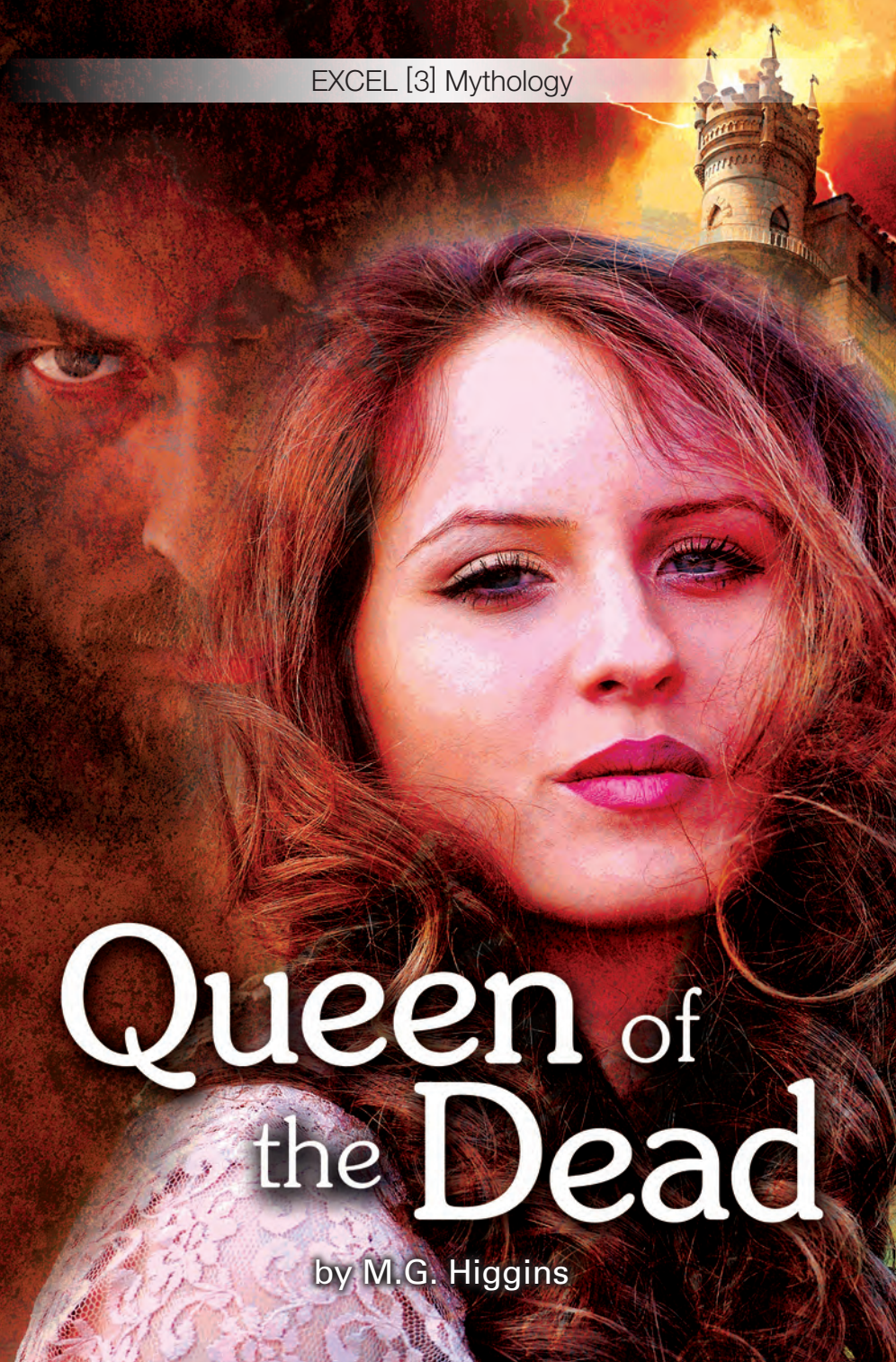
