



The Curse of the Gnouilles

*Propriété : Association Agir Ensemble
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ACT I : Introductory music. An oasis. Close to a waterhole, several people (G1, G2, G3...). Motionless, they seem miserable.

Suddenly, two voyagers appear : Walter and Véolie.

Véolie : Look Walter ! It wasn't a mirage !

Walter : Water ! Véolie, we're saved !

They approach the water and kneel to drink. They are interrupted.

G1: Ouatt !

Walter: Huh ?

G2 : Ouatt !

Véolie: What ?

G3 : Ouatt !

Walter: WHAT ?!

G1 : Ouatt !

G2 : Ouatt !

G3 : Ouatt !

Time

Véolie: Ok, are we done now ?

Walter: Can we just drink our water in peace please ?

G1 : Ouatt !

G2 : Ouatt !

G3 : Ouatt !

Véolie: What ! What ! What ! Is that all you know how to say ? *A moment..* Ok then ! *Gets ready to drink.*

G1 : You shouldn't drink that water.

Walter: He speaks !

G2 : You shouldn't drink that water.

Walter: Ok... ?

Véolie: Why not ?

G1,2,3 : Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !

Véolie: Not this again !

G3 : You just shouldn't.

Walter: Is it your water ? And you don't want to share it? Is that it?

G1 : This is everyone's water !

Véolie: Of course it's everyone's water !

G2 : It fell from the sky...

G3 : And the sky doesn't belong to anyone !

Walter: Then what is it ?...

G1,2,3 : Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !

Walter: Yelling WHAT IS THE PROBLEM ?!

G2 : The problem is that that water is not good !

Véolie: We don't care, we are dying of thirst !
G1 : But if you drink the water, you'll die anyway !
Walter: What do *you* know ?
G3 : We have lost many friends...
Véolie: Really ?
G1 : Yes. That water was good before.
G2 : Everyone drank it and it was fine.
G3 : But it became bad... because of the tiny creatures.
Véolie and Walter: Tiny creatures ?
G1 : Tiny, microscopic creatures were born in this water and then...
G3 : And then, the water made us all very sick and like I said before, the Gnouilles lost many.
Véolie and Walter : The Gnouilles ?
G2 : We are the People of the Gnouilles.
G1,2,3 : Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !
Walter: Ah ! Well thank you, People of the Gnouilles, for warning us about the water, although we now have a serious problem...
Véolie: Yes we do ! How are we going to make it back across the desert now?
Walter: We're going to shrivel up like raisins !
G1 : We have the same problem...
Walter: Really ?
G3 : Yes of course ! We need water to survive as well !
G2 : No water, no life !
Véolie: Well then, how do you survive with contaminated water ?
G2 : We had made some reserves when the water was still good.
Véolie and Walter : Reserves ?
G1 : Yes reserves, but we're running out...
G3 : Rapidly...
G1 : All that we have left is this jug...
Véolie and Walter : Give it to us !
G3 : Ouatt ?
G2 : Ouatt ?
G1 : Ouatt ?
G1,2,3 : Why ?
Walter: If you give us the water, we will cross the desert and go find help.
Véolie: And we will save you !
Walter: Well, hold on
Véolie: Mmh right...
G1 : We could do that...
G3 : No !
Véolie and Walter : No ?
G3 : I don't trust those two ! If we give them our water, we'll be left with nothing !

G1 : Do we have a choice ? Do *you* want to go get help ?

G3 : If I could, I would...

G2 : We, the People of the Gnouilles, don't do well with the sun and the heat...

G1 : That's why we stay under the shade of the palm trees, close to our water.

G2 : And even with ten jugs of water like this one, we wouldn't make it across the desert...

Walter: But *we* could !

G1 : Yes, *you* could.

G3 : If we give you this water, do you swear to help us...

G2 : Help us... not to die...

Walter: Yes, of course ! You help us, we help you, it's the least that we can do !

Véolie: We promise to rescue you !

Véolie and Walter : Yes, we promise !

G1 : Ok then ! Well here is what you will need to cross the desert without dying of thirst. *They hold out their jug.*

G2 : Walter, Véolie, we are counting on you !

Walter: No problem ! *They take the jug.* Thank you !

Véolie: See you soon, friends !

Walter: And thank you again !

The voyagers leave.

Time.

G3 : They're not coming back !

G1 : Oh, they'll be back...

Transitional musical, everyone exists. Change of scenery.

ACT II: In the village. We see our voyagers again accompanied by friends (A1, A2...) and Fati, an old wise man. The ambiance is festive. They toast. They laugh.

Walter and Véolie : Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ha ha ha !

A1 : Ha ha ha ha ha ! Cheers to your health my friends !

