

Jane of the Jungle

By Karen Zacarias
Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma

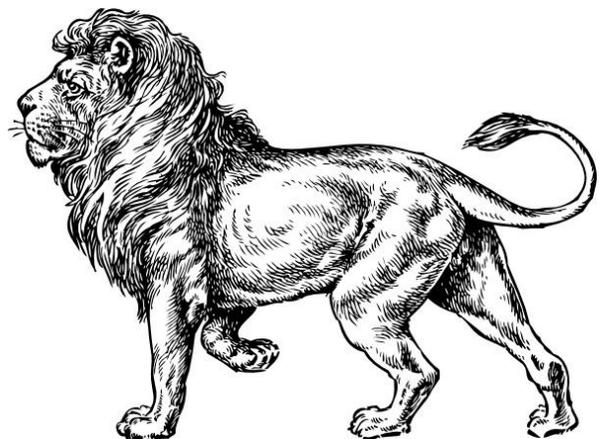
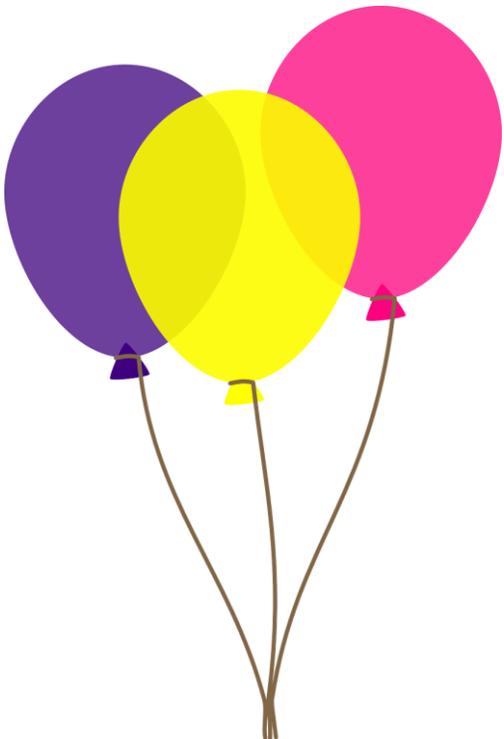


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Welcome, Teachers!

Welcome to DePaul University's Merle Reskin Theatre and the Chicago Playworks production of *Jane of the Jungle*, book and lyrics by Karen Zacarias, music by Deborah Wicks La Puma, and directed by Michelle Lopez-Rios. This show is recommended for ages 8 and up. This guide is designed to help you and your students unpack what you are about to see onstage. Here are a few curriculum connections to keep an eye out for:



Winged Wonders These are *discussion based* sections of the guide. The instructor will ask some leading questions in hopes of providing a thoughtful discussion around a topic relating to the Illinois State Learning Standards.



Growling Games: These are *engaging games* that include answering questions, ensemble work, and physical activity.



Jungle Journey: You will see this symbol when we come across a major *theme or concept* of the play. Further questions are asked after each theme based activity.



Leopard Learning: Here are some more places for lesson expansion and linking the world of the play to the worlds of the students using various academic curriculum and Illinois State Learning Standards

Theatre is a vital part of a student's development, and we cannot thank you enough for bringing your students along to grow with us. If you have any questions or comments regarding anything about this guide, feel free to contact us (information on back page).

Riley Coduto, BFA 2, Theatre Arts/Theatre for Young Audiences

You're Invited, Students!

All of you are invited to the “Too-Cool” party that is *Jane of the Jungle!* We're all going to have so much fun, but there are a few things we need to do before we get this party started:

First, please keep all totally cool phones in your totally cool backpacks. The party will be much more fun for all of us if we pay attention to all of the singing and dancing and not distract our friends on stage.

Second, even though we all love to chat and talk, let's talk after the show is finished, cool? That way we won't be disruptive and can let everyone around us hear the dialogue!

Third, please throw away any food, drinks, or gum before taking your seat. There will be plenty of cupcakes and popcorn at the party, so you don't want to spoil your appetite! Also, respecting your seat and the totally awesome architecture of the theatre is very important. The seats and the old theatre are delicate and we don't want to ruin them.

OHMYGOSH this is going to be the coolest party ever! Follow all of these guidelines and we won't have any problems, deal? Deal. Now get your growl on because it is time to party!!!



Meet the Creators

Karen Zacarias



Karen Zacarias is the playwright of *Jane of the Jungle*. She is an award winning playwright for adult and young audiences. Her plays have been put on all over the nation at many big theatres and with big theatre companies. She is the founder of Young Playwrights' Theatre, which teaches playwriting to local public schools in the Washington DC area. She lives in Washington DC with her husband and three kids.

Deborah Wicks La Puma is the composer of *Jane of the Jungle*. A **composer** is someone who writes music. Deborah is also a music director and an orchestrator and choral conductor, which means she instructs choruses to sing and orchestras to play their music. Deborah writes musicals for young audiences with Karen, the playwright, often. She has also won many awards for her work. . She lives in California with her husband, three daughters, and three cats.

