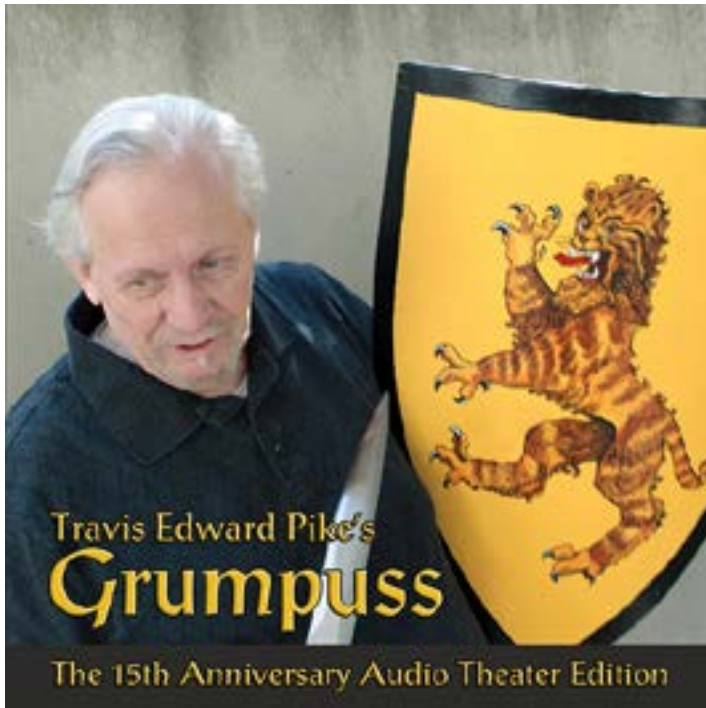


GRUMPUSS 15TH ANNIVERSARY AUDIO THEATER LINER NOTES AND SYNOPSIS INCORPORATING EXCERPTS FROM THE RHYME

Written and performed by Travis Edward Pike
Otherworld Cottage Industries
Disc One: 39:42 / Disc Two: 39:27 / Total Runtime: 79:09



"Poet, composer, and storyteller, I composed *Grumpuss* as a short fantasy adventure in rhyme, to amuse my young daughter, Lisa. Over the years, as fresh ideas sprang to mind, I revisited it, adding new passages and characters that enhanced the adventure and, from time to time, often at Lisa's bidding, pulled it out of its filing cabinet to read to her friends and other visitors to Otherworld Cottage.

"When Lisa graduated from UCLA with Departmental Honors and a degree in Classical Civilization, she helped me with my literary and musical properties in development, and one day, after another reading of *Grumpuss* for visitors, suggested I incorporate the many ideas I'd brought up in that evening's spirited discussion, and add *Grumpuss* to our projects in development.

"I did, and when she read the finished poem, she said I should record it. My live readings, with intermission and refreshments generally took around two hours. Recording it made a lot of sense, so I took it to my brother's sound studio in Pasadena.

"In 1995, Dick Moran, an old friend from Newton Corner, Massachusetts, came to visit, bringing with him his friend, Dr. Judith Stanton, a Professor of English at Bridgewater State College, Massachusetts. There is no better introduction to *Grumpuss* than her letter to me of March 24, 1997, which I quote here in its entirety.

"I have been a Grumpuss fan ever since you first introduced me to your taped performance two years ago. That was when "Grumpuss" began to haunt my mental landscape and invigorate my thinking about the relationship between myth, creativity and modern poetry. Grumpuss is erudite, but never pedantic in the way some modern poetry can be. It skillfully weaves its themes and cultural references into a masterful heroic tale proving that the epic narrative tradition is still valid.

"Last year as an introduction to oral poetry in my Homer and Greek Tragedy Seminar, I used Grumpuss to stimulate discussion of the way fragments of culture may be re-integrated. Grumpuss illustrated for my students the organic way in which artistic creation grows out of and gives new coinage to the stories of the past. The audio version I played for the class helped the students realize that some stories are best transmitted orally, and this has helped them to develop an appreciation of both the oral and written traditions.

"With your permission I will be using Grumpuss with senior English majors in my Myth and Modern Poetry Seminar this fall. It will be especially helpful in that context because those graduating students are studying literature not only because they are interested in it for itself, but also because they are planning to teach it. The Grumpuss is a lovable character who appeals to all age groups. Because of this, and because of his story's links to the heroic past, my students can use him to entice their elementary and secondary school students into an understanding of our shared cultural heritage. Using Grumpuss will be an excellent means for them to demonstrate that the tradition remains fertile and that new mythic characters of substance are still being created.

