

# **WAYWARD WENCHES BY JEAN-FRANCOIS REGNARD**

Translated and Adapted by Frank J. Morlock C 2002

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## CHARACTERS:

Mezzetin, also Croquignolet, and as a Dutchman  
Pierrot  
Columbine  
Harlequin, also as Commissary  
Isabelle, also Glandine  
Cinthio  
Pasquariel

Five men, two women.

## Scene I.

### Mezzetin

What do I see, Pierrot? Am I having hallucinations? Yes? No? It's she, it's my sister!

### Pierrot

Your sister? I don't believe it without touching her, sir.

### Mezzetin

It's herself and what are you doing here, Miss Runaway?

### Columbine

Oh, brother dear, don't get upset. I will tell you.

### Mezzetin

And what will you tell me, brazen one? Wait it makes me want to make a mess of your gizzard.

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**Columbine**

My poor Pierrot.

**Pierrot**

My poor Pierrot! Your brother's right. As for me, I love honor, and I don't like it for a girl to frequent night haunts.

**Mezzetin**

Speak then, tell me what reason you had to leave the paternal house?

**Pierrot**

Sir, do you want to bet that it's love that's taken the field? Girls are ships that ordinarily don't sail forth, except in that wind.

**Columbine**

I will tell you, brother, that as soon as you had left, there came a young knight the politest knight in the world, to ask for a room in our hotel. To not appear less polite than he, I made all the courtesies of which I was capable. So why did you leave me alone? (she says this in tears)

**Pierrot**

I have always told you, sir, company is necessary for girls be it only a broomstick.

**Mezzetin**

Well, then?

**Columbine**

As soon as he arrived, he begged me, but in the most polite way in the world, to give him a room. So to please him, from politeness, I showed him the best room in the house myself: the one at the foot of the courtyard.

**Pierrot**

From politeness?

**Columbine**

From politeness. But he didn't want to stay there, fearing it would not be healthy because of the humidity.

**Mezzetin**

He was right.

**Columbine**

Seeing that he had difficulty in staying in that room and that he was so polite I took him to another room which gave on the street over the stable.

**Pierrot**

From politeness?

**Columbine**

From politeness. But he proved to me he couldn't sleep there because, being tired and in need of quiet, the horses would interrupt his sleep at night.

**Mezzetin**

Listen, there's a fellow who has a lot of trouble getting sleep.

**Pierrot**

Perhaps, not so much as you think.

**Columbine**

I found his thinking was good for when one is trying to sleep, it's irritating to be interrupted. Seeing that he needed rest and that he always displayed the most polite manners, I felt obliged to put him in a place far away from any noise. You know that my room gives on the garden, and I took him there.

**Pierrot**

From politeness?

**Columbine**

Assuredly. Wouldn't you have done that in my place, Pierrot?

**Pierrot**

Without doubt! And, I would be furious if someone else were more polite than I was.

**Mezzetin**

There's politeness that could indeed lead us into crime.

**Columbine**

He found that my room was good enough for him, and made me understand that he would be delighted to sleep there. I told him as well, that since this spot pleased him, I would put a bed for him beside mine.

**Pierrot**

From politeness?

**Columbine**

What do you think? But, as he was extremely polite, he refused the offer which I made him for fear of inconveniencing me, and said that he wouldn't suffer that my room be disturbed for love of him, and that he would sooner sleep in the stable, than cause me the least inconvenience.

**Pierrot**

Oh, in a stable the poor young man. That makes me pity him.

**Columbine**

His politeness broke my heart. A girl isn't made of wood, and seeing that my room pleased him so much, I told him but you will get angry?

**Mezzetin**

No, no.

**Columbine**

I told him but, promise me you won't be furious?

**Pierrot**

Ouf watch out for politeness!

**Columbine**

I told him he could sleep in my bed.

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### **Pierrot**

From politeness. My word, sir, you have a well-schooled sister.

### **Mezzetin**

Oh, sister knows how to live. It's not a great misfortune. You went to sleep in another room?

