

Elephant Wake

By

Joey Tremblay

Post-production draft.

The play is set in a fictional French hamlet called Ste. Vierge. Ste. Vierge is for the most part a ghost-town situated on a gravel road somewhere on the Saskatchewan Prairie. Jean Claude is its sole remaining resident. He is about 68 years old.

Obviously the piece is a “one-man show”. However it is important to note that, in spirit, the audience plays a significant role in creating the environment of the play. Jean Claude speaks to them directly and in real time. They become and an essential part of the action.

The performer playing Jean Claude should always be aware of the presence of the actual audience in real time. He should think of the monologue as the musical score – the chord charts. But he should be like a jazz musician who uses specific moments (during transitions between beats) to riff on the play’s themes to create improvised solos in dialogue with the audience.

The following text will try to reflect as much as possible where these moments can take place.

The feel of the performance should always feel fresh and of the moment. He should come across as a man telling his stories in a stream of conscious sort of way. We should lose the sense that the actor has memorized any lines.

It is important that the design of the piece provide the actor with objects from the past that trigger memory for the actor. He is surrounded by the bones of his past. These objects work best when they can transcend from being ordinary things to objects of beauty.

Inviting the audience to reconsider the ordinary and to see beauty in things discarded is the main objective of the plays action.

Chapter 1 The Weed.

The stage is in darkness. We hear the sound of a pitch pipe. We hear the first lines of the Dies Irae. A flash light turns on. The chant continues.

Dies irae, dies illa
Solvat saeculum in favilla
Teste David cum Sibylla

Quantus tremor est futurus
Quando iudex est venturus
Cuncta stricte discussurus

Amen.

He lights his face. He makes an Elephant call

You know a long time ago there, before uh . . . well I don't know what before. But before Jesus and Noah and all that there. Well before even the bible. Well shit! You know what I mean. That long ago. It's true that elephants, they could fly. And I don't mean like a cartoon, like Dumbo or something stupid like that. Not with their ears like this here:

He lights his face with the flashlight he carries.

But they could float, like a balloon, like this:

He demonstrates.

And I'm not kidding you. This is true. And I believe this because I read this in a book. You might laugh at me and think I'm some kind of crazy guy. But I believe that as much as I believe that Jesus could walk on water, or make water like wine, or even rose up from the dead. So maybe I'm crazy but there you go.

Using his flashlight, he makes the gesture of a car passing on the gravel path that transects the stage.

Me, I like the night. I like to lie in the ditch at night and watch those cars go by. They don't see me. I hide in the long grass in the ditch and I watch them go by. And the dust,

it flies all over like a big black cloud there. And me, I'm not on the ground no more. I'm in the sky floating like the elephants did a long time ago.

He sings a ditty as the stage lights up:

En passant par la Lorraine avec mes sabots
En passant par la Lorraine avec mes sabots.
En passant par la Lorraine avec mes sabots dodaine
Ho! Ho! Ho!
Avec mes sabots

Hello guys. How are you? Are you deaf? Did you know, my name is Jean Claude. A lot of guys, they call me J.C.. The guys from Welby, they call me that. I don't mind J.C.. That's not so bad. But sometime when they joke there, or bug me to be so funny, do you know what they call me? Do you know what they say? Ah shit. Never mind. That's what.

All my uncles, my aunts, my cousins, do you know what they call me? They call me Choux-Gras.

He shows the audience a pathetic looking wildflower.

The Weed. It was my Grandfather who called me that. My Pèpère. He told me, "You're just like a choux-gras that grows beside the road. Nobody wants you in the garden, they always pull you out. But when they see you there in the ditch they all say, 'Voyons. C'est beau ça.'" That's beautiful. So I guess that's why they call a cute guy like me that.

*He places the flower near the gravel path.
He makes the sound of another lonely car passing.*

If you walk in the ditch you can find a lot of beer bottles. Me, I don't like the mess, so I always pick them up. And one time I get an idea. I say, "Hey Jean Claude, why don't you do something with all those bottles. Why don't you make a little poupée for all the people and the families that use to live in Ste. Vierge?" That's easy to do. So ta da - I make it.

Like, did you know, me, I'm the son of the twelve of two twelves. Don't call me twelve pack.

He picks up a 12 pack of beer bottles. A bottle represents each family member.

Mon oncle Elis -- Ma tante Lucille -- Ma tante Marianne -- Mon oncle Joe -- Yves -- Yvette -- Claude -- Claudette -- Bernard -- (Guess? *The audience always says, Bernadette.* J.C says No it's Jim) I'm shitting you. Yup Bernadette -- Paulemils -- Marthe . . . that's

3

Elephant Wake
By Joey Tremblay
Sixth draft
Post -Production

my Grandmother. My Mémère. She was only four foot ten. But when she wore her big boot she was four twelve.

He pulls out another 12 pack.

Ma tante Colombe -- Ma tante Florida -- Ma tante Rosaline -- Ma tante Maria -- Thérèse -
- Sylvia -- Jean -- Giselle -- Juliette -- Jacqueline -- Jacinthe -- Léo . . . that's my Pépère.
He met my Mémère at a dance. Deedle deedle deedle dee. They got married in the Ste.
Vierge church.

But before they did Père Champagne, he looked them straight in the eye and he said,
“Don't forget: French people should have a lot of kids so Ste. Vierge will grow and
grow.”

So that's what they did.

He picks up a 12 pack of beer.

Manon -- Sarah -- Christine -- Pierrot -- Marcel -- Nathalie -- Louise -- Michelle -- Hugo
--Philippe -- Yvonne -- Jeanne . . . that's my mom.

Twelve.

Twelve.

Twelve.

He reveals drawers and a trunk full of his bottle dolls.

And you see, when I was little there was a lot of family in Ste. Vierge. Les Cantin. Les
Huberdeaus. Les Tremblays. Les Fafards. There was enough kids for a fricken school.
Most of them, they were my cousins. But some of them, they weren't.

And I'll tell you something. A long time ago there, before I was born, when Mémère was
a kid, Ste. Vierge used to be a big place.

He reveals more bottle dolls.

Les Chartier. Les Desmonceau. Les Brûlé. Les Perreault. What the de hell. Hey, 'tit
Loup you crazy half-breed. What are you doing here? You don't go here! You go over
here.

He moves some bottles to another place.

With the Métis. Les Duscharme, Les Lapine, Les Blondeau. Les Belhumeur. There
that's better. Everybody in there place.

So you see Ste. Vierge was big. There was even somewhere to buy grocery. And never mind that, there was even a café. That's no lie. A café in Ste. Vierge. Ayo! They don't have to walk all the way to town to get a hamburger deluxe.

Chapter 2 **The Tale of Two Villages.**

Pause.

The story of how Ste. Vierge got his name.

He puts on priestly vestments. He becomes Père Champagne and sings the following in a mock Gregorian chant.

Je suis Père Champagne.

He punctuates the following with an altar boy's bell.

Je suis Père Champagne.

He rings the bell again.

Notre Père qui est aux cieux.

*He makes the sign of the cross.
He blesses the audience with holy water.*

Capri. Caproo. Capri. Caproo. (Don't laugh in church)

He rings the bell again.

Je suis Père Champagne and I come from Montréal.
I got big feets and I'm 6 foot tall.

A long time ago when I was so small the Ste. Vierge, she came to me.

“Ave Maria.”

