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by Karen Antikajian

Companion Books

A great way to study author style is through the use of “companion books.” These are two versions of the same story by different authors. Many folk and fairy tales have more than one version and are good sources. Companion books are different from fractured fairy tales in that the story, characters, or events are not changed dramatically nor are they told from a different point of view. It is each author’s style or way of telling the story that is different.

Some companion books I would like to recommend are:

The Greatest of All Written by Eric Kimmel - Illustrated by Giora Carmi 0823412032
Mouse Match Written and Illustrated by Ed Young 0152014535

In this Japanese folk tale, Father Mouse decides that the husband for his precious daughter must be the greatest of all. After much pondering, Father and Mother decide that the sun is the greatest of all. When they visit the sun, they are told that there is something greater—the cloud which blocks the sun’s rays. And so the story continues.

Eric Kimmel’s book ends with a haiku poem, while Ed Young’s book is done in accordion style and when you reach the end you discover that the story is told in Chinese on the back.

Town Mouse Country Mouse Written and Illustrated by Jan Brett 0399226222

Town Mouse Country Mouse Written and Illustrated by Carol Jones 0395711290

In Jan Brett’s tale, a town mouse couple exchange houses with a country mouse couple. Her side illustrations add another dimension to the story.

Carol Jones’ version tells the traditional tale of cousins visiting each other, but she uses cleverly placed peep-holes in each of the text pages that let you view a small portion of the illustrations, thus heightening the anticipation and enhancing the text.

The unusual features in both books might give students some new ideas for illustrating their own stories.

The Mitten Written by Alvin Tresselt - Illustrated by Yaroslava 0590409530

The Mitten Written and Illustrated by Jan Brett 039921920X

and

Follow The Drinking Gourd Written and Illustrated by Jeannette Winter 0679819975

The Drinking Gourd Written by F. N. Monjo - Illustrated by Fred Brenner 0064440427

Barefoot Written by Pamela Duncan Edwards - Illustrated by Henry Cole 0064435199