### **Columbine**

I could have, of course, but I was not in control. He would never let me inconvenience myself for love of him. He said he was in despair to have despoiled me of my bed, and

### **Pierrot**

Now, that's a polite fellow.

### **Mezzetin**

All right, then, what are you trying to say?

### **Columbine**

He said he'd loved me for a long while, and that he wished to be my husband, and he gave me his promise, which I still have

### **Mezzetin**

Ah, unfortunate girl. So, that's it, just heaven. But you won't escape my vengeance, and

### **Pierrot**

Never mind, sir, a good marriage will settle everything.

### **Columbine**

I don't see how it was such a bad thing to sleep with one's husband.

### **Mezzetin**

It is necessary to try to remedy all this. Enter into this hostel, and take care to say that you know me.

### **Pierrot**

My word, I keep coming back to it. Here's a polite girl, to give half of her bed to a lad and then, the poor child, the poor child.

CURTAIN

## **Scene II.**

Harlequin without his mask, holding a knapsack on his shoulder.

Mezzetin as Croquignolet. Isabelle as Glandine, servant of the Inn.

### **Harlequin**

Damn, sir! I am unable to go any further. I have a raw ass! Plague on all trips. Did they send you a summons and are you going to see the army?

### **Mezzetin**

It's that I have a martial heart.

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**Harlequin**

I believe that. Mr. Croquignolet, your father, and Madame Croquignolet, your mother, will be very surprised when we arrive in their shop their son, the lawyer, returning from Flanders.

**Mezzetin**

Oh, I believe it.

**Harlequin**

All the strollers in the quarter will crowd into your shop, to know the news of the war.

**Mezzetin**

That'll be funny enough to a young practitioner like me, to have already seen a tumultuous battle, and to be returned safe and sound.

**Harlequin**

Oh, by God, sir, you can go anywhere, like this and I guarantee you will never be injured.

**Mezzetin**

It's still a little hot.

**Harlequin**

True, but you took the air on Mount Pagnote at three long leagues from the cannon.

**Mezzetin**

I didn't go to get myself stupidly killed. It wouldn't have been honest for me to die of it, and I would've been enraged for the rest of my life, if I wasn't killed like a fool.

**Harlequin**

Ho! You're right, sir. Let's get to the country, if you please. Let us go quickly to your father, to visit his Burgundy wine, for I feel the need of strength.

**Mezzetin**

Ho, I am warned against going to my father.

**Harlequin**

And, by whom?

**Mezzetin**

They sent to tell me at the army, that my big sister, Toinon, had the smallpox and I wouldn't enjoy being scarred by it.

**Harlequin**

It's much better to protect your complexion, and it will be really insulting for a young man who has been spared by the cannon to expose himself to such an insolent malady. Let's stop at the first hostel I believe this one will do our business.

(Harlequin knocks at the door of the Inn.)

**Isabelle** (under the name of Glandine, servant of the Inn)

Good day, gentlemen. What do you wish?

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### **Harlequin**

Come, child, a room, a fire, and a good meal. I will stop willingly enough where there's good wine and a pretty wench.

### **Isabelle**

Gentlemen, you will have everything you want. We lack nothing here.

### **Mezzetin**

Come, child, take off my boots. (he raises his foot for Isabelle)

### **Isabelle** (pushing him off)

Take your boots off? Sir, go find your girls to do that. It's not my business.

### **Mezzetin**

You mean you're not also the valet of this stable?

### **Harlequin**

Sir, there's a wench that seems very determined, but it seems to me she's raking you over the coals a little.

### **Mezzetin**

My word, this little baggage is pretty. Come here, child. Are you married?

### **Isabelle**

No, sir, thank God. I have no such honor. It is a bad year for girls. All the boys are gone to war.

### **Harlequin**

And still there is one who isn't. If this little baggage wanted to, we'd soon bring this affair to it's conclusion.

### **Mezzetin**

I feel that something is tickling me. Hey, do you quite understand me?

### **Isabelle** (shrugging her shoulders)

Here's a real imbecile.

### **Harlequin** (to Isabelle, low)

It's a dummy with no common sense.

