



Petite Rouge

A Cajun Red Riding Hood

Based on the book by **Mike Artell**
Illustrated by **Jim Harris**
Adapted by **Joan Cushing**
Book, Music and Lyrics by **Joan Cushing**

Directed by **Dwayne Hartford**

Music Direction by **Alan Ruch**

Choreography by **Joanne Yeoman**

Scenic Design by **Kenton Jones**

Costume Design by **Rebecca Akins**

Lighting Design by **Michael J. Eddy**

Sound Design by **David Temby**

Stage Manager: **Sam Ries**

The Cast

Petite Rouge. Yolanda London
TeJean. Michael Arbuckle
Claude the Alligator. D. Scott Withers
Crayfish/Mrs. Duck. Lisa Fogel
Turtle/Grandmere. Katie McFadzen
Frog/Riverboat Captain. Jesse Havea

April 2007, Herberger Theater, Stage West
May 2007, Mesa Arts Center

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Arizona Commission on the Arts
Bashas' Markets
City of Tempe/Tempe Municipal Arts Commission
Wells Fargo

**Preview Guide for Parents and Teachers
to Childsplay's Production of**

Petite Rouge

We hope you find this guide helpful in preparing your students for an enjoyable and educational theatrical experience. Included you'll find things to talk about before and after seeing the performance, classroom activities that deal with curriculum connections and education standards, and resource materials.

The Story:

Mike Artell's book *Petite Rouge: A Cajun Red Riding Hood* comes to life in a foot stomping, red hot musical production.

Petite Rouge and her "goody goody, fraidy cat" friend TeJean set off on a journey across the bayou to Thibodaux, with a care package of gumbo and hot sauce for Grandmere who is sick in bed with the flu. The pair promises Mrs. Duck that they will go "straight dere and straight back." But, for a girl who is longing for adventure and excitement, "straight dere and straight back" is a promise that is pretty tough to keep.

Sidetracked by a quest for an "even hotter" hot sauce, Petite and TeJean come across Claude the Gator who is looking for a something tasty to eat. Claude's preparing a marinade for his next meal and he's in the mood for some duck! Claude devises a plan to "get him some duck" but Petite and TeJean catch on quickly and escape with the help of some gator trappers looking for a hide to tan.

Claude follows the pair onto a riverboat, and into New Orleans where Mardi Gras is in full swing. Traveling through a bright new world of masks, beads and Dixieland bands, Petite finally finds the adventure and excitement she'd been longing for. But all this adventure has her longing for home and wishing she had kept her promise. Finally, they make it to Grandmere's house where her "big nose and short arms" make TeJean's hair stand on end. Will Claude finally get his Duck a l'orange? Or, will Petite and TeJean make it home safe and sound?

Theater Etiquette: It's helpful to review theater etiquette before seeing a show, especially since this may be the first live theater experience for some of your students. Please take a moment to discuss the following pointers prior to seeing the performance:

- ~Use the restroom before seeing the show as we do not have intermission during our school performances.
- ~Stay seated during the performance.
- ~ Be respectful to the performers and other people in the audience by not talking during the performance.
- ~ Appropriate responses such as applause or laughter are always welcome.
- ~Use of cell phones (including text messaging), cameras or any other recording device is *not allowed in the theater at any time!*

Things to Talk About and Do Before Seeing the Show

The History of the *Little Red Riding Hood* Story: We all know the famous folktale about a young girl's encounter with a wolf. A strong morality tale, it teaches children not to "wander off the path." The story has changed much in its history, and been subject to numerous modern adaptations and readings. The origins of *Red Riding Hood* can be traced to oral versions as early as the 14th century. The earliest known printed version was in 1697 by Charles Perrault and in which the moral is interpreted as a warning to young women about the advances of men. The most well-known adaptation is that of the Brothers' Grimm (around 1812) where the moral is about the consequences of what might happen to you if you don't listen to your parents. Multiple variations of the story have been written in the past century, which adapt the Grimm's tale to their own interests. These adaptations often empower Little Red, have some twist of social satire or give the wolf victim status under the term *misunderstood*.

Read the Book! The play is based on the book *Petite Rouge, A Cajun Red Riding Hood* by Mike Artell with wonderful illustrations by Jim Harris. Read it together as a class before seeing the play. It is also interesting to compare and contrast other versions of this classic fairytale. Use the booklist and internet links in this guide as a starting point to find various adaptations. How many can you find?

Cajun Culture: The play takes place in New Orleans

and Acadiana in Louisiana. Acadiana is the name given to the region of French Louisiana that is home to the Cajun people, who settled along the bayous and prairies of southwest Louisiana after their expulsion from Acadie (Nova Scotia) in 1755. The Cajun people are known to be warm and wonderfully hospitable, living simple but rich lives. Food, music and dancing are a big part of the culture. The Cajun language is a mixture of French, Indian, African, and English. It is mostly French, but when a French word is not known, the English word is thrown in. The Cajun dialect can be challenging for English speakers to understand but is very interesting to listen to.