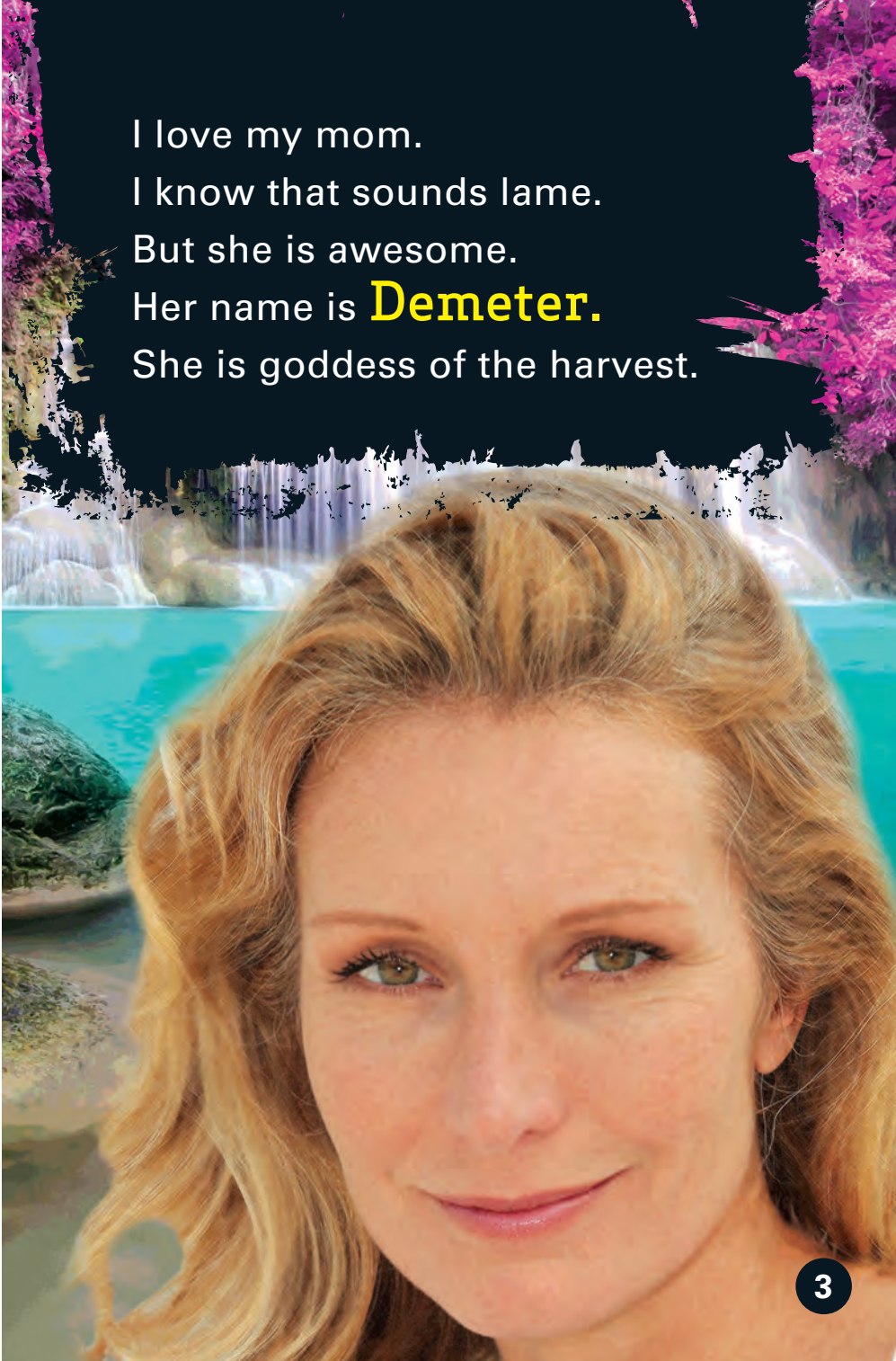
EXCEL [3] Mythology



