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***The Beast in the Bayou* Study Guide**

**1. ENCHANTMENT THEATRE COMPANY**

For more than 30 years, Enchantment Theatre Company has been guided by our mission: to create original theater for young audiences and families. We accomplish this through the imaginative telling of fairy tales, fables and classic children's stories that inspire, challenge and enrich our audience, both onstage and in the classroom. Enchantment believes deeply in the transformative power of theater to awaken children's imaginations and to nurture their humanity. Our unique style of performance – incorporating expressive masks, life-sized puppets, magical illusion, original music, dance and pantomime – is accessible to children of all ages and backgrounds and encourages everyone – regardless of age and language barriers – to engage in the joy of a live theatrical production.

**2. ABOUT ENCHANTMENT'S PERFORMANCE STYLE**

Our unique style of performance brings stories to life in a way that inspires children to use their imaginations and stimulates them to bring their curiosity, discoveries and questions back to the classroom to explore the story in different ways.

- **Masks** – the actors wear masks on their faces so they can play many characters different from themselves
- **Puppets** – the actors use puppets to play characters that are animals or large creatures [at right: child puppets from *The Fisherman and the Flounder* (top); dragon puppet from *The Brave Little Tailor* (bottom)]
- **Music** – a composer wrote the music to go along with the story and to reinforce the action that is seen on stage
- **Narration** – one narrator's voice will tell the story as we watch the actors use their bodies to act out the tale



### 3. WHY TELL FAIRY TALES?

Enchantment Theatre Company believes that myths, fables and fairy tales have intrinsic value for children's development. These classic and magical tales are not only filled with promise – the discovery of one's power and purpose, love conquering evil, the impossible becoming possible – they provide children with models for how to be in life. And most importantly, they invite children into a new way of seeing and being, where they can discover a deeper understanding of others and of themselves. Myths, fables and fairy tales are essential because they:

- Model problem solving
- Build emotional resiliency
- Develop empathy
- Give us a common language (cultural literacy & canon)
- Cross cultural boundaries
- Teach the dramatic structure of a story
- Expand a child's imagination
- Give teachers opportunities to teach critical thinking skills
- Teach lessons
- Support new Common Core Standards

#### a. The History of *Beauty and the Beast*

*Beauty and the Beast* is one of the most beloved fairy tales of all time and versions of the story can be found in myths and legends from around the world. It has its western origins in the Greek legend of Cupid and Psyche, written by Lucius Apuleius in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. In Apuleius' story the human Psyche is thought to be more beautiful than the goddess Venus. The jealous Venus orders Cupid to arrange for Psyche to fall in love with a hideous creature. But instead, Cupid falls in love with Psyche and whisks her away to his palace to save her. Cupid hides his identity by becoming invisible by day and a shadowy figure by night. Psyche secretly lights a lamp to discover Cupid's identity and falls deeply in love with him. However, she accidentally wakes Cupid and he tells her she will never see him again and flees. In despair Psyche follows him, undergoing many ordeals to prove her love. Eventually Psyche wins Cupid back and becomes immortal.

Different versions of the story have appeared since Apuleius' time. The 18<sup>th</sup> century French author, Marie Leprince de Beaumont, created *Beauty and the Beast* as we know it today: a Prince is cruelly transformed into a Beast and can only be saved by someone who loves him for himself; a kind, brave Beauty saves her father by going to the Beast in his place; Beauty falls in love with the Beast, transforming him back into a Prince. *Beauty and the Beast* has continued to fascinate people of all ages with its compelling message that appearances can be deceiving; that we must learn to trust the quiet voice within our hearts that tells us what is true.

When Enchantment Theatre decided to create a new production based on *Beauty and the Beast*, we wanted to tell the story a little differently. We decided to have a Beast who wasn't a Prince, but instead a magical creature with a mysterious purpose. And we decided that our Beauty would be a heroine who isn't defined by her appearance, but by her curiosity, compassion and bravery. We placed our story in America, in the Louisiana of the 1930s. In this show, our Beast has a mission to protect his bayou and Beauty discovers her purpose by joining him in his cause.