Mardi Gras: A big part of Cajun culture, Mardi Gras literally means Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday which marks the beginning of Lent. During the weeks that lead up to Fat Tuesday, parades are held throughout the area. Participants wear traditional masks and costumes and toss "throws" to the crowds who participate by stampeding to catch as much of this "loot" as they can. The "throws" consist of beads, plastic cups, doubloons (metal or plastic coins), and other items.

Jazz Funeral: A New Orleans funeral ritual that involves friends, relatives and a band of musicians. The participants slowly parade to the cemetery while the band plays very slowly and mournfully a dirge, or an old Negro spiritual such as *Nearer My God to Thee*, and on the return from the cemetery, the band plays an upbeat or ragtime song like *When the Saints Go Marching In*, while the participants dance and celebrate the life of the one who has passed.

Cajun Phrases to Review:
Fais-do-do (Fay Doe doe): A traditional South Louisiana dance party with Cajun and Zydeco music.

Pirogue (PEE rowg): a narrow, flat canoe that is pushed or paddled through the swamp

Grandmere (gawnd mare): French term for Grandmother

Zydeco (zie-de-coe): Cajun country music with blues and jazz influences.

Mon ami (moan ah-me): my friend

File (FEE lay): a seasoning made of ground sassafras root.

Boudin (BOO dan): a kind of Cajun sausage

Etouffee (eh-too-fay)

A tangy dish, usually made with crawfish or shrimp, prepared by simmering over a slow flame.

Alligators:

Instead of a big bad wolf the antagonist in this production is Claude the Alligator. Real alligators are fascinating creatures. Here are some interesting facts:

~The largest alligator ever recorded measured 19 feet 2 inches and was found in Louisiana.

~Alligators live in freshwater lakes, rivers, and swamps. They occasionally live in brackish (a mix of fresh and salt) water.

~On land alligators can lumber along dragging their tails, or they can walk on their toes with most of the tail well off the ground. Using this "high walk" alligators can run up to 30 miles per hour for short distances!

~Alligators in the wild are believed to live 35-50 years.

~In 1967, the American Alligator was placed on the first endangered species list due to excessive killing for the use of the meat and skins.

Things to Talk About and Do After the Performance:

✳️ All plays have three P's: People in a Place with a Problem. Where does the play take place (setting)? Who are the people (or characters)? What are the problems (conflicts)? What happens at the beginning of the play? The middle? The end?

✳️ Petite Rouge disobeys her mother when going to Grandmere's. She doesn't go "straight dere and straight back." What happens to her? What are the consequences for not following the rules in your classroom or at home?

✳️ If you got to play one of the characters in *Petite Rouge* which one would it be and why?

Your Own Red Riding Hood:

In small groups of two or three, find at least two versions of *Little Red Riding Hood* in the library or on the internet. Write down your favorite parts of the stories. Now, taking bits of each adaptation and/or adding new ideas come up with your own version of the story. Write it down and add illustrations. Share your story with the rest of the class.

Who Lives in the Bayou?

Study the terrain of the Louisiana Bayou. How many types of creatures inhabit it? Research these creatures and find out how they move, what they eat, where they live, etc. Now, choose one creature that you can base a character on. Decide on a name, age, and job for your character. Now, think about ways that the creature moves. How can you use the real creature to influence your character? Once you have made physical choices for your character, introduce yourself to the rest of the class by walking to the center of the room as your

character, telling the audience your name, age and job, and then continuing to walk across the room again sharing the physical choices you've made.

Different Endings: The play ends with Rouge and TeJean returning safely home. Rewrite the ending so that something different occurs. Does something different happen to Claude? To Grandmere? To Rouge and TeJean? Use your creativity and write what you think should happen differently.

Safety First:

In the play, Mrs. Duck warns Rouge about the dangers on the path to Grandmere's house. What sorts of dangers do your parents warn you about? Come up with a short commercial (sixty seconds or less) that teaches about an element of safety. Write your ideas down, rehearse the commercial and then share it with your class. If you can, record them with a camcorder and then watch them all.

Grandmere's Hot Sauce:

Grandmere likes her hot sauce really hot! Create a label for a bottle of hot sauce that Grandmere might sell. What is it called? Is there a picture of her on the label? Use markers, colored pencils or even paints to create your label. If you can, glue it over an existing label on a bottle of hot sauce. Display in your classroom!

Mrs. Duck's Corn Bread:

Try 'an make dis here corn bread, da same dat Rouge take to Grandmere!

- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1/2 cup all purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 can creamed corn
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted

butter, melted, cooled slightly
1 large egg, beaten to blend
~Po'sition da rack in da center of da oven; preheat dat dere oven to 400°F. Butter 8-inch square baking pan. Whisk cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in large bowl to blend. (Don't spill any, an' if you do, be sure to pass a mop). Add creamed corn, butter and egg. Stir just until blended. Spoon dat batter into pan. Bake until da tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 20 minutes. Cool in pan on rack. Dat dere be da best corn bread ever, for true! **Bon Appetite ma cher!**

Mardi Gras Activities:

Purple, green and gold are the official colors of Mardi Gras but you can use whichever colors you like for these projects. Once you've finished, have a Mardi Gras parade around your school!

~**Masks**~ Cut a paper plate into the shape of a half mask. Decorate with feathers, glitter, sequins or whatever. Attach a piece of elastic to each side and try it on for size.

~**Beads**~ It is a tradition to wear colorful beads during Mardi Gras. You can make carnival beads from salt clay or self-drying pottery clay. Roll pieces of clay into small balls or different shapes. Using straws or toothpicks, poke holes in the beads. Place the beads on a tray to dry. Use paint, glitter or markers to decorate your beads. Use yarn to string your beads into a necklace.

~**Shaker Noisemakers**~ Collect empty water bottles with lids. Use acrylic paint, glitter, ribbons or whatever to decorate them. Make sure the bottle is dry on the inside and drop some dried beans into it. Put the lid back on any you have a shaker noisemaker!

Petite Rouge Booklist

Prepared with the help of Tim Wadham,
Youth Services Coordinator for the
Maricopa County Library District



Little Red Riding Hood is a folktale that has been retold many different times, in many different ways. Here are some of the best versions:

Petite Rouge: A Cajun Twist to an Old Tale by Sheila Hebert Collins
Little Red Riding Hood: A Newfangled Prairie Tale by Lisa Campbell Ernst
Little Red Riding Hood/Caperucita Roja by Pau Estrada
Little Red Riding Hood by Paul Galdone
Little Red Riding Hood by Trina Schart Hyman
Little Red Cowboy Hat by Susan Lowell
Ooops! by Colin McNaughton
Red Ridin' in the Hood and Other Cuentos by Patricia Santos Marcantonio
Red Riding Hood by James Marshall
The Little Red Riding Hood Rebus Book by Ann Morris
Yo, Hungry Wolf!: A Nursery Rap by David Vozar
Little Red Riding Hood by William Wegman
Lon Po Po: A Red Riding Hood Story from China by Ed Young

Cajun Culture

Cajun Home by Raymond Bial
Cendrillon: A Cajun Cinderella by Sheila Hebert Collins
Clovis Crawfish and Echo Gecko by Mary Alice Fontenot
There Was an Ol' Cajun by Deborah Ousely Kadair
Mardi Gras by Diane M. MacMillan
The Bourbon Street Musicians by Kathy Price
Why Alligator Hates Dog: A Cajun Folktale by J. J. Reneaux
Haunted Bayou and Other Cajun Ghost Stories by J. J. Reneaux
Little Pierre: A Cajun Story from Louisiana by Robert D. San Souci
Feliciana Meets d'Loup Garou: a Cajun Tall Tale by Tynia Thomassie
Cajun Through and Through by Tynia Thomassie
Cajun Night Before Christmas by Trosclair

Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras: Parades, Costumes and Parties by Elaine Landau
The Greentail Mouse by Leo Lionni
Mardi Gras by Dianne MacMillan
On Mardi Gras Day by Fatima Shaik



Interesting Internet Links

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Red_Riding_Hood
-a very detailed history of *Little Red Riding Hood*
www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0333.html
-several different online versions of the story
www.endicott-studio.com/rdrm/rrPathNeedles.html
-another great site for info on the history of *Red Riding Hood*
www.surlalunefairytales.com/ridinghood/themes.html
-a source for modern versions of the story
www.nps.gov/archive/ever/eco/gator.htm
-lots of info on alligators from Everglades National Park
www.cajuns.com
-info on all things Cajun
www.gumbopages.com/acadiana
-detailed links to area known as Acadiana



Arizona Academic Standards

Your visit to the theater as well as the preparation and follow up activities can involve many content areas from the Arizona Department of Education K-12 Academic Standards. Many of the suggested discussion topics and activities can be tied to standards in several areas. *If you would like a more detailed list of standard connections for your particular grade we would be happy to assist.* Simply email Katie McFadzen at kmcfadzen@childsplayaz.org or call 480-350-8105.



Check our website in late March for **Backstage Notes on *Petite Rouge***
*Click on "For Schools," then "Preview Guides"

About Childsplay:
Childsplay is a non-profit professional theatre company of adult actors, performing for young audiences and families. Our Mission is to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, the hallmarks of childhood, which are the keys to the future. We love to hear from our audience members!



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