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Masterwork

Literary Techniques & Story Development

Narrative Format: Freytag's Pyramid

Point Of View: Third Person

Tension Building Techniques: Dwindling Options & Uncertainty of Setting

This is the story of Chuck who wants to give an item to someone.

Chuck the Christmas Beaver

A short story about bravery and standing up to adversity

A long time ago in the land of the Pacific Northwest, where the mountain ranges ruled the land, and the trees pierced the sky, the ruler of the range reigned supreme, as it was the tallest hill—no, mountain—in the land. Frost Ridge Mountain, a ruthless ruler of the land, conjured wicked winter storms that affected all who lived in the area. A small village at the foot of this mountain lay victim every year, as their harvest and livestock struggled to make it through the frigid season. Despite the hardships they endured, the townsfolk were blessed every Christmas season with the best Christmas trees in the land.

Where did these fine Douglas Fir trees come from? Why did they float down the river?

The townsfolk often wondered. It wasn't about where the trees came from, but rather who supplied them.

Further up the mountain lived a beaver named Woody Chuck Chuckerton. This wood chewer was no ordinary beaver, as he was a true Christmas believer. Referred to as Chuck by his friends, this beaver lived a life dedicated to one cause: to inspire the feeling of Christmas spirit in all living things. This thought-filled dreamer often dreamed of one day meeting Santa. *Come, Mr. Santa. Behold, my Christmas trees. Tell me, tell me, what do you think? Want to take one home for free?* Chuck would often rehearse in his head. One day, Chuck and his good friend Tursa, a black bear, were enjoying a nice day on the riverbank.

“How goes your harvest, Chuck? Have you seen the Great Timber Wolf?” Tursa teased his friend.

“Tomorrow will be the first day of the season. I've been looking forward to this all year. Despite this winter storm rolling in tomorrow, I shouldn't be delayed for any reason. And in regards to the Great Timber Wolf, that is just a silly legend. I don't think anyone actually believes that story to be real,” exclaimed Chuck.

Tursa's fishing line bent hard towards the river. The big black bear excitedly reeled in his line. After a small struggle, a large Chinook Salmon sprang from the water and flopped onto the riverbank.

“Wow, what a catch!” cheered Chuck.

The following day was harvest day. All year long, Chuck had nursed and nurtured his Douglas Fir Christmas trees. Equipped with his fur boots, winter jacket, mittens, and snow hat, Chuck trudged a path through the freshly laid snow provided by the looming winter storm. *Curse this storm and all of the snow. I'm afraid I can't feel my big toe,* Chuck complained to himself.

Chuck did not like the cold, as it was his least favorite thing about the winter season. It was an element out of his control, as he had thought the mountain had a mind of its own. After trekking his way through the freshly fallen white snow, Chuck arrived at his nursery.

“Hello, my friends,” Chuck announced to his trees. “Today is the day I cut you down and ship you out. The villagers will be expecting you soon, but until then, there is still much work to do.”

Chuck grabbed his chopping axe and got to work. For the remainder of his day, Chuck hurried about his nursery, where he cut his trees and bundled them securely to be floated down the river to the villagers at the foot of the mountain.

As Chuck chopped and chewed his way to the last section of his nursery, the winter storm had started to bury poor Chuck and his nursery.

“I must work quickly. If I work too slowly, my jacket will frost, and I will become chilly,” Chuck said to himself as he shivered whilst chopping a firm Douglas Fir tree.

In the corner of his little brown eye, Chuck heard the loud snap of a tree branch in the nearby darkening woods.

“Hello?” Chuck called out to the shadows.

A sinister yellow hue lit up the darkened woods. Stumbling back into one of his many tree piles, with a tensed body, poor Chuck cried, “It c-can’t be.”

“Oh! Woe is me,” chuckled a shadowed entity that loomed from the shadows. “You have nowhere to run, as not a single animal in this wood can outrun me. You best run, come here little

one. I will make this quick,” snarled an immense, scarred Timber Wolf as it emerged from the darkness.

Poor Chuck, the Christmas Beaver, realized he stood no chance of running, and he was far too small to fight. Despite the odds, he clenched his fists, straightened his posture, and marched towards the Great Timber Wolf with tremendous courage.

“Oh Great Timber Wolf. In my final moments, I wish to speak these last words. Know that I mean them with all of my little heart,” bravely spoke Chuck. With a hand extended, Chuck revealed one of his famous bark chip cookies from his pocket. “Merry Christmas.”

The strong winds of the haunting winter storm knocked a branch loose from a nearby tree, causing Chuck to trip and fall, rolling down a hill. The Great Timber Wolf, confused by the showing of kindness and following injury, peeked down the hillside at the injured Chuck, the Christmas Beaver.