He sings in a falsetto voice, assuming the voice of the Ste. Vierge as he reveals a statue of the Virgin Mary. He resumes the Gregorian chant.

She came to me in a pile of rocks, and I fall down on my knee.

He kneels and begins to pray fervently to the Ste. Vierge.

Je vous Salut Marie pleine de grâce.

He resumes the Gregorian chant.

And the Ste. Vierge, she tell me,

In the harsh high voice of the Ste. Vierge.

“Get up. Get up and go. Go far away West. Go far to Saskatchewan”

He resumes the Gregorian chant.

So, I go, go, go. And I travel far, far, far. ‘Cause I don't have a car.

And the winter is cold. And the mosquito they bite. And I don't got a place to sleep at night.

And when I get here to this pile of rock the Ste. Vierge she come back to me.

In the voice of the Ste. Vierge:

“Ave Mari --”

“Build. Build your church here and the people will come.”

He resumes the Gregorian chant.

So I build and build all by myself a church so high with the cross to the sky. And I call this place . . . Ste. Vierge.

It was my Mémère who told me that. That's why I know it's not bullshit.

Pause.

Oh here's something you might find interesting. The story of Welby.

Once there was a stupid English man, and his name was Mr. Welby. And one day Mr. Welby he said to his wife, “My dear lady, why don’t we go for a ride across the West in our nice horse and buggy?”

“Oh yes, let’s do it!” So off they go riding across the prairie in their nice horse and buggy.

“Giddy up, Trixie.”

He makes a sound like farting. He stops.

“Mrs Welby. Was that you?”

“No. Mr Welby you know I don’t do that. I don’t even have a hole down there. Maybe it was a goose?”

“Must have been. Giddy up, Trixie.”

He sets off again. He stops suddenly.

Mr Welby stops because he sees a big buffalo ca-ca in the grass.

“O my star, Mrs Welby, look down there. A nice big cookie. I didn’t saw such a big cookie before.”

“Not me too. O mercy, look they are all over this place. Cookie. Cookie. Cookie.”

“Maybe we should stop here and have a tea party”

“Goodie. Goodie. Goodie”

And so they stop and they drink their tea and they eat the ca-ca cookie - just like the frickin’ Queen.

“Oh my star! Oh my goodness! This is so, so good.”

“My good, gosh! I don’t ever want to leave this place. Hey, why don’t we live here. Why don’t we build a town, and never leave here.”

And so they build a town and they call it Welby.

The audience often calls out the town’s name. If so, he praises them for being so smart.

And that my good friend is not a lie. That my friend is the stupid fricking truth.

He momentarily goes silent as he surveys the landscape and gets lost in the past.

Shhht! Hey! Do you know, behind my back, they call me le ‘tit Bâtard? I’ll tell you why. It’s simple. They call me that because I don’t have a dad. Shhhht! I know you think everybody have one and I guess me too I have one but I don’t know who he is. I know my dad, he’s not French. I know my dad, he come from Welby. I know my dad he make my mom pregnant and nobody supposed to talk about that. Everybody supposed to shut up and not talk about that. Shhhht! But still, I’m not so stupid. I hear some things at night when they think I’m sleeping. I hear a lot of things. Oh yeah, you know what I’m talking about.

Chapter 3 The Funeral Singer

He starts to sing a part of the “Dies Irae”. He removes some bottle dolls of his relatives who are dead.

Dies irae, dies illa,
Solvat saeculum in favilla:
Teste David cum Sibylla.

Tuba mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulchra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.

Have you been to a funeral before? Me, I’ve been to lots. Hey, one time when I was small the priest, Père Comault, he hear me sing. I dunno, I was walking down the road, eh, singing an old song, like:

Au claire de la lune
Mon ami Pierrot,
Prête moi ta plume
Pour écrire un mot

And the priest says, “Jean Claude. Quelle belle voix. Comme un ange.” And he take me to Mémère and Pèpère and he ask them if he can teach me to sing. They say, “Bien, if you think that boy can sing, go ahead.”

And so me I take some lesson from Père Comault and he make me stand beside the big organ in the church that you have to pump. Woosh. Woosh. Woosh. And Père Comault, he plays a note, and I sing, “Do, re, me, fa, so, la, ti, do.”

He giggles.

It sound so crazy, cuz I have to go higher and higher like a bird, and sometimes I laugh. But the priest he gets mad and yells, “Jean Claude arête. Recommence.” And I sing like “O”- *He sings an octave.*

Or like this-

He sings an arpeggio.

Loo loo loo

And he teaches me songs for the mass - in Latin. I don't know Latin. It's like

He sings phonetically his version of Latin.

Tuba mirum and pick my bum.

Songs for funerals too, he teach me. Songs, that make you scared at night. And when somebody is dead in Ste. Vierge, me I'm the one who sings. Lot's of people are dead, so I tell you, I been to a lot of funeral.

He puts away more of his beer bottle people.

Dies irae, dies illa.
Solvat saeculum in favilla.

Ah it's not so bad.

You know the priest even told me, “When you sing Jean Claude, your voice brings the dead closer to heaven.”

Dominus vobiscum, et cum spiritu tuo

He giggles

Oh so fancy me. “Closer to Heaven.”

But that was when I was a little boy. I can't sing no more. My voice change and I don't have the good notes.

Chapter 4 The Gravel Road

A quiet moment of reflection marks a transition.

He makes the lonely sound of a car passing travelling from Ste. Vierge to Welby.

After they build the gravel road to Welby, everybody in Ste. Vierge, they buy the car. They build the road, the people, they want the car. They need to drive their car to town because it's so fancy here. They have their car, they need to drive their car to town. They need to shop in town. They can't shop in Ste. Vierge. No. They can't get the fancy things they want in Ste. Vierge. They need to shop in town. The IGA! Ooh! The CO-OP! Oohh! The Macleod's! Ooohh! Nobody want to shop at home so it all close down. The grocery store, it close down. The café, it close down. Everything. Kaput!

He makes the lonely sound of a car passing from Welby to Ste. Vierge.

Now this road here, if you keep going that way there, you can get to the highway that take you to the States. A lot of guys from Welby they drive through here because it's a short cut to Minot, North Dakota. You know. They can get their beer and their smoke there because it's cheaper.

Pause. He finds the bottle that represents his childhood friend, 'Tit Loup. He starts to laugh.

'Tit Loup. That crazy Métis. Do you know this funny guy? When we was little he like to play a joke. At night we hide in the ditch and when the cars go by we throw mud and rocks at their windows.

He mimes the following.

“Jesus Christ! What the hell was that?”

Me and 'tit Loup, we try so hard not to laugh. We hide in the long grass. They can never find us.

He lies back in the ditch. During the following the stage becomes dark, little things glow on the stage. We are experiencing the magic of the prairie at night, from a bird's eye view. Little lights are flickering in the distance. We hear crickets. We may even see the big dipper projected in the sky.

During the following he enacts a conversation with 'tit Loup.

Me and 'tit Loup we use to lie in the ditch at night and watch the sky. Did you every do that at night? Ah it's so nice to do. It was 'tit Loup that told me about the stars.

"J.C Do you know the dipper? The big one?"

"'Tit Loup, I can find that easy. Right there. But I'll tell you something. To me, that's not really such a dipper. To me, that's really an elephant."

"Ahh"

"Well, frick 'tit Loup! You just have to look and see. The box, there, that's the head. And that, like that there, that's the trunk. That's not so hard, dumb-dumb."

