



Mirette on the Highwire

The Circus Arts Conservatory's Education program is delighted to share this wonderful story with your students. Here are a couple things to know before the clowns arrive!

Prior to the visit from the Teaching Artists:

- Please read the book to your students at least once before the clowns' arrival. If you do not have a hard copy, you can find a pdf. of the book at circusarts.org/community-outreach go to Mirette and teacher resources at the bottom of the page.
- Mirette is pronounced with a hard T
- Vocabulary terms:
 - Kidney Stew
 - Vagabond
 - Music Halls
 - Protégée
 - Devour
 - Feather Mattress
 - Boarding House
 - Winch (tool to tighten a tight wire)
 - Hemp with a steel core (rope with steel cable to strengthen it)
 - Ashley's Hippodrome (famous theater in London)
 - He had the nerves of an iceberg

Day One:

- During the teaching artist's first visit, the students will be creating dramatic scenes from the book. We ask that an area be cleared in front of the white board or interactive screen. Around a 10 x 10' space if possible.
- We will be using the Internet to project images onto your whiteboard.

DAY TWO:

- Day two, students will be walking on a tight wire (18 inches off the ground). We ask that all students wear tennis shoes that day, definitely no heels or sandals please!
- The tight wire is around 12 feet long and is best set up in an empty classroom, stage or Media Center.

At this point, students will return to the classroom and create a writing prompt of the teachers choice. This can be a story, poem, online research, song...whatever you, the teacher, are working on in the classroom.

DAY THREE:

- The Teaching Artists will return once the student projects are complete for each of the classes to present their works. We have found that students really step up to the plate and produce better work knowing that they will be presenting.

FLORIDA STATE STANDARDS:

LAFS.2.L.3.4, LAFS.2.L.3.5, LAFS.2.L.3.6, LAFS.2.RL.1.1, LAFS.2.RL.1.2, LAFS.2.RL.1.3, LAFS.2.RL.3.7, TH.2.S.1.1, TH.2.S.2.1, TH.2.S.3.1, TH.2.S.3.2, TH.2.S.3.3, LAFS.3.L.3.4, LAFS.3.L.3.5, LAFS.3.RL.1.1, LAFS.3.RL.1.2, LAFS.3.RL.1.3, LAFS.3.RL.3.9, TH.3.H.1.1, TH.3.H.3.1, TH.3.S.1.1, TH.3.S.2.1, LAFS.4.L.3.4, LAFS.4.3.5, LAFS.4.RL.1.1, LAFS.4.RL.1.2, LAFS.4.RL.1.3, TH.4.S.1.1, TH.4.S.2.1, TH.4.H.1.1, TH.4.H.3.1, SS.2.G.1.2, SS.2.G.1.4, SS.3.G.1.3, SS.3.G.1.6, SS.4.G.1.4



"Mirette on the Highwire" is loosely based on Daredevil
"The Great Blondin".
Here is some information about this historic figure:

THE GREAT BLONDIN



Blondin crossing the Niagara River Gorge on a rope in 1859

Courtesy of the Niagara Falls (Ontario) Public Library

The most famous of Niagara's daredevils was Jean Francois Gravelot, better known as "The Great Blondin". He was born February 28, 1824 in St. Omer, Pas de Calais in Northern France.

Blondin first came to Niagara in early 1858. He became obsessed with crossing the Niagara River on a tightrope. On June 30, 1859, Blondin successfully walked across the Niagra. For this crossing, Blondin utilized a 1,100-foot long - three inch diameter manila rope stretched from what is now Prospect Park in Niagara Falls, New York to what is now Oakes Garden in Niagara Falls, Ontario. He began his first walk from the American side and completed his crossing in 20 minutes. Blondin used a thirty 30-foot long balancing pole that weighed 40 pounds.

During the summer of 1859, Blondin crossed the river eight more times. His most difficult crossing occurred on August 14 when he carried his manager Harry Colcord on his back. During the summer of 1860, Blondin returned to Niagara for a second successful year of tight rope walking across the Niagara River for hundreds of thousands of sightseers. One of his acts included pushing a wheelbarrow along as he crossed.

On September 8, 1860, Blondin completed his final tight rope crossing of the Niagara River. In 1860, Signor Guillermo Antonio Farini (aka, William Hunt) of Lockport, New York was Blondin's formidable rival. Others followed in the absence of Blondin, but none was more daring or famous.

Blondin died in 1897 at the age of 73 years.

Teacher resources:

Video: The Man Who Walked Between Two Towers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEDT8mCOF>

