





BOOK AND LYRICS	Jennifer Cameron Roberts
MUSIC BY	Nathan A. Roberts
DIRECTOR	Alicia Revé Like
MUSIC DIRECTOR	Jermaine Manor
SCENIC DESIGNER	Michael Strickland
COSTUME DESIGNER	Kristie Osi
STAGE MANAGER	Brittney Henry*

CAST

MILLER/KING	DeAnté Bryant*
OLDEST SON/KING'S SERVANT/FARMER/OGRE	Rachel Bailey*
MIDDLE SON/PRINCESS/OGRE'S SERVANT	Jailyn Genyse*
MILLER'S YOUNGEST SON	Jack Kalan*
PUSS	Sarah Lantsberger*
SWING	Brea Rollston*

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.



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SETTING THE SCENE

Meet Puss - a wise, talking cat! When her master, the youngest son of a miller, can no longer care for her, she creates a plan to bring them both happiness and security for the rest of their lives.

Through a little deception, a spirit of kindness, and a whole lot of magic, Puss guides us through an exciting journey to meet a king, enchant a princess, and battle a fearsome ogre - with twists and turns around every corner!

Will Puss be able to take back what was stolen from her? Will the mean ogre finally be defeated? Will everyone find their Happily Ever After? It's a fairy tale, so anything could happen!



WHO'S WHO?

Dressed in stylish boots, the hero of our story, **PUSS**, is a clever little cat who can talk - but shh! Not everyone knows that. (That's just one of her many secrets.)

Puss' owner, **THE MILLER**, dies and leaves all of his possessions to his three sons.

THE MILLER'S SON becomes Puss's new master after the death of his father. He is poor, but kind, and longs for a better life.

THE KING owns land all over the kingdom, but does not pay attention to the people of his kingdom while they work very hard.

The king's daughter, **THE PRINCESS**, is a beautiful young woman who dreams of falling in love with a charming young man.

The mean, nasty **OGRE** owns a lot of land near the kingdom. He takes all of the crops from the farmland for himself, leaving the farmers with nothing.

Puss in Boots



WORDS TO THE WISE

Ordinary: (adjective) regular or usual, normal.

Regale: (verb) to entertain or amuse.

Investment: (noun) an item that is bought with the hope that it will add value in the future.

Absurd: (adjective) ridiculous, crazy.

Game: (noun) an animal that has been hunted.

Marquis: (noun) a wealthy person who has a high rank in a kingdom, and who would probably own a castle or large home and lands.

Tidings: (noun) news.

Exquisite: (adjective) well-made, often beautiful and considered perfect, without fault.

Noble: (adjective) generous and forgiving.

Courteous: (adjective) having good manners and being respectful.

Chivalry: (noun) displaying honor and generosity.

Compassionate: (adjective) understanding the suffering or struggles of others.

Wardrobe: (noun) a collection of clothes that a person might have in their closet.

Humble: (adjective) not proud or bold.





WHAT'S THE STORY?

When the play begins, Puss is a cat who has been living with a miller and his three sons. No one knows that Puss can talk - they think she's just an ordinary cat! However, when the miller dies and leaves Puss to his youngest son, her new master - who is very poor and sad - decides that he will have to eat Puss to survive. In a moment of panic, Puss reveals her secret. She tells the young man that she can help him, if only he will trust her and do everything that she says. Puss also asks for a pair of boots, so that she can look fancy. The miller's son agrees to her requests.

Puss travels to the castle to visit the king. She brings him a gift from her master, who she claims is the great Marquis of Carabas. She spins a tale about her master, mentioning how noble and wealthy and charming he is. The princess becomes very interested in Puss' master. When the king wonders why he has never heard of the Marquis, Puss claims that he has been on vacation, but that she can set up a meeting between the two of them. She also learns that the king and the princess take a walk by the river every afternoon.

In the next scene, Puss explains to her master how she lied to the king, telling him what he wanted to hear instead of the truth. Puss tells her master that she has a plan to get him everything that he has ever wanted; her master follows her every word, even though he doesn't really understand how the plan will work. She leads the miller's son to the river and tells him to get in the water. When the king and the princess appear, Puss tells her master to pretend that he is drowning. A servant pulls him from the water, and the king is surprised to find him in tattered clothing. Puss pretends that his fine, expensive clothes were stolen while he was swimming, and the king offers him clothes from his own closet.