### **Mezzetin** (making leering faces at Isabelle)

If you wanted me to relax from my martial exploits I have some money, yes.

### **Isabelle**

Good, I'm quite safe with your money, it's never been that that tempted me. I prefer a man who pleases me to all the treasures of the world, and if you want me to speak frankly, I prefer your valet to you. (she pushes Harlequin in the stomach)

### **Harlequin**

On my oath, the little wench has good taste. Withdraw, sir, there aren't any secrets here for your hungry ears. (pushing Mezzetin)

### **Mezzetin** (coming close to Isabelle)

Do you know, little rogue, that I come from the army?

Scene II.



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### **Isabelle**

You from the army? You so quaintly dressed with your black clothes; it was you, then, who carried orders for the Dutch who were killed?

### **Mezzetin**

What the devil if someone cared to doubt it, I could make him see that it was Mathurin Croquignolet, volunteer foot soldier, following the army.

### **Harlequin**

And lawyer in parliament!

### **Isabelle**

Oh, you are a valorous person. I believe nothing could make a Mathurin Croquignolet flee from the chickens in the cellar.

### **Mezzetin**

This baggage is not taken with my merit. I am still a scamp with the ladies. (he teases her)

### **Isabelle**

I beg you, sir, control yourself. I don't like to be pestered. If you want to stay with us there is the open door. If not, I am your very humble servant. (she tries to go back into the inn)

### **Mezzetin** (holding her by the arm)

I don't wish to leave here, the pretty tavern. (he tries to enter the inn after her)

### **Cinthio** (who has seen Mezzetin, leaves the Inn and pushes Mezzetin rudely)

By what right, sir, if you please, do you take liberties with this girl here?

### **Mezzetin**

By what right? My right, if you please.

### **Cinthio**

It's your pleasure? Believe me, my little drunken fool. Don't burn my ears, for I can take offense to such a thing, and it will much displease you.

### **Mezzetin**

Sir, one doesn't treat a Parisian gentleman who's just returned from Flanders like that.

### **Cinthio**

You, from Flanders?

### **Harlequin** (who was hiding in a corner from fear, approaches)

May the devil carry me off if we are not come from the camp of Flanders.

### **Cinthio** (pointing to Mezzetin)

This fellow here?

### **Mezzetin** (swaggering)

Oh no, if I wasn't there when our general signified a hearing for our enemies they didn't join issue after the last of July at a set hour, to plead on the field of battle oh no, no, we weren't there.

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### **Cinthio**

Oh, oh. Here's a totally new way of fighting.

### **Mezzetin**

The case was called; it lasted more than five hours, but because of the good cannons of which we were the carriers, we soon evicted the enemy. He wanted two or three times to plead again, but was always routed and condemned to all the expenses, damages, and interests and costs. And, we were there? No, no, I am only joking.

### **Cinthio**

This, I admit, is a pleasant story of combat. I quite see, sir, that you witnessed the battle as a judge advocate.

### **Harlequin**

I am going to tell this better than my master, for between us, he's a stupid lump. First of all there's the enemy and there we are. Combat started with dawn. At once we were sending forward our suttlers. The enemy, seeing this, detached five squadrons of their best scouts. Ha, it was there that we waited for them, for soon they launched all their galleys to break a half moon after that musket fire, bam, bang, ha, I'm dead. The foreships, the cannon the trumpets were loaded with powder bam bully I cannot tell the rest for the smoke of the cannon prevented me from seeing it.

### **Cinthio**

That's the prettiest story in the world. But, I beg you, Mr. Sutter, and you, my little paralegal, to be on your way, and not to look behind you. understand me?

### **Mezzetin** (becoming courageous)

Sir, take care what you do. If you insult me

(Mezzetin takes his sword and raises it. Cinthio puts his hand on his sword.)

### **Cinthio**

Well?

### **Mezzetin**

You will have to deal with (hiding behind Harlequin) my valet.

### **Harlequin**

Oh, my oath, he would rather kill you. I am not obliged to be killed in your place.

