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THE LABYRINTH OF MEMORIES

A short story for
learning to learn



The Labyrinth of Memories

- **Theme:** Understanding memory, how it works and how it influences our behaviours.
- **Reading:** 20 minutes
- **Level:** 8-12 years old

SUMMARY

Myrina is a curious child who finds a strange pendant at a flea market. The next night, she dreams of a mysterious labyrinth and meets Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory. To get out, she has to explore her memories, her emotions and the way she learns. She discovers that every experience leaves a trace, and that a better understanding of how she works can help her to grow.

KEY WORDS

Memory, memories, labyrinth, emotions, attention, observe

Chapter 1: The Find

Myrina has always been curious about everything. Her favourite hobby is to accompany her mother to the flea markets on Sunday mornings. They spend hours hunting for all sorts of odds and ends: chipped mugs, bird-shaped brooches, and collections of spoons, each more amusing than the last.

This morning, Myrina's gaze lingered on an old pendant sold for next to nothing.

‘If you like it, it is yours. I would be more than happy to gift it to someone else,’ says the old lady who runs the stalls.

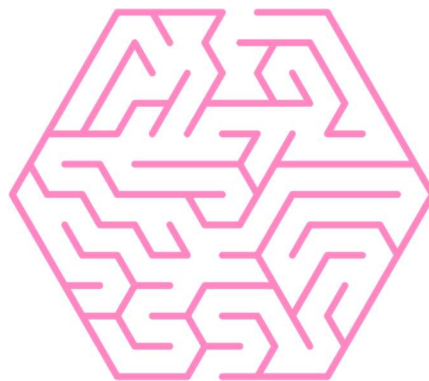
Moved by this kind gesture, Myrina proudly slips the pendant around her neck.

That evening, Myrina has a strange dream: she is standing at the entrance to what appears to be a labyrinth. A gentle voice invites her to go through the door:

**“Welcome, Myrina. This pendant opens much more than a door...
Will you dare to pierce the mysteries of your memory?”**

Chapter 2: The Labyrinth

Myrina makes her way through the labyrinth, guided by a flickering light. She soon comes to a large room with a flagstone floor. In the centre sits an enormous sculpture. It represents a brain, the folds of which are meticulously engraved. A woman draped in a silver tunic appears; her feet barely touch the floor.



‘I am **Mnemosyne, goddess of memory**. Follow me and you'll discover all the mysteries of your memory.’

The stones on the floor light up, forming a winding path to the sculpture. On each stone, a word appears: **attention, emotions, memory**.

‘The brain is a **labyrinth**,’ explains Mnemosyne. ‘All the parts work together, but they don't always speak the same language. To get out of it, choose one of the words.’

Chapter 3: Forgotten Memories

Myrina hesitates, then steps onto the **memory** tile. Instantly, images pop up on the walls: scenes she had experienced but couldn't remember. A picnic with her parents, a summer storm, an argument with her brother, the first time she rode a bike.

‘How could I have forgotten all this?’ exclaimed Myrina.

‘When certain memories are too painful or useless for the present moment, your brain keeps them away. A bit like a safe. But it's never too late to get them back.’

An inscription appears on the wall:

“How are memories created in your mind?

Is it because of what you see, hear or feel?”



Myrina thinks. She remembers the smell of rain and the tingling in her knee after a fall. ‘**Maybe all three?**’ she says aloud.

‘Exactly, your memories are formed through your **senses**: an image, a smell or even a sound can bring back a moment from the past.’

Thinking back on these memories, Myrina feels a small wave of happiness and moves on to the **emotional** tile.

Chapter 4: Wave of Emotions

A new scene appears: Myrina sees a younger version of herself, red-faced and angry after losing a game. She hides under a table, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Myrina blushes at the memory. She remembers feeling upset, but seeing it now, it seems like such a small thing. Why had she reacted so strongly?

The goddess waves her hand, and an **emotions' barometer** appears beside the younger Myrina, its needle swinging wildly between frustration and sadness.

‘Emotions influence our memories,’ the goddess explains. ‘Instead of judging yourself, try to **observe**. What if you had tracked your emotions back then? What would the barometer have shown?’



Myrina watches the needle settle. Maybe, if she had noticed her frustration rising, she could have calmed down before it overwhelmed her.

Mnemosyne takes the attention barometer and gives it to Myrina:

‘Keep it. Next time you experience a strong emotion, stop for a moment and ask yourself:



- **Why am I feeling this way?**
- **Is it helping me or blocking me?**
- **How can I react differently?**

The barometer will help you evaluate when those emotions appear, so that you can better anticipate them.'

'So, if I pay attention to my emotions, can I understand my memories better?'

'Exactly. **Attention** is the key.'

They key? Intrigued, Myrina moves forward. A new stone lights up beneath her: **attention**.

Chapter 5: The Strategy Room

'Attention is the common thread,' says the goddess. 'Think of it as a flashlight: your brain records what you are looking at and it forgets and deletes what is out of your sight.'

She looks around. The room changes again. In front of her is a wooden table covered with a large wheel divided into five sections. Each section glows with words: focus, emotions, evaluation, reflection, monitoring.