Queen of the Dead

by M.G. Higgins

I love my mom.
I know that sounds lame.
But she is awesome.
Her name is **Demeter.**
She is goddess of the harvest.



We live with the other gods and goddesses. Our home is called **Mount Olympus.** Our palace is at the top, among the clouds.

But Mom takes me all over the place. When she sits on her golden throne? I am next to her. When she goes to Earth? I help her check her crops.

My name is
Persephone.
I am a goddess too.

Most gods and goddesses are grumps. They are way too stern. Not me. I am always happy.

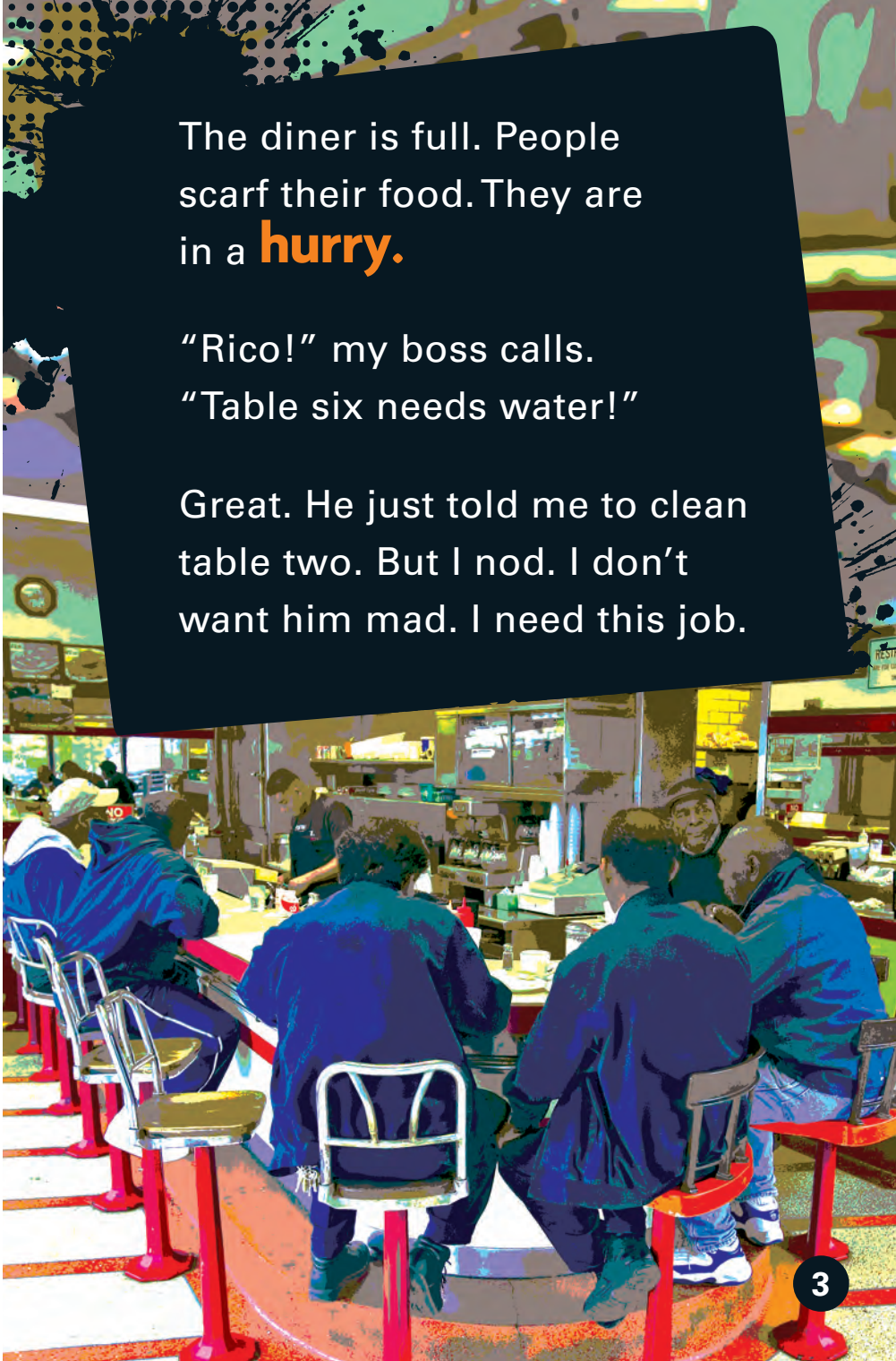
I love to dance. When I dance, I feel as light as air. Flowers spring up under my feet.

Mom smiles at me. “You are my sun and my moon.”

My cheeks warm. “Aw, Mom.”

