



THE TRUE STORY OF PUSS IN BOOTS

by Pascal Hérold

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Synopsis of "The True Story of Puss'n Boots"

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Little Pierre, the youngest son of a miller, is hopelessly in love with Princess Manon, the king's daughter. All Manon thinks about is music and dancing. The man she will take for a husband must be a good dancer, which is not the case of the king's vile chamberlain who wants to marry her.

When his father dies, all the young miller inherits is a strange cat who becomes his sole companion. This cat speaks like a human being and is able to do magic thanks to a pair of very fine boots...

Forced to leave the mill, Little Pierre and his cat set off to explore the big wide world. Little Pierre is very sad, but his cat is determined to help him win the damsel's heart.

When they stop at an inn for the night, Puss'n Boots and Little Pierre meet a mysterious masked lady who is a really good Bollywood-style dancer. She also sings a famous operatic aria, but in her own idiosyncratic way. It's the Princess!

Pierre, coached by his hip-hop top cat, tries his hand at break-dancing. The cat explains to the masked woman that Pierre is dancing out of love for the Princess. The masked woman is clearly moved to hear this...

The cat meets his friend the pianist, "Doc Marcel" who invites him to live in his place, below the Ogre's castle.

Puss'n Boots is a good hunter and carabineer. He offers his abundant game to the King on behalf of his master, the so-called Marquis of Carabas...

The King's chamberlain wants to do away with this potential rival. He asks his sinister hunchback to find Carabas, give him some magic candy which will turn him into a toad, and deliver him to the Ogre.

Before leaving the King's castle, the cat enters the chamberlain's evil workshop, finds the candy-making machine, manages to make it work, and sets off with some candy.

One dark night, Little Pierre, the cat, and Doc Marcel secretly visit the Ogre's castle. The Ogre, a "transformer" whose magic is growing old, dreams of only one thing: turning into a Swan. The Ogre is annoyed by the chamberlain, but luckily, Doc Marcel calms him down by playing him a stunning tune on the magnificent Grophone.

Claiming that someone has drowned in the river, the cat manages to get his young master, alias the Marquis of Carabas, inside the King's castle where he at last meets the Princess.







During the Princess's ball, the King's jester and the Princess, thanks to her magic lorgnette, realize that Carabas isn't Carabas, but the Princess isn't impervious to this fake marquis's charms as Pierre and the cat sing and dance to perfection.

The Princess is won over by Carabas's break-dancing. She starts dancing just like she did at the inn. Pierre recognizes the masked woman. He is petrified. Manon then starts to change her dance from classic Bollywood to a languorous break-dance...

Carabas's brothers also recognize their younger brother and his cat. They turn the two friends in to the evil chamberlain...

The King wants to visit Carabas's castle... but of course, Carabas doesn't have a castle! The cat has only one solution: to go back to the Ogre to steal his castle off him. On the way, he asks the peasants to say that all the land belongs not only to the Ogre, but also to the Marquis of Carabas.

But will the Ogre agree to give away his castle? Will he be taken in by the cat's crude trick of asking him to turn into a mouse? The ogre isn't falling for that! The fight between the cat and the Ogre-Octopus is terrible...

The peasants tell the King that the land belongs to Carabas, but the chamberlain discovers the trick. He now has fresh evidence that Carabas is telling tall tales.

And the King, Carabas, and the Princess soon reach the Ogre's castle... followed closely after by the chamberlain!

Carabas seems to be in a hopeless situation, but he continues to trust the cat.

Doc Marcel tries to calm down the Ogre-Octopus by playing the Grophone, but nothing works, and the Ogre-Octopus is about to triumph over the cat when all of a sudden, the Princess's voice rings out in the tower! The Ogre calms down, and the cat is saved.

The cat and the Ogre, who are being pursued by the chamberlain, hide in a huge cabinet. The cat offers the Ogre some magic candy so he can turn into a swan... The Ogre can't resist this sure chance of happiness.

The King is now standing in front of the cabinet, with Carabas, the Princess, and everybody. The chamberlain exults. The cabinet door opens. Out comes a horrible little red duck... The duck is a little grumpy, but otherwise alright...

The chamberlain is furious not to see the Ogre. Carabas asserts that there is no Ogre. The chamberlain goes crazy. It's the Ogre's castle. He knows the Ogre. He's his Ogre!!!

The sinister chamberlain digs his own grave. It dawns on the King so slowly that the chamberlain has time to run away.

Carabas and the Princess find themselves alone. Manon asks if her lorgnette lied to her about the young miller's true identity. Carabas notices that she is talking to her mirror. She retorts that he talks to his cat! They laugh and kiss...

