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*Dramatic Publishing*

# Puss In Boots

Adapted by  
Madge Miller



# Puss In Boots

*Fairy tale. Adapted by Madge Miller. Cast: 3m., 2w., 1 either gender. Suitable for an all-female cast. This adaptation is an amazing tale of a remarkable cat who made his master's fortune. Christophe, the miller's son, deprived of his rightful inheritance, is left nothing but a pet cat—but Puss proves to be a valuable property. Through his daring antics, Puss contrives to have his master made a marquis, which makes it possible for him to win a princess for his bride and finally dispose of a wicked enchanter. A listing is available in the script containing specifications for props and sound effects. Three sets. Fairy tale costumes. Approximate running time: 45 minutes. Code: PG5.*

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Puss In Boots



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Adapted by  
MADGE MILLER



**Dramatic Publishing Company**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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## PUSS IN BOOTS

**CHARACTERS:** Christophe, *a Miller's son*  
Minet, *His Cat*  
Claude, *King of La Campagne*  
Angelique, *His Daughter*  
The Enchanter  
Lise, *His Servant*

**SCENE 1:** The Forest

**SCENE 2:** The Enchanter's Palace

**SCENE 3:** The King's Garden

**SCENE 4:** The Enchanter's Palace

**Time:** Many Centuries Ago

**Place:** The Kingdom of La Campagne

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## SCENE ONE

*It is the forest near the palace. There are trees, shrubbery, and flowers in abundance, it being Spring. A fallen tree trunk serves as a resting-place L; An unseen brook crosses the stage from UR to UL, with a rocky ledge above it C from which the Cat fishes.*

*A small brown rabbit (Toy) stirs about DL as the curtain rises. Minet, a large gray cat, comes stealthily on R, circling around trees and bushes, intent on catching the rabbit. Just as it seems that he can pounce successfully, he yowls in anguish and hops about, holding one hind paw; the rabbit, of course, disappears off L. Christophe, a handsome boy of about twenty, enters R, an axe over one shoulder. He wears dark blue patched breeches, coarse gray stockings, and black sandals; his cream-colored tunic has peasant smocking on wrists, neck, and hem in red, dark blue and black. About his neck and across his back runs a cord from which hangs a black fabric bag.*

MINET (*Howling, holding paw*): Mmmrrrowr!

CHRISTOPHE (*Entering*): Minet! What is it?

MINET: A bramble—in my paw!

*(He rolls over on the ground, and while on his back extracts the bramble from a hind paw.)*

Mrrrrrowr! There . . . I have it.

CHRISTOPHE (*Shaking his head*): Do you have the rabbit too?

MINET: I almost did, and what a tasty dish he would have made for dinner! (*Rising.*) But I couldn't help it. Oh, dear master, when will you buy me boots? Then the brambles won't ever hurt me, and I'll catch you pheasant, rabbit, squirrel, and mice by the tens and dozens!

CHRISTOPHE (*Laughing*): Mice! What would I do with them, pray?

MINET (*Laughing cat-fashion*): Of course! I keep forgetting that you won't eat the choicest food of all, a large plump mouse! Well then, I'll save those for myself. But, truly, master, if you'll just give me a pair of boots and a leather bag—

CHRISTOPHE (*Sternly*): Minet, you have asked me that before. Do you remember what my answer was?

MINET (*Abashed*): Yes . . . (*Dolefully.*) No!

CHRISTOPHE: You know why I must answer so. I have no money—not a sou for anything except what we must have to live. The little I can earn by chopping wood I spend on bread and milk and cheese. (*Showing foot in rough sandal.*) Have I a pair of boots? (*Hanging cloth bag from tree limb.*) Have I a leather bag?



MINET: You would have, if your brothers hadn't been such greedy men. They turned you out with nothing but the clothes upon your back. GRRRRowr!

CHRISTOPHE (*Sitting on tree trunk*): And you. But you were all my father left to me. To them he left his mill and a sturdy donkey.

MINET (*Hopefully*): A mill can't catch a mouse, nor a donkey climb a tree!

CHRISTOPHE (*Smiling in spite of himself*): No, of course they can't.

MINET: And I'll never ask for boots or a bag again. I promise!

