



THE GOLDEN FLOWER

A TAINO MYTH FROM
PUERTO RICO

By Nina Jaffe

Illustrated by Enrique O. Sánchez



Essential Question

What do myths help us understand?

Read a myth about how a golden flower grows.



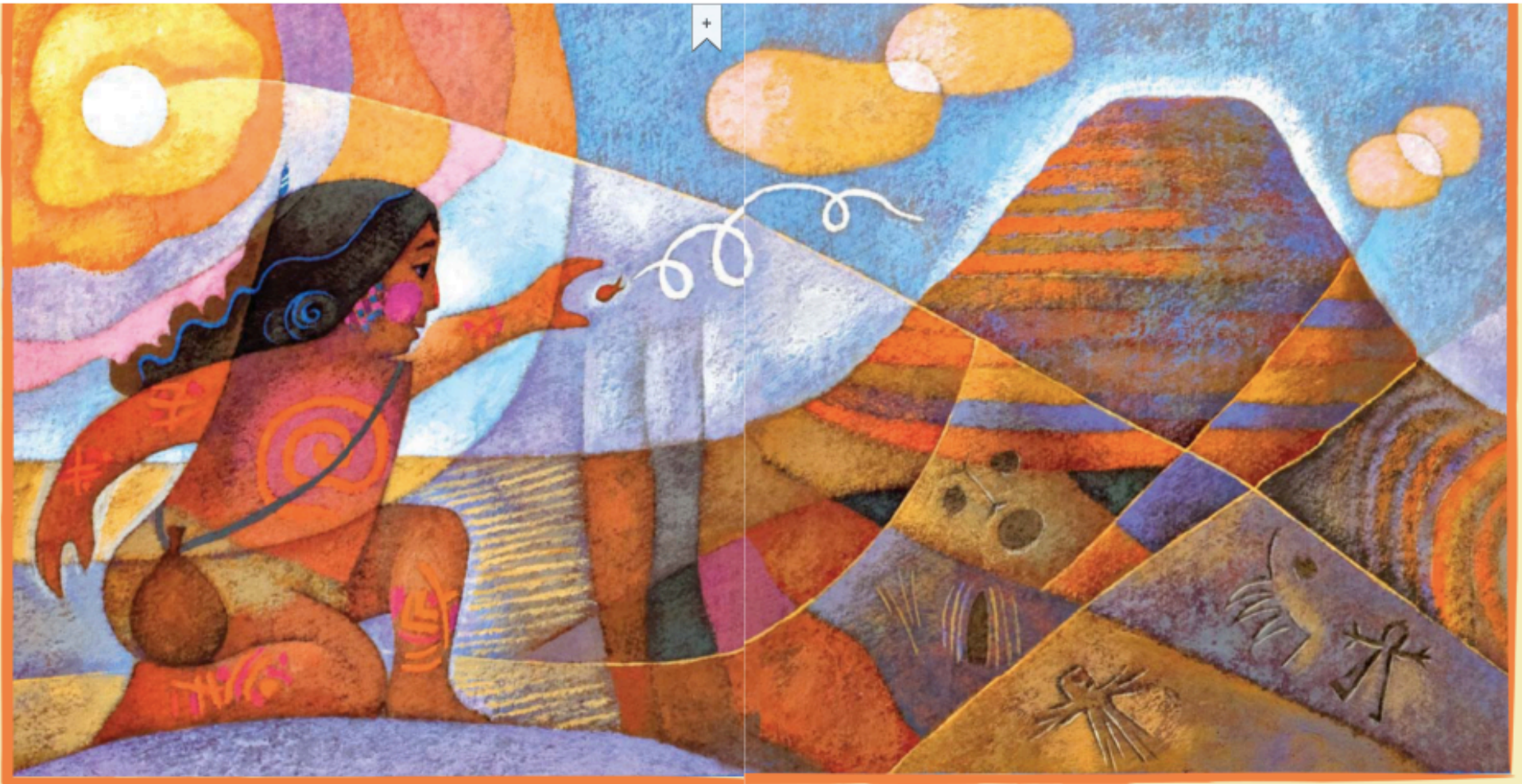
Go Digital!



