

Father, I Cannot Tell a Lie

A Skit by Dwayne Yancey

Selected from his collection, "Skits 24/7"

Cast: 1 m, 1 flexible

Length: 1 ½ pages of dialogue (497 words)

Performance time: About 2 minutes

The Story

The question, "Who chopped down the cherry tree," is answered by George Washington as well as several other former presidents and even a few well-known entertainers of today!

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“Father, I Cannot Tell A Lie”

NARRATOR: Good evening. Tonight, we take time to honor an all too-misunderstood American hero — George Washington. I say misunderstood, because nowadays George Washington’s birthday is only a pale shadow of the national day of celebration it once was in centuries past. All too often when we think of George Washington it’s as a stuffy old fellow who never smiled because he had wooden teeth. In fact, George Washington, in his day, was a true action figure. America’s indispensable man. So tonight we want to take a closer look at the remarkable life of America’s premier founding father. We’re all familiar, I hope, with the story of Washington’s personal integrity, which stood out even in his childhood.

(Enter GEORGE, with an axe, and his FATHER.)

FATHER: George! Who chopped down my cherry tree?

GEORGE: Father, I cannot tell a lie. I chopped down your cherry tree.

NARRATOR: Ah, the story of George Washington and the cherry tree. Who can forget young George’s honest, if self-incriminating, answer. But before we move on, let’s take a moment to see just how unusual young George’s answer really was. Consider, for instance, how President George W. Bush might have answered that question.

FATHER: George! Who chopped down my cherry tree?

GEORGE: Mission accomplished!

NARRATOR: Or consider his predecessor, Bill Clinton.

GEORGE: Well, that depends on what your definition of chopped is!

NARRATOR: It’s not just the honesty of young George’s answer that captures our imagination. For instance, a young Jimmy Carter might have answered truthfully, as well.

GEORGE: Father, I cannot tell a lie. I have lusted in my heart for that cherry tree.

NARRATOR: A young Ronald Reagan might have used the occasion to blame the Russians.

GEORGE: Mr. Gorbachev, chop down that cherry tree!

NARRATOR: And we all know what a young Richard Nixon might have said.

GEORGE: I am not a crook!

NARRATOR: It’s also instructive to contrast young George’s answer with those of some of our lesser-known presidents. Take, for instance, William Henry Harrison, who died after only a month in office.

(GEORGE coughs, sickly and uncontrollably.)

End of Freeview

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