CHRISTOPHE (*Stroking the cat's head*): My good Minet! When I can buy them for you, I shall do it gladly. (*Rising.*) But, till then, we have a warm dry cabin made of logs, my axe, and fish for dinner if you'll catch them. Stay here by the stream and try your luck. (*Exiting L.*) I'll just be over yonder.

MINET (*Watching him leave*): My dear kind master! I must be a better cat, and never beg him to buy boots again. But catching rabbits will be quite impossible. Still, a fine fish, freshly caught, can be delightful. Come, Minet, to work!

(*He approaches the hidden stream upstage, looks and listens, then springs to overhanging ledge, facing downstage, and begins to plunge his paw into the water at intervals.*)

(*After a moment Princess Angelique enters DR. She is a lovely young girl with blond hair and a rosy, smiling face. Her gown is pale yellow and simply made; its flowing sash and her slippers are blue. Over her arm she carries a flat wicker basket in which are fresh flowers. The only indication of her rank is a small gold coronet on her head. She wears a gold locket about her neck.*)

ANGELIQUE (*Spying flower extreme L*): Oh, there's a lovely one. It's pink. (*Going to pick it.*) It will go well on the breakfast table.

MINET (*Admiringly*): Mrrrrrowr!

ANGELIQUE (*In alarm*): Ohhhhh... an animal!

MINET (*Jumping down from ledge*): Don't run!

(*But she has begun to run R and drops her basket.*)

Now you've dropped your basket. Let me pick these up.

Can't you see I'm just a cat? You're surely not afraid of cats, are you?

(*Angelique stops in surprise and curiosity.*)

ANGELIQUE (*With spirit*): Of course not. (*Drawing nearer.*)

Why, you are a cat. But such a large one! And how well you talk! Have you a name?

MINET: A very fine name. I'm Minet. And do you have one too?

ANGELIQUE (*Laughing*): Yes, I am Princess Angelique.

MINET: How long your name is! It comes in two pieces. Wouldn't just one be enough?

ANGELIQUE: But "Princess" isn't my name. That's a kind of title. (*As Minet looks puzzled.*) It means that I'm of royal blood, and may someday become a queen.

MINET: Is it good to have a title?

ANGELIQUE: Yes . . . I guess so.

MINET (*Eagerly*): What does a princess have to do?

ANGELIQUE: Why, study hard, and be polite to everyone, and feed the poor.

MINET: "Study" . . . yes, he does that. "Be polite" . . . he is. And I am poor and he feeds me. He always shares his bread and cheese. (*Becoming excited.*) Why, then, my master is a princess too. How splendid!

ANGELIQUE (*Laughing*): No, Minet. He couldn't be. Only girls are princesses. (*As the cat looks crestfallen.*) But he could be a prince.

MINET (*Capering about*): He could? Then that is what he is—a prince of men!

ANGELIQUE: What is his name? Perhaps I've heard of him.

MINET: His name? I call him "Master." But when his father used to speak to him, he'd say, "Christophe."

ANGELIQUE: Prince Christophe? No, I don't think I know him.

MINET: Then you shall! (*Calling off L.*) Master! Oh, good master! Come at once! I've found a princess who would like to meet you. Master, are you coming?

(*The sound of chopping has stopped. Christophe's voice is heard before he enters, carrying his axe.*)

CHRISTOPHE (*Off*): What nonsense is it now, Minet? (*Entering.*) A princess—in these woods? Have you made me stop my work for—(*Seeing Angelique.*) Why, a princess!

(*He bows low. Angelique is disappointed, Minet delighted.*)

MINET (*Capering*): Didn't I tell you?

ANGELIQUE: A wood-cutter! Oh, good gracious! (*To Minet, accusingly.*) And you said he was a prince!

MINET (*Confused*): But he studies hard, and is polite, and feeds me!

CHRISTOPHE: Hush, Minet. This is Princess Angelique, the only daughter of the king.

ANGELIQUE (*With a sigh*): Minet, your master's very nice, I'm certain, but, you see, we have such horrid rules at court that I can't speak to him!

MINET: Can't speak? Why, what's the matter? Did you choke? Shall I thump your back?

CHRISTOPHE: Minet!

