

Novel Resource #5

Mr. George Baker

Author: Amy Hest

Copyright date: 2004

Publisher: Candlewick Press

About the Author:

1. Interesting facts: Amy Hest grew up wanting to write, but did not feel her life was exciting enough to generate much to write about. She had a happy childhood and got along well with her parents. Amy spied a lot which gave her a chance to know what she would write about. Amy pestered an employee at her library until she was given the job as a page. Later, she worked for the New York library as a Children's Librarian. Amy then worked in children's book publishing. As she worked these various jobs, Amy did not share that she was writing on the side. Amy claims she is very moody which brings about different writings including novels for middle graders.
2. Author's webpage: <http://www.amyhest.com/>
3. Author's email and address: amy@amyhest.com



4. Picture:
5. Other facts: Families are important themes in many of Amy Hest's books. Most of her books take place near home, New York.
6. Other books written by author: Novels: The Private Notebook of Kate Roberts, Age 11 and I love you Soldier. Picture Books: Gabby Growing Up, Pajama Party, Mabel Dancing, Baby Duck series, and Sam the Bear series.

Annotation: This picture book by Amy Hest is about the connections we make with people. Harry, a young boy makes an unlikely connection with Mr. George Baker. They are both learning to read. Mr. Baker is such an interesting man, from his suspenders to his drum playing fingers, that everyone wants to be near him. Short descriptive text by Amy Hest, and mellow painted pictures by Jon J. Muth give a "front porch" feeling to the read of this book.

Book talk: What will you look like when you are 100 years old? Will you still be in school or at least learning? Mr. George Baker is. He is 100 years old. He can still dance and play the drums, but there is something that Mr. George Baker wants to learn. Find out what it is in his story, Mr. George Baker, by Amy Hest.

Tara-Lynne Sinicki

HBMSS

tlsinicki@yahoo.com

Characters: Harry is a school aged boy who lives near Mr. Baker. He is proud to be George Baker's friend and tell about the man who is 100 years old. Mr. George Baker is old, but not too old to dance with his wife, play the drums, be a friend to Harry and learn to read. The author paints him as old and crumpled yet full of interesting life.

Conflict and Conflict resolution: There is no conflict between the two characters because they are on a similar path. The struggle may be that they are both challenged when learning to read. But Mr. Baker lends confidence to both he and Harry that it can and should be done.

Genre: Friendship/Realistic Fiction

If you like: Mr. George Baker, you will love:
The Purple Coat by Amy Hest, Remembering Mrs. Rossi by Amy Hest, The Hundred Penny Box by Sharon Bell Mathis

Interest level: K-3

Reading level: 2.5

Setting: The setting takes place in a neighborhood or school. The background is given initially and then becomes a minimal part of the illustration. The characters take the forefront.

Point of View: Second Person Objective

Theme: There are many themes in this picture book such as friendship, perseverance, compassion, respect but the first two are the strongest. Harry has an unlikely friend in George Baker yet they are bonded by their struggle to learn to read. The title: Mr. George Baker, is given because he is the focus character. Everyone is amazed at the energy and experience this man brings to any situation. All want to be a part of his world, to have a little of him rub off on them.

About the Illustrator:

Interesting facts: Jon J Muth currently lives in New York with his family. Jon was well known for his comics in the United States and Japan. His work with children's books grew out of the feelings and experiences he had when becoming a father. Mr. Muth grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio where his mother, an art teacher, took him to museums around the United States. Initially, Jon drew and painted. He was invited by Willington College to do a one man show at the age of 18. Jon then studied in Japan and England. Although he has schooling in drawing, painting, print making, stone sculptors, and sho, brush calligraphy, Jon claims his best experiences were internships with two different artists.

Tara-Lynne Sinicki

HBMS

tsinicki@yahoo.com

Illustrator's webpage: <http://www.wallenspieglefinearts.com/muth.html>

Other email or addresses: not available



Picture:

Illustrator's connection to the book: Jon began to write and illustrate books of his own. When Scholastic Publishing viewed his work, they were not sure about publishing his own work, but approached him with texts to illustrate. Jon feels this is a sacred place, to walk in someone else's words. This is his first book authored by Amy Hest.

Other books illustrated by Jon Muth: Come On, Rain! By Karen Hesse, Old Turtle and the Broken Truth by Douglass Wood, Gershon's Monster by Eric Kimmel. Jon Muth is author and illustrator of Stone Soup, an adaptation, and The Three Questions.

