WHO NEEDS TV?

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Morse Pond, MA
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FALMOUTH - Storyteller Katie Latimer visited the Falmouth Public Library and gave a super performance.

When did you start storytelling?

I started storytelling when I was about 12 years old. By 13 I was telling professionally (getting paid!) and when I was 14 I won the 1998 National Youth Storytelling Olympics, which is when I really started getting busy.

What do you enjoy most about being a storyteller?

I love being on stage, and the connection that is made with the audience. I also love working with kids, and constantly meeting new people. Performing onstage is so natural to me now that I really have a great time.

Are there any downsides to storytelling?

Since unlike theatre you are very much a one-person show, I'm responsible for myself, which is good in some ways, but I can't slack, because I'm the only one. I have to manage my own schedule and market myself, which can be challenging, and motivate myself to work on the "business" end that is not as much fun as the performing end!

Is story telling a career that you are going to stick with?

Very few storytellers, even the very famous ones, are lucky enough to ONLY storytell. I hope to do it as much as I can for the rest of my life, as I have been blessed enough to have discovered my talent so young, and have the opportunity to develop it already, I don't want to waste that.

How long does it take for you to read a story, process it, and practice it?

That depends entirely on the story. Some longer, more complex ones, such as the "Telltale Heart" which you heard, take months, while a shorter, more repetitive piece, such as a short story for 1st graders, is easy to learn. Once I have the words memorized, the "story" comes out more and more each time I tell it, until I get to a place where I'm happy, but even then it often slowly changes.

Do you generally memorize stories word for word or add some details of your own?

Generally my style is to memorize word-for-word…I get very nervous if I'm performing something I'm unsure of. However, once I have it down, and become comfortable with it, then I start to play around a little, but more with the voices, movement, etc – many stories words stay the same.

Did you ever have any childhood experiences that made a major impact on your decision to start story telling?

I was homeschooled K-12, so that allowed me a lot of freedom to explore my own interests, and also allowed for a lot of reading, which definitely helped with my ability and comfort with words and language. My parents also always brought me and my sibling to lots of theatrical events, so I had a lot of exposure to a lot of different performers and styles. However, I was always VERY shy – it wasn't until I started taking drama classes at about 10 that I started to enjoy being onstage.

Is there a type of story that you prefer to tell?

I look for stories that are unique, that people haven't heard before. I also tend towards funny stories, or stories with very memorable and distinct characters. I only tell stories that I love, never something that would bore ME as a child!

Would a radio audience appreciate you story as much as a live audience?

Good question! Some storytellers sound great and entertaining recorded, other are great performers but sound boring and terrible when just listening to them. I have heard some good recordings of me telling, but I prefer a live audience, as I think I am a very visual performer, and that eye contact and movement are important to many of my stories.

Is there anything else you would like to say?

Just that if anyone is interested in becoming a storyteller I have three suggestions:
1 - Choose a story YOU love, because your enjoyment will come through when you tell it.
2 - Even if you are unsure or nervous onstage, perform anywhere and anyplace you can (open mikes, living rooms, etc.) You will get better and less nervous which each performance… trust me …I was not always at ease onstage!
3 - You can always go slower and be louder!