Tous : Cheers ! *They toast*

A2 : The poor People of the Gnouilles...

Walter: Yes, it is a shame about them, but why would you live in the middle of the desert in the first place !

Véolie: That's true ! Their oasis is beautiful but it *is* in the middle of nowhere !

Walter: Might as well live on a desert island surrounded by shark infested waters ! Ha ha ha !

A3 : At this point, if the water is as bad as you say it is, there must not be much left of their lovely oasis...

Véolie: That's for sure !

Fati: I have traveled across that arid region many times and I can assure you

that each time, I was very happy to find the Oasis of the Gnouilles. Actually, without their water, I surely wouldn't be sitting here with you today...

Walter: Neither would we ! If they hadn't given us their jug of water... I don't want to imagine what would have happened to us...

Véolie: Shriveled up raisins !

Everyone except for Fati : Ha ha ha ha ha !

A1 : And ? Did you return to save them ?

Walter: *Return?* Back there ? Are you crazy?! Who would want to go back through that hell ? We were very lucky that they still had a jug left ! Can you imagine if we had arrived two days later ?!

Véolie: And help them ? How do you figure that we could help them ?

A1 : I don't know, but you promised them !

Véolie: Of course we did! We had to promise them or they would have never given us their jug of water !

Walter: You would have done the same ! When you're desperate and dying of thirst, you're capable of anything !

Fati: Surely, but now they're the ones dying of thirst... *Time*

Véolie: They were condemned either way, they only had *one* jug of water left!

Fati: And they gave it to you in exchange for your word ! *Time*

A2 : This is terribly sad...

Walter: Yes it's sad but we can't do anything about it !

A3 : Either way, you should at least try...

Véolie: Try what ?

Walter: Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ha ha ha !

Véolie: We're not going to cross the desert each week to bring them jugs of water !

Fati: Why not ?

Véolie: Well why don't *you* go then in that case !

Walter: And say hi to them for us while you're at it!

Fati: I'm not the one that made a promise !

Walter: Neither did we really ! When it's a matter of life or death, it's a free for all !

Fati: Keeping a promise isn't always easy, but if you don't even try, then...

Walter: Then what ? What ? Ouatt? Ha ha ha !

Fati: Then... beware of the curse of the People of the Gnouilles !

Véolie: The curse of the Gnouilles ?

Walter: You're just trying to scare us into going back there! But it won't work !

Véolie: No ! It's not working ! Well, not really...

Fati: Don't say I didn't warn you.

Walter: Yes you did ! And after all of this excitement, I need to rest ! So good night to all of you and see you tomorrow ! *He exits*

Véolie: Uhm... I'm not really tired anymore but I guess I'll go lie down a little anyway...

Fati: You should stay and talk to us, huh? While you *still can*...

Véolie: Uhm... No thanks. See you tomorrow. *She exits.*
A3 : Ha ha ha ! Fati, you should be ashamed of yourself, scaring the kids like that !
Fati: They aren't kids anymore !
A3 : They're big kids !
Fati: They made a promise !
A1 : Sure, but so what ? Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ha ha ha !
They all exist cackling. Fati stays behind, alone and pensive.
Fati : What ? What ? What ?
Transitional music. They exit.

ACT III : The next day on the street. A female villager bumps into Walter.

Female villager: Hello Walter, and how are you today?
Walter: Ouatt ?
Female villager: How are you ?
Walter: Ouatt ?
Female villager: Are you deaf ?! I said, HOW ARE YOU !
Walter: Ouatt ?
Female villager: Are you making fun of me ?...
Walter: Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !
Véolie Enters
Véolie: Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !
Female villager: Véolie ?
Walter and Véolie : Ouatt ! Ouatt !
Female villager: What's wrong with you two today ?
Walter and Véolie : Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !
Female villager: I knew that you were both far from being smart, but this is a new low point !
Walter and Véolie : Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !
The old wise man Fati enters.

Fati: I warned them.
Female villager: Warned them about what ?
Walter and Véolie : Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !
Fati: The curse of the Gnouilles !
Female villager: The curse of the Gnouilles ?
Fati: Exactly ! They gave their word and they didn't keep it... so they lost it!
Female villager: But that's awful !
Fati: That'll keep them from saying foolish things! And from us having to hear them ...
Walter and Véolie : Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !
Female villager: But it's getting very annoying to hear them say the same thing over and over again ! I think I liked it better when they were just foolish !
Fati: You're right, we won't be able to tolerate them much longer...