### **Cinthio**

Go, my little friend. I don't deign to reply to you but if you dare so much as to cast eyes on that girl, I will beat you to death with a stick. (he gives him a punch in the nose and leaves)

### **Mezzetin** (after Cinthio has left)

Is he gone yet? Hey, what did I tell you? I did a job on him.

### **Harlequin**

Ho, very good, sir. That's what comes from having been in the army.

(They go into the hotel.)

CURTAIN

Scene II.

### Scene III. Scene of the Fowl.

To understand this scene it is necessary to know that Isabelle is a girl, who, having been abused by Cinthio, followed him everywhere and, an indignity caused her to change her name and take service in Harlequin's hotel. She meets her betrayer with whom, in the presence of the host, this equivocal scene takes place.

(Isabelle, under the name of Glandine, pushes Cinthio out the door.  
Harlequin has followed the noise.)

**Isabelle**

Well, faithless one, do you recognize me now? The one you have betrayed, who was forced by you to leave her country, to find you, to reproach you with your inconstancy, disguised under the dress of a servant?

**Cinthio**

I tell you once more that I don't know you. Isabelle is not capable of such transport of anger, nor of throwing herself at people's heads, at all comers, as I have recently seen you do. You mock me.

**Harlequin** (who comes to see what all the noise is)

What the devil kind of hullabaloo is this? One would think that the devil carried off the house. It seems to me, sir, that you squeeze near my servant closely. You think one is obliged to present you with the hotel girls? My word, you'd better guard your nose.

**Cinthio**

Oh, oh. Here's a host quite grim. I see, indeed, that this base fellow doesn't talk nice, except to his horse. Sir, it's a little difference I had with Glandine. I asked her for a utensil of which I have need.

**Harlequin**

What, sir? For what do you take my wench? I beg you to understand that she is not a utensil hear?

**Cinthio**

Without so much fuss, sir, give me my bill. When you wish to keep an inn, take care to get wenches for servants who consider men of quality and treat them properly.

**Harlequin**

What then, rascal, what have you done that the gentleman complains of you? Haven't I told you that a serving wench must be sweet and forthcoming to the guests?

**Cinthio**

Hey, sir, she isn't forthcoming or sweet at all.

**Harlequin**

Why isn't she? This isn't the first time I've had my doubts. You see how bold the baggage is I didn't take her to serve in the kitchen, but I quite see she belongs there.

**Isabelle**

If I am bold, it's not at your expense. Do you wish me to leave quite naked?

**Harlequin**

Yes, I wish it. A girl who doesn't earn money is born only to make beds in a hotel.

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**Isabelle** (aside)

I've got to get out of this. (aloud) And what have I done to cause this fuss? This nice gentleman is very pleasant, to get all the girls in our hotel to serve him, and to take all our profits.

**Harlequin**

What then, is it only a little dirty talk on his part?

**Isabelle**

He said this is his sister. Hey, yes here's a nice relative. There's never a male guest in this hotel of whom I can't be the sister if I wanted to take the trouble. Ho, indeed, sir, I don't intend to suffer another woman take my place.

**Harlequin**

Glandine's right, sir. When there's a servant in a hotel one ought to be served only by her. And besides, Glandine is very clever, which means, she makes a bed as well as a stew.

**Cinthio**

I know, sir, that she knows her work perfectly well but she's a little impudent who serves at call, when she ought to serve me alone. Have I not the right to complain?

**Harlequin**

Assuredly she's wrong. I will tell you now, sir, that here everything is very exact to give company what they ask. At this time, I don't wish to give to the stage coach a cat or a wild rabbit that the messenger had kept. Why, then, slut, have you been so impudent?

**Isabelle**

I serve to another what I promised you? Say often, sir, that you, haven't wished to content yourself with what you have chosen yourself, and that an appetite is come to you while eating?

**Harlequin**

By God, sir, if you are fantastic, there's no way to content you.

**Isabelle**

You see, I beg you, if it is not enough of a meal for a man alone. I presented him with a young chicken, tender, fat right down to its nails like me. The gentleman was not content he still wanted another.

