

Our trip to the foreign countries

A long journey

By Vincent Le Quang

The sky is bright and it starts to get warm. Jack wakes up feeling nausea. He wonders if it's the rocking or the smell of the elephant he's riding that is causing that.

"Elephant. I'm still inside that dream?"

In fact, the cold fact that this is not a dream starts to sink in for Jack. Sophie is still lying next to him very comfortably, in a deep sleep. There is no sign of civilization or anything at all within Jack's line of sight. His cell phone is almost out of battery and without signal since he embarked on this trip. He records his voice.

"Guys, friends, everyone I love. If I don't come back alive from this trip, just know that I love you... so much. I am now on an elephant, in the middle of literally nowhere...with this crazy ass girl still wearing that stupid pink tutu. There is nothing but grass around. Not a tree, not a soul, not a chipmunk. I'm on a big giant freaking lawn! Where the hell are we? I guess we are in France or something!"

He stops the recording, and tries to use the camera, but the phone shuts down.

"No! My proof! My only proof that I'm not crazy!"

Jack looks at Sophie, wondering why yelling this loud did not even wake her up. He picks up a lollipop sticking out of her purse and angrily sucks on it. Approaching from the horizon, a silhouette appears on a horse.

"Sophie, wake up."

"Hum, five minutes more." She softly says.

There is a man completely naked on a horse. He first speaks in French then repeats his sentence in English.

"Come down from the elephant. I am here to inspect you."

Upon hearing that sentence spoken by the naked Frenchman, Jack shudders with fear.

“Sophie! There’s a crazy naked French guy on a horse. Wake up!”

Sophie frowns looking at Jack’s face.

“You have breath smell. Did you eat my lollipop? Why did you touch my purse? You didn’t ask me, you punk! I thought you didn’t like beer flavor!”

“Please come down from the horse, both of you”, asks the Frenchman.

Sophie looks down. She notices that the man is holding a familiar black device with a blinking red light, and he keeps putting his nose on it. She suddenly panics and takes off her tutu.

“He’s got a breathalyzer. Quickly, put this on”, she whispers to Jack.

“Your tutu? Hell no!”

“Quiet! Just put it on, discretely.”

“No! I’m sick of you telling me what to do without explanation.”

Sophie forcefully pulls out Jack’s pants and shoves the pink tutu into his crotch. She comes down from the elephant to hear what the naked man has to say.

“This breathalyzer tells me that one of you has been drinking. Smell it.”

“Oh, I can assure you, officer. It’s not me. Let me show you”

Sophie puts her mouth into the French guy’s mouth. Jack’s face turns red and his stomach turns as he witnesses that.

“Jack, you can come down”, yells Sophie.

“I’m not kissing the naked French guy!”

“It’s ok, he knows you’re the one who’s been drinking. Just come down and show yourself.”

Jack hesitantly climbs down the rope ladder, wearing Sophie’s pink tutu. The French guy smiles, and then laughs loudly.

“Haha! I didn’t know you were here for the show. Well, you’re fine then, I’m sure you’ll make a fine ballerina. Enjoy your visit to France.”

The naked horseman rides away to the horizon.

“You hear that Jack? We’re really in France!”

“Hihihi hahaha” says Jack. “We’re in... France... Can you explain why you had me wear your stupid tutu?”

“Because of your breath smells like beer, you idiot. That’s why.”

“Oh but of course, that makes perfect sense. Now, can I get back my pants?”

After the exchange of clothes, Sophie takes out her pamphlet. Jack rolls his eyes, briefly waiting to hear what burst of nonsense will come out of her mouth this time, and tells her:

“Sophie, look around us. How is this France? There’s nothing, empty, nada, niet.”

“Well, that’s what I am trying to figure out. I think...”

She pauses for a few second.

“I think...”, she continues.

“I want to strangle you”, mouths Jack.

“I think we’re supposed to be near the Château de Versailles ...”.

Jack’s puppy eyes show signs of desperation. Sophie says:

“Oh that’s right, look over there”

Jack just realized he was wrong. There is something around. Not far away, there is a red brick lying on the grass. Jack expresses his astonishment.

“Oh, splendid. That’s a brick. We’re completely saved. Halleluia!”

Sophie keeps staring at her mysterious pamphlet. She then stands on the brick and looks far into the horizon.

“Oh, I’m so excited to meet the king of France!”

Jack walks towards the horizon and sights at the emptiness. He turns around. Sophie has vanished.

“So... Sophie! Oh no, what the...”

The brick is still there and the elephant too, but no sign of Sophie or anything she was carrying. Jack talks to the elephant.

“Where did she go? Did you see where she went?”

Dah!!! What’s happening to me? I’m talking to a damn elephant!”

Jack runs around in circle but still sees nothing until the horizon. He tries to put his head into the elephant’s mouth but gives up quickly. He then attempts to pick up the red brick but that doesn’t budge, as if it’s been glued to the ground. He tries to stand on it. He puts one foot on but loses balance and tumbles. Somehow, hitting the grass hurts a lot more than he expected. Lying down on the ground, he closes his eyes. Upon reopening them, he sees bright chandeliers hanging from the ceiling, walls covered in lush tapisserie, stained glass windows, and bring glowing ornaments. He contemplates the view above him when Sophie suddenly appears, smiling at him.

“Look Jack, we’re in a French castle!”

To be continued...