



Saxton Freymann

TeachingBooks Movie Transcript

Saxton Freymann, interviewed in his studio in New York, New York in August, 2001.

This is a transcript of the movie available on TeachingBooks.net. It is offered here to give you a quick assessment of the program topics, as well as to enable people with auditory disabilities access to the words.

Because this is a transcript of an edited movie, it should not be used as an assessment of Mr. Freymann's writing. Many of the sentences found here were edited, and all editing decisions are the sole responsibility of TeachingBooks.net.

Everyone has at some time picked up a tomato, noticed it had a nose. I'm just unusual in that I've kind of carried it out to an absurd point.

The Edible Arts

These red delicious apples have these great bumps on the bottom. I see this as the brow. And these are the cheeks. And this is the chin. And if I put eyes right there on top of the cheeks, it'll give you a nice kind of crotchety, old character.

Sometimes they weep while you're working on their eyes. So, he's a very suspicious character.

Initial shopping is the first really creative interaction with the food. I go to the grocery store, and I look for food that looks like people or looks like the things that I need . . . it's got this kind of surprise. This could be a mouth. Maybe the eyes go right there. These are the cheeks. This is the surprised mouth.

When I shop I'm more focused on the forms and the shapes, and I'm not always as attentive as I should be to what everything is labeled.

A-Peeling Books

One way or another, all of the books are celebrating vision and noticing visual puns. The first Scholastic book was *How Are You Peeling?* and that dealt with emotions. It was very important to me that the book try to hold on to the complexity and the ambiguity of some of those emotions, which is why the entire text is in questions. There's no gender. There's no race. There's no age associated with these characters. So, you have all of the wonderful subtleties, but you don't have any of those limiting, isolating, exclusive qualities that you'd usually find in an expressive face.

In something like the pumpkin book, *Dr. Pompo's Nose*, I had to have planned out all of the angles and all the expressions that I needed. The Dr. Pompo character is a single pumpkin with a variety of expressions. In some cases the mouth is very small. In some cases the mouth is very big. And, of course, you have to carve those expressions in a specific order. That is, the mouth has to start small, and then you carve it bigger and photograph it, carve it bigger and

photograph it. And I had to do it quickly because once you cut into these pumpkins, they don't stay fresh. In *Gus and Button*, I had architecture to deal with and plants and forests and vehicles and all kinds of things. *Gus and Button* is about wanting to find something beyond the world that you know and venturing out into territory that you're not familiar with.

[Reading from *Gus and Button*]

"Surrounded by a happy crowd, Gus said, 'Listen well. These very special friends of mine are Cecil, Pip and Bell. They showed me many lovely things and helped me realize that to really see what's out there, you need more than open eyes. When I keep my wits about me and I keep an open mind, everywhere I look I am surprised by what I find.'"

Nature Is the Best Teacher

The philosophy is that nature is the best teacher. The most beautiful form is already staring you in the face. I can't make anything so beautiful, but by just nudging it a little bit, it's still every bit as much a piece of broccoli as it was to begin with, only in this context it's absolutely a tree.

I'm having an enormous amount of fun doing this. I'm sure that I will always be associated with food no matter what I do. I do a lot of painting and drawing and all kinds of other things, and some day I'd love to use media other than the edible arts to create books. But, for the time being, I'm having a lot of fun.

Books by Saxton Freymann

- BABY FOOD (created with Joost Elffers), Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2003
- DOG FOOD (created with Joost Elffers), Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2002
- GUS AND BUTTON (created with Joost Elffers), Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2001
- DR. POMPO'S NOSE (created with Joost Elffers), Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2000
- ONE LONELY SEA HORSE (created with Joost Elffers), Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2000
- HOW ARE YOU PEELING? FOODS WITH MOODS (created with Joost Elffers), Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 1999
- PLAY WITH YOUR PUMPKINS (created with Joost Elffers), Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1998
- PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD (A Joost Elffers Book), Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1997

Note: Bibliography created in 2002.

Many thanks to the Scholastic folks, including John Mason, Elizabeth Eulberg and Marilyn Small.

Additional thanks to Gretta Miller, Rich Matheson, MJ Baumann and all at Clotho Advanced Media, Inc for their invaluable, professional help with this production.

Of course, this entire Author Up-close program occurred because of the kindness and generosity of Saxton Freymann and his family, who shared their home, studio, time, energy and food with me in order to make this production.

This program is a production of TeachingBooks.net LLC and may only be used in accordance with the Subscriber Agreement found on the TeachingBooks website.

TeachingBooks.net obtained permission to reproduce the images and text from Saxton Freymann's books.

From GUS AND BUTTON by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers. Published by Arthur A. Levine Books, an imprint of Scholastic Press, a division of Scholastic Inc. Copyright ©2001 by Play With Your Food, LLC. All rights reserved. Used by permission. SCHOLASTIC'S material shall not be published, re-transmitted, broadcast, modified or adapted (re-written), manipulated, reproduced or otherwise distributed and/or exploited in any way without the prior written authorization of SCHOLASTIC INC.

From DR. POMPO'S NOSE by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers. Published by Arthur A. Levine Books, an imprint of Scholastic Press, a division of Scholastic Inc. Copyright ©2000 by Play With Your Food, LLC. All rights reserved. Used by permission. SCHOLASTIC'S material shall not be published, re-transmitted, broadcast, modified or adapted (re-written), manipulated, reproduced or otherwise distributed and/or exploited in any way without the prior written authorization of SCHOLASTIC INC.

From ONE LONELY SEA HORSE by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers. Published by Arthur A. Levine Books, an imprint of Scholastic Press, a division of Scholastic Inc. Copyright ©2000 by Play With Your Food, LLC. All rights reserved. Used by permission. SCHOLASTIC'S material shall not be published, re-transmitted, broadcast, modified or adapted (re-written), manipulated, reproduced or otherwise distributed and/or exploited in any way without the prior written authorization of SCHOLASTIC INC.

From HOW ARE YOU PEELING? FOODS WITH MOODS by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers. Published by Arthur A. Levine Books, an imprint of Scholastic Press, a division of Scholastic Inc. Copyright ©1999 by Play With Your Food, LLC. All rights reserved. Used by permission. SCHOLASTIC'S material shall not be published, re-transmitted, broadcast, modified or adapted (re-written), manipulated, reproduced or otherwise distributed and/or exploited in any way without the prior written authorization of SCHOLASTIC INC.

This transcript is created for educational purposes and may be copied and distributed solely for these purposes for no charge as long as the copyright information remains on all copies.

Questions regarding this production should be directed to: info@teachingbooks.net

Copyright ©2002 TeachingBooks.net LLC. All rights reserved.



©2002 TeachingBooks.net LLC. All rights reserved.