

# HACKMATAACK

## 2006

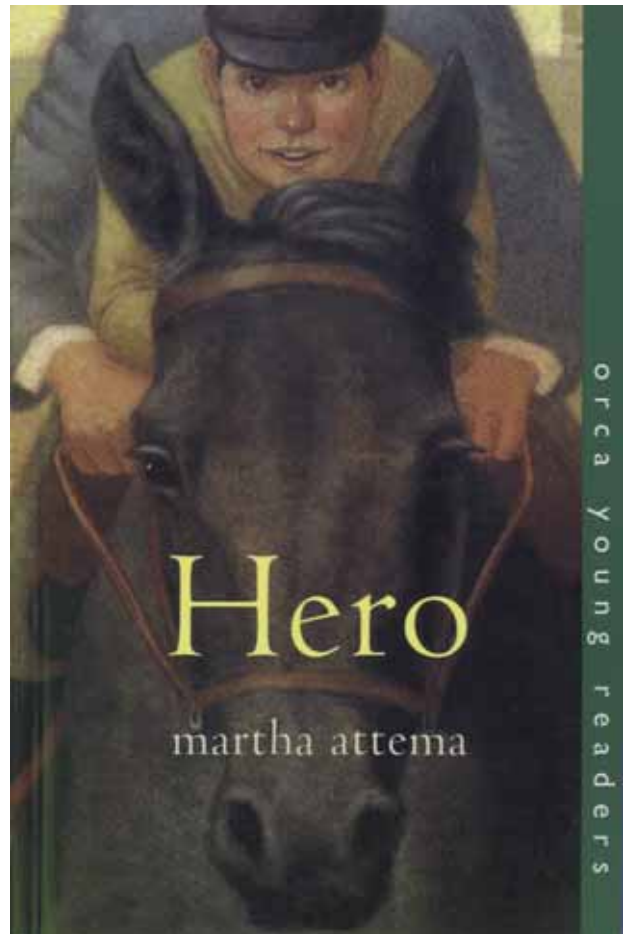
### ***Hero***

**by Martha Attema**

*Hero* is the story of Martha Attema's great uncle's stallion. The story is set in the Netherlands during the Second World War.

During the last winter of W.W.II. Izaak must change his name to Jan and leave his hiding place in Amsterdam to travel to a farm in Friesland, where he will stay till the country is liberated. Izaak feels miserable and lonely until he makes friends with the beautiful Friesian stallion, Hero. The Germans want the horse. When fleeing German soldiers come to the farm to take the horse, only Izaak can think of a way to save him.

"I wrote this story, because it is part of my family's history. Hero became a famous stallion after the war. The story of his capture by the Germans and his escape during heavy fighting, appeared in a Dutch newspaper in 2000. After I read the article, I knew I had to use this information for a novel."



### **Thematic links:**

Second World War  
The Holocaust  
The Jewish plight  
Heroes and bravery

### **Activity Ideas:**

- Friesian horses are an old and unique breed. If you are interested in the history of the Friesian horse visit: <http://www.fps-studbook.com>
- Examine the book cover. What do you think this book is about? What does the boy's facial expression tell you? Can you tell by the cover that this book is about war? Why do you think the artist used dark colours?
- If Izaak had stayed with his mother in Amsterdam, what do you think would have happened?
- Write a different ending and share with classmates.
- How many heroes did you find in the story?
- Who is your hero today? Write about your hero and share.

Check out ([www.marthaattema.com](http://www.marthaattema.com)) for a study guide for 'Hero' including other activity ideas