

# Legal Tales

### Once upon a Time, the Law

International Studies in Law and Literature, Volume: 4

### Author:

François Ost

Translator:

Mark Byrne

Telling stories as a way of exploring the law—this is the premise of the present volume. It draws on a wide range of narrative forms: historical fables and animal allegories, science fiction and realist reportage, dreamlike speculations...<u>See More</u>

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Telling stories as a way of exploring the law—this is the premise of the present volume. It draws on a wide range of narrative forms: historical fables and animal allegories, science fiction and realist reportage, dreamlike speculations and fantastical tales, philosophical re2actions and dystopian visions.

Across nine stories, the book invites readers to react on law and justice by posing strange and unsettling questions:

Should there be laws aboard Noah's Ark?

Between absolute love and unleashed violence, what place is there for Pilate's Roman justice in the trial of Jesus?

What do the animal trials held in the West up to the French Revolution reveal? What if Robinson Crusoe, having set sail from Brazil in search of African slaves for his plantations, had not been shipwrecked on the outward journey—but on the way back?

Where do the hidden passages of the majestic Palace of Justice lead? And what kind of justice lies buried in its secret depths? What is law for? The story of the *Amoco Cadiz* shipwreck offers a stark and contrasting answer.

Can reality sometimes surpass fiction? The distortion of law in a modern democracy suggests it can. A dystopia emerges when, enthralled by their president Selfidor and his motto "Never two without me," the people begin to forget the law.

Killing your own clone—one equipped with artificial intelligence, no less—is it murder, or the destruction of a non-human entity?

Over the years, the author loses touch with his beloved library. Books disappear, others turn up in the strangest places. What is The Liberated Library trying to tell him? And what kind of legal knowledge does it contain?

This book was originally published by Éditions DALLOZ under the title, *Contes de la rue Soufflot* (2024).

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### **Biographical Note**

**François Ost** a jurist and philosopher, is a member of the Royal Academy of Belgium. He is the founder of the European Academy of Legal Theory and has taught in Brussels and Geneva. He is professor emeritus at UCLouvain–Saint-Louis (Brussels), where he also served as Vice-Rector. The author of around twenty books on legal theory and philosophy, he now devotes himself to the Law and Literature movement, of which he is one of the leading pioneers in the French-speaking world. His contributions to this eld include theoretical studies, plays, and collections of legal tales.

#### Readership

This book of legal tales is a blend of law, literature and philosophy; it covers a wide range of subjects and is aimed at a broad readership, from students to specialists. More broadly, it is aimed at readers interested in the social role of law and justice.

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