



ROYAL DE LUXE NANTES

LIMERICK / September 2014

Legend of the frogs

So, here is a legend I hope will twist your jaw with ridiculous palpitations,
and make the audience paralysed with fear, more drunk and dishevelled,
more hideous than a pig doing pirouettes in the muck,
burping with nausea as unwholesome as the fart of a giant elephant.

(She spits)

A long, long time ago,
Limerick was invaded by wild frogs from Asia.

When they got annoyed, they tripled in size and some exploded,
projecting strips of carcass onto the walls.

A pestiferous smell, so tenacious, was spreading over the city.
It was so bad that for miles around one could tell who was an inhabitant of Limerick.
When he entered unknown pubs or wandering out of the territory,
Neighbouring countrymen would instantly turn their backs
and would even, on occasion, resort to calling the police to chase away intruders.

Barrages were set up on the roads
and Limerick was declared a disaster zone.

The inhabitants of Limerick supported each other pretty well,
displaying their solidarity.

Those in charge of the town, having heard talk of paranormal magicians,
clubbed together to invite them.
They were put up in the best hotel in town.

The first of them was unlucky:

Having brought out a flute, he planned to charm the amphibians.
The frogs listened patiently, surprised at so much attention.
However, when he stopped, twenty of them inflated with joy
and burst all at once, projecting our magician against a wall
from where no one was able to unglue him.

Fixed to the wall, a metre above the ground with his feet dangling, his arms frozen in the stone, he stayed this way for several days and meditated.

The second and more competent one adopted a camouflage strategy.

A costume was fashioned for him that more or less resembled the invaders. He hopped on all fours and imitated, on the ground, the movement and art of these swimmers who, intrigued by this, did the same.

The inhabitants watched this strange carnival from their windows, their hearts twisted with hope. They noted that very soon a great number of frogs were following him. Tens, hundreds, and then thousands were coming down the boulevards of the city. He led them to the station where cattle trucks had been prepared to trap them.

The doors were shut on them and they sent this convoy, pulled by a locomotive, to plunge them into a ravine where a big fire awaited them. The police, fire brigade and many volunteers were on hand to ensure the smooth running of the operation.

Unfortunately, no sooner had the first jolts of the wagons started, than the Asian frogs, who weren't stupid, sensed the danger and exploded each in their turn, and finally all together, destroying the walls.

Sadly the second magician lost his life and a great many frogs were able to escape.

Missed again!

The third one, a great analyst, had carnivorous turtles brought in by helicopter.

One hundred thousand of them were released in Limerick. Terrifying battles took place all around the city. **The frogs let themselves be eaten by the turtles** in order to explode inside them, propelling dangerous shells every which way. And on top of that, the turtles attacked the children of the city as they crossed the roads.

It was a disaster!

In the midst of this hell, only the night allowed for calm, each of the warring parties had to allow themselves a little respite for the next day's battle.

It was then that a divine light descended onto Limerick in the most simple and surprising form.

Mac Elligott, a mechanic from a small garage in the city, ran out of petrol close to the station. Leaving his headlights on, he took the spare petrol can from the boot and emptied it into the tank.

He returned to the wheel and was overcome by a totally real hallucination. The lights from his car had attracted hundreds of peaceful turtles and frogs.

Simply put, they were asleep, with their eyes open, hypnotised by the vehicle's light beam. He started to get out and noted that none of them reacted.

He went straight home and picked up the telephone. A few minutes later, a delegation, seething with excitement, made a big decision. Every inhabitant would have to dismantle the headlights from their vehicles to create a huge wall of light! The station was chosen as the location, and the following night, a wall of one thousand five hundred headlights was built.

The night after that, when the wall was finally turned on, all of the wild animals gathered in front of it as if it were an exceptional drive-in.

Then the firemen ignited flamethrowers and all of the vermin died in seconds...

Finally, we heard no more of Asian frogs and carnivorous turtles.

© Jean-Luc Courcoult, author and director, founder of the street theatre company Royal de Luxe