ANGELIQUE: No, no, I mean I'm not allowed to speak to anyone

below the title of Marquis. Oh, what a pity! I should like to talk to Christophe. Will you tell him for me, please?

MINET (*Importantly*): The Princess Angelique begs me to tell you—

CHRISTOPHE: Yes, I heard. And I thank Her Highness for her kindness. If I were a Marquis, oh, how gladly would I listen!

MINET (*Pondering*): But he must become a Marquis first. It's very simple, then. What does he have to do to be one?

ANGELIQUE (*Hesitating*): Why . . . A Marquis has a castle, usually. And great riches . . . (*Apologetically.*) and fine clothes

CHRISTOPHE (*Bitterly*): And I have none of them, and never will!

ANGELIQUE (*To Minet*): Please tell your master for me that perhaps, if he works hard, and chops a very great deal of wood—

CHRISTOPHE: I could buy a castle? No, it's quite impossible. It would be easier to find a five-leafed clover! (*Bowing.*) My respects to Her Highness. I shall get back to chopping wood now.

ANGELIQUE: Must you—that is, must he leave?

CHRISTOPHE: My axe, Minet.

(*Minet stoops to pick up the axe, hands it to Christophe, then looks back at plot of grass, gets down on all fours.*)

ANGELIQUE (*Agitated*): I should like us to meet again!

CHRISTOPHE (*Stalking off L gloomily*): Farewell!

ANGELIQUE: Oh, dear! Such a silly rule! If I could change it . . .

MINET (*Springing up with a cry of triumph*): Mrrrrrowr! It is! I have it! Just see! I found it! Mrrrrrowr!

ANGELIQUE: But what, Minet? What did you find?

MINET (*Showing her*): A five-leafed clover! Just now—in the grass! (*Counting leaves.*) One-two-three-four-five! Now you and Christophe can be friends!

ANGELIQUE: Oh, Minet—

MINET: Didn't my master say it would be easier to find a five-leafed clover than to be a Marquis? Well, I found it!

ANGELIQUE: Yes, I know you did, And perhaps it does mean something. But to be a Marquis . . . oh, that means a great deal too.

MINET: A castle . . . riches . . . and fine clothes—I'll find a way!

ANGELIQUE (*Hopefully*): Do you think you can?

MINET (*Boastfully*): I found a five-leafed clover, didn't I?

(*A strange old woman hurries on, drawn by these words. Her dress is bright and gypsyist in pattern, and she wears a dark apron with odd symbols worked on it in gold. Dangling earrings, a green scarf tight about her head, and bright green slippers complete her costume. She carries a large basket.*)

LISE: You did? Give it here. I want it!

MINET: Who are you?

LISE (*Drawing purse from basket*): Oh, I'll pay well.

ANGELIQUE: For my five-leaved clover? No!

MINET: I found it for the Princess Angelique.

LISE (*Becoming obsequious, bowing*): The Princess Angelique? Your Highness, I crave your pardon, but the clover must be mine. I need it for a recipe my master is preparing. Here—see this list.

(*She sets basket down and unfolds from it a five-foot list of printed ingredients.*)

It has taken two full years, but I have found each thing that's called for, all but one.

MINET: A five-leaved clover?

LISE: Yes, just so. My master is a man of violent temper. He has told me that I dare not fail again to find a five-leaved clover. Please, Your Highness, give me that one in your hand! It may well be the only clover of its kind!

ANGELIQUE (*Troubled*): I should like to help you, but I need it for myself. (*Putting it in locket.*) Yes, I'm going to put it in my locket. Then perhaps it won't be long before Christophe and I are friends.

MINET (*Approvingly*): Mrrrrrowr!

LISE: O woe! Woe and sorrow! What a rage he'll be in when I tell him!

MINET: What is the recipe he's making? Why on earth would anyone eat that?

LISE: It's not a recipe for eating, but for—(*Clapping hand over mouth.*) I have said too much. If you will not give it to me . . . ah, alack! This is a sorry day for all of us, I fear.

ANGELIQUE: Who is your master? Why are you afraid of him?