The Dream

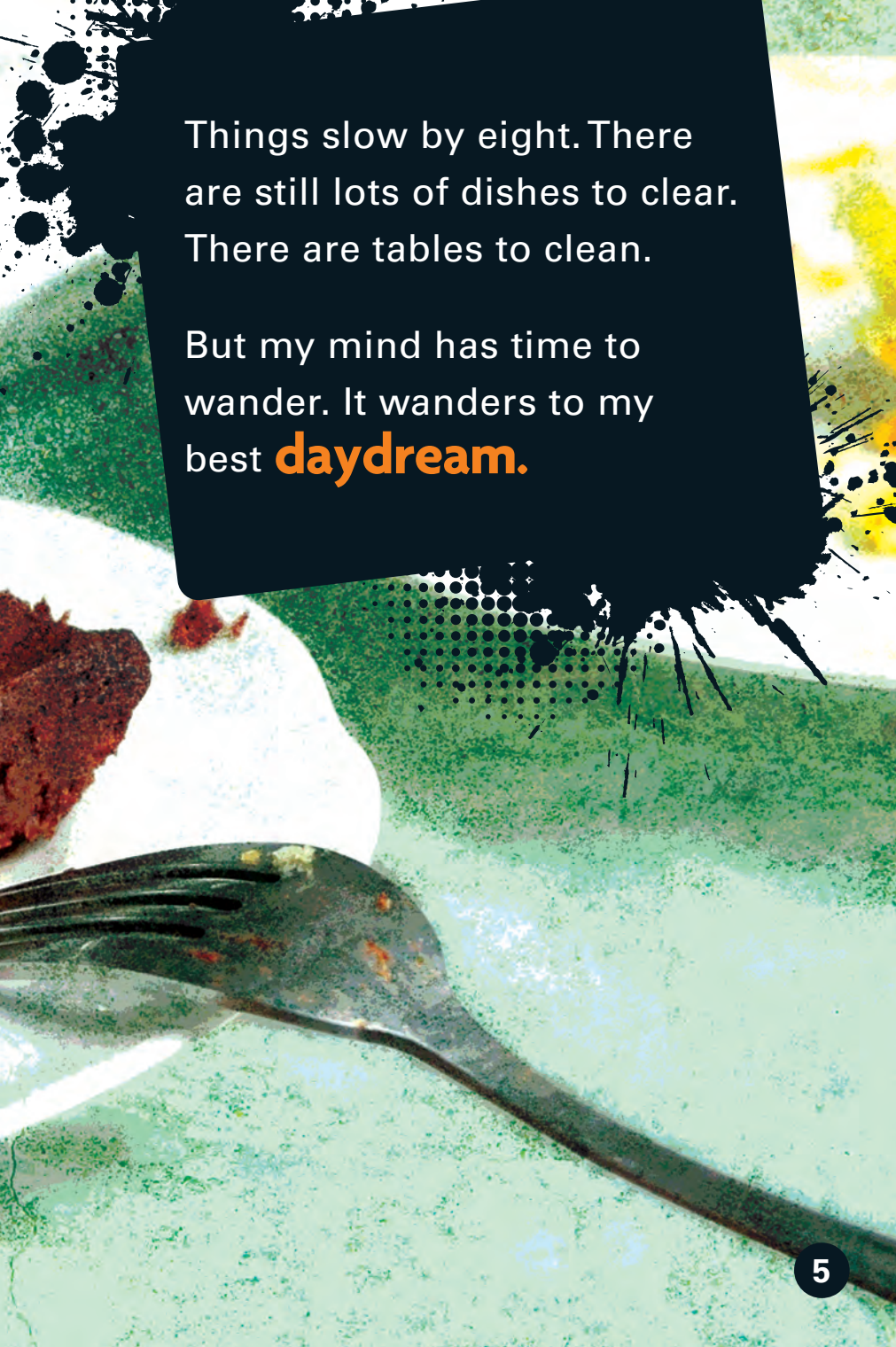
by M.G. Higgins



The diner is full. People scarf their food. They are in a **hurry.**

"Rico!" my boss calls. "Table six needs water!"

Great. He just told me to clean table two. But I nod. I don't want him mad. I need this job.



Things slow by eight. There are still lots of dishes to clear. There are tables to clean.