Hey, guys! You know an elephant? That's a big guy, eh? Everybody think if you're a big guy, you make a lot of noise, you bump into things, you make a big mess. But that's not true. The elephant, him, in the bush he walk so-o-o quiet. Ssshht!

He demonstrates how an elephant walk.

He move his leg like this . . . so careful . . . and his foot . . . his big round foot there. . . it goes down so soft . . . like this here . . . it doesn't make a noise . . . it doesn't break a branch. And do you know how he does it? If you took his foot there, and you saw inside that big thing you would see little toes pointing like this, like a ballet dancer. And those toes, they don't get sore because the boot he's wearing is like a big pillow. You didn't know about that? A big, big guy like him? Walking in the bush tip toe. Really, really quiet. Shhhh!

Chapter 5

The Big House

During the following, he presents a miniature of his grandparent's house where he grew up.

Fait do-do, bébé a maman.
Fait dodo, tu auras du l'eau l'eau.

Shhhh. You can hear some things when you pretend not to listen.

Shhht! I heard a secret. I heard that when I was born in the back room of Mémère's big house, there was no doctor, just Mémère and my mom. It was such a secret, not even the priest knew about it. Shhht!

But nobody ever told me nothing. I walk into the room -- Sshht! Écoute!

But still, if you listen you can hear some things they say and then you pretend you don't listen and they don't know.

I know that when I'm born, there was too much trouble and my mom she is dead, and me I'm alive.

I know they say that when I was little I was always crying. A big cry baby. "That kid never shuts up."

I know they say something is wrong with me. They say, "He's not right in the head that one." Shhht!

I know that no one can never, never, never say the name of le maudit Anglais that make my mom pregnant" when Mémère is in the room.

I know that some of them -- some of my tantes -- they don't like me here. Ma Tante Yvonne, she say, "That's too much for maman and papa. They had twelve of us to raise, they don't need another one. Especially one that's got a broken head." Sshht!

Maybe they don't talk about it. Maybe they don't want you to hear. Maybe they don't even want you in the big house because you're just the big cry baby avec la tote caser. But still, you can hear a lot of shit when you pretend you don't listen.

Every year at my birthday, I go to the grave where my mother is sleeping, and I cut the grass and I make her a vase with the nice weeds that grow in the ditch.

He goes to the bottle that represents his mother and he carefully lays her to rest.

Fait do-do, bébé a maman.
Fait dodo, aura du l'eau l'eau.
Maman est en haut
A fait du coco
Papa est en bas

"Maman, you don't even know me. You die when I was born. Vous n'm'avez jamais vue, mais mon nom est Jean Claude. Tous le monde m'appel Choux-Gras."

He mimes playing a violin..

So all my life I grow up in the big house, with my Mémère and Pépère. It was the biggest in all Ste. Vierge. Colline! It was big because they had twelve kids.

He calls out square dance moves in French.

Un, deux, et trois fois,
Swing ta bottine au fond du boite a bois.
Jig-a-jig -a-bull-a-beef and away you go
Un promenade et dos-si-dos

Pépère him he like to dance. But in Ste. Vierge there was no place to dance. So he would invite all the people in the living room of Mémère's big house. And I remember he would move all the furniture and we would have a dance.

He sings a bawdy Métis song and jigs wildly about the stage.

En passant de le rosier
J'ai rencontre mon 'tit Cavalier
Ils voulait m'embrasse
J'ai dit 'coute mon 'ti 'effronté

The Métis them, they could play all the instrument and they could sing really loud. Mémère her, she didn't like too much drinking. And the Métis -- well, she always used to say, "The Métis, that's good people. But I don't want them in my house." And my Pépère, he would tell her, "Never mind Marthe! Swing ta bottine au fond du boite a bois!" And he would pick her up and swing her around and make her scream and laugh.

He continues to sing a song. He gets the audience clapping. He transports us to a time of old time dances.

Avant que l' Curé était né
Espèce de dégoutant bébé
Dans la ventre de sa mère
Ils suçait bien la pin d' son père

He sings a rhythm and claps out the rhythm in response. He breaks out into a crude jig. He dances until he exhausts himself.

Me, maybe I'm only this big, but I remember these dance and I can hear these song like it was today.

Sadness overcomes him.

Chapter 6 Bones

He is lost in thought as he recovers his breath. His breathing becomes a soundscape for the following sequence. He searches for something on stage. He finds a papier-mâché elephant mask. The stage becomes an eerie place, as he gathers discarded objects and holds them to enact an elephant wake.

That's ok. That's ok. Not tonight Jean Claude. Tonight we do this.

An elephant call.

Do you know when an elephant finds the bones of one of his dead friends he like to pick them up and touch them. He does this because when he touches the bones, he can hear the breath and even hear the voices of his dead friends. And maybe, a voice comes on the wind to his ear and touches him like a kiss.

Sometimes he likes to pick up the bones and put them together like a big puzzle.

He removes the mask and busies himself to change the mood. He gathers more bottles and puts them in cases.

Mémère always say, "There's no time to cry. There's no time to act sad. If you act sad you're just being lazy. Il faut être fort. Il faut travailler fort. Lave les vaisselles. Lave Le plancher. Travaille. Travaille. Travaille." No sitting around crying when Mémère is in the room.

One time, me and 'tit Loup we were walking in the bush and we found a dead horse. And it stink so much and it had bugs crawling in his mouth. Yuck it stink. And 'tit Loup, him, he don't like that too much and he puke in the grass and he have to go home. But me, I came back there almost every day. And I watch the dead horse shrink and shrink until there was just bones.

You know sometimes when a car drives by it might hit a skunk or a gopher, or maybe even a fox. I don't like to leave these dead guys on the road, so when I find them I like to pick them up and carry them behind the shed so they can rot in peace. When they finish, and they're just bones, I like to wash them in hot water. Respect. Respect.

Do you know what I found last night? I found a porc-épic! You have to be careful when you carry a porc-épic. Because pick, pick, pick. Ça fait mal, eh? But me, I know how to carry it so I don't get pick. He's a big guy. I bet you he's got a lot of bones.

He starts to laugh.

One time that crazy ‘tit Loup, he get an idea. He take the scarecrow from Mémère’s jardin and he put that on the road like somebody dead, like this. And we tie a rope around his head and we hide in the ditch. And when the cars come by . . .

*He makes a car sound.
He assumes the role of the driver.*

“Shit! Somebody’s dead on the fricking road.”

And just when they come out there, to check about this, me and ‘tit Loup we pull the rope, and the scarecrow he jump, and we scare the shit out of them. That ‘tit Loup he’s a bad bugger. One guy there, I’m sure he had to change is pants.

With the audience, he has an improvised exchange.

Do you know him? No. That’s probably a good thing. Shit watch out when you drive through Ste. Vierge. You never know what you will find on the road. Hopefully. It’s not me. O boy you never know.

Chapter 7 Mon Oncle Elis est Mort.

He picks up the bottle that represents his Uncle Elis.

Hey, Mon Oncle Elis! Did you know Mon Oncle Elis? He was Mémère's brother, my great uncle. He was not very tall you know. Just a little man like this. And he have a small white face that look so nice and soft, just like the face on the statue of la Vierge.

A lot of people they say, “That guy is fricken crazy. You can’t tell if he’s a man or a girl!” But me I don’t think that is nice to say. I don’t think he was so bad.