Deborah Wicks La Puma



Many of the plays they write music and lyrics for are **commissioned**, meaning a person or a theatre pays a person to write a specific musical for their theatre. *Jane of the Jungle* was a commission for South Coast Repertory Theatre in Costa Mesa, CA in 2012.

Synopsis

Our story is about a young girl named **Jane**, who is about to begin middle school.

Jane has a best friend named **Kayla**, and they are invited to a birthday party.

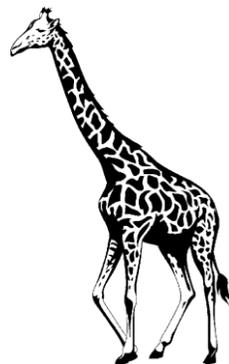
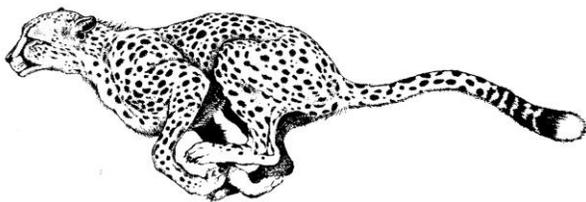
A Too-Cool-Almost-Middle-School-All-Girls-Birthday-Party to be exact.

But then, the unthinkable happens: Jane wakes up the next morning with cheetah spots!

Continuing our journey, we meet **Steve** (and his pack of skater friends) who want to break the rules. Jane and Kayla need to decide whether or not they play it safe.

As the play goes on, we encounter lots of fun, difficult choices involving friends, family, and the endless urge to be “cool”.

Why are weird things happening to everyone’s body? What does it mean to be “totally cool”? How does Jane deal with the “wild changes” happening inside and outside of her body?





Growling Games: *Raise Your Hand If*

Raise Your Hand If is an activity that engages students and assists them in unpacking themes and concepts in the play in relation to their own lived experiences. This activity can be done before or after the play.

Directions: The instructor will be reading off these statements below. If a student agrees, relates or connects to the prompt in some way, they may raise their hand. Students can be asked to share their experiences with the class.

Raise Your Hand If...

- ...you like animals.
- ...you have a sibling.
- ...you have one or more best friends.
- ...you have ever said something not nice to one of those friends.
- ...you have ever left them behind.
- ...one of those friends has said something not nice about you.
- ...you think you are a leader more than a follower.
- ...you think you are a follower more than a leader.
- ...you have argued with a parent or a guardian.
- ...you have noticed your body change over the past few months.
- ...you have ever felt uncomfortable with your body.
- ...you have ever wished a part of your body was different.
- ...you have ever felt alone.
- ...you have people in your life that care about you.



Winged Wonders: *Communication*

Teachers: please read the following statements aloud to your students. The discussion afterwards should be guided by the following questions. What do you notice about your students? What do they notice themselves?

Positive communication is important in keeping and building relationships everywhere you go.

-If you ever feel sad, angry, upset, or frustrated, how can you communicate to your parents or friends you are feeling this way?

-Is it better to yell and scream at people or talk through your emotions with people?

Common Core Standards

22.D.3a Identify and communicate with others within your school, family, and community regarding health issues.

24.B.3a Apply a decision-making process to an individual health concern.

24.A.3c Explain how positive communication helps to build and maintain relationships at school, at home and in the workplace.



Jungle Journey: *Animal Drawing*

Have you ever thought about yourself as an animal? In *Jane of the Jungle*, Jane turns into a cheetah! Kayla turns into a bird! And Steve turns into a tiger!

What would you turn into? In the space below, draw yourself as an animal. It can be **BIG**, it can be small, it can be **tall**, loooong, **fuzzy** or not!

Why/how did you choose this animal?

Do you think parts of this animal remind you of you? The way they walk, talk, look, sound?

Common Core Standards

W.5.2.a Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

VA:Cr1.2.6 a. Formulate an artistic investigation of personally relevant content for creating art.

VA:Cr3.1.5 a. Create artist statements using art vocabulary to describe personal choices made in art making.



Leopard Learning: *Puberty*

In *Jane of the Jungle*, the changes in the characters' bodies are **personified*** by turning into an animal. These changes are due to **puberty**. Puberty is the time in between childhood and adulthood where physical, mental, and emotional changes start happening. During puberty, *change* is the key word.

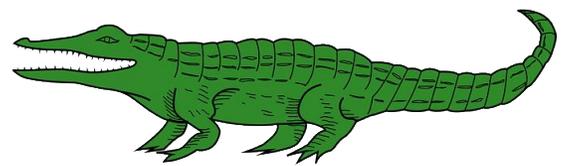
For example:

- Joanne has suddenly turned very tall (resembling a giraffe)
- Pat, who turns into a zebra, wants to hide in the background
- Steve gets "whiskers" and his voice cracks
- Jane starts to get "feelings" for Steve

Growth spurts, wanting to fit into the crowd, facial hair, vocal changes and having a crush are all elements of puberty that our characters are experiencing.

As we go through elementary and middle school, everyone's body is going to change at a different pace and in a different way, and that is *puuurrrectly* normal.

