



Source: Roger Boyes, 'Iranian President faces Cup red card', *The Times* in *The Australian online*, 08/05/06.

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It was clear that the master did not approve of Jacques' request. The big man scratched his chin then tugged an ear lobe before he said,

'Look here Jacques, you gave him a generous serve of cudgel last week. Enough is as good as a feast. I have nothing against the man. Reynard talks too much but apart from that he is not too bad. *C'est pas mal, pas mal!* You know he has his charms.'

'But Master, Reynard as a Sabbatarian! And a Sabbatarian with a cast in one eye!'

'Never mind Jacques, there are worse things with which to contend. If it were not for the fact that I need to go to Marqueyssac (which by Macchiavelli's measurement is just a few bowshots from La Roque Gageac and last night's delicious repast) we would be safe afloat and drifting downstream on the river ferry. As it is this is a notorious strip for encounters with...'

Wait! Wait dear listener! As your narrator I have something more to say. As my most perceptive of listeners (with respect for the spirit of Diderot) I crave your opinion. Here we are at a real crossroads in this story. What do you think will happen next? Will Jacques defy his master and confront Monsieur Reynard in an aggressive manner? Will our two heroes simply pass Reynard and ignore his proselytising stream of Sabbatarianism? Will they return to La Roque Gageac, catch a ferry downstream to Breynac and work their way back upstream to Marqueyssac? Will Jacques and his master turn about to spend another day at the Inn in the hope that Reynard will go on his way? I can see that you need some time in order to consider all these possibilities. In the meantime, I am impatient to proceed so let me tell you what will happen. In fact you have taken so long in your considerations, my slowest of all listeners, that several events have already come to pass! I am now not sure why I stopped to ask your opinion in the first place! I will with certainty think twice in the future—if in fact you continue to listen because now I am not sure if you will!

Reynard felt bored as he waited for Jacques and his master. He had wanted to torment them with the free flow of his new found thought and belief. He stepped down from the tree stump upon which he had stood for the greater part of the morning. Even a good Sabbatarian needs a break, he thought. Perhaps Jacques had disappeared back the way he had come because he really believed that the Dordogne would dry up like the River Sabat if he and his master continued to travel on a Sunday. Reynard sat on the ground with his back resting on the tree stump. After a while with the cicadas buzzing mercilessly around him, his head nodded towards his chest. He fell asleep. He snored as usual. Each breath was deep. It swirled its way to the depth of his lungs. Each

exhalation pressed back up through the dry tissues that lined his passageways to escape with a long rattling sound. The noise, like one of Zola's famous farts, echoed across the great valley of the Dordogne. Jacques and his master stopped in their tracks. They looked around with an air of confusion. It was impossible to tell from which direction the sounds came as they ricocheted between the cliffs of Marqueyssac and the walls of the houses that lined the slopes of La Roque Gageac. The innkeeper's wife screamed. With a convulsive jerk of her arms she tossed the chicken she was plucking into the air. It fell feathers and all into her famous ragout. All the cicadas stopped their drumming. With a startled snort a wild boar pulled its nose clear out of the compost of the nearby forest floor. It scuffed its front hoofs backwards in a gesture of alarm. On the second of Reynard's snores it tossed its head and whirled round. From a dead stop to a full gallop it disappeared deeper into the undergrowth. In its panic, without regard for what might be ahead, it burst through a clearing and cantered directly across the legs of three bandits who were taking a nap.

'*Sacrebleu!*' said the first.

'*Sacré Cœur!*' rhymed the second.

The third sat bolt upright, muttered some blasphemous things in Spanish and fainted dead away.

The oblivious Reynard at complete peace with the world see-sawed his way on in the arms of Morpheus. He dreamed of a fat winged child, too gross to be a cherub. It floated and drifted into the arms of an old bearded man. 'Papa! Papa!' it cried. The old man took the child into his arms and strode into a cave. At the entrance were poppies and other somniferous herbs; the names of which escape me and Jean-Jacques is not here to tell me. All the while the child was pulling hideous faces with particular emphasis on a leering cross-eyed squint.

At that point, Reynard realised that he was dreaming. He forced himself awake with such a sudden jerk that he heard himself give a loud snort like that of a great beast of the *Ursus carnivora* kind. It was repulsive. Reynard was horrified. He cast his eyes about fearful that Jacques and his master might be close by to observe this embarrassing moment. But a profound silence had fallen across the valley. He was alone. He would never know how close he had come to an encounter with the bandits who terrorised this part of the Dordogne. He would never know that he had saved Jacques and his master from a similar fate. They would never know that Monsieur Reynard had saved them for a second time. The first was the afternoon of the haystack and the fire. Do you remember dear listener? Ah well, I thought not.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Nola Farman.*