LISE (*Not listening*): A sorry, sorry day! Then I must search and search again. (*Pausing in her exit R.*) But if that is the only one, who knows what he may do? (*Exiting, ominously.*) My master is a strange and dreadful man!

ANGELIQUE (*Shivering a little*): Brrrrrr! Does she make you shiver too, Minet?

MINET: I feel a feeling like a snowflake sliding down my back.

ANGELIQUE: Still, he couldn't be so very angry over just one little five-leaved clover.

MINET: And you are the Princess! Princesses don't need to be afraid, I shouldn't think.

ANGELIQUE (*Firmly*): I'll just tell father. (*Smiling.*) And I'll tell him too about Christophe. Perhaps he'll even know a way to change the rule about whom I may speak to!

(*She starts to run off R. Minet springs toward the basket and calls.*)

MINET (*Handing it to her*): Your basket!

ANGELIQUE: Oh, yes. (*Kissing cat's head lightly.*) Thank you, dear Minet. I hope that I may see you and your master soon!

(*She exits R. Minet very nearly swoons in ecstasy, rolls over, and purrs.*)

MINET: Mrrrowr . . . mrowr . . . mrrrrrrowrrrrrr . . . why, she might even scratch behind my ears if I had boots! (*Bounding up, admiring himself in stream.*) I am a handsome cat, there's no denying. My fine straight ears . . . my silky whiskers . . . my pink nose—what's that? (*Leaning over stream.*) Slipping in between the stones—a fish! Yes, quite a large one. And I promised my good master that I'd catch some fish for dinner. (*Springing to ledge.*) Now to watch and wait!

(*He crouches with chin on paws, watching an imaginary fish swimming back and forth. Then stealthily he raises one fore-paw and after one or two false starts plunges it into the stream below. There is much splashing as he pulls up (from a hidden pail) a large black and scarlet (rubber) fish which seems to wriggle in his paws.*)

A-ha! I have him! Next I'll tap his head against this stone—

FISH (ENCHANTER) (*In strange disembodied voice over P. A. offstage*): No, no! I beg you, free me!

MINET (*Almost dropping fish in his surprise*): What? Are you talking to me? That won't help. I need you for our dinner.

FISH: Stop! If you let me go, I'll grant you anything you wish.

MINET: But how can a fish do that?

FISH: Release me and I'll show you. (*Coaxingly.*) Anything you wish! You have my promise.

MINET: I don't know . . .

FISH: What one thing do you want more than any other? If it's money—

MINET: No! A pair of boots! Boots of red leather! And a leather bag. Can you get them for me?

FISH: Boots and a bag? Of course! But quickly—for I cannot breathe above the water! Let me go, then in a moment look behind the bushes to your left!

MINET: Boots and a bag! I'll do it! (*Throwing fish down with splash.*) There! (*Peering in.*) He's gone from sight already. (*Springing down from ledge.*) But will I really find the boots? My boots of bright red leather? Or was it just a trick, and have I let our dinner get away for nothing? I'm afraid to look. (*Creeping L.*) Behind these bushes, so he said. (*Going almost off L.*) I don't see . . . yes! Yes, here they are!

(*He springs out carrying a pair of high red leather boots and a large red leather pouch. He hugs them, capering about in delight.*)

Red leather! Oh, how handsome! And the bag—yes, just the size for catching rabbits. Mrrrowr! What splendid dinners we shall have now, with my hind paws safe from brambles!

*(He sits on the fallen log and begins to tug the boots on.)*

How proud he'll be, my good kind master, when he sees them! Ugh . . . for I didn't break my word . . . I didn't ask him for the boots. There! *(Strutting about.)* It's just like walking on the softest moss. And they do become me. *(Picking up bag.)* Now with my bag I can creep up to the shyest rabbit . . . *(Pretending to do so.)* . . . and have this down about its ears before its nose can wiggle! That's just what I'll do, and have a great surprise for my master. Mrrrowr!

CHRISTOPHE *(Entering L, wearily)*: Surprise? What are you up to now, Minet?

*(The cat jumps behind a bush so that the boots are not visible, and holds the bag behind his back. Christophe unslings the shabby bag from the tree limb and sits down beside the log, leaning his back against it and starting to take their repast from the bag.)*

Come, here is bread for you, and a bit of cheese.

