



Oh Christmas Tree

Thierry Chapeau

Traduction : Franck Theodore Joessel

1

- When I think of all the path we walked for this miserable crooked christmas tree. What about the roots? Do you want to plant it in the garden? Well, we have a decent scarecrow now.
- Not at all daddy, we will put it back where it was.
- Are you kidding me?
- No... I will make him the most beautiful fir for Christmas. So he will tell how beautiful he was and how people admired him when he is back in the forest. The other trees will not look down on him anymore.

Émile will choose the reddest apples and he will carefully shine them in order to decorate the tree. His friends and Santa Claus will not believe their eyes.

Start pulling the board

Émile rushed down the cellar heading for the pantry as soon as he got home.

2

There he made a terrible discovery; the shelves were empty.

- Mom! There is not any apples left!
- You know I gave them to the pigs. It was all rotten.
- What can I put in my tree now? Well, I will go to see Marcel.
- He grabbed a basket and went away.

3

- Hi Marcel!
- Hi Émile! You are just in time! I have just finished my tree. It was not easy to decorate it because I had no apples. So I used something else. You will see it really is amazing.

4

- Amazing indeed!
- Oh! Apples and potatoes are the same thing except pips right?
- Yeah, in a way... Well, er, I got to go, I... I have errands to do, bye!

Émile thought. Juliette might help him. She was so kind.

Start pulling the board

Her mother opened the door.

- Hello Émile. Do you want to see Juliette? She is in the living room decorating the tree.

5

- Hi Juliette! Woah! What a tree!
 - Thank you Émile. I took my last pennies and went to see mother Knopf early this morning. She found me a beautiful twenty meters red ribbon. Back home, I emptied the dresser drawers. Then I polished everything. And there you are! It took me the whole morning.
 - What a talented girl you are, it is shimmering, it is the most beautiful tree of...
 - Juliette! Her mother shouted from the kitchen.
-

6

- I cannot find cutlery. Did you...
- She entered the living room. She was speechless before the decoration of the tree.
- I did not find apples so I had the idea of...
 - Condemning us to eat with our fingers till Christmas! Come on Juliette; take it down. Kids look at each other disconcerted.
 - Juliette, let me help you and do not worry. After that, we will go and see Théo; he has a lot of apple trees.
 - He is so stingy, do you think he will give us apples?
 - Let me take care of this.

Start pulling the board

Théo welcomes them

- Here come the lovers!
-

7

- Ha ha! Very funny! Could you do us a favor?
- Just ask me Chatterbox-Juliette. At Théo's there is everything you need!
- We have no apples to decorate our tree....
- You should eat less compote Paupiette-Juliette.
- Three marbles for an apple. I can push up to four.
- Keep quiet Émile, anyway, there is not even a single one.

Marcel is running up

- Hi guys! Émile, after you left, I got a serious telling-off, Mom had no potato for the soup. And now, I have nothing for my tree.
 - Holy cow! It is apple crisis in this village! Fortunately, I, Théo, the right kid for the job, had a brilliant idea. - Come on! This way please! Come and admire my masterpiece! Pah-pa-rah!
 - Well, don't you decorate it?
-

8

- Fir cones in a fir tree, there is nothing original about that!

Juliette laughed at Théo. He raised his eyes to heavens.

- Well, if we cannot find a solution, Santa Claus will be angry. And we can say goodbye to our presents!

In fact, Emile thought about his poor tree. He promised himself to make him the most beautiful fir.

- What about we go and see old father Augustin...

- That old bear at the very end of the forest? You've got a screw loose Peanut-Juliette.

- Sir Théo, let me tell you that he always sell funny things that you can find nowhere else. He is a real magician.

- A true sorcerer you mean!

- Do not talk rubbish Marcel! Juliette is right, it is our last chance!

- So, Strong-Théo, do you chicken out?

Start pulling the board

Juliette dragged the little band towards the forest.

9

Marcel and Théo trailed a little behind.

- The other day father Augustin was selling pigs with wings and legless cripple millipede. Maybe he will turn me into Thingummyjig-Marcel!

- He will turn you into Marsaddle. You will gallop far away. That will give us a break.

- Keep making fun of me! You will not be that cocky up there. Some say he lives with a dragon. It seems his house becomes red like fire at night.

- I do not believe you! Hey lovers! How far is your Aladin's cave?

- Actually, here it is.

Start pulling the board

- Théo, look, there is smoke, it is the dragon! We are trapped!

- Be quiet Marcel!

Cheered up by Juliette's eyes Émile knocked at the door: knock-knock

Nothing, silence...

He hit harder: bang, bang, bang!

10

- I am coming. There is no panic!
Father Augustin surprises them.

- Hey kids! Are you playing Tom Thumb or what?
 - No, not really, actually... Well, we have nothing to decorate our fir trees. Not a single apple. So we thought...
 - That the old bear could sort the matter out! Of course! Alright, come in.
Juliette and Emile wormed into the place.
 - Thank you father Augustin
 - What about the two of you? Do you want home delivery?
 - Er...no...no... we are coming father Augustin.
 - Watch out! Mind the step!
-

11

What a step indeed! Vertiginous stairs inviting children to go down in enormous amounts of shambles. They were filled with wonder. Only Théo complained:

- It is hot in here! Where are the apples?
 - Hup! We have to get down to work kids! Everyone takes a log under the stairs and joins me in the next room.
-

12

Near a furnace, father Augustin poured sand in a big bowl. Then he pushed it in the red mouth. Marcel whispered.

- I know stone soup but I never tasted sand soup.
- You cannot imagine the power of these little grains. Just give them some time.

Juliette got closer. She wondered.

- Look! The grains are disappearing. It looks like honey now.

The old man smiled. He took a long metal blowpipe. He thrust it in that honey and coated its tip with the white-hot lava.

Start pulling the board

He brought the blowpipe to his mouth and blowed.

Soon the little bit of paste started inflating like a balloon. Father Augustin warmed it up, turned it, worked it with strange tools, and heated it again. Now children were trully filled with wonder.

13

... One glass apple appeared before their eyes.

He cut it off the blowpipe with a big pair of pliers. His little audience was clapping loudly.

The old man got down to work again cheered up by children joy. Little birds, bells and fir cones of all colours slowly came to light. These were the first Christmas balls ever.

Juliette filled the little baskets with care.

The four friends thanked father Augustin and went away filled with emotion.

Marcel looked at the sky flaring up on the horizon.

- Maybe the sun is made of sand!

14

Émile was proud; his parents were admiring his Christmas tree.

- Dad.

- Yes sonny.

- Can I invite father Augustin for Christmas?

END