

Le Shaggy Dog – A One Act Play by Dave Morgan



Synopsis

This is a short suggestive play revolving around 4 able bodied French soldiers who have managed to live out the war in the comparative luxury of a small French castle with all of the amenities.

Their lives are thrown into disarray when they learn the war has caught up with them and they have to make a plan to ensure that they all survive.

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Narrator with a strong French accent plus 3 male 1 female with mild French accents.

The Males can be any age or size.

The female must be trim, have an outgoing personality and be prepared to wear a padded bra if necessary.

Plastic pigeon

Card Board cut of a small castle

3 trees

1 dummy radio, Cooking pot, mugs Wine glasses

1 white flag, Field Glasses

Very small tent, deck chair, pile of sticks with a red LED inside

Curtains closed

The narrator stands in front of curtain in his smoking jacket, greased hair and cigarette in a long cigarette holder and looks at the audience.

Narrator: - “Bonjour, madam misère and welcome to le story of le shaggy dog.”

“Now listen carefully b’cause there may well be more than one shaggy dog”.

“You all remember le war, so cast your mind back to when le army of France was in disarray.”

“Le orders for le very brav men were to make sure that le famous little castle upon le hill did not fall into enemy hands.”

“Now le little castle was a nice place to be. There were no battles to be waged and the supply of red wine was plentiful.”

“But we must first introduce our very fine brav soldiers.”

The curtains open to reveal 4 soldiers in camouflage trousers, braces, shirts, and an array of army helmets and jackets. One of the soldiers is clearly female and wears grey camouflage trousers in lieu of the multi coloured ones worn by the men.

Narrator: - “And here we have lieutenant Clouseau who is in charge of this mighty force”

Lieutenant Clouseau steps forward and says: - “Bonjour people of France”

Narrator: - “Drill Sergeant Michel who keeps le men fit and ready for battle. When he takes them into the woods on a route march he comes back as fresh as a daisy and the rest of the men are, how you say, knackered.”

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Drill Sergeant Michel steps forward and in a very sexy voice says "Bonjour you very beautiful people." Michel visually picks out some man from the audience, winks and blows him a provocative kiss.

Narrator: - "Le guard and head of security corporal Beaujolais"

Corporal Beaujolais steps forward with a glass of wine in hand and says: - "Madam, misère, I drink a toast to France and to your health in this terrible war. Viva le France."

Narrator: - "and Private LeClerc who defends the troupe with his life, if necessary."

LeClerc steps forward turns around and says..... "Allo, Allo..... all of you sitting in your trenches. Please keep your heads down until le order comes to go over le top." WE, from the comfort and safety of this magnificent little castle, really appreciate your bravery and discomfort, as you wait in these squalid conditions for months on end for something to happen.

The backdrop is that of a small castle.

Narrator: - "The men go about their daily routine keeping each other abreast of the situation."

Lieutenant Clouseau: - (*sitting in his deck chair*) "It has been very hot today. I can barely move. I sink I will slip down to the river after dark and dip my tootsies in the water."

Lieutenant Clouseau: - "Sergeant Michel; I have not seen you all day, where have you been?"

Sergeant Michel: - "I have been on the roof of le little castle with Corporal Beaujolais looking out for the enemy. It was so hot I had to take off all of my clothes."

Corporal Beaujolais: - "I can vouch for that. I looked so hard, my eyes nearly fell out; they were like balloons! My eyes that is."

Narrator: - "Is he the Shaggy Dog?"

Lieutenant Clouseau: - "I have never known such devoted soldiers. You will all be awarded a medal upon our return to a victorious Paris."

Narrator: - "LeClerc is repairing the radio."

LeClerc who not repairing the radio but was looking at a magazine, looks at the narrator and runs across the stage and starts fiddling with a box with an aerial sticking out of it.

Lieutenant Clouseau: "Any luck LeClerc?"