Female villager: What should we do about this ?
Fati: Kick them out of the village.
Female villager: Kick them out of the village ?! But we can't do THAT !
Fati: Then we must help them to keep their promise. It's the only way to break the curse.
Female villager: Help them ? I'd be willing to help them, but how ?
Fati: They must go see Eugene !
Female villager: Eugene ? The crazy hermit that lives in the forest ?
Fati: Eugene is not crazy. Eugene is a genius ! And like many geniuses, he is misunderstood, and suffers greatly from it.
Female villager: Eugene is a genius ? In what possible way ?!
Walter and Véolie : Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !
Female villager: I don't think we should wait any longer...
Fati: Let's go !

They all exit. Music.

ACT IV : At Eugene's home.

Eugene : So you say you need my assistance ?
Fati: Yes Eugene. We humbly beg for your assistance, to help these young boys that are now incapable of saying anything other than "Ouatt, Ouatt, Ouatt."
Walter and Véolie : Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !
Eugene: I see... They encountered the People of the Gnouilles, didn't they ?
Fati and Female villager: Exactly !
Eugene: And they did not treat them kindly, did they ?
Fati: and Female villager: Exactly!
Eugene: While the People of the Gnouilles, had been kind to them, correct ?
Fati: and Female villager: Exactly !
Eugene: I see... I see... Wait a minute!.. I recognize you two...
Walter and Véolie : *Trying to hide one behind the other* Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !
Eugene: Yes, you're Walter and you're **Seif**, correct ? We grew up together in the village, yes... Yes I remember when we were young... Some very difficult years, painful even... for me anyway! Right? Do you remember? You both loved to torment me! I was, how should I say ?... Your favorite toy ! You spent a lot of time making fun of me and laughing at me, and I can assure you that that did not feel very good. Which is why I prefer the company of trees now... But today, it's my turn to laugh, right ? ... WHAT !
Walter and Véolie : *Petrified* Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !
Eugene: Ha ha ha ha ha ! Thank you, thank you... Ha ha ha ! Thank you my friends... You really are quite funny but I've laughed enough for one day. Why don't you try again tomorrow ! *He exits*
Walter and Véolie : *Frantic and confused* Ouatt ? Ouatt ? Ouatt ?
Fati: Calm down ! Calm down ! You tormented Eugene for all of those years,

and now he's getting his revenge. It's his turn to make fun of you now. Yet, if we do not tire of laughing, we quickly tire of the misfortune of others... Well, when intelligence is triumphant...

Female villager: Which isn't always the case, huh ? I think that you two know something about that, don't you...

Walter and Véolie: *Shameful* Ouatt... Ouatt... Ouatt...

Fati: Well, bring them back to the village. I'll speak to Eugene and try to get him to come around...

Female villager: Come on you geese, let's go.

Walter and Véolie: Ouatt ! Ouatt ! Ouatt !

They exit, the old wise man stays behind and calls out :

Fati: Eugene ! Eugene ! It's me ! Fati ! I'm your friend, you know that... Would you mind chatting with me for a moment ?

Eugene comes out

Eugene: Fati, my friend, of course I will talk with you. But I'm warning you, I don't want to hear a single thing about those two idiots! They got exactly what they had coming !

Fati: Eugene, I know that you suffered greatly because of them but please listen to me : you don't know the whole story.

Eugene: I don't ?

Fati: No you don't. The people of the Gnouilles are in grave danger. The water in their oasis has gone bad, it's contaminated and undrinkable! Walter and **Seif** promised to help them but they didn't keep their word...

Eugene: *Sarcastic* Well isn't that surprising !

Fati: That's why they've been cursed...

Eugene: Well good !

Fati: Possibly. Regardless, the People of the Gnouilles are dying as we speak !

Eugene: Either from thirst or from poisoning.

Fati: Exactly !

Eugene: Personally, I think I would prefer to die from poisoning... It's probably more painful but at least it's faster !

Fati: Eugene !

Eugene: Oh... Sorry !

Fati: If we want to save them, we will have to move very quickly. We have to go now ! *Time* Now ! *Time* Eugene ! *Time*

Eugene: Now ! Every second that passes is a second lost ! We have to do something! Yes! We have to do something... Something... Something...
He ponders

Fati: Eugene, don't you have one of your famous inventions around here that could maybe...

Eugene: *Thinking* Yes, maybe...

Fati: Maybe you could invent something like... Some kind of giant slide that could bring ice from the North Pole all the way down here. And the ice would melt into water once it gets to the desert...

Eugene: My friend !

Fati: Yes?..

Eugene: You have a vivid imagination !

Fati: Do you have something better to propose ?

Eugene: I think we can find a more simple solution. We are going to transform their bad water into good water ! Let me work on it tonight. We will leave first thing tomorrow! *False exit*

Fati: Eugene !

Eugene: Huh ?

Fati: Thank you !

Eugene: *Grumbling* Hmm ! *He exits*

ACT V : Back at the oasis. The people of the Gnouilles are still around the waterhole. They are much weaker than before. Enters Eugene followed by Fati.

