

**MOON'S CLOUD BLANKET
BY ROSE ANNE ST. ROMAIN**

**Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2006
Grades 3-5**

Submitted by Courtney Kraemer, Youth Services Librarian
Terrebonne Parish Library, Houma

Title: Moon's Cloud Blanket
Author: Rose Anne St. Romain
Illustrator: Joan C. Waites
Publisher: Pelican Publishing, 2003
Pages: 32

Summary

Moon's Cloud Blanket is a picture book version of a Native American legend from the Houma people of South Louisiana that explains the magical origin of Spanish moss. When a storm raged through the bayous of Louisiana, a mother and her two children sought shelter from the flooding waters in the branches of a cypress tree. Later that night the mother asked the moon to keep her sleeping children warm. "Moon spoke to Stars, Stars spoke to Clouds, Clouds spoke to Wind. And Wind stopped." Then Moon wove shreds of gray clouds, making a blanket to protect the woman and her children. Thus, the beautiful, fragile plant known as Spanish moss that hangs from the branches of cypress and oaks came to be.

Awards and "Best Book" Lists

2004 Honor Title, Storytelling World Awards
IRA/CBC Children's Choices program 2004 Selection
Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People 2004

Author's Biography

Rose Anne St. Romain, who is from Mansura, Louisiana, has been a professional storyteller since 1982. Her many professional performances include appearances at the Louisiana Book Festival, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and the International Reading Association Conference. She has told stories for numerous library programs and Jimmy Buffet's Internet radio program, "The Stories We Could Tell." She has an M.S. in Speech Communication and an M.L.I.S. in Library and Information science. This is her first book. She is currently the Early Childhood Consultant for the State Library of Louisiana.

Illustrator's Biography

Joan C. Waites has illustrated more than thirty children's books. She is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and regularly contributes to *Hopscotch* and *Fun for Kids* magazines. She lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, with her husband and three children.

Other Books Illustrated by Joan C. Waites

The Balloon Game by Edward Allan Faine

Little Ned Stories by Edward Allan Faine

The Waving Girl by J.B. Nicholas

Related Titles

Arrow to the Sun: A Pueblo Indian Tale by Gerald McDermott

The First Strawberries: A Cherokee Tale by Joseph Bruchac

The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses by Paul Goble

Legend of the Bluebonnet by Tomie dePaola

Sootface by Robert San Souci

Classroom Connections

- Have students research the **Houma tribe**. Students can be divided into groups to complete a timeline of the tribe's history, an illustration of a traditional home, a map indicating the places the tribe has lived and a list of unique characteristics of the tribe.
- Have the students collect **Spanish moss** as a homework assignment. Have them indicate where they found the moss and what type of tree it was collected from. Also, as part of their assignment, they could be instructed to use the moss to make a unique creation.
- Have the students write their own **myth** explaining the creation of Spanish moss or explaining another natural phenomena.
- Have students locate average **rainfall** amounts in Louisiana, as well as in your local parish. Also, have the students search for and recount records for hurricanes, storms and floods in Louisiana.
- Have students read other **Native American legends**.
- Have students study different types of **folktales**, including "pourquoi" tales.

Websites

American Folklore

<http://www.americanfolklore.net/index.html>

This folklore site contains retellings of American folktales, Native American myths and legends, tall tales, weather folklore and ghost stories from each and every one of the 50 United States.

Earthbow

<http://www.earthbow.com/native/frames.htm>

This site contains hundreds of stories that are indexed by tribal origin.

First Nations Histories

<http://www.tolatsga.org/Compacts.html>

This site details the histories of many Native American tribes, including the Houma tribe.

Gems

<http://www.gems.brodart.com/authors/romain.htm>

Interview with author Rose Anne St. Romain.

The Story of Spanish Moss

<http://www.terrebonneparish.com/local/culture/spanishmoss/spanishmoss3.htm>

This web page explains what Spanish moss is and the many ways it is used.

Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site

<http://www.carolhurst.com/subjects/nativeamericans.html>

This is an excellent discussion of Native Americans and Children's Literature in general.

Louisiana Weather

<http://countrystudies.us/united-states/weather/louisiana/>

Includes chart of rainfall by city.

Louisiana Climate

http://www.state.la.us/about_climate.htm

Includes links to information about Louisiana climate.

National Weather Service Southern Regional Office

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov>

National Weather Service

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/lch/research/lchhur.htm>

A Historical Study of Tropical Storms and Hurricanes that have affected SW Louisiana and SE Texas.