Other versions of *Beauty and the Beast* to discover:

- *East of the Sun and West of the Moon* – Norway
- *The Pig King* – Italy
- *La Belle et Le Bete* – Jean Cocteau's 1946 French film
- *Beauty and the Beast* – Disney animated film and musical

#### **b. Synopsis of Enchantment Theatre's *The Beast in the Bayou***

Once there was a shopkeeper named Odis Jones who had two little girls named Grace Elizabeth and Beauty Jane. The family lived in a little town on the edge of a bayou. There was a legend in the town about a horrible Beast who lived in the bayou and would kill anyone who dared to enter it. Beauty was curious about the bayou and in spite of the legend, she snuck away to see it for herself. As Beauty wandered deeper into the bayou she met a heron, a fox and a turtle. She gave the fox food but the turtle was frightened of her and fell over on its back. Beauty helped set the turtle back on his legs and sent him on his way. Suddenly she felt as if someone was watching her and when she turned around, she found a beautiful rose on the ground. She looked about to see if she could find who left it and decided to climb a tree to get a better view. But as she got to the top she lost her footing and fell, breaking her leg and lying unconscious. The Beast in the bayou jumped out from hiding and saw that she was injured. He gently carried Beauty back to the town and then quickly ran back into the bayou when her father appeared looking for her.

Years passed and Odis had fallen on hard times; he was in debt to Boss Cash, the town's wealthiest, meanest man. Grace and Beauty Jane were all grown up, but where Grace had become lovely and confident, Beauty was reserved and shy. After Beauty's accident, she always walked with a limp and was self-conscious of her injury. Boss Cash told Odis that if he could marry Grace, he'd forgive the family's debt, but Odis would hear nothing of this. Boss had an assistant, Jimmy, who was secretly in love with Grace and Grace had begun to fall in love with Jimmy. Odis decided that he needed to travel into the city to borrow some money so he could get rid of his debt to Boss. He asked Grace and Beauty what gifts they'd like him to bring back for them. Grace asked for a new dress but Beauty only wanted a rose. The sisters warned their father to avoid the bayou, but Odis was in a hurry and decided to take a short cut. As Odis traveled into the bayou, he took a wrong turn and got lost. At last he stumbled into a clearing and found that he was in front of a magical treehouse, with roses twining around the door. He thought of Beauty and went to pick a rose. Suddenly a horrible howl was heard and the Beast leapt out and confronted Odis. "Thief...you've stolen my rose, you will die!" howled the Beast. Odis fell down in a fright and told the Beast he'd picked it for his daughter. The Beast told Odis that if one of his daughters would return in his place, he'd spare his life. He gave Odis a magic feather and sent him whirling home.

Odis arrived home and told his daughters what had happened. Beauty said it was her fault – she'd asked for the rose – and that she should go. Odis said no one was going and they'd deal with this in the morning. As Odis and Grace went into their house, Beauty impulsively picked up the magic feather and was magically whirled into the bayou. Beauty arrived at the front of the Beast's house and without warning the Beast leapt out and confronted her. She dropped the feather and limped away in fear. The Beast suddenly stopped, recognizing her as the girl who fell from the tree so long ago. The Beast was gruff but kind to Beauty. He told her that she was brave to come in her father's place and that she could have whatever she needed. Time passed and Beauty was reacquainted

with the animals she'd met years ago. The heron told her she belonged in the bayou; the fox played with her and welcomed her home; the turtle remembered her kindness. She also met a snake who told her that she was here to help the Beast, but Beauty didn't know what he meant.

Meanwhile Odis and Grace were worried about Beauty and were having trouble paying their rent. Boss secretly told Jimmy that he had bought the deed to the bayou and was going to drill for oil. Jimmy was horrified...the bayou was a magical place and shouldn't be destroyed. Back in the swamps, Beauty had begun to feel at home and loved being friends with all of the animals there. One day an alligator came along and Beauty tried to make friends with him. Instead the alligator chased her and was about to bite when suddenly the Beast appeared and calmed the alligator, saving Beauty's life. The old gator explained that he'd been pushed out of his home by humans like Beauty. The Beast told the alligator that Beauty was a friend and showed the gator where he could go to find a safe swamp. Beauty began to understand the dangers to the bayou and why the Beast had asked her there. She asked if she could see her family once more and the Beast told her to go home to her family but to promise she'd return. Beauty took the Beast's magic feather and was magically transported back home. Odis and Grace were thrilled to see Beauty once again. The Beast also sent gold to help the family with their debt.