The miller's son, who's name is revealed to be Henry, meets the princess, whose name is Matilda. Henry is invited to join the king and Matilda on their walk. Puss excuses herself, running ahead to the nearest farm. She asks the farmer to tell the king that his land belongs to the Marquis of Carabas, even though it really belongs to a mean old ogre who takes all of the crops for himself. Though the farmer doesn't want to lie to the king, Puss says she will get rid of the ogre if the farmer helps her, and then runs off before the farmer can say anything.

Henry, Matilda, and the king appear. The farmer, who really wants to get rid of the mean ogre, says that the land belongs to the Marquis, which impresses the king. We move to another scene, where Puss speaks with another farmer and makes the same request. When the king arrives, the farmer tells him that his land belongs to the Marquis of Carabas. The king is even more impressed. This happens one more time, and Henry goes along with it, even though he has no idea what is going on.

Puss arrives at the ogre's castle, greeted by an odd servant. We learn that ogres can take on any shape that they wish, and Puss says that she is not really a cat, but an ogre in the shape of a cat! She claims that she is actually the cousin of the ogre who lives in the castle, and the servant lets her in.

Puss meets the ogre, asking him if he can turn into any animal that he wishes. She challenges him to turn into a lion, and he does. She then challenges him to turn into a very small animal: a mouse. He does, and Puss traps him in her hunting sack.



Henry, Matilda, and the king arrive at the castle. Puss tells the king that the castle belongs to her master, the Marquis of Carabas. The king tells Henry that he is very impressed with his wealth and castle and lands, as well as how humble he is. He gives Henry permission to marry Matilda, who has fallen in love with the miller's son while they have been walking together.

The servant enters, confused, and the ogre begins to make noise from inside the sack. The king demands to know what's going on, and the truth is finally revealed: the king learns that Henry is not the Marquis of Carabas, but actually the poor son of a miller. The king is upset, but Matilda doesn't care. She has fallen in love with Henry's kindness and generosity. Henry feels that he does not deserve her love because he lied to her.

Then, Puss reveals her big secret! The castle actually does belong to Henry. She says that she really is the ogre's cousin. Years ago, she explains, her cousin stole the castle from her and then had a witch turn her into a cat. She has come to reclaim her castle and her lands, and she gives them to Henry, naming him the true Marquis of Carabas. The king then allows Henry to marry Matilda.

As the play ends, Puss lets the ogre out of the bag, but he decides that he likes being a mouse, and Puss decides that she likes being a cat. Puss explores the village, now full of happy people enjoying their lives under the rule of the fair and kind Marquis of Carabas.





PUSS IN BOOTS ... A "FURRY TAIL" BEGINNING

The original story for *Puss in Boots* was actually called *Le Maistre Chat*, or *Master Cat*. *Le Maistre Chat* is a French fairy tale written in the late 17th century by Charles Perrault, published in 1697.

This makes the *Puss in Boots* that you know and love an **adaptation**, or a version of Perrault's tale adjusted for the theatre. It's quite common for classic stories to be adapted. In fact, this story is so popular that it has shown up in various forms over the years, from Tchaikovsky's ballet *The Sleeping Beauty* (which featured many different stories) to Walt Disney's short film adaptation in 1922, to the 2011 film *Puss in Boots*, about Shrek the Ogre's feline friend!

Adaptation isn't something that's new to today's storytelling, however, even Perrault himself was adapting pre-existing folk tales when he wrote his stories. *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella* are just a few examples of classic stories that Perrault borrowed from folk tales as he created a new literary genre—the fairy tale.

WHAT'S A FAIRY TALE?

Fairy tales are short stories that include mystical characters like goblins, elves, trolls or gnomes and usually include some sort of magic or enchantment. These stories also include beast fables, or stories in which animals can talk and take on other human qualities. More often than not, there's a happy ending to these once-upon-a-time tales, which always seem to take place in a land far, far away and a time long, long ago. Fairy tales have universal meanings and though they're often far-fetched, they're usually told as though they might be true.

Charles Perrault may have been the first person to actually record fairy tales in literary form, but they have existed for thousands of years in oral form.

While tales like *Puss in Boots* are decidedly of the European tradition, other cultures have naturally contributed to the genre. There are stories from ancient Egypt (*The Tale of Two Brothers*) to modern day China (where various fairy tales are told in Taoist philosophy). All are relevant to their own cultures and to how we understand storytelling today.

Fairy tales almost always seem to have a moral, and though our clever feline practices some trickery and deceit to succeed, the original *Le Maistre Chat* was indeed written as a lesson to young people on devotion to one's master and a guide for civilized conduct. The story stresses the importance of industry and the ability to thrive and survive under any circumstance, both of which are valuable qualities.

