

theatre
for young
america

STUDY GUIDE

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An educational supplement to the live theatre experience of

RAGGEDY ANN & ANDY'S Christmas Adventure



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RAGGEDY ANN AND ANDY'S CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE is a play adapted by Gene Mackey, resident playwright of Theatre for Young America. It is based on several of the short stories by the originator of Raggedy Ann and Andy, Johnny Gruelle. He was the creator of both the dolls and the early stories. Because Gruelle's original pieces from the 1920s and 1930s are quite short and each is a story unto itself, Gene took pieces of many of his stories and then tied them together with a through line to make it a coherent plot to watch. Johnny Gruelle had a unique look at childhood. His stories are quaint and somewhat dated but are popular for their old-fashioned morals. Gene wanted to base his play on the charm of those old original stories. Among the stories in the play are *The Introduction to RAGGEDY ANN STORIES*, *Raggedy Ann Learns a Lesson*, *Raggedy Ann and the Strange Dolls*, *Raggedy Ann and Andy In the Deep*, *Deep Woods*, *Raggedy Ann and Andy and the Nice Fat Policeman*, and *Raggedy Ann and Andy and the Wonderful Witch*. Each of these *Raggedy adventures* demonstrate the rewards of kindness, truthfulness, and steadfastness. Here is a brief synopsis of the script:

THE PLAY SYNOPSIS

The play begins and ends with Grandma's voice providing us an intro into the play. The dolls have been taken to an upstairs bedroom of a girl named Marcella while the family goes to visit relatives for Christmas. A Dutch doll tips over as she begins to move. This starts her saying "Mamma. Mamma. Mamma." A Toy Soldier gets out of the box and begins to shout "Hup. Hup. Hup." Raggedy Ann and Andy have quite a time hushing the two up! Raggedy Ann is always talking and tells a story about her being washed and her head "stuffed with fresh, clean an cotton" so now she is very smart. The dolls have a pretend holiday party. They notice they are a little cold and Raggedy Ann and Andy head off to borrow the "Magical Burning Stick" (yule log) that the Hoolygoolys own. They want to warm Marcella's room.



Then the two rag dolls begin their trip into the deep, deep woods. They hear someone crying. The two Raggedys are quick to help whomever is crying and they find a "Nice Fat Policeman", as he is called in the original stories. (Some of the newer publications of the story have called him "The Nice Police Officer" in an effort to be more politically correct.) This crying man explains that he found a note on his front door that said, "Please arrest Mister Hooligooly." He has never arrested anyone before and is very sad about it. The Raggedys ask, "Who left the note?" He doesn't know. Then they ask what Mr. Hooligooly has done that he needs to be arrested, and he doesn't know why. Now the Raggedys have a mystery to solve as well as a favor of helping the nice, but crying, policeman.

The three go to knock on the Hooligooly's door. Mr. and Mrs. Hooligooly are delighted to see them and decide to have a party and bake cookies! Since Mr. Policeman is too sad to go into their house, they decide to come outside and have a picnic party! This couple is so funny and unusual that soon all are laughing and partying! No one notices a witch sneak into the front door to Hooligooly home and then come out with something under her cape. The partiers finally notice her and try to stop her, but she has made it into her own house and closed the door.

As the partiers are trying to get in the witch's house, the evil witch has ordered "The Magical Burning Stick" make piggy pancakes. The policeman and Mr. Hooligooly gobble down those piggy pancakes, and it turns them into PIGS! With the help of "The Magical Burning Stick", Raggedy Ann and Mrs. Hooligooly shrink the witch into a bottle. Then they concoct a potion that turns Mr. Hooligooly and The Nice Fat Policeman back from pigs into whom they really are.

The adventure continues as Raggedy Ann and Andy return to the Toy Soldier and Dutch Doll just in time to have a lovely Christmas party--singing and dancing around warmth of "The Magical Burning Stick"

(Yule Log). Grandma is heard coming up the stairs to retrieve the dolls because Marcella has grown tired of her new dolls and wants her old ones to play with her.

