

18. THE SECRET OF THE Y

Professor Sue Nibley is one of the 1300 devoted full-time faculty members at BYU. Her research and teaching have benefited thousands of students over the course of her career. Today, though, she is on the verge of a discovery that could forever change her students' understanding of the Y....



**LOCATE PROF. NIBLEY
IN THE LIBRARY**

Prof. Nibley has made a troubling discovery: she thought that the Y was put on its eponymous mountain in 1906, but she just found an engraving of a Y Mountain from 1588!*

Clearly, there is more to the Y than meets the eye.

*Trust us, this is totally real: Johann Sadeler, "Erbprinz Maximilian als Herkules." See?



**WHERE DOES PROF. NIBLEY
GO TO INVESTIGATE?**

Prof. Nibley walks to the base of Y Mountain. The engraving (based on a lost painting) shows the ancient Greek hero Hercules at the base of Y Mountain choosing between two paths: one that leads to vice and one that leads to virtue.



**WHICH PATH DOES
PROF. NIBLEY CHOOSE
AND WHAT HAPPENS TO HER?**

Prof. Nibley chooses the path on the left, which the engraving shows leading to virtue. However, she is almost killed by a falling rock that is so perfectly round that it must have been hand-carved. "I'm a fool!" she exclaims. "Engravings are usually a mirror image of their source.* I'm on the wrong path!" Professor Nibley retraces her steps and takes the path on the right that leads to the top of the mountain.

*Ask your art history professor.



**LOCATE PROFESSOR NIBLEY
AT THE TOP OF Y MOUNTAIN**

"For Pythagoras, the ancient Greek philosopher," Prof. Nibley muses, "the letter Y symbolized coming of age and choice. The right path represented good, and the left, wickedness."* How fitting that this ancient symbol stands above a university of young adults committed to choosing the right. She stares down at campus below. "Whoever put the Y here meant it as a sign. What other markers did they leave?"

* We're not making this up either.
Seriously.



**WHAT ANCIENT OBJECT ON
BYU CAMPUS IS PROF. NIBLEY
LOOKING AT THROUGH HER
BINOCULARS?**

She spots the pre-Columbian hand-carved stone ball, almost identical to the rock that nearly killed her. "A Y has three points, like a triangle. Pythagoras was fascinated by triangles," she says.* "I have two points--where is the third landmark? If I construct a triangle with equal sides, one side connecting the Y and the rock, the final point on campus should be...."

* Remember the Pythagorean theorem from Geometry? Yeah? High five!



**WITH THE Y AND THE BALL AS
TWO POINTS OF A TRIANGLE,
FIND THE FINAL POINT
ON THE MAP, KEEPING ALL
SIDES THE SAME LENGTH**

"I guess X does mark the spot," Prof. Nibley says, noting the distinctive shape of the ASB. She lifts a floor tile and discovers an ancient casket. There, wrapped in a Nemean cougar skin, is the Slingshot of Hercules. "Of course!" she exclaims. "No wonder the clues were a Y shape and a round stone. The fabled weapon that can only be wielded by the loyal, strong, and true. This belongs in BYU's Museum of Peoples and Cultures!"*

* We wish. But still, go visit the museum.



WHAT DID THE ANCIENT GREEKS THINK THE LETTER 'U' STOOD FOR?

- A Idleness
- B Debauchery
- C Stupidity
- D All of the above



ACTUALLY...WE MADE THIS UP.

But what *is* true is that 'U' and 'Y' both derive from the same Greek letter: *upsilon*. Who knew that rivals could share the same origin?? It seems like something out of a myth or a movie...

Brigham Young spurred the efforts to found the University of Deseret in 1850, renamed the University of Utah in 1892.