THE ORAL TRADITION

Great stories demand to be told, and that's exactly how fairy tales survived before they were written down. For these stories, having an **oral tradition** simply means that they were originally shared orally from one generation to another, or told instead of read (as they weren't written down). Fairy tales survived this way because of their dramatic and fantastic nature, allowing the storyteller to easily remember and actually act out favorite moments from a story through specific character voices and actions. Have you ever told a story like this?

Today, you can find fairy tales (and the influence of fairy tales) just about everywhere. From daycare to Hollywood, fairy tales continue to entertain fans of all ages. Can you think of any recent, popular adaptations of fairy tales (or characters in fairy tales) that might be your favorites?



DID YOU KNOW?

There are other authors who are very famous for their fairy-tale stories.

Hans Christian Andersen

The Emperor's New Clothes
The Snow Queen
The Little Mermaid
The Ugly Duckling

The Brothers Grimm

Beauty and the Beast
The Elves and the Shoemaker
Hansel and Gretel
The Frog-Prince
Rapunzel
Goldilocks and the Three Bears
Snow White and the Seven Dwarves

What other fairy tales do you know? Have you heard of these? Do you know where these fairy tales come from?

Lon Po Po
Anansi
Sultan Majnun or The Nunda, Eater of People
Tales of Amadou Koumba
Udea and Her Seven Brothers
The Jackal and the Spring
The Princess in the Suit of Leather
Rhodopis
The Death of Abu Nowas and of his Wife
The Magic Lotus Lantern
Ye Xian / Yeh-Shen
The Wolf of Zhongshan
Prince Saiful Malook and Badri Jamala
The Dream of Akinosuke
The Boy and the Wolves

And Many More!





CATS, CATS, CATS... AND THEIR NINE LIVES

In *Puss in Boots*, Puss is a very special cat. She can talk and dance, perform magic, and create plans to save herself and her master. She does all of this to survive, as her very life is threatened at the beginning of the play! But, can all cats do this to survive? Not quite. However, all cats have learned to adapt to their environments in order to survive. Let's explore how they do that!

IN THE WILD

Cats fall into the scientific family *Felidae*, and are referred to by scientists as felids. Felids are pure carnivores, which means you won't find them eating a lot of fruits, veggies or other plants. They prefer rodents, birds and other small animals that they can hunt. Big cats (*like tigers, lions, jaguars and leopards*) are known to hunt much larger prey like wildebeests, impalas, zebras and buffalos.

SLEEPING HABITS

Cats can be active around the clock, but they can also easily sleep the day away. In fact, the term "cat nap" comes from the feline's ability to fall asleep almost any time, anywhere or any place. Cats also have an unusual ability to stay asleep, they can sleep as much as 20 hours in a single day. Most species are at least partially nocturnal (*active at night*), with wild species like lions most active after dusk.

ON THE HUNT

Whether it's a lion or a house cat, every felid has specially honed senses for the hunt. Their **large eyes** are six times more sensitive to light than human eyes, which allows them to easily see in the dark. **Large ears** tune cats into high-frequency sounds, helping them to locate unseen prey. **A keen sense of smell** and **highly sensitive**

whiskers allow felids to literally taste the air or detect the slightest movement in the air around them. Perhaps the coolest traits cats possess is a **strong sense of balance**—they always seem to land on their feet no matter how bad the fall! Their long tails help them to keep this balance. They also have **strong, powerful legs** that help them run very fast and across large distances. Cats will even walk on their toes in order to move faster. On their paws, they have **sharp, deadly claws** that help them capture their prey.

WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

With some exceptions, wild and **domesticated** felids are typically solitary (*that is, they live by themselves*), though domesticated cats tend to be relatively more sociable (*and species like lions live in prides, or groups of lions*). Most wild cats live in forested terrain, though they can be found almost anywhere from deserts to mountainous regions.

TALK, TALK, TALK

Most felids can vocalize and make sounds like meowing (*meowing*), hissing, growling and snarling, and all rely heavily on body language to communicate with others. For example, have you ever seen a house cat with an arched back and puffed out fur? Stay away! That's one angry cat! Speaking of angry cats—big cats also have the ability to roar, a sound that you probably won't hear from domesticated cats.

LONG LIVES

Cats can live between 10 to 14 years, though many house cats (*and even wild cats*) can live in captivity beyond 20 years. The oldest known cat on record, Creme Puff, was 38 years old when she died in 2005.



DID YOU KNOW?