LeClerc: - "No Lieutenant, she is still broken."

Lieutenant Clouseau: "Do you think it is the batteries?"

LeClerc: - "No Lieutenant, I think the spring has broken."

Lieutenant Clouseau: - "the spring???"

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LeClerc: - “Oui oui Lieutenant. When I look through this big hole in the side of the radio which was made by the enemy bullet I see lots of round things hanging on wires and there is no sign of the spring.”

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “Oh lala. This is terrible news. How can we keep in touch with our glorious leaders without a radio?”

LeClerc: - “Like we’ve done for the last 2 months; by Pigeon post.”

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “You stupid man, you cooked the last pigeon 2 weeks ago and we were depending on you fixing the radio.

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “What happens if you cover the hole in the radio?”

LeClerc: - “It goes deaf and can’t hear you?”

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “ah well I suppose we must just live out le war in the terrible circumstances until someone arrives to relieve us.”

Corporal Beaujolais: - “Another glass of wine my Lieutenant?”

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “How many of these bottles have we got left? The wine is so strong and fine bodied just like our magnificent soldiers.”

Corporal Beaujolais: - “A cellar full, my lieutenant. They should keep us going for another 6 months at least.”

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “And then what should we do?”

Lieutenant Clouseau: - LeClerc you must get the radio working by then.”

Narrator: - “The troop is interrupted by the arrival of the mail.”

A rubber pigeon is thrown with force from the wings, bouncing it off the floor. The cast jump.

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “What on earth was that?”

LeClerc: - “It is another pigeon. Shall I catch it and cook it?”

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “No, No. Certainly not. It is most likely carrying an important message that says we can all go home.”

LeClerc: - “And then can I cook it?”

Michel: - “do not be so cruel. It is a working pigeon who has flown here across enemy lines to deliver us good news.”

LeClerc: - “but the last one was very tasty.”

Beaujolais: - “Will you shut up about the pigeon.”

Beaujolais: - “Lieutenant, what is the news.”

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Narrator: - “The lieutenant picks up the bird and takes a small piece of paper from its leg. He mumbles and mouths words as he looks through the message. He then throws the pigeon down on the ground, lifts his head, jumps out of the deck chair, stands to attention and announces.....”

LeClerc: - “Oh good, we are going to play a game of charades.”

The lieutenant scratches his chin, looks at LeClerc, then the narrator and they both hunch their shoulders shake their heads with a bemused expression on their faces. The narrator then repeats sternly

Narrator: - “Stands to attention and announces...”

Clouseau jumps up, takes the pose and announces

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “Men we have new orders. Our incredible commanding officers say that we shall come under attack and say that we must defend the little castle at all costs to prevent it from falling into le hands of le enemy.”

LeClerc: - “What does this mean?”

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “Pack your bags and get ready to run”

Narrator: - “Immediately LeClerc starts waving the white flag and corporal Beaujolais rushes to checks for the enemy.”

Narrator: - Beaujolais runs to the front of the stage and looks at the audience though his field glasses. Beaujolais was shocked; shocked I say when he sees the masses of enemy soldiers out there. He staggers back to the troop in disbelief and explains how many of the enemy were out there, by opening his arms wide and indicating the numbers with his fingers.

LeClerc: - “Is it a book?”

Beaujolais: - “non, non you stupid man. It is le enemy”

LeClerc: - “How many words?”

Beaujolais gasping for breath: - “there are thousands of them.”

LeClerc: - “Pick me, pick me, I know the answer”

LeClerc: - “It is le dictionary?”

Narrator: - “Sacrébleu exclaimed Lieutenant Clouseau and.....”

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “Hey you, man in le very strange dress. Stop stealing my lines.”

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “As I was about to say, we do not have so many men to defend the little castle with such an onslaught of the enemy.”

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “Drill Sergeant Michel, tell the men to prepare themselves for battle as we are about to be attacked.”