Art Medium used:

Jon Muth typically uses painting and drawing for his illustrations. He claims that he has no particular style, but lets intuition guide his work

Students can understand how the art medium is created by: studying the illustrations in Mr. George Baker. Students can see that Jon Muth uses several shades of a similar color to create shadows, lines, and wrinkles.

The medium was chosen to convey the meaning of the story because: A large part of the story centers on the fact that Mr. George Baker is 100 years old. Jon Muth's style of shadowy painting gives long shadows, lines, and age to his character.

Across the Curriculum connections:

Subject area: Social Studies

Activity: Go on a historic tour of Carmel

Resources/supplies: Buses for transportation and guide needed

Resources: Carmel Historical Society: <http://www.carmelclayhistory.org/> The Carmel Clay Historical Society will give tours of the Monon depot museum and discuss how communication was carried 100 or more years ago to the Monon station. This will give students an idea of what George Baker's life would have been like as a boy growing up in their hometown.

Tara-Lynne Sinicki

HB MSS

tlsinicki@yahoo.com

Subject area: Reading

Activity: Read to or with another student of a different age

Resources: multiple copies of well-known books, such as class books, guided reading and free choice books.

Activities:

A. Tour of historic Carmel is an activity for the entire grade level but can be done by class

Link to Indiana Academic Standard: see starred standards below

B. Reading to or with another student of a different age is a paired activity.

Link to Indiana Academic Standard: see starred standards below

Discussion Questions:

Before: Do you own or have you seen anything that is 100 years old?

During: If Mr. George Baker sat by you on the school bus, what would you ask him? p. 20.

After: If Harry or George Baker were reading, and they were stuck on a word, how would you help them? What if they read the words but didn't understand the ideas? How would you help them then?

Language:

Word list to be defined: snappy: lively, quick and bright p. 3

Suspenders: straps that attach to the front and back of the pants and hold them up by going over the shoulder and attaching to the back. p. 5

Teeters: walking in a wobbly fashion p. 11

Shuffle: to walk with scooting steps p. 19

Indiana Academic Standards met by book:

Kindergarten

Reading: k.1.1, k.1.3, *k.1.22 Listen to stories read aloud and use the vocabulary in those stories in oral language, k.3.3, K.3.5,

Social Studies: *k.1.1 compare people, objects, and events of today and long ago, k.1.3, k.2.4, *k.3.3 Describe people and places in the school and community, *k.3.5 Describe simple differences and similarities between ways people live in cities and on farms, *k.5.1 Identify ways in which people are alike and different.

Grade One:

Reading: *1.1.15 Read aloud smoothly and easily from familiar text, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 1.3.4, 1.3.5

Social Studies: *1.1.1 Identify examples of things that have changed and things that have remained the same as students compare their lives with the lives of family members, such as parents and grandparents, *1.1.2 compare past and present similarities and differences in daily life by using biographies, oral histories, and folklore., 1.5.3, 1.5.4

Grade Two:

Reading: *2.1.6 Read aloud fluently and accurately and with appropriate changes in voice and expression, 2.3.7,

Social Studies: *2.1.1 Listen to historical stories and compare daily life in the past and present, *2.1.2 Identify changes have occurred in the local or regional community, 2.2.4, *2.5.1 Identify some of the responsibilities that individuals have to themselves and others, *2.5.5 Identify people of different ages, cultural backgrounds, traditions, and careers and explain how they contribute to the community

Grade Three:

Reading: 3.2.6, 3.3.1, 3.3.3, 3.3.4, 3.3.5,

Social Studies: *3.1.2 Explain why and how the local community was established and identify founders and early settlers, 3.1.3, * 3.1.4 Give examples of people, events, and developments that brought important changes to the local community or region, *3.1.5 Develop simple timelines of events in the local communities, 3.1.6, 3.1.7 Use a variety of community resources-such as libraries, museums, and county historians-to gather information about the local community, 3.5.1, *3.5.5 Use community resources-such as museums, libraries, historic buildings, and other landmarks-to gather cultural information about the community

Bibliography:

<http://www.amyhest.com/>: Amy Hest's website

<http://www.carmelclayhistory.org/>: Website for Carmel Historical Society

www.perma-bound.com : for IL and RL

<http://www.doe.state.in.us/standards/welcome.html> : IDOE standards

www.barnesandnoble.com: Barnes and Noble website

<http://www.candlewick.com> : Candlewick Press

www.visitingauthors.com: Houghton Mifflin Reading Meet Amy Hest

<http://www.wallenspieglefinearts.cim/muth.html>: Jon Muth's home page