

MacDonald, M. R. (1993). *The Storyteller's Start-Up Book: Finding, Learning, Performing and Using Folktales*. August House Publishers.

*The Storyteller's Start-Up Book* aims to encourage and instruct potential and beginning storytellers in the art of storytelling. The book consists of seventeen short chapters that move from welcoming a new storyteller to telling tales to networking opportunities and finally ending with a selection of twelve tales audiences love. MacDonald breaks down storytelling for the reader into smaller approachable pieces to assist the reader in understanding the history they join when telling stories. Throughout the book, MacDonald relies on other storytellers to illustrate the various methods and techniques the reader can use in their storytelling repertoire. This book is for beginning storytellers who want access to techniques, resources, and stories to build their confidence and knowledge as a storyteller.

MacDonald provides bibliographies at the end of each chapter with more resources for the reader to look into if they desire more information on that chapter's particular subject. She continually emphasizes that storytelling is as varied as there are storytellers. As such, she recommends reading other storytellers' works and folktale literature to gain a robust storytelling collection. Some of the bibliographies include a few sentences to give a little more information about the recommended work. When a bibliography includes a summary, it helps decide whether the recommended work is a resource that the reader will want to access. MacDonald includes a Works Cited and an Index at the end of this book, giving more resources for the reader. The index allows the reader the ability to locate the bibliographies and books mentioned throughout the chapters quickly.

MacDonald includes twelve tellable tales that she has told to audiences ranging from pre-school to adult. They are tales that include rhythm, song, and audience participation. She begins the tales first with the chapter titled "Stories Audiences Have Loved" and within the chapter

writes what age group the tale fits the best and a short note about the telling aspects of the story. At the end of each story, MacDonald adds "Tips For Telling" and "About The Story." In the first section, she advises on body movements, audience participation, how to say a phrase, and what she has done to tell the story. In the "About The Story Section," she gives cultural and background information of the tale. MacDonald includes any notes about changes she made or other variations of the tale. She adds the story's type motif so the reader can locate other tales within that motif index. The people group or location of the tale is next to the story's title in the table of contents. This added collection allows the reader to immediately take what they have read in the book and put it into practice with a story written in a teller's voice. The teller's voice ensures that the beginning teller does not have to try and figure out if a tale has become too obtuse with literary descriptions. Instead, the beginning teller can immediately tell the story if they enjoy it and want to share it with an audience.

Throughout this book, MacDonald encourages the reader to tell stories everywhere and that the teller does not have to have the tale perfectly polished before sharing the story with an audience. In the chapter "Learning the Story in One Hour," MacDonald shares techniques for the beginning teller to learn the tale they chose. One of her suggestions she reiterates throughout this work is to find a tale that excites and speaks to the reader. The suggestions and advice provided break down learning and telling a tale into manageable pieces no matter how long or difficult the tale may be to the teller. MacDonald uses examples from other tellers to illustrate the different methods one can emulate when telling. She gives the reader the confidence that although MacDonald speaks with authority, she does not view herself as the only source of information or hers as the only method to learn a story.

Margaret Read MacDonald is an authority on the subject of storytelling with her personal experience of telling stories to 10,000 children every year within Seattle's King County Library System as a children's librarian. She has written sixty books both on the subject of storytelling and folktale collections. MacDonald has a Ph.D. In Folklore from Indiana University and teaches "Playing with Story" workshops in the U.S., Europe, and New Zealand.

Overall, *The Storyteller's Start-Up Book* is a resource that beginning storytellers will find valuable and helpful at the start of their telling journey. Tellers who have more experience will also gain insights from this book as it includes a plethora of resources and encourages tellers to remember why they tell stories. This book is a resource that will assist new tellers and excite a continuing love for storytelling for both new and experienced storytellers.