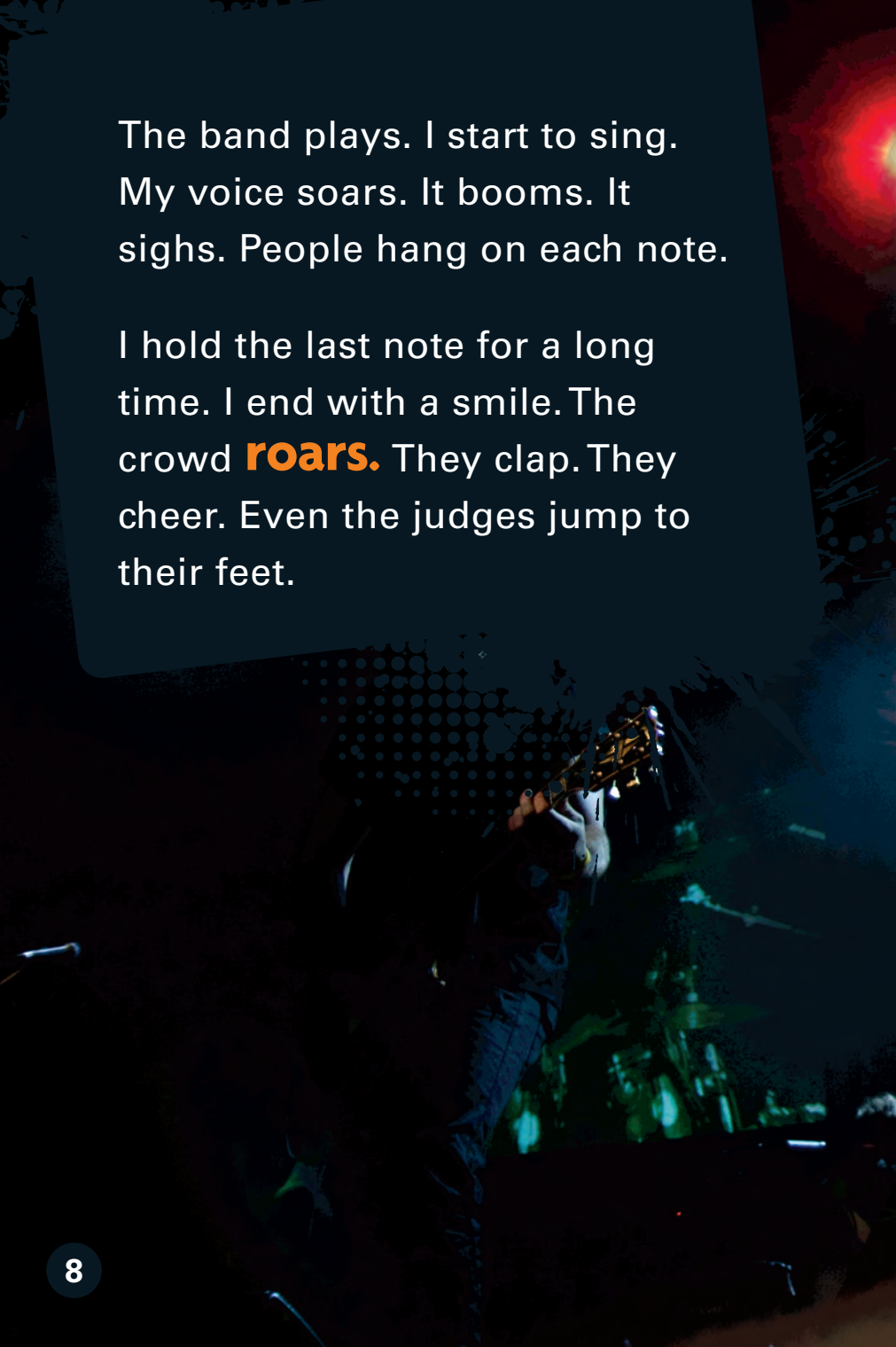
But my mind has time to wander. It wanders to my best **daydream.**

I am on ***Star Maker,*** the TV music contest. I am up against 19 other singers.

I walk onto the stage. My hair is styled. My clothes are awesome. Girls scream when they see me.

The band plays. I start to sing. My voice soars. It booms. It sighs. People hang on each note.

I hold the last note for a long time. I end with a smile. The crowd **roars.** They clap. They cheer. Even the judges jump to their feet.



TEACHER'S GUIDE

EXCEL

EXCEL [3]

- Careers
- Fantasy
- Mythology
- Romance
- Teenage Firsts

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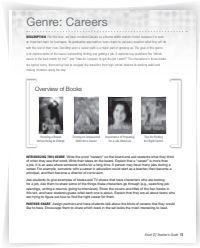
Instructional Support Components

This guide contains instructional support for each book.

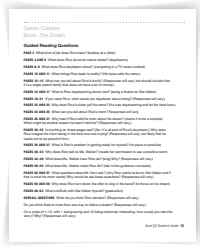
GENRE OVERVIEW AND LESSON PLAN (one for each genre): Use these pages to introduce and discuss the genres in this set. Lessons are appropriate for whole class or small group instruction.