**Harlequin**

Devil, sir, if you're like that you'd put an entire spit in your mouth at one time.

**Cinthio**

Oh, don't believe her. I was very pleased with the chicken. I am not so gluttonous an eater, but I know that you present that chicken to all comers. It's already served twenty different tables, and I am not a man to share with the rest of the earth.

**Harlequin**

Ah, by God, sir, take care, if you please. What do you say? I cannot listen to you messing around like that, and one only serves fresh food in my hotel. Speak, has one ever eaten the same chicken twice here?

**Isabelle**

Indeed! Don't you see that the gentleman doesn't know what he's saying? Nobody ever touched it it was a delicate bird that I had taken pains to raise and that I nourished for the spit with as much pleasure as if it had been for me myself. Everyone who saw her wished to eat her and now, I kept her only for this gentleman. It's

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quite rude to take such little notice of the care I took for you. Perhaps you don't like meat with bacon because it makes you fat?

**Cinthio**

Bacon/schmacon, I don't care when things are good I find them so. I don't let myself be tricked.

**Isabelle**

To satisfy this gentleman's taste one would have to serve him an old tough bird, some ancient, of the lower court. That's how to get into his graces.

**Harlequin**

Oh, by God sir, if you love tough meat, we will give you all you can eat.

**Cinthio**

Eh, sir!

**Harlequin**

I have a goose that has made my soup for three months. You will have that. There isn't a stable boy bold enough to put his teeth on it.

**Isabelle**

That's exactly what the gentleman needs.

**Harlequin**

Come on, quiet down. I do not want to hear you breathe. Go back down. I quite see that the gentleman doesn't know a wench from a chicken. I'll put a side of beef on the grill for you.

CURTAIN

### Scene IV. On French morals and the manner of making love.

**Columbine**

Nothing is more true than what I tell you: this gentleman called

Cinthio, who loves you, who swears an eternal love for you, has said as much to me, and without knowing that you give him to me because of his infidelity. I don't know if, in the end, he wouldn't succeed in breaking my heart a little.

**Isabelle**

Is it possible, miss, that so much love is followed by so much perfidy? No, I would never have believed that men are faithless to such a degree.

**Columbine**

Men are the most cursed ! I know only one secret, so as not to be deceived, it's to deceive them first.

**Isabelle**

The perfidious one! After having engaged his heart to me with a promise of marriage.

**Columbine**

Promise of marriage! Ah! I would never believe it. A trap for dupes, a trap for dupes.

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### Isabelle

He had to leave me for a duel after he killed his enemy; love made me fly after his footsteps. I came to Paris, I disguised myself as a serving wench under the name Glandine. I came as a lodger in this hotel where I live I saw him with pleasure again but I ought to forget him forever. But, alas! When one has a sincere heart, and is not born a criminal the way's hard.

### Columbine

Oh, you must become one, otherwise, one can do nothing in love, and the virtue most needed, in this century in which we live, is a little inconstancy seasoned sometimes with perfidy.

### Isabelle

Why then, miss, with all your experience, did you let yourself be taken in like a novice? For it seems to me from your story that you were somewhat maltreated.

### Columbine

I admit that I didn't get any better bargain than you but I know what I know and, with time, I'll be wiser.

### Isabelle

That means, miss, that you don't pretend to stay there, and that you don't wish to be an adventuress?

### Columbine

I left home like you to follow a faithless lover I called Octavio. **Cinthio** came directly to take part under my standards and if he had not acquainted me that he was a deserter by profession, I don't know if I might not have enrolled him dammit, in time of war, one takes what one can find.

### Isabelle

What a joy, miss, to be able to change lovers so easily. And I would be content if I could only avenge myself on the infidel. I would like to be able to hate him as much as he deserves.

### Columbine

Don't trouble yourself about vengeance. Only place your interest in the hands of a coquette of this country of whom he will become amorous. I promise you, she'll do him up.

### Isabelle

No, no, I can't believe myself avenged by giving him to another. If a woman loves him once, she'll love him forever. And besides, French women would never let him go.