'This is a **Metacognition Wheel**,' Mnemosyne explains. 'Metacognition helps you understand how you learn and remember.'

Curious, Myrina spins the wheel. It lands on **focus**. The room shimmers, and suddenly, she's back in her classroom. The teacher is explaining fractions, but Myrina is staring out the window. Then she looks at her notebook: half the page is blank.

'If you shine your attention on distractions, you miss important information. **Before starting a task, evaluate your attention level:** are you feeling tired? Interested? Motivated? It will help you find ways to fully focus on the task.'

'So, my attention is the key to my memories. I need to pay attention to my senses, my emotions and information I want to focus on.'

With a smile, Mnemosyne disappears, and a luminous door opens at the back of the room.

Chapter 6: The Labyrinth of Memories

Myrina is faced with three different paths. A sign asks the following question:

“What techniques do you use to remember new information?”

Under the question, three choices appear:



- I repeat several times in my head or out loud.
- I imagine an image or a story to help me remember.
- I'm making a link with something I already know.

Myrina hesitates. She feels that all these answers are right. What helps her is to use different techniques depending on what she needs to learn.

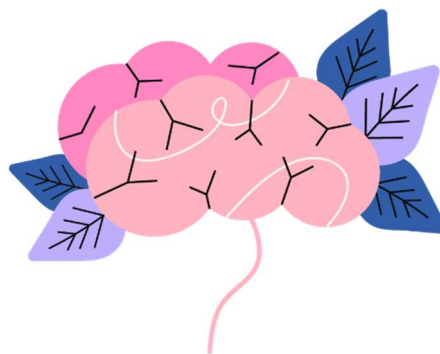
**“Here is a secret:
the more you understand how you think, the easier it is to learn.”**

Myrina takes a deep breath and decides to move forward. As she makes her way through the labyrinth, images and words swirl around her, as if the labyrinth itself is trying to show her something.

‘What I remember is part of me,’ she murmurs. ‘But what I forget... is it really lost?’

As she formulates this thought, the walls of the labyrinth slowly disappear, revealing an immense space bathed in light. In the centre, a broken mirror floats in suspense, each shard reflecting a part of herself: an idea she had, a moment she has forgotten, an emotion she has experienced.

She has reached the heart of the labyrinth.



Chapter 7: The Light of Truth

“This mirror is the reflection of your memory.

To assemble it, remember the paths you've taken.”

Myrina reflects on her time here: she learnt **to observe** her thoughts, to **ask** herself questions, to **identify** what helps her to remember and understand.

Little by little, she assembles the pieces together. When the last piece fits, the mirror lights up. Myrina sees her reflection, clear and whole. She smiles.

The pendant around her neck lights up. It was the key to this adventure the whole time. As she places a hand on it, she feels the world of dreams fade away.

She opens her eyes in bed; the pendant still clutches in her fingers. Was it all a dream? Perhaps... But what she has learnt feels very real.



Today, I learnt...

Myrina discovered that memory is like a labyrinth: sometimes confusing, but full of treasures. By understanding how it works, she learnt:

- to use her senses to recall old memories,
- the importance of managing emotions,
- to observe how she learns.



MASTER YOUR MIND

Question 1

Myrina discovers that certain forgotten memories come back thanks to the sounds, smells and sensations she experienced.

Is there a smell, a sound or a taste that reminds you of a joyful memory?



Our memories are formed in different ways, and everyone has their own way of bringing them back. Some remember best through images, others through sounds or emotions. What method do you use?

Question 2

Myrina's emotions influence her memories and sometimes distort them. By taking a step back, she can analyse them better.

When you experience a strong emotion, how do you react?

1. I take a moment to understand what I'm feeling and why.
2. I find a way of expressing my emotion (by drawing, writing or doing something else).
3. I tell someone about it.
4. I try to ignore it, so I don't think about it.



There's no one way to manage your emotions: some people need solitude to think, others find comfort in talking about them. Observing your emotions doesn't necessarily mean controlling them straight away but learning to listen to them.

Question 3

Myrina discovers that there are several ways of learning and retaining information.

In pairs, ask your classmate what their favourite technique is to remember important information for a test.



There is not one method of learning: some information is easier to remember through repetition, others through association or practice.

TOOLBOX

These tools can help you in the way you learn.

We all learn in different ways.

Choose the tool that best suits your needs.

You can download the tools on the website of the project.

1/ My emotions thermometer

Objective: Monitor and regulate emotions

The emotion thermometer enables you to track your emotions and better understand them. Fill the thermometer every time you experience a strong emotion.

2/ Metacognition Wheel

Objective: Understand your metacognitive strategies

The metacognition wheel serves to reflect on how you think.

3/ Attention barometer

Objective: Assess your attention level

The attention barometer enables to assess your attention level before taking a task. You can then analyse it with your teacher to decide how you can adjust the activity to match your attention.



CogniQuest is a project created by organisations and schools from Belgium, Croatia, France, Greece and Poland.

Together, they have developed tools to help you think about your thinking. This is called metacognition - a fancy word that means “learning how to learn”.

Through these tales, you’ll discover different ways to solve problems, stay focused, and reflect on how you learn best.

Explore the whole CogniQuest collections on the website of the project:

www.cogniquet.eu



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