Genre: Careers

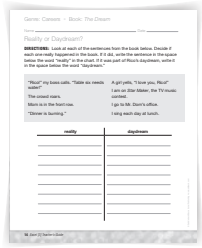
BOOK LESSON PLAN (one for each book): Use these pages to introduce the books, to teach or review specific reading skills, and to introduce any special vocabulary in the books. Lessons are appropriate for whole class, small group, or individual instruction.

Genre: Careers
Book: The Dream

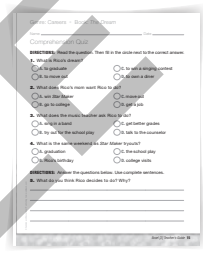
GUIDED READING QUESTIONS (one for each book): Use these pages after the initial reading of the book. These questions allow for a deeper rereading of the book and an exploration of the book's issues and character dynamics. Questions are appropriate for whole class, small group, or individual instruction.


Guided Reading Questions

COMPREHENSION ACTIVITY (one for each book): Use these pages to monitor comprehension and build reading skills. Activities are appropriate for paired or independent work.


Reality or Daydream?

BOOK QUIZ (one for each book): Use these pages to assess comprehension. Quizzes are a mix of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short-answer questions.


Comprehension Quiz

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Implementation Options

Excel is intended as a supplemental set of books for classroom use. The lesson plans and guided reading questions in this guide are designed for both small groups and individual students. Here are some options for implementation:

- Display the books as part of a classroom library and allow students to self-select titles. Use the reproducible activity and quiz for each book to monitor comprehension.
- Form small groups for genre exploration. Assign two or more books from a genre set to each small group. Use the genre overviews and lesson plans to introduce each genre. As each group completes a book, use the guided reading questions to spur discussion and to check comprehension. Have the groups complete a presentation on how the books represent the genre they are exploring. Use the reproducible activities and quizzes for the books to monitor comprehension.
- Use selected titles for intervention with teens reading below level. Assign a specific title to a group and use the lesson plan in this guide to introduce the book and teach any special vocabulary. Have the students read the book independently or as part of a small group. Use the guided reading questions after the first read to build comprehension and encourage book discussion. Then assign the reproducible activity. Students may work independently or in pairs. Use the quiz to assess comprehension.

Clark, C. & Rumbold, K. "Reading for Pleasure: A Research Overview." National Literacy Trust, 2006.

Cullinan, B. E. "Independent Reading and School Achievement." American Association of School Librarians, 2000.

National Endowment for the Arts. "To Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence." Research Report #47. 2007.

Walberg, H.J. "Scientific Literacy and Economic Productivity in International Perspective." Daedalus, 112, 1–28. 1983.

Correlations to the Common Core College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

Saddleback has correlated the *Teen Emergent Reader Libraries* to the anchor standards to show how extremely low readability materials incorporate higher level comprehension and text analysis expectations and requirements.

Common Core Anchor Standard	Genre Pages	Book Lesson Plan	Guided Reading Questions	Comprehension Activity	Book Quiz
CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.			✓		✓
CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.			✓	✓	✓
CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.			✓	✓	✓
CCRA.R.4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.		✓	✓	✓	✓
CCRA.R.5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.		✓	✓		✓
CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.		✓	✓	✓	✓
CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.		✓	✓	✓	✓
CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.			✓		✓
CCRA.R.9 Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CCRA.R.10 Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Note: Standard 10 focuses on range, quality, and complexity of text. This library represents the range expected by the Common Core standards, but the readability is kept simple for emergent and beginning readers to foster accessibility.

