Puss in Boots

Ideas Packet

Prepared for the Blackfriars of Agnes Scott College
Production of
_Puss in Boots_
Adapted by Madge Miller

Directed by Charlotte Cué

Scenery, Costumes, and Lighting designed by
Lindsay Moore

Performance Dates
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Prepared by
Charlotte Cué and
David S. Thompson, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor
A Letter to Teachers

Thank you for your interest in the Blackfriars of Agnes Scott College’s production of *Puss in Boots*. Blackfriars, the oldest continuously running theatre troupe in the Atlanta area, in conjunction with the Department of Theatre and Dance at Agnes Scott produces theatrical pieces that allow us to share our passions with you. We would like to thank you for your interest and support our troupe and production program. Providing this ideas packet is one means of showing our appreciation.

The activities in this packet reflect themes relevant to our production (greed, hope for a better future, improving one’s circumstances) along with some concepts that relate to the practice of theatre. The two sections within the packet, Before the Show and After the Show, provide different activities that you are free to choose from and change as needed for your situation. Please keep in mind, our activities are suggestions and do not represent the only options. You may wish to shuffle activities around or create your own.

When examining the Ideas Packet for *Puss in Boots*, please take the name literally. Our intention in this collection of questions and statements that follow is to stimulate discussion and creativity amongst your students. The ideas generated in the packet could serve as a basis for many fun activities including creative writing assignments, art projects, and staging your own production of *Puss in Boots*.

At the same time, please do not let the ideas presented in this packet to limit you. Our intent is to provide materials that will broaden your curriculum. For example, some questions may be more valuable or use prior to attending the show while others may be better suited for post-show discussion. Explore any question or activity as you see fit as you are in the best position to determine what provides the greatest benefits for your students. Feel free to add, subtract, or alter activities, as you desire.

We thank you for your interest in our program and production and hope that you enjoy this show. The pages that follow represent a tool that we hope you will find helpful in teaching your students. Feel free to comment on what was useful and what you wanted more of in order to help with the development of these packets in future years.
Before the Show
Character Analysis

**Christophe** is the son of a wealthy man whose only inheritance is his clothing and cat, Minet. In order to make money he must chop wood and barely makes enough to feed himself and Minet. While he worries about getting caught, he follows the crazy schemes Minet comes up with because he hopes that they will improve his situation. He cares deeply for the Princess and tries to protect her from the Enchanter.

**Minet** is Christophe’s cat and the protagonist of the play. He does not always understand the rules of the human world. He is very clever and comes up with plans to get him out of trouble. While he is momentarily selfish by asking for boots instead of money, he tries to make up for it by determining to help Christophe become a Marquis and be with Angelique.

**Claude** is the king of the country the play takes place in. He is also the father of Angelique. He needs Angelique to marry a wealthy man in order to help provide for the kingdom that is in desperate need of money. He is also very naïve and blinded by the Enchanter’s wealth to notice that his daughter does not like that man. He tries to be protective of Angelique and keep her following the rules of the kingdom, even though it takes him awhile to catch on to the situation.

**Angelique** is the princess and the only daughter of the King. She cannot talk to Christophe because he has no title but longs to. She is sweet and loyal as she follows the country’s rule even though she does not want to. She knows that her country is poor and that she will probably have to marry rich, but she still remains hopeful that one day she could talk to Christophe.

**The Enchanter** is a sorcerer who is trying to create a potion that will make him invincible. However, he only needs a five-leafed clover that Angelique has and his servant was unable to attain. He decides to take matters into his own hands and no longer rely on Lise’s help. He plots to marry Angelique to obtain the clover. He fails and is defeated by Minet.

**Lise** is the Enchanter’s servant. She is very nervous about being around her master, as she has failed to get the last ingredient for his potion. She has a good heart and wishes no harm to anyone else and attempts to protect the princess from her master. She decides to help Minet with his plans to defeat the Enchanter by giving him the same tricks to use.
Before the Show

Synopsis

Minet, a large cat, longs for a pair of boots and a bag so that he will be able to help his master, Christophe, who has nothing but Minet. While fishing, Minet happens upon Princess Angelique who is picking flowers, who reveals that, though she would like to, she cannot talk to Christophe because he does not have a title above Marquis. Spurred by something Christophe said, Minet finds a five-leafed clover and gives it to Angelique. At that moment, Lise, the Enchanter’s servant, who has been searching for a five-leafed clover, begs for the clover unsuccessfully, and returns to the Enchanter’s castle. Minet returns to his fishing after Angelique leaves and catches the Enchanter disguised as a fish. In exchange for his freedom, the Enchanter gives Minet the boots and bag he longs for which upsets Christophe, who would have liked to have gold more. Seeing his master’s disappointment, Minet vows to make Christophe a Marquis.

On her way to the castle, Lise reveals her fear of her master and decides to pretend to be deaf so he will not get angry with her. The Enchanter, now in human form, finds out about Lise’s failure and uses magic to spy on Angelique and to find out what she has done with the clover. The Enchanter reveals that the five-leafed clover is needed for his potion to become invincible and that he will not perform any more transformations until the potion is complete. The Enchanter finds out that the royal family is in desperate need of money and plots to marry the princess in order to obtain her locket that contains the clover.