### Columbine

Oh, take care. Don't you know that Paris is the boutique of lightness? A stranger never comes here without taking his position. Indeed, I tell you, it is the department store of inconstancy which provides for all Europe.

### Isabelle

Is it possible? I wouldn't have believed it. Alas, when a Frenchie tells you he loves you, he says it in a manner so tender and passionate that it seems his love ought to last more than twenty years after his death.

### Columbine

Twenty years after his death; my, yes women would be happy if their love lasted only twenty days.

### Isabelle

You surprise me.

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### **Columbine**

Doesn't the variety of their fashions express the inconstancy of their humor? Today they wear wigs that hang to their knees tomorrow they wear others that don't go below their ears. They are dressed the most simply in the world, two days later, you find them in their lace and ribbons: soon they are trussed in their clothes and swaddled like mummies and sometimes a ream of cloth wouldn't suffice to make an arm of their suits. Then all is changed, wheeling about in a Frenchie from head to foot.

### **Isabelle**

Perhaps that's true, for adapting and the manner of dressing but as to the heart, I can not believe it is so subject to change.

### **Columbine**

Oh, you're right. They are mirrors of fidelity. Do you want me to describe a Frenchie who wants to awaken the tenderest heart of a young woman? First, I warn you that hot ashes are not more hot. Ah, my dear child, my princess, how many beauties, how many charms! Have the gods ever made anything so perfect as you? No, my love cannot go so far, and I am in despair at having only ordinary words to express that love would you like me to die at your feet? You say nothing? Then, I must die, because your cruelty orders it. Then he cries, he lets a burning sigh escape, he rests his head on a corner of the fireplace. Nothing more is necessary. There's a woman in the net.

### **Isabelle**

But truly, I quite believe him. And a man who explains himself so lovingly is very loveable. Is there a way to resist such sighs? I admit it wasn't necessary to court me in such a high falutin' style to seduce me. I feel I have a French heart.

### **Columbine**

That's the prettiest thing in the world. But, observe the reverse of the coin. I am going to make you see a Frenchie after his passion cools. That is to say, eight hours after declaring himself.

### **Isabelle**

Let's see them.

### **Columbine** (passing to the other side, counterfeiting a lover)

My word, Madame, I am surprised at your manners. I never come to you without having some subject of annoyance. You come so little, monsieur, at least not so often. By God, Madame, one has one's business. When you started to love me, you had no other business besides love. Is this the fondness you have sworn for me? But, Madame, that cannot always last. But, you have taken so many oaths to me that your passion would be eternal. Madame, I believed it. Ingrate, infidel. Oh, Madame, no insults, you can put a placard on your door, to take lease of your heart if you care to. There's my Frenchie gone.

### **Isabelle**

But truly, miss, if this is true, as you wish me to believe, a Frenchie is practically no better for a woman than an Italian.

### **Columbine**

Much worse. Believe me, from one woman to another, as a faithless one, I much prefer Octavio to any other. Goodbye, miss. I promise you that I will not spring any trap on the heart of your lover and because of my care for you, you will have no reason to cry thief.

### **Isabelle**

A heart is still a petty thief of which women today are not very scrupulous.

**Scene V. Scene of Remonstrances of Pierrot.**

**Harlequin**

Look here, Pierrot. I am going on an important expedition. I leave you master in my place. Take care of the house and above all don't let anything happen to the girls. (leaves)

**Pierrot**

Oh, hang it! Leave it to me. If the girls deceive me, they'll have to be pretty smart. Still, it's a cursed cow to control, and by nature eels wriggle a lot. I'd better call Glandine and preach her a sermon.

(Glandine enters. Pierrot takes an armchair.)

**Pierrot**

Listen to me, Glandine. Honor is a joy, but a joy which spoils when exposed to the air. A girl is like a bottle of water of the Queen of Hungary it loses its virtue if it is not shut tight. This is what caused a great philosopher to say that a woman must live shut in her room. He didn't speak of girls, for they were thinly sown in his days, more so than today.

Glandine What are you trying to say with all your nonsense? Are you mad?