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Book Overview Chart

Book	Fiction/ Nonfiction	Theme	Readability Level	Lexile Level	Word Count
Careers Genre					
The Dream	F	pursuing a dream versus going to college	1.2	150L	1280
Grow	F	turning an unexpected skill into a career	1.2	140L	1283
Hire Me	F	importance of preparing for a job interview	1.2	120L	1268
Your Future	N	tips for finding the right career	1.5	130L	1178
Fantasy Genre					
Family Curse	F	discovering a werewolf heritage	1.3	170L	1224
Freedom	F	goblin miner finds a mysterious egg	1.3	130L	1280
Witch	F	being sold as an apprentice to a witch	1.4	110L	1259
Movie Magic	N	how CGI makes fantasy movies look real	1.5	120L	1142
Mythology Genre					
Queen of the Dead	F	Greek myth of Persephone	1.2	100L	1249
Stolen Hammer	F	Norse myth of Thor dressed as a bride	1.4	150L	1110
Trickster	F	Native American myth of how people got fire	1.3	110L	1197
Gods of Myth	N	overview of gods of various mythologies	1.5	60L	1138
Romance Genre					
First Love	F	dealing with a breakup	1.4	120L	1204
Notice Me	F	realizing a crush on a friend	1.1	100L	1218
Ruby	F	a relationship develops between students with disabilities	1.1	120L	1267
A Day for Love	N	history of Valentine's Day	1.5	140L	1241
Teenage Firsts Genre					
Moving Out	F	getting a first apartment	1.0	100L	1297
My Voice, My Vote	F	realizing the importance of voting	1.5	100L	1218
A New Path	F	transitioning to college	1.2	120L	1295
License to Drive	N	steps to getting one's first driver's license	1.5	80L	1287

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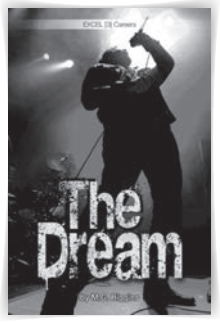
Genre: Careers

DESCRIPTION For this level, we have included Careers as a theme within realistic fiction because it is such an important topic for teenagers. As graduation approaches, teens begin to seriously question what they will do with the rest of their lives. Deciding upon a career path is a major part of growing up. The goal of this genre is to explore some of the issues surrounding finding and getting a job. It explores key questions like "Which career is the best match for me?" and "How do I prepare to get the job I want?" The characters in these books are typical teens, discovering how to navigate the transition from high school student to working adult and making mistakes along the way.

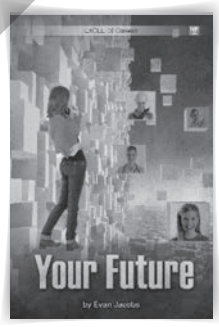
Overview of Books



Pursuing a Dream Versus Going to College

Turning an Unexpected Skill into a Career

Importance of Preparing for a Job Interview



Tips for Finding the Right Career

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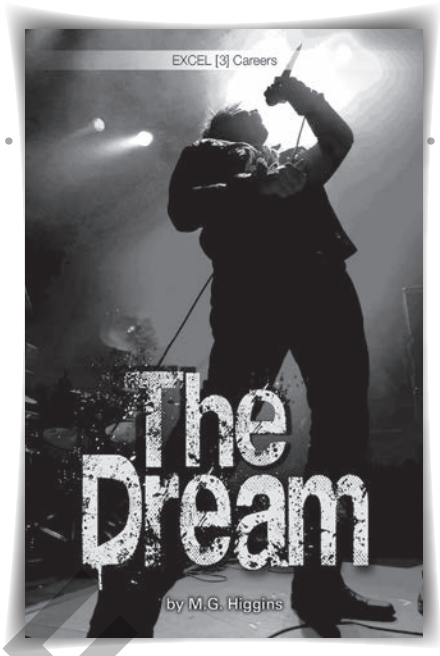
INTRODUCING THIS GENRE Write the word "careers" on the board and ask students what they think of when they see that word. Write their ideas on the board. Explain that a "career" is more than a job. It is an area where someone works for a long time. A person may have many jobs during a career. For example, someone with a career in education could start as a teacher, then become a principal, and then become a director of curriculum.

Ask students to give examples of books and TV shows that have characters who are looking for a job. Ask them to share some of the things these characters go through (e.g., searching job openings, writing a resume, going to interviews). Show the covers and titles of the four books in this set, and have students guess what each one is about. Explain that they are all about teens who are trying to figure out how to find the right career for them.

PARTNER SHARE Assign partners and have students talk about the kinds of careers that they would like to have. Encourage them to share which book in the set looks the most interesting to read.



The Dream

Genre: Careers
Book: *The Dream*

SYNOPSIS This book explores the idea that there is more than one way to achieve a dream career and that sometimes dreams can shift when confronted with reality. Eighteen-year-old Rico's goal is to win *Star Maker*, a TV singing contest. He wants to be rich and famous and make his mom happy. But as the tryout date approaches, he realizes that what his mom really wants is to see him graduate and go to college. Rico has to make an important decision about the path he will take to achieve his dream.