Mon Oncle Elis, he lived in a shack in the valley with a Métis man called le Gros Cackoo. Le Gros Cackoo was big and strong, eh, like a bear - but he couldn’t talk good. He just make funny noise like this “guh, guh guh, guh” when he try to talk.

Mon Oncle Elis said, “That one, il parle mal, mais je comprendre tous qui dit and tous qu’ il y a besoin. I feed him good to keep him big and strong. He keeps me safe from all that is bad and mean in this ugly, ugly world.”

When I’m little I used to walk to visit with them. Mon Oncle Elis, him, he was always so excited to see me. He would dance in the kitchen. “Ooo la la! La grande visite de Ste. Vierge. Il faut faire un beau gâteau. Un gâteau pour le petit môme.”

Le Gros Cackoo he always want to play the piano and make me sing songs.

Avec toé je veux pas danser la bastringue la bastringue
Avec toé je veux pas danser
Tue es bien trop excité (*in the voice of Le Cackoo*)

Mon Oncle Elis would come in laughing, “Quelle belle musique! Chant les boys! Chant fort!” La bastringue. La bastringue.

Then, when the cake was done, we would take it outside with a blanket and have a picnic in the long grass.

Mon Oncle Elis him, he would always tell some funny, funny stories. Did you know, he used to live in Paris. That’s true. He was even a singer in a place called Les Follies des Mômes. He told me he put on costumes and he would sing the songs of Madam Edith Piaf.

He puts on a fur coat that is much too small for him.

And you know when he drink a bit of chokecherry wine there, he would make a good show for me and Le Gros Cackoo. Right there in the middle of the tall grass.

He performs an impression of his uncle performing the song “Milord”.

Mesdames et Messieurs,
Gentlemen and gentlemen.
Tonight I’m going to sing for you a song that’s called Milord.

Allez, venez, Milord!
Vous asseoir à ma table;
Il fait si froid, dehors,
Ici c'est confortable.
Je vous connais, Milord,
Vous n'm'avez jamais vue
Je ne suis qu'une fille du port,
Qu'une ombre de la rue...

(spoken)

Ah Milord, I know you, but you don’t know me. I’m just a girl from the port. A shadow on the street.
But I pass by you one day, walking so proud with your scarf in the wind. Arm in Arm with that girl.
Ah quelle était belle.
But she doesn’t love you. No. She leave on a ship forever and she tear your heart in two.

(Singing)

Allez, venez, Milord!
Vous avez l'air d'un môme!
Laissez-vous faire, Milord,
Venez dans mon royaume:
Je soigne les remords,
Je chante la romance,
Je chante les milords
Qui n'ont pas eu de chance!
But look at me, Milord,
Why won't you look at me -
. . . oh but you are crying, Milord?
But I think you don't cry for me.

When Mon Oncle Elis get to this part of the song, he would shake and get so sad.

He removes the fur coat, which becomes his uncle.

Sometimes he would cry so much Le Gros Cackoo would have to hold him in his big arms and rub his head like a baby until he'd fall asleep. Then he would carry him in the house, and put him in the bed.

He hums "Milord" as he carries Oncle Elis to the alter.

When Mon Oncle Elis died the priest ask me to sing at the funeral. The church was empty. Nobody came. Just me, the priest, and le Gros Cackoo. In the graveyard Le Cackoo fell in the snow and he yelled, "Mon cœur est caser. Je veux mourir." Me, I don't know what to do so I just rub his head like this, and I sing:

He sings quietly holding back the tears, and through the song he gains confidence and manages to change his mood.

Allez, venez, Milord!
Vous asseoir à ma table;
Il fait si froid, dehors,
Ici c'est confortable.
Laissez-vous faire, Milord
Et prenez bien vos aises,
Vos peines sur mon cœur
Et vos pieds sur une chaise

Not tonight Jean Claude. Not tonight. Tonight we only sing:

La la la la la la

He let's the song build to take him out of this mournful place, and he searches for something hidden on the stage. He pulls out a bottle of beer from the paper bag and drinks throughout the following.

Labatt's Blue!

Um you don't mind if I take?

Sorry I only got one. They should have told you, its bring your own beer to this party.

The following is an improvisation. It should have a playful feel to it. Hopefully he can meet someone in the audience. He asks them for there name. Throughout the play he incorporates this person into the play. For the sake of this draft, the man will be called Bill.

What's your name? Bill? Hello Bill. Are you from Welby? No. Well that's good. Eh Bill, have you seen an elephant before? Me, I haven't, but my Mémère, she did. One time she was in Edmonton visiting my Aunt Louise, and she went to the zoo. That's right, a zoo. And she saw a real elephant. Oh boy. She said that the skin was rough, rough, rough to touch, but the trunk there, at the bottom, was soft to touch, just like a little baby's hands. That's pretty good eh? They even took a picture.

Chapter 8

L'École

Do you like the night Bill? Me, I like the night. I like the night because the moon him, he's français. That's right. French. He's round and fat and he always smile and he always tell a good joke. Just like my Pépère. And when he drink a bit he sings a good song.

He sings a line from some bawdy French song.

Eh? That's the Moon. Un vrai bonhomme.

The School in Ste. Vierge, I go there when I'm little. The stupid teacher she make me sit beside Sisco Belhumeur. And he smell like smoke and he always scratch his head, and pick his nose.

The teacher, she's Madam Labousse and she can talk French but she tell us we can't talk French in school because, "Now we learn the English". One time she make me and Sisco stand up in front of the class and me, I have to say "Sisco Belhumeur, 'ave you seen my blue humbrella?" Sisco he look at me, "J.C., c'est quoi un maudit humbrella?" All the older ones, they always laugh at me and Sisco. Sisco he can't talk English, just Cree and Michif. And me, I know a bit of English, not too much, but I'm too shy to talk. Apparently, that's not the case tonight Bill.

I don't like school. I don't like Madame Labousse. I never understand what she talk about and she always yell at me when I look out the window.

Pépère him, he don't like school. Whenever I don't want to go, he says, “Mais, reste chez nous. Today you help me with the cows.” I'd rather be with a cow in the pasture than with a cow in the classroom.

How are you doing bill. Do you like the day Bill? Me, I don't like the day. I don't like the bright day. And I'll tell you something. You might think I'm some kind of crazy guy but I'll tell you something I know is true. The sun? The sun up there in the sky? She's like a teacher. That's right, a mean teacher. She just sits up there and she's so smart and so serious and she can't laugh and she can't tell a joke! She just point at you and she don't smile.

(during this moment J.C would offer my beer to someone who inevitably said “no thank-you.” Are you scared of my germs? I don't blame you. Boy I've been around.)

When I was in grade three they built a new school in Welby. A skinny man came from Regina to tell us the Ste. Vierge school would close down. At first I was so happy because I thought, “Frick! We don't have to go to school.” But the skinny man told us there would be a bus to take us to Welby and Pépère him, he was the bus driver.

Mrs. Peach, she was a mean bitch. Every morning, when the Ste. Vierge bus come to school, she would stand in the door and say, “Take off your boot. Take off your boot. You don't want to mess the new school.” One day I don't want to take off my boot because I have a hole in my sock and I don't want the kids to tease me.

“You take off those dirty muddy boots young boy, or I'll pull your ear right off.”

“That's not mud on my boots. That's shit. I must have stepped in some cow shit.”

Ayoi! Clack across the face and she pull my ear all the way to the office.