**Pierrot**

How as if I were crazy! Don't you know that I am presently your pedagogue?

Glandine I'm really in good hands.

**Pierrot**

I am of your opinion. What the bridle is to a horse, a stick to a blind man, a rudder to a ship. I am the bridle, you are the horse. I am the stick, you are the blind man. I am the rudder, you are the ship, but a rudder with which I will prevent you from going on the roads of men for the world is a sea and winds blow in this water which bubbles. I who have reason in this sea I'm getting confused.

Glandine Quickly, quickly, help here's a man drowning.

**Pierrot**

Who's right, I say? Now, Harlequin left me in this house to protect you.

Glandine I am much obliged to you, I assure you I will protect myself quite well.

**Pierrot**

Bah. If you please, I don't trust girls, I've been tricked before.

Glandine What, you mean you have commerce with women?

**Pierrot**

Right, when one is made in a certain manner, one has to resell this merchandise. A little baggage begged me to give her a kiss dammit, she didn't have to ask twice. I was neither mad or a fool, I approached, she gave me a big slap in the face. Since then, I've sworn never to kiss again.

Glandine Good idea, Pierrot. Believe me, don't play with girls there's nothing to be gained.



**Pierrot**

Yes, if it's only a slap. However, no more discussion, go in, and march ahead of me. (he watches her go) Out of sight, as if swallowed.

**Scene VI. Scene of Bravery.**

Harlequin, dressed bravely as a soldier, accompanied by Pasquariel and three other soldiers.

**Harlequin**

Hey, Hope, Chain Breaker, Gun Powder, Terror of Chickens? Well, my children, what does your heart say to you? Has it been a long while since you have eaten human flesh?

**Pasquariel**

You don't need to speak, my captain. I am before hand with you. (draws his sword and makes a lazzi)

**Harlequin**

By God, here's a fine fellow, this comedian has killed more chickens by himself, than my whole platoon together.

(Pasquariel makes yet more lazzi.)

**Harlequin**

Hola, hola, who is that man there? Don't let your ardor cool. Let's find Cinthio. Who is that man there? He seems to me to have the air of a seducer of girls. Who are you, my friend? Isn't your name Cinthio?

**Cinthio** (looking Harlequin up and down)

Hey, what's that to you?

**Harlequin**

Huh! Dammit what's it to me? If you are Cinthio, or even only cousin, half cousin, or cousin germane to Cinthio, by God, may the devil take me, you will find out.

**Cinthio**

May one imagine, sir, as to how this Cinthio has offended you? For you seem to me quite enraged.

**Harlequin**

Assuredly I am enraged. Cinthio is a clown who goes from girl to girl with a revolving promise of marriage. Oh, God, if I meet you, my little friend, you will keep the word you gave to my sister, or you will get a whipping from me.

**Cinthio**

He is quite a rogue, to deceive girls like that.

**Harlequin**

I want him dead or alive. I would give a hundred crowns reward.

**Cinthio**

Hold on, sir. I want you to earn more than fifty louis today. Give me thirty and I will tell you where Cinthio is and so, not to hold you forever in suspense it's me.

**Harlequin** (astonished)

## WAYWARD WENCHES BY JEAN-FRANCOIS REGNARD

It's you, it's you! Ha, on my oath I am delighted. You don't wish to marry my sister?

**Cinthio**

Really, as we are in a century where women

**Harlequin**

No, oh, by God, we'll see. You will take her when I make you swallow some medicine. Let me alone with him.

**Cinthio**

I laugh at your threats, and to show you I'm not afraid of you or your bullies I will wait for you in that hotel.

**Harlequin** (to soldiers)

Let someone follow that man and prevent me from seeing him. There, by God, it's necessary to stir vigorously in an affair.

### Scene VII. Scene of the Dutch

Mezzetin as a Dutch captain with a wooden leg.

**Mezzetin**

Guten tag, mein herr, guten tag.

**Harlequin**

Guten tag, guten tag.

**Mezzetin**

Mich, being a stranger seek lodging in this town.