In the beginning of the world, there was no water anywhere on earth. There was only a tall mountain that stood alone on a wide desert plain.



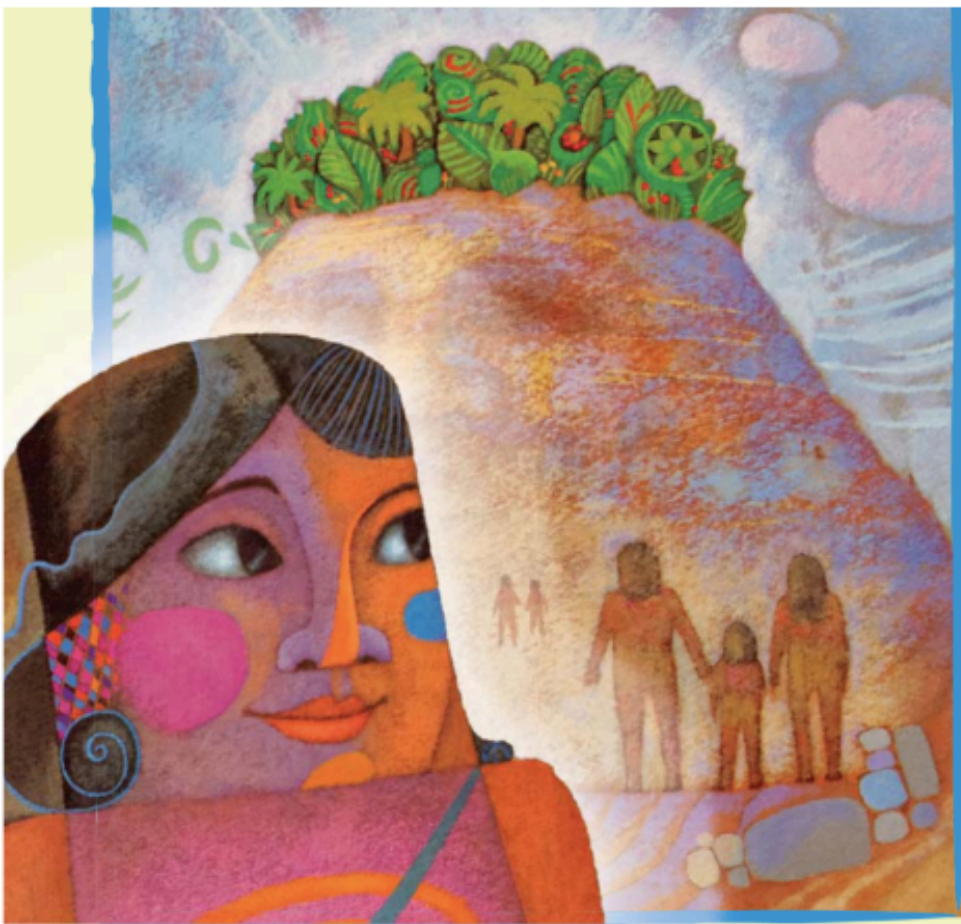
There were no green plants. There were no flowers. All the people lived on top of this mountain.



One day, a child went walking on the dry land below the mountain. As he bent down over the ground looking for food, something floated by on the wind. He reached out and caught it in his hand. It was a seed. A small, brown seed. He put the seed into his pouch.



The next day, he went walking, and again found something as it floated by on the wind. It was another seed. Day by day, he gathered these seeds until his pouch was full. It could not hold anymore. And the child said to himself, "I will plant these seeds at the top of our mountain."



He planted the seeds and waited. One morning, a tiny green leaf appeared. The child watched. From under the ground, a forest began to grow high on top of the mountain.