“Maybe they talk like pigs where you come from young man, but now you're in Welby and in Welby we don't use dirty words.”

On the way back home on the bus I told Pépère, “The teacher, she slapped my face because I said, ‘Shit!’ Did you know shit's a dirty word?”

But, he just laugh, and he tell me, “Mrs. Peach her, she thinks that shit's a dirty word because her, she doesn't shit. She doesn't even have a hole. That's why her ass is so big, because the shit can't come out. That's why she wears so much perfume. To cover the smell of shit.”

Bien! Don't laugh. That's true. My Pèpère told me it was.

And do you know why elephants can't fly anymore? I'll tell you. One time, there was a big fancy teacher, sitting under a tree, teaching a big fancy lesson to all of her kids. And the elephants, they were floating in the clouds, holding their breath. Well, they need to have a rest. So they stop in the tree. Bien. The tree it can't hold so many heavy guys so it breaks and it falls on top of the teacher. Well the teacher, her, she was so mad she swore at the elephants and she said a big magic thing there, so bad they forget how to fly. That's true. They forget. After that, they don't fly again.

You know, one time at school, me I have to go pis-pis. Mrs Peach is teaching everybody the maths, 2 times 2 and all that, but frick me I have to piss.

So I put up my hand, "Mrs Peach, can I go to the bathroom?"

"You stupid boy, you should go before. Now you sit there and wait for the recess."

Ayoi, I have to pee so bad. I even pinch my ga-ging there, so the piss don't come out. But frick it start to hurt and I can't hold it in. So I think maybe I could let just a little bit out. Like two drops. That's not so bad. But shit, once I start to piss, I can't stop and I piss and I piss, and it feels so so good, but shit fill my pants and it spill over my desk and it run down on the floor like a creek.

And all the kids they see that and they start to laugh, and point their fingers at me.

"Jean Claude, what did you do?"

And Mrs Peach she pull me out of my desk and she make me sit in a chair in the front of the class.

"You dummy, you sit there in your wet pants and don't move until they dry."

And all the kids they are staring at me. And they are making funny faces. But I try not to look. I just look down. Because it makes me sick to look.

That night I told my Pèpère. "I'm a dummy Pèpère. I'm no good at school. I can't do the maths. I can't spell the words, I always make mistakes. Maudit, bon-rien sans décent. That's me."

Pèpère he say, "Choux-Gras that's funny you should say that, because I was thinking about all the work I have to do here. I sure could use your help, and I don't think you should go waste your time in a bullshit school with a bullshit teacher like Mrs Peach. Pleure pas comme ca, mon homme. Ca vaut pas la peine."

So that's it. I quit. I quit in grade three, because I have to work hard with my Pèpère. He needs me. He told me that.

He sings

Petit Pèpère noel
Quand tu descendras du ciel
Avec des jouets par milliers
N'oublie pas mon petit soulier

Hey everybody! I have a surprise for you. It's a really really really big surprise!

He exits. He returns.

Shit. I have to get it. It's all the way at the church. I'll be right back. So don't go away dumb-dumb, or you'll miss it!

Intermission

Act Two
Chapter 9
A Christmas Wake

During intermission the space has been transformed into a rudimentary Christmas scene. There are votive candles burning. Paper Mache crèche figures populate the stage covered in cloth. Jean Claude will eventually reveal them one by one.

Jean Claude enters in the dark, holding a procession candle and singing.

Les anges dans nos campagnes

Ont entonné l'hymne des cieux

Et l'écho de nos montagnes

Redit ce chant mélodieux (everybody)

Gloria in excelsis Déo!

Surprise!

Shit I'm so glad you came back. Even you Bill.

Before Christmas, me and Mémère, maudit, we were so busy. We have to clean the house. We have to change all the sheet in the bed. We have to make tourtières, sucre en crème, pâté de fois. We have to work and work. Because, this year, everybody is coming home for Noël.

He sings as he brings a covered paper-mâche animal.

Il est né le divin enfant,

Jouez hautbois, résonnez musette.

Il est né le divin enfant,

Chantons tous son avènement.

And the presents, too, we have to make. Everybody gets something from Mémère. Something made from papier-mâché. Ta da!

He reveals a comical looking donkey

That's a lot of work. Sometimes we stay up all night to make sure it's ready.

He populates the stage with family.

Then, they all show up. The whole family. All my uncles, my aunts, my cousins. The house is full. We hardly have enough place to sleep. Me, I have to put a pillow and blanket under the stairs because my bed is full.

He sings two verses of "Il est né le divine Enfant" to reveal the other crèche figures.

Depuis plus de quatre mille ans

Nous le promettaient les prophètes, (wiseman)

Depuis plus de quatre mille ans

Nous attendions cet heureux temps. (wiseman)

Une étable est son logement, (Joseph)

Un peu de paille est sa couchette, (Marie)

Une étable est son logement, (oh I almost forgot - the sheep)

Pour un dieu quel abaissement.

Jesus!

Surprise!

At night, we all go to la Messe de Minuit. The church is full. There's candles everywhere.

The crèche that Mémère make is up front. And me I am so nervous because I have to sing 'Minuit, Chrétien'. Frick that's a hard song to sing. And everybody is quiet watching me.

He sings in falsetto:

Minuit, chrétiens, c'est l'heure solennelle,
Où l'Homme-Dieu descendit jusqu'à nous
Pour effacer la tache originelle
Et de Son Père arrêter le courroux.
Le monde entier tressaille d'espérance
En cette nuit qui lui donne un Sauveur.

This is the part that everybody in Ste. Vierge sings with me. So you can all sing loud too. You can sing in French, English, in Chinese. Tonight we don't care. Just sing loud because it need a lot of boom, boom, boom.

Peuple à genoux, attends ta délivrance.

And don't forget to roll your 'r' on rédempteur.

Noël, Noël, voici le Rédempteur,

Everybody now.

Noël,

Careful this is very high.

Noël, il est né le Rédempteur

Bravo. Bravo. I love you guys.

Après la messe we all go back to Mémère's house for le réveillons and we stay up all night. The ladies in the kitchen they make a lunch. The men in the living room they drink Labatt's Blue. And when they get so drunk there, Pépère, he puts on Don Messer and we dance and we dance and we don't go to sleep. But always in the morning Mémère comes in with a big box full of stuff we made for all the other kids. And my cousins, they're so excited about all that stuff. Little horses and cows. Like this here. Ducks. Some sheep. Stuff like that . . .

Pause. He falls into a sadness that seems to overtake him instantly.

It's ok. It's ok. Not tonight Jean Claude.

Aahhhh! That's a long time ago. Now everybody move away. Christmas time nobody come around here.

Shhht! Écoute!

During the following he disassembles his crèche. It's like the figures are the crèche are talking behind his back.

“It's not right. It's just not right. Things have to change. Shhhht! She can't raise a boy all by herself. Especially one like him. We have to send him away. There is a place in Weyburn. I think. Or maybe Moose Jaw. They have a home for that.”

Stupid! Stupid! Stupid! Maudit bon rien sans décent. Everybody dies. Everybody goes away. You don't have to get crazy about that.

He gets very agitated and almost nauseous. He puts on the elephant nose and tells this story as a way to calm himself down.

