

Author Interview: The Beaver and the Lumberjack

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What's up with talking beavers? Narnia has talking beavers and in this free Readers Theater script Carol Montgomery has created another talking beaver--based on an Aesop Fable. In this spunky fable character counts. See what the author was thinking in this summer interview by Readers Theater All Year. Carol Montgomery created "The Beaver and the Lumberjack" in June 2010. Readers Theater All Year interviewed her in July 2010. Here is that interview:

Idea?

RT All Year: Where did you get the idea for this script?

Carol: I knew fables are a good source of ideas for Readers Theater, so I bought an old book of Aesop's Fables at a used book sale. Then, I just started reading. The book has 154 different fables. I didn't know there **were** that many!

Resources?

RT All Year: What's the name of that book and did you use any other resources to write the script?

Carol: Since I was on a roadtrip to California to visit my family following my mom's untimely death, I only had one copy of Aesop's Fables along. It's an old copy from 1947 published by Grosset and Dunlap, Inc with illustrations by Fritz Kredel. Apparently its part of their classic series "Illustrated Junior Library." The only other resource was whatever came out of my head. (Smile.)

Time?

RT All Year: How long did it take you to write the script?

Carol: Oh, wow! I don't really know. I wrote the roughdraft longhand in the van on our roadtrip. It's a sloppy mess longhand! All I know is I told my niece I'd have twelve scripts by the time we arrived in California. Since I only had two new ones I really pushed to write ten more on the trip out. I think I wrote the rough drafts of ten scripts in two days!

Why?

RT All Year: Why did you write the script?"

Carol: The Beaver and the Lumberjack" is an adaptation of Aesop's fable "Mercury and the Woodman." I wondered what would happen if I switched out the mythological character of Mercury with an animal. Well, the animal had to be able to swim and be found in the woods. That sounds like a beaver to me! :) In fact, talking beavers are no surprise in Narnia either! So, the beaver was chosen. If he was a reoccurring character I might have given him (or her) a name.

Although I knew that some kids may not know the definition of woodsman or lumberjack, I opted for lumberjack. **Teachers often use unfamiliar words in Readers Theater to build vocabulary.** Lumberjack painted a better picture in my mind, so I chose that word.

Once that decision was made I just added a bit of dialogue between the two characters. Well, it worked as a launching pad! I just wrote by hand as we rode. (Yup! The kids have grown up so its easier to travel now. I don't even have to pack for them--except a lot more food!)

Personal Story

RT All Year: Which story about the script of the process of writing it would you like to share?

Carol: Aesops Fables are sometimes difficult to adapt. Some of them are too dark or too boring. But, I knew I could work with this storyline. I just decided to lighten things up a bit by making the beaver a **happy helper with a few positive character qualities**. The ending gives a fun twist. Perhaps it will lead to another story so the beaver gets a name? We could have a name the beaver contest!
:) Hope you enjoy it!

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