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Michel: - Yes sir, straight away sir, er....where are they?

Lieutenant: - Beaujolais, where are the men?

Corporal Beaujolais: - I don't know, I haven't seen them since the start of the play.

Lieutenant: - "Sacrébleu, they have deserted us, what ever shall we do?"

Narrator: - "Drill Sergeant Michel has an exciting Idea."

Drill Sergeant Michel calls out: - "I have an exciting idea."

She looks at the narrator both frustrated and annoyed, then smiles at the audience and continues:-

Drill Sergeant Michel: - "These men need encouragement to show they are capable and prepared. I shall take them on a forced march into the woods, this will make them alert to the dangers and the exercise will ensure that they do not run away. Now where are my handcuffs?"

Narrator: "Drill Sergeant Michel screams out for the men to fall in."

Drill Sergeant Michel turns and looks at the narrator. Walks up behind him and screams "Fall in." The Narrator jumps with surprise.

Narrator: "Drill Sergeant Michel marches the men into the woods"

Drill Sergeant Michel: - Left right, left right,

The men sing as they march stage:

"We are marching off to war. Even tho' our feet are sore"

"When we come back we'll be fit. Fit for nothing silly twit."

Lieutenant Clouseau: - "ah those brav men and so happy to go on a forced march at a time like this. I take my hat off to Sergeant Michel for his devotion to duty and that of these incredibly brav men who have nothing but admiration for him."

The lights dim on the stage

Narrator: - "Le troop are away for hours then stagger back into camp.

The lights come up again as the narrator continues:-

Narrator: - They are bedraggled, knock kneed with their backs bent, their shoulders forward and their heads lowered while Sergeant Michel walks behind in a very upright manner fastening the top buttons of his uniform jacket."

Michel calls to the narrator: - Hey! You should not be looking, you dirty old man.

The men mumble as they stagger back: -

"Here we are back again, satisfied but full of pain."

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“Only went one hundred meters, then she stripped and began to beat us.”

And Sergeant Michel gives a huge smile at the audience and blows them a kiss.

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “Oh you magnificent men. How you have toiled in le woods under the strict control of Sergeant Michel but you see how fit he is and you are so tired. I think you should go on these marches more often.”

Lieutenant Clouseau: - “Look at all of your hollowed chests and then look at the chest of Sergeant Michel. It is pure muscle. It is only with exercise and determination that you get such Physique. Look at his slim waist with no fat and I guarantee a six pack that would be the envy of all men.”

Sergeant Michel: - Why thank you lieutenant, I didn’t think you noticed.

Sergeant Michel: - “But fear not Lieutenant, I shall march them off their feet once more tomorrow and the day after if need be.”

Beaujolais: - “Hurray....., I mean no....., I mean yes....., I mean we need more rest before we can go through that again.”

LeClerc: - “Speak for yourself, Beaujolais.”

Narrator: - “Ah, could he be the shaggy dog?”

Narrator: - “But haven’t they forgotten something? The little castle will be under attack at any moment and they don’t have a plan. Worse than that they do not have any men”

LeClerc: - “Lieutenant, what do we do when the enemy attacks.”

Lieutenant: - “We will defend le little castle with our lives!”

LeClerc: - “and what happens when we are all dead?”

Lieutenant: - “Then the enemy will take the little castle.”

LeClerc: - “Then that defeats the object. What is the point of dying?”

Lieutenant: - “For le honour, for France, because this is our orders”

LeClerc: - “Viva le France!”

Lieutenant: - “err yes, exactly.”

Narrator: - “The lieutenant is deeply troubled for he also does not wish to die needlessly. He needs new orders but the radio, she is broken and le only communication is with le pigeon which has just arrived by post.”

Sergeant Michel: - “if we all have to die, I have a request.”

Beaujolais: - “No, No, Sergeant. We admire your fortitude but please, no more requests for at least 24 hours. You will kill us before the enemy arrives.”