By Aaron Hawkins Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #187663 in Books
- Brand: Sandpiper
- Published on: 2011-11-15
- Released on: 2011-11-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.63" h x .78" w x 5.13" l, .60 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 5-8—An old-fashioned quality permeates this story of a 14-year-old who is hornswoggled by an elderly neighbor in the early 1980s near Farmington, NM. Lured by the promise of gaining ownership of her apple orchard, Jackson agrees to conniving Mrs. Nelson's proposal that if he does all the work and gives her the first \$8,000 of proceeds, she will give him the deed to the land. The contract is signed at a lawyer's office. Jackson is as wily as his neighbor, and he manages to gain a work crew of his sisters and cousins, overcomes his mother's resistance, and is amazingly resourceful at handling each obstacle as it appears. The story will be especially appealing to those hoping to promote a solid work ethic and an economical attitude that the recent Wall Street woes have brought back to the fore. The focus on the tremendous amount of labor involved and the battle of man versus nature gradually heightens the suspense, as the possibility of success seems doomed. Closest to Gary Paulsen's *Lawn Boy* (Delacorte, 2007) in its exploration of work, this novel is much more realistic and less tinged with fantasy elements. The pride Jackson feels in his ability to meet the challenges exemplifies the traditional values that permeate each page, and yet he is no hero; he is clearly in over his head and knows it, which rescues the story from being preachy or priggishly pompous. This is a book that is cutting-edge 2010 in its appeal to 19th-century values. *Carol A. Edwards, Denver Public Library, CO*

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From [Booklist](#)

Most fiction is about how to do something intellectual, like solve a mystery, or emotional, like fall in love. This, however, is about how 14-year-old Jackson Jones does something extremely practical: grow apples. At first it seems to be a get-rich-quick scheme. Mrs. Nelson's son doesn't want anything to do with his late father's orchard, and Mrs. Nelson promises Jackson the orchard itself if he can raise and sell \$8,000 worth of fruit. Although he enlists his sisters and cousins, the amount of work that comes with the orchard—pruning, fertilizing, picking, selling—is enormous. Can he pull it off? And if he does, will Mrs. Nelson stick to her part of the bargain? There's a lot here about farming (complete with fine spot illustrations of equipment and irrigation systems) that not every reader will enjoy. But there's also a strong sense of the satisfaction that comes with ambition, hard work, and finally success that will pull many kids along. Between the math, the growing, and the people skills, this is a unique book, and one where readers will learn something right along with Jackson. Grades 5-8. --Ilene Cooper

Review

"Set in New Mexico in the early 1980s, Hawkins's children's book debut is rich with details that feel drawn from memory (an engineering professor who worked on his family's orchard as a child, Hawkins also contributes schematic line drawings), and Jackson's narration sparkles. His hard work, setbacks, and motivations make this a highly relatable adventure in entrepreneurship."--*Publishers Weekly*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lisa Marsh:

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Jill Williams:

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