



Saving Sammy

Eric Walters

illustrated by Amy Meissner

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About the Book

After Morgan's backyard is flooded by the nearby river, her dog, Shire, finds a baby beaver that has been washed out of its den. Realizing that its parents aren't coming back, Morgan must quickly learn to care for the beaver, which she names Sammy. Morgan's parents warn her that he can't stay with them forever. Will Morgan be able to find a safe home for Sammy?

About the Author

Eric Walters began writing in 1993 as a way to entice his grade-five students into becoming more interested in reading and writing. At the end of the year, one student suggested that he try to have his story published. Since the first creation, Eric has published over 80 novels and picturebooks. His novels have become bestsellers, winning over a hundred awards, and have been translated into 14 languages. Often his stories incorporate themes that reflect his background in education and social work and his commitment to humanitarian and social justice issues. Eric presents across North America and farther—speaking to more than 70,000 students each year. Eric is a father of three and lives in Mississauga, Ontario, with his wife Anita and dogs Lola and Winnie the poodle. For more information visit his website at www.ericwalters.net.

About the Writing

I find inspiration almost everywhere I go. This story began when I was in Smithers, British Columbia, and was being hosted by the very kind Monkman family. Right behind their home, practically running through the backyard, is the Bulkley River. Wide and wild, I was told that it can become even more so as the spring melt-off often causes the river to overflow its banks and engulf part of their yard. They then

told me a story—and showed me pictures and video—of a little baby beaver who had been discovered washed up and abandoned on their property as the waters receded. They saved the life of this little beaver, who they named Sammy. They sought out the expertise of Angelika and Peter Langen who run Northern Lights Wildlife Society who raised Sammy until he was eventually released into a wildlife sanctuary.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections

Prereading Ideas

It can be very exciting to see a wild animal in its natural habitat. What makes a wild animal “wild”? In the book, the main character, Morgan, wants to rescue a baby beaver that she finds in her backyard. Can you think of reasons why a person *shouldn't* touch wild baby animals? Are there reasons why Morgan *should* rescue the beaver?

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Morgan discovers that caring for the baby beaver is hard work. What are some of the challenges her family faces? How do they work together as a team? Do you think Morgan could have cared for the beaver all by herself? Have you ever started a project that was too big? Who did you ask for help?
2. What do you know about beavers? Have you ever seen one before, either in the wild or in pictures? What kind of habitat do beavers live in? What do they eat?
3. In the story, Morgan's house backs onto a river which poses occasional risks of flooding. How would you feel if a flood, fire or other emergency threatened your home or school? What would you do? (Teachers may wish to discuss school and community earthquake, fire and other emergency plans. Reassure students that these kinds of emergencies are not common, but that being prepared and having a plan helps people remain safe if one does happen.)

Suggested Activities

1. Write a letter convincing the founders of the wildlife society that they should help save Sammy.
2. Using information from the book, draw what you think the Northern Lights Wildlife Society might look like. Include any animals that might live there.
3. Write chapter 8 from Sammy's point of view as he travels toward the wildlife shelter. What does he think of Morgan and her family so far? Is he scared? Does he have any idea where he is headed?
4. Beavers are considered part of the rodent family. Choose another type of rodent (mice, rats, squirrels, porcupines, etc.). Divide a piece of paper in half lengthwise, labelling one side “beaver” and the other side with the rodent you've chosen. Research to find information for each about food, habitat, appearance, etc., and create a chart.
5. In groups of four, act out the scene where Sammy is first found (chapter 3). Have each student play one of the characters (Shire, Sammy, Morgan and Morgan's mother).

Websites of Interest

www.wildlifeshelter.com

www.urbanwildliferescue.org/humane/beavers.htm

www.beaversww.org/beavers-and-wetlands/articles/saving-habitats-and-lives

www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/natural-disasters/floods-safety-tips

www.floodsafe.com.au/what-floodsafe-means-for-you/children

Recent Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

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Catboy and Hunter

The Matatu (Picturebook)

Prince for a Princess (Orca Echoes)

Review

“Walters’ writing style and choice of words make this book an excellent choice for beginning readers and also for reluctant readers...The suspense that the plot offers, as well as the message of empowerment, will ensure that children aren’t bored or disengaged regardless of what reading level they are at...Sure to please any young reader as well as keep listening parents entertained. This book would be a wonderful addition to any children’s literature collection.”

—*CM Magazine*

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