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Dramatic Publishing

Puss In Boots

Adapted by
Moses Goldberg



Puss In Boots

Fairy tale. Adapted by Moses Goldberg. Optional music by Bill Corcoran. Cast: 2m., 2w. This fairy tale is a fast-paced and witty interpretation of a beloved classic, especially for children from ages 4 to 8. An inventive prologue introduces the young audience to some of the conventions of the stage in an amusing way. The troupe then performs the familiar tale of the lovable Simple, who befriends an extremely clever cat. The cat is so grateful for Simple's friendship, and especially for the beautiful pair of boots she receives, that she promises to find Simple a place to live. With the audience's creative assistance, Puss also manages to find Simple a well-matched princess and helps Simple to defeat the evil ogre. *Simple scenery. May be performed in the round. Approximate running time: 50 minutes. Code: PG4.*

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Puss In Boots



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Puss In Boots

By

MOSES GOLDBERG



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This play was first performed by Stage One, Louisville
in 1978, with the following cast:

Wisteria / Princess.....	J. Smith-Cameron
Jones / Ogre/King.....	Gary Heilsberg
Fitzgerald / Simple.....	John Youngblood
Ms Dupres / Puss.....	Cheri Chenoweth

CHARACTERS

Wisteria

Princess Clarissa (These two must be doubled)

Jones

Ogre

King (These three must be doubled)

Fitzgerald

Simple (These two must be doubled)

Ms Dupres

Puss (These two must be doubled)

TIME

Once Upon a Time

SETTINGS

The bare stage.

The River

The King's Garden

Ogre's Castle

PUSS IN BOOTS
by Moses Goldberg

WISTERIA: *(enters with a scrap of paper)* What's this?

FITZGERALD: Don't read that!

WISTERIA: It says "To Wisteria".

FITZGERALD: You'll embarrass me.

WISTERIA: Don't be so bashful.

FITZGERALD: Well, whatever you do, don't read it out loud.

WISTERIA: "My friend, you gave my heart a toss
With hair so soft like Spanish moss.
I like your voice, your face, your hands,
Your eyes of black like frying pans.
Your skin is white like Elmer's glue
And when I'm dead,
I hope you are too."
Well, thanks a lot, Fitzgerald. Is that what you think of
me?

FITZGERALD: I spent an hour on that poem.

WISTERIA: And that's all you came up with. I don't want to be friends
with you any more. Here's your Smurf ring back. My eyes
are like frying pans!

FITZGERALD: Wisteria, please!

(They argue back and forth, JONES enters)

JONES: All right. Break it up. I don't care what's going on off-stage, but on-stage, you're friends! The audience is ready for the play. Today we're doing PUSS IN BOOTS. (*a reluctant truce*) Oh, there's going to be one small change in the casting. I will play the King, as usual. But, just for today, Wisteria, you will play the Ogre.

WISTERIA: What!

FITZGERALD: She's just right for it.

WISTERIA: Father, I won't. I learned the Princess and, besides, the costume only fits me. (*Exits*)

JONES: Okay! Fitzgerald, you will play the Ogre.

FITZGERALD: I have a contract that you signed that clearly says that I play the hero in PUSS IN BOOTS. And that's who I'll play. (*Exit*)

JONES: The Ogre is kind of a hero! Ms. Dupres...

DUPRES: Don't even think it. I didn't come all the way from Decatur, Alabama to play that freak. I know that cat. I've studied that cat and I'm going to play that cat.

JONES: Why am I always the one to play the Ogre? I guess you know this means I have to play two parts.

DUPRES: Why, Mr. Jones - - you're just the only one who could do it. You're the best actor we've got.

JONES: That's flattery.

DUPRES: You're right! (*Exits*)

JONES: It's flattery, but it's also true. *(he strikes a few poses)* I am pretty good. But I hate playing the Ogre. I have to wear this dirty, heavy costume. The ruff itches and the hood makes my ears hurt. But there's one good thing about playing the Ogre. I get to scare people.

WISTERIA: Dad, have you seen my shoe?

JONES: Boo! !

WISTERIA: Good morning to you, Your Majesty.

JONES: You're supposed to be terrified.

WISTERIA: That's the Ogre?