While Beauty visited her family, Boss began to dig up the bayou. The fox and the turtle accidentally ran into Boss and he cruelly chased after them. The Beast began to weaken and die as the bayou was being destroyed. The week passed and Beauty almost forgot her promise to the Beast. One day Jimmy burst in and told the family that Boss was tearing down the bayou. Beauty said she had to return to the Beast immediately and her family gave her their blessings. Beauty magically returned to the Beast's treehouse and found him almost dead. As she tried to revive him, Boss appeared and tried to finish off the Beast. Beauty called out to the animals and the alligator came and hungrily chased Boss away. Beauty touched her heart and then touched the Beast's heart and he revived. The Beast told Beauty that she had saved the bayou. He confessed that he remembered her from years ago when she had visited the bayou and been so kind to the animals. Suddenly Beauty realized that it was the Beast who had rescued her when she fell from the tree. The Beast told Beauty that this is where she belonged and he asked her to help him save the bayou. Beauty joyfully agreed and hand in hand, they went off to fulfill their destiny.

#### **4. VOCABULARY WORDS**

There may be some words from *The Beast in the Bayou* story that your students are unfamiliar with. Here's a short list of definitions:

- Bayou – a marshy water or swamp; the word comes from Louisiana's French-Canadian settlers who pronounced the Choctaw Indian word for a creek – “bayuk” as “bayou”
- Legend – a story, folk tale or oral history
- Heron – a large wading bird with long legs and beak
- Self-conscious – someone who is embarrassed, awkward or shy
- Impulsive – acting without thinking; sudden or spontaneous
- Destiny – something that is meant to be; one's future or fate

## 5. PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

**Class Exercise 1:** In our experience it's best to read the story several times to the students before they come to see the show. This can be done in a single sitting or over several days.

### 1) Read the story to encourage imagination

Simply read the story to your students, no need to act it out, just keep a matter-of-fact tone. During the first reading, invite children to close their eyes, simply to listen to the story and imagine the scenes. **Ask them: what did they see in their mind's eye (Beauty, bayou, town); what did they hear (bird calls, Beast howl); what did they sense (danger, mystery)?**

### 2) Read the story for understanding

On the second reading, ask your students to notice different characters, language, descriptions. What kind of story is it (fictional, fantasy)? Is it set in an imaginary world? How do you know? Is the ending happy or sad? Are there any words you don't understand? E.g. bayou, legend? (See vocabulary list)

### 3) Read the story for elaboration

This time, read the story and ask your students to remember their favorite parts so they can retell them in their own words, retell the whole story or act out a new ending like Enchantment Theatre did.

You may want to talk about the moral of the story. What is it teaching us? Why is the Beast trying to protect the bayou? What does the story tell us about judging someone by outward appearances? Do you think it would be a bad thing if Boss destroyed the bayou...why?

**NOTE: In our talkback the actors will ask the students several questions:**

- 1) Why did the Beast want Beauty to come in her father's place?
- 2) If you were Beauty, would you have gone to the bayou to save your father?
- 3) What was different about hearing the story and then seeing it acted out?

Questions 1 & 2 could be discussion or activity points before or after seeing the show. Question 3 could be a discussion point after seeing the show.

### **Class Exercise 2:**

- 1) What is another story that you know and like to hear?
- 2) Can you write down what happens in the story?
- 3) Can you tell us the story out loud?
  - This could be a project that is worked on over a period of time, in multiple sessions.
  - Work with the students on writing down the story piece by piece and finding causal and temporal links.
  - Students review the story repeatedly, growing familiar with the through line of the story.



- They practice telling pieces of the story out loud. What happens first? What happens next? Why did that happen?
- The goal would be that they could tell the story to the class without looking at any paper, that they would not be reciting a memorized portion of text, but really just telling the story themselves, in the mode of passing on an oral tradition.

### **Class Exercise 3:**

Before going to the show, ask your students to close their eyes once again and recall what they imagined in their mind's eye when you read the story aloud (Beast, Beauty, bayou). Then for a moment, ask them to see themselves sitting quietly in the classroom. Are they excited about seeing the play? What do they notice about how they feel? Can they move their attention from themselves to the whole class...then to the whole school? Then ask them to easily bring their attention back to the class and then to themselves. How do they feel now? Are they ready to enjoy the show with their fellow students?

## **6. POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES**

Regardless of age, experience has shown that it is worthwhile to speak with your students after a performance (their favorite part might have changed or for older students, ask them how acting, music, puppets, etc. changed their response to the story) and then ask them to draw a response to the show. This is important because creating a visual piece of work allows the response to remain in the imaginative realm of their mind's eye, rather than being committed straightaway to an intellectual realm. They could also make a class collage/poster/or hallway display depicting times when they or people they know were brave.