Meanwhile, Minet has left gifts at the palace from the Marquis of Carrabas and tries to convince Christophe to take a swim as a part of his plan. At first, Christophe refuses but later agrees because it will allow him to talk to Angelique. Angelique and her father are sitting in the garden when a trail of flowers leads Angelique to the gifts Minet left. The Enchanter shows up and convinces that King and Angelique that he is the Marquis of Carrabas and bestows gifts upon Angelique hoping to get the locket. The Enchanter expresses his wish to marry Angelique and the King agrees to the arrangement after viewing all the gifts the Enchanter has brought. The Enchanter then leaves to prepare his castle for a banquet with the royal family. Angelique hears Minet’s screams that the Marquis of Carrabas is drowning and she runs out to help. As Angelique and a “rescued” Christophe walk around the garden, Minet and the King discuss the imposter Marquis as Lise arrives to inform the royal family as to the Enchanter’s plan. Minet, being clever comes up with a plan to defeat the Enchanter.
Minet and Lise steal away from the banquet at the Enchanter’s in order to put the plan into motion. After the rest of the banquet party arrives, the Enchanter begins to perform magic tricks that Minet copies. Minet taunts the Enchanter to transform into a lion, which begrudgingly the Enchanter does. Minet then dares the Enchanter to turn into a mouse, which he does again. Minet chases the mouse and eats him defeating the Enchanter. The King gives Christophe the title Marquis of Carrabas and Minet the title Sir Boots.
Before the Show
Imagination and Interpretation

For this part students may use a sheet of paper to write down answers or even act out their answers.

What do you believe an Enchanter is?
- What would he look like?
- How would he act? Stand? Speak?
- What kind of magic would he perform?
- Would you like to be an Enchanter?
  - If so, what magic tricks would you like to perform?
  - Would you transform yourself too? Into what animal?

Minet is a big cat that can talk with other humans.
- How would you act if you were a cat?
- What kind of cat would you like to be?
- What would you wear?
- What would you eat?
- Make up a story about being a cat.

In this production the role of Minet the cat will be played by a human actress.
- How do you think this changes the character?
- Does the character seem real then?

Acting as an animal can be difficult and require a lot of work. Try acting as your favorite animal with the ability to talk. Where would you begin?
Before the Show

Perceptions

How do you react when you cannot get something you want?
- Do you yell and scream?
- Do you try to bargain for it?
- Is it something hard for you to get?
- What are some things you really want?

Do you think you are very clever?
- Do you like to come up with plans?
- What kind of plans do you think of?
- What do you think is the cleverest thing you have done?

Have you ever taken something from someone else?
- What did you take?
- How did it make that person feel?
- How did you feel?
- Was taking it okay?

Have you ever bossed someone around?
- Why did you do it?
- How do you think that person felt?
- How would you feel if you were bossed around?

Were you ever forbidden from doing something?
- What was it?
- Was there a reason for it?
- Did you follow that rule?
- Did you like following it?
After the Show
Discussion Questions

In *Puss in Boots*, Princess Angelique is not allowed to talk to Christophe because he does not have a title. Why is it so important to have a title?
- What does having a title mean?
- Was it right for the King to prevent Angelique from talking to Christophe?
- Why did he not just change the rules?

Minet was able to outsmart the Enchanter by tricking him. What do you think about this trick?
- What did you think about Minet?
- Was he clever? Or brave?
- Would you have done the same thing?

Lise was able to help the King and Minet to devise a plan. Why do you think she did this?
- Did she want to help? Or just get rid of the Enchanter?
- Would you have done the same thing?
- Why or Why not?

Other elements combine to create the world of the play such as the set and the costumes of each actor. The elements help to support the acting of the actors involved.
- What is your opinion of the set?
- Did you think the set helped to contribute to the show?
- What did you like about the set?

- What was your favorite costume?
- Why did you like it?
- Was there any costume you disliked? Why?
- Upon seeing Minet’s costume and makeup, did you imagine a cat?

- Did you find the Enchanter scary?
- Did you like Minet? Or did you not like him?
- Did you feel that the actors were convincing?
After the Show
Theatre and Performance

Have you ever seen a play before?
- Where was it?
- What did you think about it?

Do you think theatre is different from television or movies?
- How does it differ?
- How is it similar?

What were some of your expectations when watching *Puss in Boots*?
- Were your expectations met?
- Was it better than you thought? Or worse?

What was your favorite part of the play?

How would you put on a play?
- What do you need to perform?
- What type of play would you like to do?
- What would you want it to be like?
After the Show

Act it Out!

Now it’s time for you to put on a play of your own. Either dividing into smaller groups or as a whole class, pick a scene from any play, including *Puss in Boots* or write your own. Have the class decide on everything that is needed to perform their scene. This will allow them to act as directors and execute their ideas.

The students must figure out all the props and costumes they will need to perform the scene. They also must figure out how to move and act in their scene. Some ideas for scenes include:

- The Enchanter performing his magic tricks
- Minet fishing for food
- Two students talking about homework
- Students playing a game at recess