By some counts there are hundreds of different breeds of cats. How many can you name?

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Abyssinian | Ichabod |
| Australian Mist | Maine Coon |
| Bengal | Maltese |
| Burmese | Pixie Bob |
| Calico | Persian |
| Himalayan | Siamese |





ACTIVITY: SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Match the descriptions on the left with the correct image on the right

Descriptions

These allow cats to easily see in the dark.

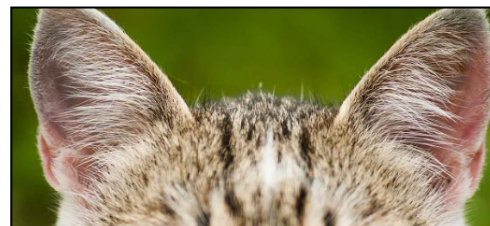
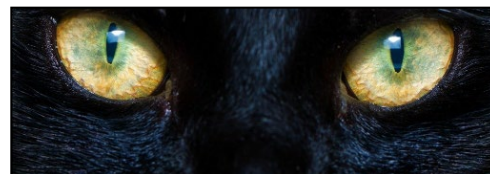
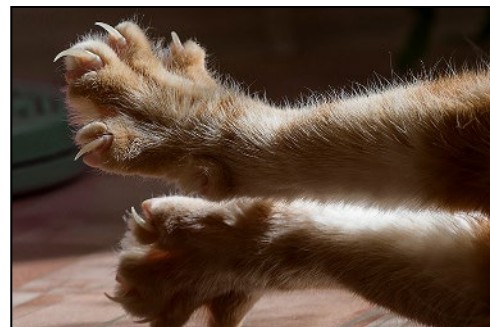
This helps a cat keep its balance, so that it often lands on its feet.

These allow cats to "taste" the air or detect movements around them.

These help cats run very fast and very far.

These help cats capture their prey.

Images





GREAT ADAPTATIONS: WRITING EXERCISE

Charles Perrault adapted folk tales for his *Tales of Mother Goose*. Disney adapted Perrault for movies like *Cinderella*. But does that mean that all the great adaptations are done? No way!

You have a chance to make a fairy tale all your own, using your own original ideas to adapt a past story. Pick either *Puss in Boots* or any other fairy tale you might be familiar with (use the list from previous sections of this guide) and rewrite the story to fit today's world. Your fairy tale should include the following:

1. "Once upon a time" to begin, and "happily ever after" at the end.
2. Some mystical character like a fairy, an ogre, or a talking animal.
3. Some magical event or enchantment must occur in the story.
4. Fairy tales like the number 3! Things happen in threes a lot in fairy tales. For instance, in *Puss in Boots*, the miller has 3 sons! Also, Puss visits 3 farmers! **The ogre changes form 3 times, too:** first into a lion, then back into an ogre, and finally into a mouse! When writing your story, you can include things happening in threes, just like other fairy tales!

In the space below, write your new story:



TIME TO EXPLORE!

[Perrault, Charles and Clarke, Harry. *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault.* Nabu Press, 2010.](#)

Read all of the classics as they were originally written! Note that this book contains a historically accurate translation, that is, some of the language will be slightly different than what we use today. For example, the word "enchant" is spelled "inchant" in the book.

[*Fairy Tales, by The Brothers Grimm - Project Gutenberg*](#)

Access dozens of classic fairy tales, all illustrated on Project Gutenberg's website!

[Shelley Duvall's *Faerie Tale Theatre.* KOCH Vision, 2008.](#)

Check out this complete set of 26 classic tales brought to life by the likes of Billy Crystal, Matthew Broderick, Susan Sarandon, Mick Jagger, Robin Williams and more!

[*Puss in Boots.* Dreamworks, 2011.](#)

This high-stakes adventure features a character introduced in *Shrek 2*. While the story shares no similarity to the original fairy tale, it is interesting to draw comparisons between the works.

[Fairy Tale Puzzles - Digipuzzle.net](#)

Crossword, word searches, hangman games, jigsaw puzzles, and more - all with fun fairy tale themes!

[*American Indian Myths and Legends \(Edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz\)*](#)

Over 160 stories gathered from all over the United States and North America.

[*African Cats.* Disneynature, 2011.](#)

This documentary film follows a pride of lions and a family of cheetahs trying to survive in the African savannah.





DESIGN IT!