JONES: Yes, I have on the Ogre costume.

WISTERIA: You sound like the King. Dad, they are two different characters. They move and sound different.

JONES: I'll walk differently for the Ogre. *(he experiments)*

WISTERIA: That's not scary. It should be scary. He crawls around and hunts for snails and eats slugs.

JONES: How's this?

WISTERIA: That's better. And you could make your voice kind of slimey.

JONES: Slimey? Like this? *(he gets into it and scares WISTERIA)*

WISTERIA: *(to audience)* That's pretty scary, huh? Uh, that's good Dad. Could you go someplace else and practice?
(JONES exits)

FITZGERALD: *(enters)* Excuse me, Miss Jones.

WISTERIA: You'll notice I didn't speak to you.

FITZGERALD: Good.

WISTERIA: What are you doing?

FITZGERALD: Ms. Dupres asked me to get your father's robe. *(takes a blue cloth from the prop trunk)*

WISTERIA: Well, that proves how much you know. He doesn't wear that robe anymore.

FITZGERALD: Wisteria, let go.

WISTERIA: Give it to me... *(it tears)*

FITZGERALD: You ripped it!

WISTERIA: Well, I wouldn't have if you hadn't said my eyes look like frying pans.

FITZGERALD: I like your frying pans.

JONES: *(enters)* Are you two arguing again? What's that behind your back? Show me! That was my robe! My favorite robe! All right. Who did this? Wisteria!

WISTERIA: I'm sorry.

JONES: Wisteria, I can't believe you tore my robe. I'm going to have to...

FITZGERALD: Wait a minute. She didn't tear it.

WISTERIA: I didn't?

FITZGERALD: No. I did it. I got mad at you and I just ripped it apart.

JONES: Fitzgerald, I've had it with you. You're fired. You have 10 minutes to get out of this theatre. Now go and pack... Go on.

WISTERIA: No, father, you don't understand. He had this brilliant idea.

JONES: He did?

FITZGERALD: I did?

WISTERIA: Remember how much trouble it is to make the river for the play? We had to bring in buckets of water and mops and... Well, Fitzgerald thought if we ripped the robe and put it down like this, it would look like a...

JONES: A river! That was good thinking, Fitzgerald. *(exits)*

FITZGERALD: You saved my job!

WISTERIA: You saved my life!

(they shake hands. MS. DUPRES runs in.)

DUPRES: Let me through. *(looks in trunk)* I can't find my whiskers. I can't find those pipe cleaners I use for whiskers.

FITZGERALD: Well, they look goofy anyway. Just forget about them.

DUPRES: I can't. I have to look like a cat.

WISTERIA: What will you do, Ms. Dupres?

DUPRES: I'll just have to draw them on with makeup. Here, you hold the mirror. There... there... how does that look?

WISTERIA: There's one thing. Your nose looks like a lady's nose.

DUPRES: Good idea. I'll color it in. There. And draw some cat lips.

WISTERIA: I want whiskers!

DUPRES: No, you're the Princess and you look like a Princess already.

WISTERIA: Well, in the next play, I'll have whiskers. *(exits)*

(FITZGERALD has fallen asleep in the tree.)

DUPRES: Okay, Fitzgerald, it's time to start. Fitzgerald, will you go... Fitzgerald... Fitzgerald... FITZGERALD! Oh no, he's fallen asleep and it's time for the show. FITZGERALD! I can't make enough noise. *(to audience)* Could you help me? I need to make a big noise so Fitzgerald will wake up. When I count to 3, you make a loud noise. 1... 2... 3.

FITZGERALD: Was I asleep?

DUPRES: *(to audience.)* Thank you! Yes, it's almost time for the overture. *(to audience.)* Hey, if we need your help during the show, would you help us? Thanks. *(exits)*

OVERTURE *(All the music is optional. The cast plays a medley of tunes from the play on appropriate instruments)*

SCENE ONE: The river.

(Puss is asleep in a tree.)

PUSS: Meow. Morning! Time for breakfast. Here I come Fishy! *(She gets on a rock and just as she catches a preset fish, OGRE enters.)*

OGRE: Any snails around here? Hey, what's this?

PUSS: Hey, that's my leg!

OGRE: Is it edible?