It's ok. It's ok. Not tonight Jean Claude. Tonight we only do this.... *(elephant call)*

You know a long time before? Before the big ice went all over? It's true the elephant used to look just like a gopher. That's no lie. Just like a gopher. But after the big ice he start to grow and grow. And now the elephant is a big guy and everybody want to kill the elephant. I think he should've stayed the way he was. I think it's better to be a little gopher.

He removes the elephant nose. He goes to the bottle that represents his grandfather.

Pépère died in the kitchen. Before we milk the cows. He told me to tie his boot. So I did. Then I hear him go:

He makes a grotesque sucking noise.

And I think he's making a joke, so I laugh. But then he fall off the chair. On the floor. Moving crazy. All blue. Then he stop.

He sings, “Petit Papa Noel” as he carries the bottle to the alter.

Mémère said we had a lot of work to do. We have to clean the church. We have to clean the house. We have to change all the sheet in the bed. We have to make tourtières, sucre en crème, pâté de fois. We have to work and work. Because everybody is coming home.

I told Mémère, “Please don't send me away. Please don't send me away to live somewhere else. I won't get in the way. I will work hard. I won't be bad.”

She told me, “Pleure pas Choux-Gras. Ca n’arrivera jamais. Je te besoin ici. Ton Pépère est aux cieux. Aux cieux avec les anges. And I need you. I need you here with me.”

And so I didn’t cry. And I didn’t cry. I wasn’t a cry baby that day. I sang all songs for the funeral of my Pépère in front of all my aunts and uncles and cousins and I didn’t even cry once.

The following is spoken in near darkness. He opens a box of little tattered papier mâché animals. We barely see them. This is a magic moment.

One time, at Christmas, after everybody get the present, Mémère tell me to go outside by the shed to get some wood because the fire is almost out. So I dress up there and I go behind the shed and, frick! I can't believe it. In front of me, all over in the fricking snow, is all kind of little animals, just like the ones we made my cousins . . . only bigger. Des vaches. Des chevaux. Des moutons. Des couchons. And in the snow, painted red it say, “Joyeux Noël, Choux-Gras!” And I can't believe it. I can’t fricking believe it. How did she make all these? When did she have time to make all these? And I look back to the house, and in the window behind the frost I see Mémère and Pépère. Standing there. Just watching.

Oh bien. What am I thinking? That’s an old story. You have to be strong eh? Il faut être fort. Il faut travailler fort.

He starts to disassemble his little Christmas surprise.

Now everybody, they are dead or they move away. Christmas time nobody come around here. So, I guess I don't have to clean up. That pretty damn good. No more washing all those sheets.

Sometimes, ma Tante Yvonne, that lives in Welby you know, she ask me to come for Christmas. So, I bring some sucre en crème. That's easy to make. And her boy there -- I don't know his name, Daryl, Darcy, Bill -- I can't remember. But the little one, you know. Anyway, he says he don't want to sit beside me. He says I stink too much. Yvonne her, she tells him to go eat in the room with the TV. After supper we all go watch the TV and me I try so hard not to fall asleep. I just want to come home but Yvonne say I sleep in the basement beside the furnace. She make a bed for me.

I’ll tell you something there. I don't like town. I don’t like town. I don't like the people in town. Pépère always said, “Maudit Anglais manqué! They can have their stupid Toronto Maple Leafs. We’ve got les Canadien and Jean Beliveaux. And when he was really drunk he would stand in the middle of the room and yell, “God frick the Queen.” Oh boy Bill. Don’t say that in Welby.

Chapter 10 L'Église est finit

He begins to laugh. He reaches into his pocket, lifts his hand to his mouth, and covers it with his other hand so the audience can not see what he is doing. When he finishes, he reveals his mouth which is covered in bright red lipstick. He kisses the air.

One time, me and 'tit Loup, we were picking chokecherries in the bluff across from the church. And that crazy Métis, he make his lips all purple with the juice and he says, "Look at me I'm a girl. I'm a girl. Kiss me Choux-Gras. I'm a horny, horny girl." That 'tit Loup, he sure make me laugh.

Hey guys! If you come to Ste. Vierge and you want to see inside the church you have to ask me because I have the key. It's really dirty right now. I don't clean that for a long time. Some birds, you know, get in there and they make a big fricken mess. The statue of la Vierge is still there but she's got bird shit piled up on her head. Like a big hat.

He picks up la Vierge.

One time, me and 'tit Loup we sneak in the church with some chokecherries and we squeeze the juice on the white face of la Vierge. And 'tit Loup said, "Eh, she looks like Rose Blondeau. Bis la salope, Choux-Gras. Bis la belle pute."

When Mémère saw that she say, "Oh, Seigneur! Qu'est ce qu'il y a avec la Vierge?" I told her "Maybe it was 'tit Loup."

"Maudit Métis!" And she lick a Kleenex and she wipe it off and we say the rosary five times. Don't laugh. That's a hell of a lot of "Hail Mary"

Do you know, 'tit Loup told me once, "Hey, J.C., do you know how English people pray? Hail Mary, full of grace, two chickens had a race."

It was the bishop who came all the way from Regina to tell us they were building a new church in Welby and the Ste. Vierge church would close down. "Not enough people live around here." Mémère her, she wasn't too happy. When everyone else was going up to kiss his ring, we went home. "Maudit Anglais. Jamais. Jamais. Jamais." She said, "We won't go to the church in Welby. We'll go to the church in St. Joseph instead. There the priest is still French and we have a lot of cousins there." But you know, Mémère her, she can't drive, and me, I'm too small. So Mémère says, "We can walk. C'est pas trop loin. Maybe ten, twelve miles if we cut through the bush." But, you know, I think it's farther than that, because, frick, my leg get sore after we walk all day. So sore I don't even listen to the priest in St. Joseph. I just rub my legs.

On the way back home we always sit in the long grass and we eat our sandwich. Baloney. Or Klik. I like Klik. Avec la moutarde la. And Mémère her, she would tell me all kinds of story about when she was a kid. She would always tell me, “Don’t forget how to talk French and always remember your prayers.”

Talking to her in the sky.

But you know Mémère, sometimes I forget some things. You can't help that. I've got no one to talk to anymore. They all move away. In the bush there's still some old Métis live there. Chechess. La Veuve. L'Homme. But I don't see them too much.

Yelling loudly.

Mémère! Écoute! Je veux souvenir! Je veux parler Français!

Pause.

But I forget a lot.

Speaking to the audience.

Hey! Don't look at me like I'm some kind of crazy guy, okay? Maybe she can't hear me. But maybe she can. So let's not make a joke about that tonight. Not tonight.

He retreats.

He goes to a pile of flour sacks. He fusses with them sheepishly.

Chapter 11

Le Zoo

Hey Bill, I was wondering something. Do you know how to make the glue for papier mâché? You don't? I can't believe it because it's so easy. (I think Bill only has grade 2. No I'm shitting you Bill I know you have grade 4) All you do is take some water. Then you put some flour inside. (Maybe two scoop like this there). Mix it up quick so it's not too lumpy. That's all you do. That's easy eh?

(Ah shoot I made soup. Here one more. It's has to be like this here, like la colle. Like paste there. Careful don't make fricking bread.)

He stirs up a mixture.

After P p re died, M m re said we have to keep busy. She said, "J'en ai des id es la." She said she want to make un 'tit parc by the road -- "Un zoo la" -- full of animals. Animals made from...(Bill?) papier-m ch . My god Bill is smart. I'm convince he has grade 6)

First, we make un veau -- a calf, about this big here. Then we make a small pig. Then, because we found some horns in the bush, we make a deer. After that M m re, she found in a closet an old fur coat. So we make a bear. He stand up like this and he hold a Labatt's Blue. In his mouth he's got teeth like a man because we found those under the bed. They were P p re's. We make everything. Even a buffalo. When we were finished with the animals we made a bunch of lemons and we tied them in the trees.