***Personification:** a person, animal, or object representing a quality, concept, or thing.



Common Core Standards

23.C.2a Identify physical, mental, social and cultural factors affecting growth and development of children (e.g., nutrition, self-esteem, family, and illness).

CCR.L.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.



Growling Games: *Hypnosis*

Hypnosis is a game that involves student participation and collaboration. One group of students will lead one random student around the space using their hand(s) as a guide. This game requires verbal communication, trust, guidance, and awareness as the students work together to maneuver the space.

Number of Players: 4+

Space: Open area/large space

Time: 15 mins

Directions: Put the students in groups of 4. One student will be Animal 1 and the other three will be *The Clique*. Have them check with each other about physical limitations they might have today (ex. Hurt ankle, sore knee). Set space parameters so students know where they can and cannot move and how to keep each other safe. Ask *The Clique* to stick out their hands, palm facing Animal 1's head, about six inches from their face. Have Animal 1 pretend to be hypnotized by the hands, following everywhere they go (high, low, down, around, you name it). All of the hands in *The Clique* must be going in the same direction, and no one is allowed to break free. After about 5 minutes, *The Clique* is then hypnotized and Animal 1 takes the lead.

Post game discussion:

-What does it mean to be a leader? What did it feel like?

-What does it mean to be a follower? What did it feel like?

-Did you feel frustrated with The Clique sometimes? Why? How about the follower?

-Who do you think is a leader in *Jane of the Jungle*? Who is a follower?

Common Core Standards

2C.3b Demonstrate cooperation and teamwork to promote group effectiveness.

TH:Cn11.1.5 a. Investigate community, historical, and social issues and incorporate other content areas in drama/theatre work.

DA:Pr4.1.6 a. Refine partner and ensemble skills in the ability to judge distance and spatial design. Establish diverse pathways, levels, and patterns in space. Maintain focus with partner or group in near and far space.

SL.5.1.c Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.



Jungle Journey: *Herd, Flock, Pack*

In *Jane of the Jungle*, there are several groups of characters that move together. There are differences in how they are described, and who is in what group. Here are the definitions for all of the groups:

Herd: a large group of animals, especially hoofed mammals, that live, feed, or migrate together or are kept together as livestock

Flock: a number of birds of one kind feeding, resting, or traveling together.

Pack: a group of wild animals, such as wolves, living and hunting together.

Herd members usually pursue the same goal, and their behaviors are all very similar (ex. Joanne, Pat, Chris and Beth wanting to blend into the background). Pack members all work together to achieve one goal, and are very similar to one another. There is usually a pack leader whom everyone else follows (ex. Steve and his friends.) Flock members look identical and do the same things (the party girls singing, dancing, and being rude.)



Questions to answer:

How can you see these examples play out in your school?

Do you feel you fit into a herd, a flock, or a pack the best? Why?

Do you think it important for groups to stick together and support each other no matter what?

Common Core Standards
2A.3b Analyze how one's behavior may affect others.



Leopard Learning: "TC" and Peer Pressure

Nicolette Miller is referred to as "TC", or totally cool, several times throughout the play. A few 6th, 7th, and 8th graders from Bernotas Middle School in Crystal Lake, Illinois, answered the prompt, "What does it mean to be cool?" Here are a few of their answers:

It means you just have this certain way and style that is better than other styles or ways".

"To be popular".

Be the prettiest, have the best outfits, most friends".

A lot of people learn the term "cool" from their friends and family, but the idea of being "TC" is shown to us through TV, advertisements, and social medias.

- What do you think makes a person "cool"?
- Is it their outward appearance? Personality?
- Now, think of your best friend. What makes them cool?
- Can a person be cool without following all of the latest "trends" we see in media?

In the end, Nicolette doesn't know if she is "TC" enough to go to her own party because she has spots like Jane. Being cool doesn't have to mean doing what everyone else is doing. Being cool can mean caring about others' feelings and being true to yourself. Here are some more answers from the Bernotas students:

It means to be your true self: and not care what others think of you. If you pretend to be someone you aren't it isn't cool".

It means to be a good role model and not to care what other people think about you but to be yourself.

Being cool has different meanings. To me being cool means being yourself.

Kayla **peer pressures*** Jane into doing things Jane doesn't necessarily want to do, like leaving Milo alone outside.

- When we know something doesn't feel right to us but someone is telling us to do it, what can we say to them?

Common Core Standards
Peer pressure: influence of a member or members of a group
2B.3b Analyze the effects of taking action to oppose bullying based on individual and group differences.
2D.3b Define unhealthy peer pressure and evaluate strategies for resisting it.

Webliography

About the author:

<https://www.dramaticpublishing.com/authors/profile/view/url/karen-zacarias>

<http://crunchynotes.com/shows/jane-of-the-jungle/>

About the playwright:

<https://www.dramaticpublishing.com/authors/profile/view/url/deborah-wicks-la-puma>

Activities:

<http://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/>

Curriculum Connections:

<http://www.ilclassroomsinaction.org/standardsbooks.html>

Special thanks to Mara Rosenbloom and her students at Bernotas Middle School for their participation!

Enjoy the Show!