PUSS: NO!

OGRE: What are you?

PUSS: A cat.

OGRE: What's in your paw?

PUSS: A fish.

OGRE: Put it back in my river!

PUSS: No. I caught it for breakfast!

OGRE: You eat fish!

PUSS: I eat a fish every day.

OGRE: Put it back or I'll throw you in the river.

PUSS: NO!

(A chase starts and PUSS loses the OGRE by hiding in the audience.)

OGRE: People think that they can come into your river day and night and take your fish. They never pay any attention to... What was I doing? Oh yes... the cat! Have you seen a cat? She has long, pointed ears... like that kid over there. She's wearing a coat like that kid over there. She has long...WHISKERS! *(throws PUSS into the river and exits. SIMPLE enters.)*

PUSS: Help! I can't swim. I'm drowning!

SIMPLE: Nice day. Hey, you're... I'll... Here I come Kitty. *(He pulls her onto the bank.)* Come on Kitty. What are you doing in the river? Cats don't like water. You're all wet. I'll dry you off.

- PUSS:** Cold!
- SIMPLE:** That won't work. I've got to blow warm air like a summer breeze. *(to audience)* Can you help me? Could you all blow warm breezes? *(if necessary:)* On the count of three, everybody blow a nice warm breeze. One. Two. Three... That's good. It's working! Thank you. *(to Puss)* You're dry now. Are you OK?
- PUSS:** Yes.
- SIMPLE:** You got your ears all muffy. Nice ears.
- PUSS:** Thank you for saving my life.
- SIMPLE:** Sure. You're so pretty. Well, if you're OK, I'll just go on.
- PUSS:** Bye.
- SIMPLE:** *(has gone, but returns)* Are you sure you're all right?
- PUSS:** Yes, and thank you for pulling me out.
- SIMPLE:** Well, bye.
- PUSS:** Bye.
- SIMPLE:** *(again leaves, then returns)* What were you doing in the water?
- PUSS:** The Ogre threw me in because I caught one of his fish.
- SIMPLE:** Boy, that Ogre makes life miserable for everyone in the valley. He tore down my house.
- PUSS:** He tore down your house! Where do you live?
- SIMPLE:** I don't. I sleep in the woods.
- PUSS:** So do I. I sleep in this tree.

SIMPLE: Do you? That's a nice tree. Well, I better go. I've got a lot to do today. Bye.

PUSS: My name is Puss.

SIMPLE: Hello, Puss. Simple. That's my name. My name is Simple but everyone just calls me... Simple. Simple...Puss... Simple...Puss. So long.

PUSS: What do you have to do today.

SIMPLE: I know I'll be hungry tonight so I have to catch a rabbit. It will take me all day. I'm not very good at catching rabbits. Bye.

PUSS: I can catch rabbits.

SIMPLE: You can?

PUSS: I'm the best rabbit-catcher in the world... but I can't swim.

SIMPLE: I can swim a little but I can't catch rabbits!

PUSS: I used to catch rabbits for my old master.

SIMPLE: Did you have a master?

PUSS: Yes, but he's gone now.

SIMPLE: That sounds lonely.

PUSS: It is.

SIMPLE: I used to have a pet pig, but he's gone now, too.

PUSS: That sounds lonely.

SIMPLE: Yes, but you can't cry over spilt milk. Bye.

PUSS: Simple. I could catch you a rabbit.

SIMPLE: You could! Oh, no. I know you've got better things to do today.

PUSS: I don't really have anything better to do.

SIMPLE: You don't.

PUSS: No.

SIMPLE: Neither do I!

PUSS: Why don't we do it together?

(Optional) SONG #1 -- IT'LL BE ME

PUSS:

Just suppose you're sittin'
Undemeath an oak or elm tree.
Watchin' little ants go by,
Busy as they can be.
Suddenly you realize
There are more than two eyes starin'
It'll be me, helpin' ya watch 'em.

SIMPLE:

What if you were starvin'
And you went to pick some cherries.
Into a big paper bag,
Puttin' juicy berries.
Suddenly you realize
Lots of hands are getting sticky.
It'll be me, helpin' ya pick 'em.

BOTH:

Or if you lay down,
Under a cloud-filled sky,
And you were figurin' out