One of the most exciting parts about doing a production of *Puss in Boots* is imagining all the ways that the characters can look! Clothes are very important in the world of *Puss in Boots*. People notice Puss once she's wearing her hat and boots, and the king finds Henry very interesting when he's dressed in his nice clothing. Clothing can be a symbol of status and wealth, but they also tell a lot about the characters. In a world with ogres and princesses and talking cats that wear boots, you can let your imagination soar.

Imagine you have entered the world of Puss in Boots!
Design an outfit for yourself using the space below.



THE ART OF ADAPTATION: A Full Curriculum for Educators

We invite you to explore the following three-phase curriculum centered around adaptation - and, of course, feel free to use these materials for your students and your classroom. There are also two writing exercises that go along with this curriculum, which can be found in the study guide.

PHASE ONE (BEFORE): Discussion

There are two forms of adaptation to discuss here: written adaptations, and the act of adapting to your changing environment. Let's start with the latter, and discuss the major themes of *Puss in Boots*, and how they relate to our lives now.

LINKS to Perrault's *Puss in Boots*:

[Audio ONLY](#) (via YouTube)

[Text ONLY](#) (via *American Literature*) - slightly adapted

[TEXT with IMAGES](#) (via *Short Kids Stories*) - slightly adapted

Guiding questions or talking points for discussion:

- Before seeing the play, discuss adaptation and what that means to your students. Is anyone already familiar with the word, and how do they define it?
- How do your students feel like they adapt in everyday life? What are things that they experience that force them to adapt? What challenges do they face when they are adapting?
- Center this pre-show conversation on the students' lives, before they meet the characters and analyze how they adapt in the story. The goal should be for students to recognize that everyone must learn to be adaptable - and that it doesn't require a talking cat and a little bit of magic to do it!
- Consider reading or sharing the "original" fairy tale by Charles Perrault. This can happen before or after seeing The Rep's production, but you'll definitely want your students to be familiar with it for the next phase of the conversation. If you do not have a copy of the text, there are links above for different online versions of the story.



PHASE TWO (AFTER): Comparing Adaptations

For this conversation, you'll definitely want to introduce your students to a few different forms of the *Puss in Boots* story. Some may already be familiar with the 2011 Dreamworks film. That would be a good component for discussion ([short clips from the film can be found on YouTube](#)), as it contains none of the plot points from the original story. However, it would be a good way to discuss the consistency of the character of Puss. Also, take the time to read the Perrault text, as The Rep's production will more closely resemble that story. The questions that we suggest for discussion involve comparing these two works.

Key Takeaways: students should recognize what things stayed the same from each version - the essential components - and what things were altered.

Consider building a Venn diagram as you discuss.

Guiding questions or talking points for discussion:

- **Characters:** what characters are in both versions of the story? What characters are missing? How have the characters changed, and how have they stayed the same?
- **Plot:** what events happen in both versions? What events were added to The Rep's play, if any? What events were removed? Why do you think the playwright added in the new things? What is their value to the story?
- How could the events that were removed be depicted in the play? Brainstorm how you might write them back in.
- What did you really like about the play? What did you really like about the original story? Are they the same?
- Discuss the design of the show, and how each character's costumes were different? (*If students have seen the animated film, they may have been expecting Puss to look different.*) How did the set designer handle so many different locations - the mill, the river, the farms, the castles?
- Students might also point out the music in the play, and how there aren't any songs in the original story. What do the songs add to the story? What songs did students really like, and why? What do we learn from the songs?



PHASE THREE: The Act of Adaptation

Now that students have covered the concept of adaptation and understand how they naturally adapt to new environments - as well as compared and contrasted adaptations of the same story - it's time for the students to become the adaptors!

Either as a class or in small groups, have students choose a fairy tale to adapt. There are suggestions located in the study guide, or the students can pick their favorites. Students should read the fairy tale before beginning the prewriting process.

Pre-write:

- Students should decide what the essential components of the story are - which characters must stay, which events must happen? What are the themes of the piece? Remember, an adaptation has to be recognizable to the original work, otherwise the new work is merely "inspired" by the original. Make sure the focus is on using the tools in the original story to build the new one.
- Are there any major additions that students want to make to the story? A location change? As long as the essential components remain, students should feel free to be creative.

Writing:

- Have students write the opening scene of a theatrical adaptation of their fairy tale. The opening scene should introduce the characters, and begin to present the conflict.
- The focus is on the dialogue, and not the description.
- Students should aim to write 1-2 pages.

PERFORM!

To wrap up the lesson, have students perform their brand new adaptations of a classic work! Remember, the audience is just as important as the actors, and applause is the best way to show your appreciation!