JOHNNY GRUELLE and RAGGEDY ANN AND ANDY HISTORY

Raggedy Ann and Andy are often called the world's best-loved and most-adored rag dolls. Johnny Gruelle is credited with making the first one-Raggedy Ann. He was born in Arcola, Illinois, in 1880. He was a writer and an illustrator. In 1915 he found an old rag doll up in his family's attic, brought her downstairs, and made her a nose and mouth with his ink and re-sewed on her shoe-button eyes. His daughter Marcella was so fond of the doll that he began to tell her stories about Raggedy Ann. It is interesting to note that the doll was created before the stories were imagined. The Gruelle family kept making and selling the dolls. The first dolls had a real candy heart sewn in a pocket that said I love you. ITT URNED OUNow most home seamstresses and toy manufacturers embroider or stamp the heart on the dolls. In 1918 Johnny Gruelle published a book called RAGGEDY ANN STORIES. Soon after he created a little brother for Raggedy Ann, called Raggedy Andy, and published a book about him in 1920. He continued to write books about these two dolls until he died in 1938. He wrote more than twenty Raggedy Ann and Andy books. He also had his son Worth help him to write and illustrate proverbs and stories that were published in magazines and newspapers. Some stories are still being written about them, although these are not by Gruelle and his son. Hasbro Toy Company still manufactures these dolls, although some people continue to make them by hand. McCall's has sells patterns for the dolls. Many people collect different versions of the dolls and the books too. There was even a Raggedy Ann and Andy lunch box. The Fleischer Company has made a cartoon about Raggedy Ann and Andy in 1940 that you can watch on You Tube. Raggedy Ann and Andy dolls have been around for about one hundred years! These were the first dolls that had books to go with them. Now it is quite popular with Barbie dolls, Cabbage Patch Kids, and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and many others.



HISTORY OF RAG DOLLS

A rag doll is a toy made from scraps of fabric or rags and stuffed with something like cotton, leaves, older fabrics, or whatever people can find. They are the oldest type of dolls known to man. They are usually handmade. The oldest rag doll in the British Museum is from Rome, Italy, and dates from the 1st-5th century AD. Some rag dolls have no faces on them. Now rag dolls are sometimes made by sewing machine. Another famous rag doll is the character of Sally, from the Tim Burton film THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS. Here is a project idea: research rag dolls on the Internet or in the library. How many kinds of rag dolls can you find? What are they filled with? What is their hair made of?

My mother was a very clever and imaginative seamstress. One year for a Christmas surprise, she made a big rag doll to look like me. She gave it brown eyes and blond hair and made it as big as me at age five. She even made me and my doll identical dresses to wear. Oh, how I loved to dance and pretend with that doll! Mother kept the doll at her house and then my daughter also played with it when she was a child. For my daughter my mother put a nightcap and one of my old flannel nightgowns on this old rag doll. My daughter loved her too although she was definitely an old used rag doll.

DESIGN A RAG DOLL

Maybe you would like to design a rag doll on paper and with colored pencils or crayons. Picture a rag doll that you would like to have fun with. You could plan a pirate doll or a ballerina dancing rag doll. What can you imagine, plan, and then draw? Remember your drawing is to be like a pattern for someone to understand how to make the doll. Add any special instructions. What are the eyes made of? Buttons? Or what else? What do you imagine the hair should be made of? Share your design with the rest of the class. Maybe you could make a rag doll of the future? Maybe a doll for 200 years in the future. Will it be a robot?



CREATIVE DRAMATICS EXERCISE

Everyone decide their favorite toy. Take turns acting out the toy—either in pantomime or using the sounds of the toy. The players get three guesses to figure out the toy you chose to enact.

OPEN ENDED WRITING PROMPTS OR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR AFTER THE PLAY

- Why are the dolls alone in the house?
- Why did Raggedy Ann and Andy leave the party with the dolls?
- What are some of the things the Magical Burning Stick does in the play?
- How did Raggedy Ann and Andy escape the Witch?
- Who do you think wrote the note to the Policeman about arresting Mr. Hooligooly?
- What was a favorite costume of yours in the play? Which one? Why was it your favorite?
- What were some of the different locations where the dolls pretended the play took place?
- What made you laugh in the play?
- In the play you heard about many celebrations and parties. What parties and celebrations happen at your house?
- What part of the play was most powerful to you? Why?
- What part of the play would you like to change? What do you think might be better?
- Why do you think kids like rag dolls?
- Have you ever had a rag doll? What did it look like? Did you make up any stories about your toy?