

FRENCH DISCONNECTION

By Rod

This sketch is based in John 17 vv 13-19, but mainly picks up on the idea of being “In the world, but not of the world”. In this case Arthur is in France, but he is clearly not French – even though he tries to behave like a Frenchman. So it illustrates the idea that Christians are ‘aliens’ in a foreign country, whether we like it or not. The world will quickly see us for who we are, and so we should not try to conform to the world’s ways.

CAST

Arthur *Written as from London (East Croydon) but this could be changed to suit the actor. Thinks he speaks French well.*

Madge *His wife. Does not speak French apart from being able to say ‘bonjour’.*

Waiter *Clearly French!*

Table is set with two places. Waiter is busying himself elsewhere, perhaps at a separate table opening a bottle. Arthur is dressed in beret, striped top, onions round neck – looking ‘typically’ French.

Arthur This place looks all right for a cuppa.

Madge I’m not sure. It looks very French.

Art Well we are in France, Madge.

Mad Yes, I know, Arthur, but will we be able to make ourselves understood?

Art Don’t worry, dear, remember I got grade 1 in French O level.

Mad Yes, so you have told me – several times. But that was a long time ago. O levels don’t even exist anymore.

Art Oh, don’t worry, old girl, I’m still pretty fluent. In fact some have said that I speak French like a native.

Mad *(To self)* Yes, a native of East Croydon. *[They sit down at table. Waiter approaches.]*

Waiter Bonjour madame, bonjour monsieur.

Art *(Bad French accent)* Bonjour garçon.

Mad Bonjour.

- Waiter Vous voulez quelque chose à boire?
- Art A oui. Pour madame un café.
- Waiter Au lait?
- Art *(Raising hand, Spanish style)* Olé!
- Waiter Non, monsieur. Est-ce que madame prends son café avec du lait?
- Mad What is he saying?
- Art He wants to know if you want it straight away – or with a delay.
- Mad What a strange question. Straight away of course.
- Art *(To waiter)* Non, pas de 'delay' – immédiatement.
- Waiter *(Puzzled)* Bien sûr monsieur. Et pour monsieur?
- Art Un thé, s'il vous plait.
- Waiter Au citron?
- Art Non, non, je conduis un Renault.
- Waiter *(Puzzled)* Ah, très bien, monsieur
- Mad What is he asking now?
- Art He wanted to know what car we drive.
- Mad I expect he was impressed that we have a French car. Makes us blend in with the scenery.
- Art Blend in! I reckon he thinks I am French given my fluency in the lingo.
- Waiter Est-ce que vous voulez quelque chose à manger?
- Art Pardon.
- Waiter Des glaces peut-être?

Art Oh, non, non – dans un tasse.

Mad Did he say 'glass'?

Art Yes, but I told him we wanted our drinks in china cups.

Mad They do have some strange customs these French.

Waiter Si vous préférez, nous avons des moules magnifique.

Art Mule?

Mad What did he say?

Art He was asking if we would like some mule to eat.

Mad Mule! I know they eat horse meat but I didn't think they sank as low as eating donkey.

Art *(To waiter)* Absolument, non!

Waiter I think monsieur, and madame, have misunderstood what I have been saying.

Mad Hang on, why are you speaking in English? Do you not understand my husband's French?

Waiter Let us just say that some things have been 'lost in translation'.

Mad So he does not speak French like a native then?

Waiter I would say that although monsieur is in France – he is clearly not French.

Mad Even with his French beret?

Waiter Non, madame.

Art *(Somewhat belligerent)* In that case, I'll have a mug of builders with six sugars – and a chip butty.

Waiter Pardon, monsieur, I am afraid I do not understand you....

THE END