### **Art/Drama Activities for Younger Students:**

#### **1) Visual art activity: make half-masks (the same style that the actors wear):**

- Cut a paper plate in half
- Cut out a triangle along the center of the edge, giving a space for the nose
- Using a large hole punch, create a hole for the eyes
- Hole punch two small holes on the sides & twist pipe cleaners through them to attach the mask behind the head
- Decorate the masks using materials of your choice (markers, crayons, glitter, feathers, stickers, paper scraps of different colors, gems, etc)



#### **2) Physical activity: wear your mask**

- What character did you create?
- How does this character walk? Do they have heavy steps, or light steps? Do they move fast or slow? Do they glide across the floor? Do they stomp their feet? (ask questions that generate different ways of moving)

- What does your character look like when they are happy? What does your character look like when they are sad?
- How does this character sound? Can they talk? What sounds do they make? (ask questions that generate different vocal qualities)

### **Art/Drama Activities for Older Students:**

**1) Visual art activity: create a cartoon of your favorite part of the story** (write the narration along the bottom and dialogue in speech bubbles.) Then create a group comic strip. Take the original cartoons and hang them up in sequence. What are the missing scenes? What is the dialogue needed in between scenes?

**2) Physical activity: act out the story, through a variety of different ways**

- Actors mime the whole piece with someone narrating/reading on the side
- Actors mime the piece and the class makes the sound effects
- Actors make the sound effects instead of words and someone narrates
- Actors use their bodies in a way that shows what character they are

### **Independent Writing or Discussion Work:**

- Ask your students (or discuss with younger students) to describe/write about the characteristics of Beauty; e.g. shy, brave, kind. Then have them write/describe the characteristics of the Beast and Boss. How are they different from Beauty?
- Compare and contrast the behavior and characters of Boss and Odis, Beauty's father.
- Write a personal account from the point of view of Beauty.
- Read the synopsis of the "traditional" story of *Beauty and the Beast* (included below); compare and contrast this version with the play. What's similar, what's different?
- Write a version of the story that takes place in Philadelphia; what would your Beast look like? Would he live in Fairmount Park...in a sewer....by the river? Why is he there?
- Review the performance (pretend you are a theater critic – what was good about the performance, story, acting, etc.)
- Help preserve oral traditions. Interview a parent, guardian or neighbor and ask them to tell a story they were told when they were young. Write down the story and the context in which it was told.

### **Environmental Activities:**

**1) Learn about the animals in the story**

- **Alligators** are reptiles (cold blooded animals like turtles and snakes) and are native only to the United States and China. They live in the southern part of the US, from Florida to east Texas, with the majority found in Louisiana. They are shy of humans and will only attack if provoked. They live in freshwater marshes and swamps. They make holes to live in which help spread plants and create plant diversity; their abandoned holes are used by other animals in droughts. They create an ecological balance by eating muskrats and river rats that can cause severe damage to coastal wetlands. They can live as long as 70-100 years.

- **Herons** are large wading birds with long legs, long s-shaped necks and long, pointed bills. They eat fish and insects and nest in tall trees. They are migratory birds and can be found all over the world. They live on average 15 years but can live as old as 23 years. They are most vulnerable when they are young; half of blue herons born die within their first year.
- **Turtles** are also reptiles and are known for their hard shield-like shell. Many turtles can hide their heads inside their shells for protection. Turtles eat plants, small fish and insects. Turtles live mostly in water and can live as long as 70 years or more. Tortoises are in the same family but are land, not water animals. They are estimated to live up to 150 years old! Many species of turtles and tortoises are endangered.
- **Foxes** are small, dog-like animals. They can have red or grey fur and can be found in every continent except Antarctica. They live in wooded areas and coastal marshes and make their dens in stream banks and gullies. They eat insects, rodents, birds and fruit. They have a keen sense of sight, smell and hearing and can run for miles without tiring. They can be playful and their reputation for cunning has made them popular in folktales around the world. In the wild, foxes only live 2-5 years but they can live as long as 15 years in captivity.
- **Snakes** are also reptiles and can vary greatly in pattern, color, size and variety. Some snakes are venomous. Snakes eat insects and rodents. They are found in temperate to warmer climates. They make their homes under rocks, in tree stumps, logs, or in underground burrows. Snakes sun themselves to regulate their body temperature or will move to into the shade to cool down. They hibernate in winter and shed their skin 3-6 times a year. In captivity they can live up to 50 years.

## 2) What wild animals live near you?

- Think about the animals that you met in *The Beast in the Bayou*; do any of these animals live near you? (All of them except alligators!) Many of these animals can be found in Fairmount Park or in parks and forest preserves around the region.
- What other animals can you name that live in our region? (Deer, bears, coyotes, owls, chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits, raccoons, etc.)