MINET *(Scornfully)*: Bread-cheese—mrrrowr! What would you say to tasty rabbit? I can catch one now!

CHRISTOPHE: You can?

MINET: Just close your eyes until I count to ten.

*(Christophe sighs, closes his eyes, and continues eating. Minet tiptoes from R off L past Christophe as he counts, hurrying his steps as he passes his master.)*

One—two—three—four—five . . . sixseveineight . . . nine—*(Off)* ten!

CHRISTOPHE *(After a moment)*: Well? Shall I open them? *(Waiting, then opening eyes.)* Minet! Minet, where are you? Is this another of your tricks? Naughty puss! I'll not go looking for you.

MINET *(Off in triumph)*: Mrrrrrowr!

CHRISTOPHE *(Springing up in alarm)*: Minet! What is it?

MINET *(Entering L with a bound)*: What, indeed, but rabbit for your dinner! *(Opening bag.)* Look inside!

CHRISTOPHE: A leather bag! *(Looking down at Minet's feet.)* And boots of fine red leather!

MINET *(Capering about)*: Aren't they handsome? Don't I make a splendid sight?

CHRISTOPHE: What mischief were you up to? How did you get these things, Minet?

MINET: Why, by my cleverness. He said, "What do you want?" and I said, "Boots!"

CHRISTOPHE: He? Who has been here?

MINET: Just a fish.

CHRISTOPHE: Minet! Explain yourself, before I lose my patience.

MINET: But it was a fish, dear master. I had caught him in my paws, when he cried, "Let me go and I shall give you anything you ask!"

CHRISTOPHE: A fish? No . . . it was an enchanter, very likely.

MINET: An enchanter? What is that?

CHRISTOPHE: A man with magic power to change himself into a fish, a bird, or animal.

MINET: Then if I were one, I could suddenly become—a lion?  
Rrrrowr!

*(He imitates a Lion's roar and spring.)*

Or a tiny mouse? Eek! Eek!

CHRISTOPHE *(Wearily)*: Yes, yes, but do you realize what you've done, Minet? You caught a great enchanter while he was a fish. Why, he'd have given you large sums of gold to set him free!

MINET: He offered money.

CHRISTOPHE: And what did you ask for? Boots!

MINET *(Abashed)*: And a leather bag to catch you rabbits.

CHRISTOPHE: My poor Minet, with so much gold I could have bought six pairs of boots . . . and decent clothing for myself . . . a hat with plumes, a velvet tunic, and a sword. Then I might have gone into the world to slay a dragon—kill a giant—oh, do something brave and fine!—and so the King would say to me, "Rise, good Marquis. And you may wed the Princess Angelique!"

MINET *(Howling with remorse)*: Mrrrowr . . . ooooooo . . . mrrrowr . . . mrrrowr! It's all my fault! I asked for boots instead. A selfish, wicked cat! Oooooo . . . mrrrrrowr . . .

CHRISTOPHE: There, there, Minet!

MINET *(Darting to stream)*: If I could catch him once again—

CHRISTOPHE: He's gone now. Oh, it doesn't really matter.

MINET: Yes, it does. It does! Oh, master, please forgive me!

CHRISTOPHE: Why, of course I do, Minet. We'll say no more about it. Eat your bread and cheese.

MINET: But this I promise you: I'll find a way to make you great!  
My master shall be Marquis yet!

*(The curtains close on scene one.)*

*(After a moment Lise comes muttering out R, before the curtain, consulting her enormously long list of ingredients, some of which she reads in ludicrous fashion.)*

LISE *(Nodding after each)*: Toe of frog . . . and scale of dragon!  
Wing of bat . . . lizard's leg. Root of hemlock . . . hair of dog . . .

