

THE TURKISH APPLE A parade

Thomas Gueulette

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Etext by Dagny

Translated and adapted by Frank Morlock

CHARACTERS:

LEANDER

GILLES

ARLEQUIN

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SCENE I.

GILLES: Sir, I have many things to ask of you.

LEANDER: You may speak boldly; there is no one in the world who can reply to you better.

GILLES: That's very true, sir, for you talk a lot.

LEANDER: I agree to that, but that's because I have travelled a lot. I've been in Turkey, Persia and Normandy.

GILLES: Yeah, and me, too. You know quite well I'm from Gonesse and that I came from there to Paris.

LEANDER: Great voyages, my friend, are made by sea.

GILLES: And the nicest are made with wenchies. Do you know, sir, that not having been to the galleys like you—

LEANDER: Look, don't be insolent.

GILLES: Is going to sea different from going to a galley?

LEANDER: It's not possible to be more ignorant.

GILLES: Ignorant, sir! You don't know what you're talking about. Look, look, sir. Don't you know the wonders of the world.

LEANDER: (speaking impromptu about all the wonders, half invented, half historical.)

GILLES: (interrupting him) These are beautiful wonders. Listen, get up early in the morning, take a walk. You will see the lark, rising and doing its chirping; it's lost from sight, and falls like a stone without killing itself. Well, isn't that very nice?

LEANDER: (scornfully) Doubtless, but it's very common.

GILLES: It's seeing fish at the bottom of a river without drowning.

LEANDER: Now that's very difficult.

GILLES: 'Sblood! There's more to be seen, but let's look at the other one. Our donkey has an ass hole that's very round and makes square turds. You don't find this nice?

LEANDER: Oh, that's admirable.

GILLES: Oh, Hell! The one that beats me is to see a girl who has her womb split open and her guts don't fall out.

ARLEQUIN: (entering) Sire, here's a letter you were asking for.

LEANDER: Let's see what it is. It's a card.

ARLEQUIN: Yes, sir, it's a card from the Grand Seigneur.

LEANDER: Look, it's from my friend. (reading)

"I beg you if this present is received to come see me, my dear Leander.
The Grande Seigneur."

Hurry, I've got to leave right away. Ah, my friends, I leave you my house and all that I have. Take good care of my interests; there is some wheat and some wine in the granary.

ARLEQUIN: Is there some cheese?

LEANDER: Always obedient to his mug. Become polite. But I haven't any time to lose. Be very prudent, I am going.

GILLES: Don't put yourself to any trouble. You will see what care we have over all your belongings.

ARLEQUIN: Sir, bring us something from Turkey.

LEANDER: Yes, my friends, I promise you

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SCENE II

ARLEQUIN: Oh, we must find something to keep us from being bored in the absence of our master.

GILLES: By god, let us play with wine and never give up.

ARLEQUIN: I really want that, but after Monsieur Leander returns and his wine is gone—

GILLES: Oh, well, yes. Sonofabitch, we will give him a good account.

(They play, they drink, then squabble. They put everything topsy-turvy. LAZZI. They end by arguing and then by fighting.)

LEANDER: (entering) I had a good trip. I've come from Turkey. I must find my servants. I am in anxiety to know where they can be. (seeing them) Ah, there they are.

ARLEQUIN: Ah. Here's the boss.

GILLES: Hey, Bonjour our master. (They want to hug him.)

LEANDER: Hello, Hello. Always remember your manners. Haven't you ever read puerile civility is honest?

GILLES: No, sir.

LEANDER: Well, I will make you a present of one.

ARLEQUIN: Sir, we're really pleased with ourselves. We haven't left the house. Did you have a good trip?

LEANDER: Oh, as to that, yes.

ARLEQUIN: And we had a good time at home.

GILLES: Tell us, did you see Turks in Turkey.

LEANDER: Take my word for it. There are so many.

ARLEQUIN: And what's the Grand Turk look like?

LEANDER: He's six feet.

GILLES: And how many hands?

LEANDER: Just two.

ARLEQUIN: Sir, sir, that jerk doesn't understand a thing. Rather speak to me. What have you seen and thought about in Constantinople?