All the people came to see. It was a forest of many-colored flowers, a magic garden of green leaves and thick branches. The child was happy.



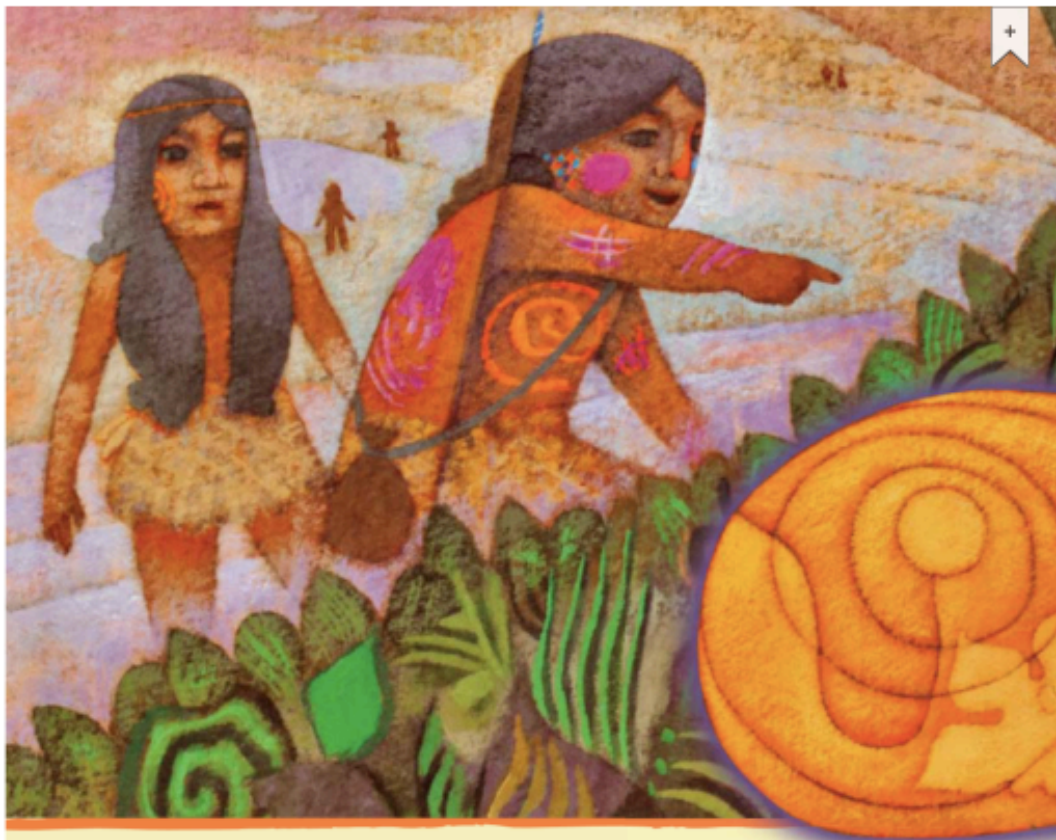
In the middle of the forest, at the foot of the tallest tree, there grew a vine that wrapped itself around the tree.

And from that vine there grew a flower more beautiful than all the rest. A bright flower with **golden** petals.



STOP AND CHECK

Reread What happened after the child planted the seeds? Reread to check your understanding.



And from that flower, something new **appeared** in the forest. It looked like a little ball. “Look!” cried the child. “Something is growing out of the flower!”

As the people gathered around to watch, the ball grew larger and larger, until it became a great yellow globe that shone like the sun. Even as they walked on the dry land far below, people could see it **shining** on top of the mountain.



One woman said, “If you put your ear next to the ball, you can hear strange noises coming from inside.” The people listened. Strange sounds and murmuring could be heard. But nobody knew what was hidden inside.

The people were afraid. After that, they all stayed away. Even the child stayed away.