"Again, my sincere thanks for the use of your performance for my classes. You have created a character who will enrich the imaginations of many. I sincerely hope that you can arrange for the general public to meet him soon."

"The original of *Travis Edward Pike's Grumpuss Audio Theater Production* was a dual cassette release that I recorded at Phil Yeend's NSI studios in Burbank, California, with M&E (music and effects) tracks created and mixed at Adam Pike's studio in Pasadena. This upgraded, 2013, Otherworld Cottage Industries dual CD release of *Travis Edward Pike's Grumpuss: The 15th Anniversary Audio Theater Edition*, features Adam's restoration of my original performance with re-recorded passages, fresh music and effects tracks, remixed for CD.

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(CONTINUE TO THE GRUMPUSS SYNOPSIS)

The synopsis of the epic narrative rhyme applies to both the 15th Anniversary Audio Theater Edition on CD and the 20th Anniversary Platinum Edition on DVD

“A Grumpuss is not like a dragon. Rather more like a large surly cat, with tremendous paws and gigantic claws, and jaws that can crush armor flat.” So when “a messenger rode to the king, with a quest both awesome and grave, In need of a knight, not afraid of a fight—a knight both cunning and brave,” the king summoned Sir Ellery.

“Well, Sir Ellery was a fine athlete. He excelled at every sport. King’s champion was he, three times out of three, the most formidable knight at the court.”

The king ordered Sir Ellery to repair at once to the armorer, who “pulled from a nook a gigantic book, an authority proven and tried, and carefully consulted the index, until the word ‘Grumpuss’ he spied.

The sketch of the Grumpuss in that book set Sir Ellery imagining a triumphant return, when “half of the ladies in court would swoon just from seeing him march in the door. Thousands would clamor to hear of his deeds, and more would be coming...and more,” so he never heard any of the armorer’s advice.

Nor did he hear the provisioneer, because when “the old man bent to the task of explaining just what must be done, and wherefore, and how, the knight dreamed again that the battle’d already been won.”

And so it was that without the benefit of advice, Sir Ellery went “off to his folly, his fortune, his fame, to battle by royal decree. the Grumpuss whose lair lay to the north, through the hills, in the rocks, by the sea.”

Three hours later, Sir Ellery entered the dangerous highland pass. “He led his horse up the rocky vale. Determined he was to press on, but he’d only traveled an hour more, when the last glow of daylight was gone.”

At the top of the gorge, he is confronted by a mercurial dwarf (who may be a sorcerer as well), and

whose reaction, upon learning Sir Ellery means to vanquish the Grumpuss, is less than enthusiastic.

“Vanquish? Indeed” said the wee, little man. “Now that would be a shame. Must it be killed? After all, the ones that I’ve known have been tame.”

Tactfully refusing the dwarf’s offer of shelter, “Sir Ellery traveled the rest of the night, pondering some horrible doom, invoked by a curse of the dwarf, or worse—a spell of perpetual gloom!”

I shan’t give the story away, but I can tell you that a week later, “On a gloomy night...and this despite the light from the full moon on high, the dwarf went to bed with a sense of dread and foreboding he couldn’t deny. If the dwarf was asleep when the first yowl came, by the second he was wide awake. By the time he heard the mournful third, he’d begun to tremble and shake, for out of the night came a clanking sound—a horrible ghostly clatter. He tried to be still, but a cold, eerie chill, set all his teeth a-chatter. “Who’s there?” the dwarf cried, but no answer came, save a rattle, a clank and a moan, as closer, and nearer, and louder, and clearer, came the horror unseen, and unknown.

Despite these chilling passages, Grumpuss ends happily, and I trust these excerpts are enough for you to decide if you want more.

SEE ALSO THE GRUMPUSS LEGACY WEBSITE

There, in addition to the many inspiring turn-of-the-century reviews and testimonials, you may explore photographic essays of the World Premier Performance, meet the production and celebrity guests at the World Premiere Banquet, see Production Notes dealing with staging the live, Save the Children Benefit Performance at Blenheim Palace, and some idea of what the future may hold in store.

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