LEANDER: Oh so many houses. And the Palace of the Grand Seignor is so big. There's a court there.

GILLES: I bet they enter it through a door.

LEANDER: No. Through a window. I saw all his wives, all his sultanas.

ARLEQUIN: And how many did he have?

LEANDER: Three or four thousand.

GILLES: The devil! Is he chopped up like a pate?

LEANDER: Why that?

GILLES: 'Cause I had one wife who beat me to a jelly; if they all beat him at once, you see plainly—

LEANDER: I've seen so many beautiful gardens.

ARLEQUIN: You've seen, you've seen. But what have you brought back with you?

GILLES: Damn! There's the rub!

LEANDER: A marvelous fruit.

GILLES: Let's see so I can eat it.

ARLEQUIN: Give it to me so I can swallow it.

LEANDER: See, here it is.

GILLES: Huh! It's an apple.

ARLEQUIN: It's a Snipe from Normandy.

LEANDER: Yes, but it has all possible qualities.

GILLES: What's that?

LEANDER: You are going to go to a grocer. You will buy sausages, puddings, cheese, clothe—

ARLEQUIN: I can do all that without an apple.

LEANDER: Hang on if you don't mind. The grocer will receive you with astonishment. You ask for the best of everything he has. Take it and bring it here.

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ARLEQUIN: Without paying?

GILLES: Without giving anything in return?

LEANDER: Yes, gang.

ARLEQUIN: But he'll chase after you. Indeed that's what happened to me.

LEANDER: Eh, no, he won't run after you. The apple will make you invisible. He won't know what has happened.

ARLEQUIN: I'll make the fortune of all the merchants in Paris. Gimme, gimme, master.

GILLES: But damn. Maybe you are tricking us.

LEANDER: Not at all, on my word. But to prove to you the truth of what I am telling you, do you want to see how powerful this apple is? You two will stay here. You will hide the apple wherever you like and I will find it right away.

GILLES: Sonofabitch. I bet you won't.

ARLEQUIN: I will really bet my small purse.

(LAZZI. Leander retires. Gilles puts the apple under his hat.)

GILLES: That's taken care of.

(Leander enters and greets both, hat in hand. Arlequin raises his hat. Gilles only shifts his feet.)

LEANDER: Really Gilles, that's no way to greet people. And I can clearly see you will never learn good manners.

GILLES: Hell, what do you want me to do?

(Leander kicks him in the ass and knocks his hat off; the apple appears.)

LEANDER: Like that, Mr. Gilles. Oh, the stakes are mine.

GILLES: No, no. We were playing for three times.

ARLEQUIN: Sonofabitch, sir, it's for three times. I would have done better otherwise.

LEANDER (after some improvised argument gives way) Come on. I insist on it. You really must have some care for your servants.

(Leander leaves after some LAZZI. Gilles puts the apple in his shoe.)

ARLEQUIN: That's taken care of. Kitty Kat, Pussy Cat.

LEANDER (returning) I've just received a letter from one of my friends from Turkey who begs me to send him some shoes after the French fashion. Gilles show me your shoes.

(LAZZI over the shoes. Finally Leander finds the apple.)

GILLES: Sonofabitch ! He's a sorcerer.

ARLEQUIN: We've still got a trick to play. Come on, boss, go hide.

LEANDER: I don't know what these comedians want.

(More LAZZI which ends with Gilles eating the apple.)

GILLES: Sonofabitch. Whoever comes now won't find it 'till tomorrow.

ARLEQUIN: Come on, sir, come. This time we are going to see a beautiful bet.

(Leander returns with a handful of flour that cannot be seen by anyone.)

GILLES: You've found it twice. Have a look.

LEANDER: The first time it was in your hat. The second time in your shoes. Therefore, at present, it must be in your underwear.

GILLES: Ah, yikes, how you will find it. But release me then, sir, you are tickling me.

LEANDER: You put it in your mouth.

(Gilles laughingly opens his mouth and closes his eyes.)

LEANDER: You must have a lump.

(At the same time Leander throws flour in his mouth which makes him guffaw.)

CURTAIN