You know one time, a car driving by there, it stop. And I heard the man say, "Isn't that strange. Hey kid! Who made the art?"

And I tell him, "Don't be stupid! That's not art. That's a zoo. My grandma made that. And me, I help her."

"What's it for?"

"Mind your damn business. That's what it's for."

And he drive away.

He pours glue into a storage container. Perhaps an old cream can. He listens to the sound.

That remind you of something. Too much cabbage soup maybe? Trot trot.

He makes more glue.

When 'tit Loup move to Ste. Vierge they drove up in an old old truck that made a big bang. 'Tit Loup him, he was sitting in the back there, on top of a bunch of junk, smoking a cigarette and drinking coke. I watch them from the ditch. They were moving their stuff into the Ste. Vierge school. There was his dad, Cinq Sous, and his two sisters, Jig-Jig and Louise. When 'tit Loup saw me in the ditch he walk up to me with a cigarette.

"Hey, funny face. Do you want a smoke?"

"No. Me, I don't smoke. How come you move into the old school?"

"I don't know. My dad bought that."

"Me, I live in that big house with my M m re. Do you want to see my zoo?"

When 'tit Loup saw the zoo he ran around like a crazy Métis and he go behind the deer.

He makes a crude gesture with his pelvis.

He just laugh and laugh. He's a bad bugger that one.

Don't stand to still for too long in our Zoo boy. You never know.

He pours more glue into the cream can. He remarks on the sound.

Oh my god...that's not getting better.

Chapter 12

Il est né le divine Boe-Boe.

He puts on the elephant mask. He hums a ditty. He gets busy ripping up newspaper.

One time, me and Mémère, we were walking home from St. Joseph. And we were almost home because we were on the gravel road and we could see the church. Well, frick! A big grey storm started to come to us. And everything got real cold and fricking windy. And we could see like a -- a grey thing there, you know . . . uh . . . Christ! What do you call that? Like a tunnel spinning? Frick! What is that? Well, you know what I mean! Shit! A grey thing coming straight down the gravel road.

Mémère her, she grab my hand and we run in the ditch and we crawl in the culvert under the road and we start to pray. "Je vous Salut Marie. Je vous salut Marie. Je vous salut Marie." And we don't stop until everything is real quiet. Then, we crawl out of the culvert and we watch the storm move away.

And that's when Mémère get her idea. You see, our zoo was missing something. Just one more one thing to make. (Bill do you know?) Ta da!

You know there is two kinds of elephant? That's right. Two kinds. One is from Africa. And the other one is Chinese. The one from Africa is tall, tall, tall and very skinny. He has big big ears. His ears are big eh, because it's hot in Africa and they are like air condition. The elephant that Mémère made for the zoo is Chinese. The Chinese one is round and fat and not so so tall and his ears are not so big. I guess it's not so hot in China, but I don't know I've never been there. But I saw these two elephants in a book and I told Mémère, "If we're going to make an elephant we have to know which kind to make." And she point to the Chinese one and she say, "Ce lui la."

If you want to make an elephant you have to work hard, because it takes a long time. You can't make an elephant in two fricking days. So don't tell me, "I can make an elephant easy," because that's a fricking lie! I should know. I help Mémère make one.

He dumps a pile of paper into a container.

First, you have to find the right legs. Me and Mémère we walk in the bush for a day and when she squint her eye and see the perfect tree, "En vois, coup les."

Then you have to find something good for the body. Us, we use an old bureau from upstairs. Nice and strong and just the right size. We put that on the legs.

For the head we found an old coke box made from wood. Not quite big enough but Mémère said we could add some pieces. For the ears we use an old tire tube. For the trunk, we took the wood from an old mirror that look like this. We put that together and frick, that's a trunk.

So when you have all the skeleton you have to hammer and tie that good and tight so the elephant can stand up all by himself.

So there you are. You have an elephant with no skin. Now my friend the fricking work begin. Bring the water, make the glue, find all the paper you have in the house: magazine; The Welby Spectator; Christmas paper; everything you can fricking find because the elephant has to be big and fat, just like the picture.

Me, my job is to put the glue nice on the paper and give that to Mémère so she can put that in the right place. Glue on the paper, give that to Mémère. Glue on the paper, give that to Mémère. Glue on the paper -- stop! Mémère has to check the picture to see, like this:

Assuming the role of his Mémère, he uses his thumb to compare the proportions of the elephant in the photo with the elephant they are building.

O.K.

Glue on the paper, give that to Mémère. Glue on the paper, give that to Mémère. Glue on the paper, give that to Mémère. Glue on the paper . . . holy shit! There he is. And you can't believe it. You can't believe this big funny guy.

He stands up and moves around to stand face to face with the elephant.

She took some stones for the eyes and she painted them so real that he stare at you so sad, almost like crying. So sad because here he is. In Ste. Vierge. And maybe he's a million

miles from China. I wrap my arm around his big neck and I rub his head and I say in his rubber ear, “Pleure pas Boe-Boe. Il faut être fort. Il faut être fort.”

It was 'tit Loup's idea to put the wheels on Boe-Boe's legs. He said it would be good if one could sit on top and the other one could pull. So that's what we do. We pull our sad elephant all over Ste. Vierge. I told 'tit Loup that Boe-Boe was ours, even though Mémère said it was just for me.

One time me and 'tit Loup we had a big fricking fight. We were out in the pasture with Boe-Boe, eating our sandwich on the hay rack. And 'tit Loup him, he get a crazy idea. He want to teach me how to dance.

“I already know how to dance.”

“Not like a Métis, you can't. You can't jig like a half breed.” And he get up there and he start doing a funny step on the rack.

“Come on Choux-Gras show me how you dance.” So me, I get up there and I show him my dance. And 'tit Loup him, he start laughing at me. Laughing and laughing like a crazy Métis.

“Stop laughing, 'tit Loup. It's not so funny.”

“I can't help it. You dance like an anglais. You dance like someone from Welby.”

“Get lost, 'tit Loup, you dirty Métis! And quit laughing.”

“Ta gueule, Choux-Gras! You maudit anglais!”

“'Tit Loup, you're nothing but a stupid Métis! And your dad is always drunk!” And I take the rope on the elephant and I start to pull him home.

“And another thing 'tit Loup. Boe-Boe is mine. My Mémère made it for me. So you can't ride it because she doesn't want no Métis to even touch it.”

That's when 'tit Loup, he throw a rock. Capow! Right in the head. And I fall down in the tall grass. The next thing I know 'tit Loup is on top of me. “Wake up, Choux-Gras. I'm sorry. Wake up.” And he pick me up, and he put me on top of Boe-Boe, and he pull me all the way home.

That's my friend. That's my friend.

I told Mémère I tripped and fell on a rock and she wiped the blood off my head with a cold cloth.

As he rubs the scar, he remembers something.

Oh pauvre 'tit Loup. I saw his sister Jig-jig in town last year. I ask her, "hey comment ça va avec mon homme 'Tit Loup.

"Ah, Choux-Gras. La misère. La misère. 'Tit Loup est mort. Il est mort ca fait deux ans."