PREPARING TO READ Show students the cover of the book. Read them the following preview:

> *Star Maker.* It is a TV singing contest, and it is all Rico can think about. He is sure the show is his path to being rich and famous. But this is Rico's senior year, and all his mom can talk about is college. Can Rico make his mom happy and pursue his dream?

Ask students to turn to a partner and talk about what they think will happen in this book based on the cover and the preview. Then ask for volunteers to tell the group some of their predictions.

READING SKILL Point out that most books let readers know what the main character is thinking about. Some books even take readers inside the mind of one or more characters. When this happens, the reader has to figure out what is really happening and what is just in the character's mind. Ask students how readers might be able to tell (e.g., things that are impossible in real life might show up in a character's thoughts or a book might use words like "what if" or "I think"). Show students the cover of *The Dream*. Explain that part of this story is based in reality and part of it goes inside the main character's dreams and daydreams. As students read, they should look for clues to decide whether what is happening is real or fantasy.

VOCABULARY LESSON This book includes a few words that are at a higher level than the rest of the book but are necessary for communicating the content. Teach these words before students read the story. Write each word on the board. If appropriate, have the students write each word on an index card, and then trace the letters as they say the word.

daydream good thoughts that distract people from what they are doing

graduation an event where people who finish school get their diplomas

guidance counselor a school employee who listens to students and gives them advice

Have students work with partners or small groups to come up with sentences using each of the vocabulary words. Ask students to share the sentences with the class.

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Genre: Careers
Book: *The Dream*

Guided Reading Questions

PAGE 3 What kind of job does Rico have? (busboy at a diner)

PAGES 4 AND 5 What does Rico do as he cleans tables? (daydreams)

PAGES 6–9 What does Rico daydream about? (competing in a TV music contest)

PAGES 10 AND 11 What brings Rico back to reality? (His boss calls his name.)

PAGES 12–15 What can you tell about Rico's family? (Responses will vary, but should include that it is a single parent family that does not have a lot of money.)

PAGES 16 AND 17 What is Rico daydreaming about now? (being a finalist on *Star Maker*)

PAGES 18–21 If you were Rico, what would you daydream about doing? (Responses will vary.)

PAGES 22 AND 23 Why does Rico's sister yell his name? (He was daydreaming and let the food burn.)

PAGES 24 AND 25 What can you tell about Rico's mom? (Responses will vary.)

PAGES 26 AND 27 Why hasn't Rico told his mom about his dream? (wants it to be a surprise) What might be another reason he hasn't told her? (Responses will vary.)

PAGES 28–35 Is anything on these pages real? (No, it is all part of Rico's daydream.) Why does Rico imagine his mom being in the front row and crying? (Responses will vary, but likely that he wants her to be proud of him.)

PAGES 36 AND 37 What is Rico's problem in getting ready for tryouts? (no place to practice)

PAGES 38–43 Why does Rico talk to Ms. Walker? (needs her permission to use a practice room)

PAGES 44–49 What does Ms. Walker have Rico do? (sing) Why? (Responses will vary.)

PAGES 50–55 What does Ms. Walker make Rico do? (talk to the guidance counselor)

PAGES 56 AND 57 What questions does Mr. Dorn ask? (why Rico wants to be on *Star Maker* and if that is what his mom wants) Why would he ask these questions? (Responses will vary.)

PAGES 58 AND 59 Why does Rico turn down the offer to sing in the band? (to focus on his dream)

PAGES 60–63 What conflicts with *Star Maker* tryouts? (graduation)

OVERALL QUESTIONS What do you think Rico decides? (Responses will vary.)

Do you think there is more than one way to follow a dream? (Responses will vary.)

On a scale of 1–10, with 1 being boring and 10 being extremely interesting, how would you rate this story? Why? (Responses will vary.)

SAMPLE

Name _____ Date _____

Reality or Daydream?

DIRECTIONS: Look at each of the sentences from the book below. Decide if each one really happened in the book. If it did, write the sentence in the space below the word "reality" in the chart. If it was part of Rico's daydream, write it in the space below the word "daydream."

"Rico!" my boss calls. "Table six needs water!"

The crowd roars.

Mom is in the front row.

"Dinner is burning."

A girl yells, "I love you, Rico!"

I am on *Star Maker*, the TV music contest.

I go to Mr. Dorn's office.

I sing each day at lunch.

reality	daydream

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