The chamberlain goes and asks the cat for his help to escape. The cat agrees and looks for something in his pocket...

The festivities are underway at the King's castle. The lovebirds are getting married. The bride looks superb. At the castle gates, the cat sings a languorous tango: "Manon's Tango". Everybody dances, and in the procession we see all the protagonists of the story. All except the chamberlain...

The cat with his pal, the duck proudly bring up the rear. The Ogre-duck comes face to face with a horrid big toad. It's the chamberlain! The duck chases after the toad and pinches his backside. They disappear into a thicket. The cat is happy.

Director's Intentions by Pascal Herold

The True Story of Puss'n Boots is a 3D animated feature film.

The story is by an eminently French author, Charles Perrault. The reason that this marvelous tale hasn't yet been made into a Hollywood movie is probably due to the delicious amorality of the story. And yet, as Bruno Bettelheim said in his psychoanalytical study of fairytales, it seems important to tell children that they can make a success of their lives, even if they're not top of the class. In short, in some cases, a couple of little lies may not be all that serious...

Technically speaking, I started a new 3D animation studio: Studio Delacave. I was fortunate in that my best staff who worked with me for years in the Duran animation and special effects studio came with me. The technology used in rendering is unique and revolutionary for cinema. The Nadeo company has developed, in exclusive partnership with our Studio, real-time high-definition technology which makes the use of 3D exceptionally fluid. The reactivity obtained provides a real improvement in quality.

In artistic terms and specifically in terms of the animation, we decided to use the Key Frame technique. This ambitious technical choice of manual animation is a guarantee of very high quality as opposed to Motion Capture animation which, as far as I'm concerned, merely reproduces with excessive perfection electronically-captured human movements. The choice of the animator's perspective and free will was one made by Walt Disney in the early days of animation and it is still the case in the big American studios such as Pixar and Dreamworks.

In terms of the directing, La Véritable Histoire du Chat Botté is a coming-together of the Hérold and Deschamps families. I have long been convinced that 3D animation is a terrible trap artistically speaking if the techniques of computer animation are not used for the benefit of a strong artistic view of human comedy. In short, the more technical gizmos you have, the more humanity you need. And what could be more human than theater... That's why I asked Jérôme Deschamps and Macha Makeieff to join me in this project. Jérôme and Macha are well-known for their highly personal directing style for theater and opera as well as for TV with Les Deschiens. What's more, I consider Jérôme to be a great actor, so he will have the difficult job of breathing life into most of the characters in the film.

Macha Makeieff was keen to provide the highly personal touch of the Deschamps' world by creating the characters' costumes. In view of the importance of music and dance in our film, Juliette Deschamps' talent in musical direction was crying out to be used. The Deschamps family as a whole is simply wonderful...

To sum up, this film sets out to achieve four things:

- to tell a pleasant story with an unusual moral...
- to put our trust in a team of wonderful young graphic designers and animators
- to maintain the highest quality standards of 3D animation in order to appeal to the international market
- to serve the talent of an exceptional family: the Deschamps.



The directors

Pascal Hérold : producer - director

In 1984, Pascal Hérold founded the Duran Duboi group. Under his management, visual effects artists and 3D animators developed internationally renowned artistic and technical expertise in special effects and 3D animation for cinema, television, and advertising. It was at Duran-Duboi that the special effects for over a hundred films were developed, including Alien IV, Jeanne d'Arc ("The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc"), Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain ("Amélie from Montmartre"), Asterix, and Immortel (Ad Vitam).

During the early days at Duran, Pascal Hérold worked in editing and special effects and developed a unique relationship with the directors with whom he worked. With "La Véritable Histoire du Chat Botté", Pascal is going back to his roots.

Jérôme Deschamps : director

After attending the "Conservatoire Supérieur d'Art Dramatique de Paris" (Paris Drama School), Jérôme Deschamps spent three years at the Comédie Française. In 1977, he put on his first show, "Blanche Alicate" with Dominique Valadié, then in 1978, "La Famille Deschiens" and "Les Oubliettes" at the Théâtre des Quartiers d'Ivry and the Bouffes du Nord. He then founded with Macha Makeïeff the company they run together. Jérôme Deschamps acts in most of his shows and in films (La Séparation by Christian Vincent, La Vie en Rouge ("Line of Life") by Pavel Lungin). In 1981, the "Syndicat de la Critique" gave him the "Theatrical Revelation" award. In 1992, he won the Young Theater Prize from the Académie Française as well as the "Grand Prix National du Théâtre". After presiding over the French Film Center's "Commission d'Avance sur Recettes" (Advance against Takings Funding Committee), he was chosen in September 2005 to head Paris's Opéra Comique.

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