Chuck opened his eyes to a hostile flurry of snow pelting his face. He sat up and checked himself for injuries, as he had just suffered a harmful fall. *Am I okay? Did I break anything?* Chuck thought to himself. After struggling to get to his feet, a strong gust of wind pushed his frosted, furry body against the cliffside that he had fallen down. With his left cheek pinned against the frostbitten stone, Chuck saw the raging Frost Ridge River rushing about 100 feet below. The topmost points of the snow-smothered pine trees, which usually towered over him, looked as if they were but mere shrubs. Panicking, Chuck quickly turned his face, pressing his right cheek against the cliffside. Again, all that he saw was the raging winter storm, the Frost Ridge River, and the snow-smothered pine trees.

“Oh no. Now you’ve done it, Chuck. You’ve managed to get yourself stuck,” he muttered to himself.

The wind died down a bit, but the frosted winds still stung his eyes. *Now is my chance. I will climb this mountain. I must,* Chuck thought to himself. With one small arm extended, the furry beaver grasped a rounded stone in the rock face and pulled himself up. Chuck repeated this action with his other arm and bravely traversed the frosted vertical incline of the cliff he had fallen down. *How did I get down here in the first place? What caused this—* Chuck cut his thought short when the image of the legendary Great Timber Wolf took center stage in his little mind’s eye.

“The Great Timber Wolf of Frost Ridge Mountain,” he frightfully whispered to himself.

Lost in his thoughts and filled with the fear of this frightful realization, poor Chuck lost his grip and stumbled back onto the small platform that he had previously fallen on.

Memories of what had occurred moments before his frightful fall filled Chuck’s mind as he struggled to his feet once more. He recalled his moment of bravery, remembering his defiance toward the sinister request made by the Great Timber Wolf. Chuck remembered that the Great Timber Wolf would await him at the top of the cliff, but he knew his odds of convincing the Timber Wolf to show mercy were far greater than his chances of surviving a 100-foot fall.

Once again, Chuck mustered all of the courage he could and began to traverse the inclined mountainside. Rock by rock, and ice chunk by ice chunk, Chuck carefully climbed. As he nearly reached the ledge, the wicked winds of winter picked up.

Oh no, this is not good, Chuck internally cried. With a loud bellow, the wind pulled the snow-covered beaver's grip free. Chuck fell from the rock face once more, but this time, he hit the platform hard, crying out in pain.

"Please, hear me, Great Timber Wolf. This is no way to spend a Christmas, stuck here in pain. Please, find it in your heart, great one, and save me from this strain," cried Chuck.

The only response Chuck received was the wind's chilled echo throughout the valley. Chuck figured as much, as he did not expect such a fierce predator to shed any mercy. He was small and was a meal on the food chain. For what he believed would be his last try, Chuck bravely struggled to his feet and dusted himself clean of snow. With great determination, the beaver marched his way toward the cliff face once more, causing a plume of snow to arise with each heavy step. Chuck scaled the cliff face a bit faster this time, as he remembered which clumps of rock and ice were sturdy enough to climb.

Is that the ledge? Wait—it must really be! That is the ledge. I am almost there, Chuck thought to himself. He had climbed high, far from the platform upon which he had fallen. The brave beaver had done it. The ledge was within range, as there were only two, maybe three more climbing stones to grab.

With excitement, Chuck hurried his way through the rest of the climb. While mid-climb, the wind picked up again, but this time, Chuck was ready. With all of his strength, Chuck held onto the rock face for dear life.

This wind will not defeat me, he thought.

The wind did not relent and seemed as if it was intentionally trying to make poor Chuck fall. A forceful gust swooped in, coldly blasting the beaver's side.

"No!" Chuck repeatedly yelled.

The poor beaver's tiny mittens were no match for Mother Nature, as the wind had blown Chuck's grasp on the stone free once more. The poor beaver cried out in fear as he began to fall. With eyes shut, Chuck's life began to flash before his eyes. *This is the end for me. I am finished*, he thought to himself.

As the beaver fell in what felt like an unending fall, he felt a sharp pain in his floppy tail. Although the pain was great, he did not have time to think about it, as he whipped upward toward the sky.

This is not falling. I am—flying, the beaver cheered to himself. Chuck kept his eyes closed but felt himself flying upward.

After a moment, he then felt like he was floating. *I am not flying anymore. I am still*, he thought to himself.

This thought was interrupted by the feeling of falling once again. This time, however, he did not have time to think or even panic, as he smashed into the snow. A sharp pain now filled his backside, but still too scared from his fall, the beaver did not think of it.

"Get up, brave one. Your bravery has spoken to me. You will not be my meal today. Instead, you will be—my friend," said a low-pitched, ruffled voice.

Chuck looked up and saw that the feared terror of Frost Ridge Mountain, the Great Timber Wolf, had indeed saved his skin. With a wave of its head, the once feared Timber Wolf offered it's aid to Chuck the Christmas Beaver. Due to Chuck's bravery, and the Great Timber Wolf's change of heart, the two came together and delivered the Christmas trees to the villagers at the foot of Frost Ridge Mountain.