## 3) For Older Students

- Choose an animal that lives in your region and find out more about it – what does it eat, where does it live, what surprised you about it? Is it endangered?
- Write a story about your animal from its point of view – what makes it happy, what scares it, who are its friends, what kind of an adventure can you imagine for it?

## Synopsis of the Traditional *Beauty and the Beast*

Once upon a time there was a widowed Merchant who had fallen on hard times. He had three beautiful daughters; the two oldest were vain and spoiled but the youngest, Beauty, was kind and selfless. The Merchant learned that one of his ships that he thought was lost had returned to port and he made plans to travel to the city to see if he could recover some of his wealth. Before he left he asked each of his children what presents they would like; the older daughters asked for jewels and dresses but Beauty only wanted a rose. When the Merchant arrived in the city, he discovered that all of the goods from the ship had been seized to pay his debts and he sadly departed for home. On his way back, he got caught in a storm and became lost in a deep, dark forest.



The Merchant stumbled upon a fabulous castle in the middle of the forest. The doors opened mysteriously and he was welcomed inside and served a meal by invisible hands. He fell asleep and when he woke in the morning, no one was there. As he prepared to leave, he saw a rose bush and picked a rose to bring to Beauty. Suddenly he heard a horrible howl and a hideous Beast appeared. "You stole my rose? You will die!" yelled the Beast. The Merchant explained that he picked the rose for his daughter, Beauty. The Beast told him that if Beauty would return to the castle in his place, he would spare the Merchant's life. He sent the Merchant away on his magical horse and swiftly the Merchant arrived back at his home. The Merchant told his daughters about the Beast, and Beauty vowed to return in his place. The Merchant told her no, that he would go to the Beast the next day; he just wanted to see his children one last time. Once the family had retired for the night, Beauty stole away on the magical horse and returned to the Beast's castle.

At first Beauty was terrified of the Beast, but his gentle manner reassured her that he meant her no harm. He asked her to treat the palace as her own and magically gave her whatever she needed. Each evening he saw her briefly and asked her to marry him, but Beauty always refused. Each night Beauty dreamt of a sad Prince, who asked her to look deeply into her heart and find the truth there. As time passed, Beauty began to grow fond of the melancholy Beast, but she missed her family and longed to see them. She asked the Beast if she could see her family once more and the Beast permitted her to journey home. However he warned her that if she didn't return in one week he would die. The Beast gave Beauty jewels and gifts for her family and a magic mirror in which she could see him in his castle and be reminded to return to him. Beauty promised she would return and was magically transported home.

The Merchant was thrilled to see Beauty again and tried to persuade her to stay. Beauty explained that the Beast had been kind to her and she must return to him in one week or he would die. Her sisters were jealous of her gorgeous clothes and jewels and pretended to join their father in entreating her to stay longer, but only with the intent of destroying the Beast. As the days passed Beauty began to forget her promise. On the seventh night, she remembered to look in the Beast's mirror and was startled to see him lying on the ground as if dead. She jumped on the magic horse and traveled back to the Beast's castle. She called out for the Beast and searched for him everywhere, at last finding him lying in his garden. She ran to him and told him of her love for him. Suddenly the Beast was transformed into the handsome Prince from her dreams. He told her that long ago an evil fairy had turned him into a hideous Beast after he refused to marry her. The only way the curse could be broken would be if he found someone who could love him in spite of his appearance. Beauty and the Prince were joyfully married and lived happily ever after.

**7. POST-PERFORMANCE STUDENT SURVEY FOR “THE BEAST IN THE BAYOU”**

Survey can be taken individually or as a class. If taken as a class, we recommend that you ask your students to place their heads down on the desk (e.g. 7-up game) and have them raise their hands for a count. Please also jot down their comments to the open-ended questions below. Thank you.

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Name/Teacher’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	Yes	No
1. “The Beast in the Bayou” was fun.	___	___
2. I learned many new things.	___	___
3. Seeing the show made me want to read more stories.	___	___
4. I want to make up my own stories.	___	___
5. I want to learn more about acting.	___	___
6. I want to see another show.	___	___
7. This was my first play.*	___	___
8. I told/will tell my parents about the show.	___	___

What was your favorite part of the show? Why?

What was your least favorite part of the show? Why?

\*If this was NOT the first play you have ever seen, do you recall the titles of the other plays?

PLEASE MAIL/FAX THIS SURVEY TO US AT  
 Enchantment Theatre Company / Attn: Student Survey  
 100 South Broad Street, Suite 1318 / Philadelphia, PA 19110  
 Fax: 215-496-9161