Oh poor Métis. I didn't even know. I guess he was living in Regina, and one time he was so drunk he pass out in the cold. They found him froze in the snow. Pauvre Métis.

He carries Tit Loups bottle to the alter.

Jean Claude why don't you go to the old church, light a candle for him, and sing a bit of the mass.

That's my friend. That's my friend.

He's a bit overcome by sadness but he manages to pull himself out.

Chapter 13

Boe-Boe est Mort

The first time I'm drunk is with 'tit Loup. I was fourteen. Mémère was gone to visit in Regina, and me, I was supposed to keep care of the house. 'Tit Loup said, "Hey! Let's have a party. We'll tell some guys in Welby and we'll have a party in the big house." Me, I'm nervous. I don't want a stupid party. But 'tit Loup say, "Come on Choux-Gras. Don't be an old lady. Let's have some fun. It's so boring in Ste. Vierge."

When the bar in Welby closes they all show up. Eight ball. Jimmy Welcher. Minty. That stupid Murray Lloyd. All the gang. All the ones that never talk to me but when there's a party they all show up with their case of Molson beer and they act like your best friend.

Me, you know, I'm so nervous. I drink a lot and I drink fast. I'm nervous because I don't want these maudits anglais to wreck the house. I heard there was a fight out side and I don't want that in the house.

Jimmy Welcher him, he's in the middle of the living room stomping his foot so hard. All the windows are shaking. The girls are drunk and they're laughing at him, but he just keeps dancing like a big joke.

'Tit Loup, he tells me, "You're acting so weird, Choux-Gras. Don't worry. Everybody is having a good time. Tomorrow we can clean. Go get another beer."

When I go in the kitchen I see that stupid Murray Lloyd. And he's got eggs from the fridge and he's breaking them on the floor. Everybody is laughing. It's supposed to be a funny fricking joke.

"Don't do that, Murray. It's not so funny."

And I go to pick up the mess. And Murray, he breaks an egg on my head. And everyone is laughing at me. And I try to get up but I slip on some eggs. I want to find 'tit Loup. I want him to make everybody go away from Mémère's big house. I don't want this party anymore.

When I find 'tit Loup he's holding some girl. He's got his face pressed against some girl's face . . . and his tongue is all . . . his tongue is all . . . And the room is spinning. And Jimmy Welcher is dancing. And the windows are shaking. And I have to run outside. I've got shit in my hair and I'm gonna be sick. And I run down the road. I run and I run like I think I'm going crazy. And when I get to the church I stop, and I look up, and in the window upstairs I see the moon. I see the moon in the window of the Ste. Vierge church. And just before I puke all over the gravel, I yell, "God frick the Queen!"

That's when I hear a noise. The noise of a car that slam the brakes on the gravel road. And a bang, like it hit something. And I see the lights of a car down by Mémère's house. And I hear, "What the hell did we hit?"

Run. Run back to the house. Run to the circle of guys standing on the gravel road.

I see Eight ball. I see Jimmy Welcher. I see that stupid Murray Lloyd. "Hey J.C., maybe you should put up a sign on the road: Elephant Crossing."

And I see my elephant down on the road. In the light of the car that hit him. Down on the road like this . . . with his side smashed in . . . and his head all twist like this . . . and his sad stone eyes fall out on the gravel with red Christmas paper showing through . . . just like blood.

Me, I'm like ice and I can't move. I'm scared to talk because maybe I might cry.

"Who put that guy on the road?"

“Maybe he walk out all by himself.”

“Shut up Murray!”

It's 'tit Loup. And I see him there holding hands with the girl he kiss in the house. And I see something in his dirty half breed face. And I start to get hot, so hot. And I know. I remember the scarecrow and I know.

“Maudit god-damn Métis!”

And I swing my fist like I never did before and I crack him one in the face. And the girl, she scream when 'tit Loup him, he fall down on the road holding a hand full of blood. And I yell, swinging at all of them, “Everybody go. Everybody go away or I'll kill you. I'll kill you.”

He works hard at pulling himself out of this sadness.

That's ok. That's ok. Not tonight Jean Claude. Not tonight.

Chapter 14

An Elephant Wake

There's no time to cry. There's no time to act sad. If you act sad you're just being stupid lazy. When my Mémère died twenty years ago I didn't cry. I didn't cry. I didn't cry. I was too fricking busy. I have to clean the house. I have to change all the sheet in the bed. I have to make tourtières, sucre en crème, pâté de fois. I work and work.

The church, too, I clean. I scrape the bird shit from the bench. I shake the mice out of the tabernacle. I even wash the big curtain behind the altar. Because everybody is coming home –

Ma Tante Yvonne told me I did all that work for nothing, because the funeral was going to be in Welby. In Welby? Oh non. Dit pas ca Yvonne. Welby. Shit. And I want to sing the mass in Latin, because Mémère would want that, but they don't let me. Ma Tante Yvonne said the priest in Welby doesn't do it like that anymore. It's different now.

Oh I got so mad. I said to hell with all of you. Have your stupid Welby funeral, but I'm not going. If I can't sing the mass I'm not going. You can't tell me what to do. I'm not a cry baby. I'm staying here in Ste Vierge.

Takes Mémère to the alter.

So Mémère, I stay in St Vierge. I light all the candles in the church. And all by myself I sing the mass for you.

Dies irae, dies illa.
Solvat saeculum in favilla
Teste David cum Sybilla.

And I didn't cry. I didn't even cry once.

A while ago I go back to the place in the long grass and I find my Boe-Boe. There's not much left of him. Just a lot of junk, you know, wood and old paper and grass growing through it. And there I am in the tall grass with the bones of my elephant. And everything is so quiet. And everything doesn't move. And that's when the wind starts to blow and it brings voices. Voices so quiet like a whisper that tickle your ear. And I can hear my Mom who was dead when I was born. And I can hear Mon Oncle Elis singing Madame Edith Piaf. I can hear 'tit Loup making a good joke. I can hear Pépère, he is whistling a song when he milks the cows. And I can hear Mémère, so quiet, so so quiet, in my ear, almost like a kiss. And she says, "Choux-Gras, Pleure pas. Il faut être fort. Il faut être fort." And that's when I get my idea. That's when I know what I'm gonna do.

I'm gonna make an elephant. I'm gonna make an elephant so fricking big that when he stands over the gravel road the cars, they can drive right through his legs. I'm making an elephant so fricking big that the people they can see it from Welby. They can see it from St. Joseph. They can see it all the way from Minot fricking North Dakota. And the people, they're gonna come from all over to see this big fricking guy. They're gonna come from all over the world. And Ste. Vierge . . . Ste. Vierge is gonna grow and grow.

He sings. He takes the miniature house and places it center stage. He places the weed in front of the house. He gets to work by singing and ripping paper.

Slow fade to black.

65 Elephant Wake-Up Call. An elephant wakes up from having been fitted with a tracking collar that will help protect him and his kind from poachers and shows that he's more awake than you might imagine. Info. Share Links. Added:Mar-14-2018. By: mrgod2u (32439.97). Tags: wtf, elephant. Views: 2325 Replies: 27 Score: 65. Elephant wake Up Game is very simple but also it is very interesting. You need to wake up all them hit with SPACEBAR and you can go to bed. You should avoid ghosts, they hamper you to complete the level. Sometimes if you find an alarm clock don`t worry - it will increase game time. Now play and wake up elephants!