leaf of mandrake plucked at midnight! Whiskers of a white-skinned whale . . . spider's web . . . and chestnut burr. Petal from a purple rose . . . shell of crab . . . and seven tears! (*Turning front.*) But a five-leafed clover—ohhhh! I have searched for weary months. And then, today, to see one right before my eyes, perhaps the only one! What shall I say to him, my master the Enchanter? What a rage he'll fly into. I know it! And perhaps turn into something dreadful and devour me! (*Taking short cross.*) Should I run away? No, it would do no good, for he could always find me. As an eagle he would soar aloft until he saw me, then—zoom to earth. And I'd look up and see a monster there before my eyes—a tiger, or a dragon, or a mighty serpent. Brrr! And that would be the end of Lise. No, it is best I go back to his castle. He went to take a cooling swim. Perhaps his temper will be cool as well, and he'll not punish me. But when he hears I haven't brought the five-leafed clover—oh, who knows what he will do? (*Stopping suddenly.*) I have it! I'll pretend to lose my hearing! Then when he asks me for the clover, I won't have to answer. If I can gain a little time, it may be that I still can find a clover. Oh, I hope so! Lack-a-day! (*Exiting L, shaking her head dolefully.*) My master is a strange and dreadful man!

## SCENE TWO

(*The curtains open on the Enchanter's castle. The room is entirely of black and white; black draperies line the walls and are punctuated by white columns. A white chaise longue upholstered in black stands C and is the only piece of furniture. Behind one section of drapery R is a practical mirror; behind the drapery UL is a large scrim frame behind which a scene may be played.*)

ENCHANTER (*Off UC*): Lise! (*Nearer.*) Lise! (*Flinging open curtains and entering UC, thundering.*) Lise!

(*The Enchanter is a tall majestic figure, in black tights, black velvet tunic, black velvet cape lined in scarlet, and black hat with scarlet plumes. A narrow black mustache, small pointed black beard, and peaked eyebrows give him a satanic aspect. The total effect is somewhat marred, however, by the fact that the mighty Enchanter is bootless, limping, and in a terrible temper.*)

Where is that lazy servant? (*Pulling black bellcord.*) Lise! (*Collapsing on chaise.*) Oh . . . my poor feet! How far I've walked—and bootless! Over sticks and stones and brambles, all because that cat demanded boots! Wretched creature, to



catch me while I was a fish, delighting in the cooling waters of a quiet stream. But what a near escape from death! I dared not turn myself into a bird to fly back home, for fear of hawks or falcons or a hunter's arrow. No, I'll risk no more transformations until my potion is complete and I have drunk of it. (*Rising.*) But then, what power will be mine! One sip, and I shall live forever! Although I have the gift of transformations, I am still mortal, and may easily be killed. Why, just today, that monstrous cat nearly made an end of me. After I drink the magic potion made of ninety-nine and one mysterious things, no one can harm me! I shall be free to practice all my evil arts without a fear. The chattering mortals like that worthless Lise—

LISE (*Entering UC*): Did you call me, master?

ENCHANTER: Call you? Until my face turned black! Until my throat was hoarse with calling!

LISE (*Pretending not to hear*): The roof is falling? Oh, good gracious! Let us fly!

ENCHANTER (*As she turns to run*): Stop! Have you lost your wits?

LISE: The dog is having fits?

ENCHANTER: What ails you, woman? Cease this madness, do you hear?

LISE: Clear? Oh, yes, very clear. A fine clear day. And was your swim a pleasant one?

ENCHANTER (*In fury*): Ohhhhh! What am I to do with you? Go! Fetch me boots!

LISE (*Approaching him as he sits*): Fruits? What kind of fruits? Plums, peaches, pears?

ENCHANTER (*Pointing to his feet*): Boots! Boots, not fruits, you idiot!

LISE: Your boots of fine red leather—what's become of them?

ENCHANTER: No matter—it's no matter. Fetch the black ones. Black!

LISE (*Pounding his back*): Pound you on the back?

ENCHANTER (*Springing up with a howl of anger*): No! Go! Get out! And bring me back a pair of boots!

LISE (*Innocently*): Of course, good master! You need but ask it. (*She scurries out as the Enchanter seems on the point of exploding.*)

ENCHANTER: Has she gone deaf, or mad? Mortals, mortals! Ugh! Soon I shall drink the magic potion, and no longer be one! (*Stopping suddenly.*) But there's one ingredient I still must have: a five-leafed clover. (*Bellowing suddenly.*) Lise! Did you find it? Lise! What is the creature doing? Lise!

(*He stands C. She suddenly appears behind him, extending a hand with a black boot in it on either side of him.*)