Eugene: People of the Gnouilles ! Greetings !

G1, 2, 3 : Ouatt... Ouatt...

Eugene: Here, have a drink ! *He holds out his water bottle.*

G1 : If we drink your water, you won't be able to cross the desert and you will die like the rest of us...

Eugene: Don't worry about that, just drink. I can assure you that everything is going to be ok. *They drink.*

G1 : Thank you. But you aren't who we were expecting.

Eugene: You were expecting visitors ?

G2 : Two friends who left to find help...

Eugene: Friends ?

G2 : Yes... well, maybe...

G1 : Let's just say that they're taking a long time to come back...

Eugene: Huh... They must have gotten lost on the way... There are so many trails, it's easy to get lost out here ...

G3 : I knew that they wouldn't keep their word and that they were never coming back...

Eugene: Well you were wrong my friend, I can assure you that they will be coming back very soon...

G2 : Look!

G1,2,3 : Walter ! Véolie ! *They enter, backs loaded like mules.*

Walter and Véolie: Ouatt... Ouatt...

Fati: Walter and Véolie came to see us and told us about your situation. And that's why we're here !

G3 : Véolie, Walter, I beg for your forgiveness. I doubted your promise, but you held it.

Eugene: Yes, they absolutely wanted to come back to help you... especially after they lost their ability to speak!

G1 : I might have inflicted the curse a little too quickly...

Eugene: Oh no... Those two definitely needed something to motivate them...But enough about them, take a look at what we brought you...

G2 : A cube ?

Eugene: A fountain !

G3 : A fountain in the form of a cube ?

Eugene: Exactly ! It's an invention of mine which will allow you to purify your water !

G2 : Really ?

Eugene: Really ! You simply pour your dirty water in over here, you pump it, and it comes back out over here, clean and ready to drink!

G1 : So we're saved !

Fati: And so are we, as we will now be able to cross the desert !

G3 : How can we thank you ?

Fati: There is no need. You are not responsible for the misery that you endured. And as fellow humans, had we been able to help, but chosen not to, we would not be dignified of this title! As you cannot spell humane without human!

G2 : Humanitarians !

Eugene: Just, *humans* !

Fati: And don't forget that you saved two of our villagers.... Speaking of which, maybe you could lift the curse now, and give them back their ability to speak ?

Eugene: Is it really *that* urgent ?

Fati: Eugene !

G1 : They've already been freed !

Fati: Really ? Walter ?

Walter: What ?

Eugene: Véolie ?

Véolie: What ?

Fati: Are you sure ?

G1 : Well, yes... although I haven't used this power in a very long time.... Maybe I didn't do it correctly.... That would be unfortunate...

Eugene: Oh, it's really not a big deal ...

Fati: Eugene !

Véolie: Eugene.

Walter: Eugene. I'm sorry for all the hurt that we caused you.

Véolie: Forgive us Eugene. We were foolish, and our ignorance made us cruel.

Walter: We see that now.

Véolie: And we regret it.

Walter: Eugene, if you want, we will build you a house in the village.

Véolie: So that you may live among us...

Eugene: But I don't have any special powers to make sure that you'll keep your promise...

Fati: Eugene !

Eugene: What ?

Véolie: If you wish to come back, we will build you a house full heartedly !

Walter: We wish to earn the title of *humans* as well!

Eugene: Well, you've managed to surprise me.

Fati: Sometimes, it takes a while to become *human*.

Eugene: Sometimes, it takes a very long while...

Fati: And sometimes, it never happens at all ! But that's not the case today, Right Walter and Véolie ?

Walter and Véolie : We are very sincere !

Fati: Eugene ?

Eugene: Mmh... ok then. I will come live amongst you, in the house that you are going to build me !

Everyone : Hooray!

Eugene: Together, we will invent tons of useful little things to help all of us live fully as humans! *Directed towards Fati :* Like a giant ice slide for example !

Fati: Eugene ! Ha ha ha !... My friends of the Gnouilles, we must leave you now as we have a long journey ahead of us to return home...

G3 : Absolutely not ! You cannot leave without sharing a meal with us first!

Fati: We would love to !

G2 : I will make you the best water-lily salad you've ever had !

Eugene: Friend, if I may, please don't forget to wash your hands.

G3 : Why ? Are they dirty ?

Eugene: Dirty, no, but you plunged them into the contaminated pond water...

G3 : Yes, I see. From now on I will wash then at the fountain.

Fati: My friends, let us rejoice that we are together! And let us celebrate our two heroes of the day: Véolie and Walter who today became humans!
They lift them up in celebration.

Tous : Hourray ! Hourray !

Final music.
The End