**Harlequin**

This town, sir, is very obliged to you. There, my word, a cursed body

**Mezzetin**

Show me, if you please, sir, where be lodging for my horse and me?

**Harlequin**

It's a hotel you seek, sir, right?

**Mezzetin**

Yes sir, a hotel.

**Harlequin**

Wait, sir, where you are, you will be fine. There's good cuisine here, and also you will find some pretty girls, and all that you want, I understand, immediately.

**Mezzetin**

I ask monsieur's excuse, coz I no speak good Frenchie but my thinking is much better than my talking.

**Harlequin**

Go, sir, don't trouble yourself, believe me, sir, go stay in that hotel, for a man who has only one leg ought to be more tired than other people.

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**Mezzetin**

Adieu, monsieur, I thank you, very strongly. (knocks at the door)

**Harlequin**

I really need to know who this stranger is who is going to put up in my hotel. Come here, sir. May one know where you're from and what brings you here?

**Mezzetin**

I am a Dutch gentleman from Dutchland, who comes to this city on a matter of great importance.

**Harlequin**

You see, it's one of those sots who are very self important.

**Mezzetin**

I have been on sea duty and commanded a ship during a naval combat.

**Harlequin**

What the devil, sir, why are you here? Apparently you have a safe conduct?

**Mezzetin**

I have come expressly from my country to claim my vessel which these French devils have burned like a chicken.

**Harlequin**

Eh, you're right. They're nasty devils, these Frenchies. You should have cried fire someone would come to your aid.

**Mezzetin**

Not at all, sir. I have already lost my leg which those madmen have taken from me during the battle.

**Harlequin**

If you lost your leg, it's not my fault, I assure you, sir. I have not found it.

**Mezzetin**

I am going to claim my member at the court.

**Harlequin**

My word, sir, if I may speak openly, I don't believe they'll give it back.

**Mezzetin**

Hey, why sir?

**Harlequin**

Well, sir, if the court had to return, to all brothers in Holland, all the members that the Frenchies carried off this last year, hey, there wouldn't be any more legs in France.

**Mezzetin**

But, sir, how can I do my duty without limbs on a ship.

**Harlequin**

I advise you, sir, to serve in a hospital. From what I see, Mr. Dutchman, you've been a little dismantled. Ha, ha, ha.

**Mezzetin**

I don't laugh, sir, I am a gentleman, donner vette.

**Harlequin**

Donner vette, my little friend. You feel your old beating. I will send you back to Amsterdam.

(They fight. The Dutchman falls and makes many lazzi with his limb.)

**Scene VIII. Scene of the Commissariat.**

\*Cinthio, Isabelle, Harlequin as Commissariat, and Pierrot as clerk.

**Harlequin**

Come on, hurry up, draw your writing desk, close the door, put the dogs outside, wipe your nose, leave a wide margin and write large and clear.

**Pierrot** (pulling a large desk and a tiny pen from within in)

Sir, work quickly, if you please, I have short breath, as you know, which doesn't permit me to stay in one place very long.

**Harlequin**

I will be done soon. (to Cinthio) What's your name? Tell me your name, first name, occupation, country, street apartment number and parish. Do you have a father, mother, brothers or relatives? What brings you to Paris? Have you been here long? Who do you visit? Where do you go? Where have you been? Write it down, quick. (he hits Pierrot on the shoulder)

**Pierrot** (falling down on his desk)

Ah, my shoulder's broken. Here's a crippled clerk.

**Harlequin**

That's the interrogatory method. What a stupid ignoramus. (to Cinthio) And you, my little squire, you don't wish to respond? Write that he said nothing.

**Cinthio**

What do you want, sir, for

**Harlequin**

Silence! You suppose, my friend, that I have the time to listen to all your stupidities? Do you know that I have three rogues to hang today already, not counting you?

**Pierrot**

And five or six ladies to dispossess, or drive crazy.

**Cinthio**

Sir, my name's Cinthio and I lodge with Harlequin.

**Pierrot**

I know him. He's a rogue.

**Harlequin** (giving him another blow)

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Think what you're doing, you beast! Would you know this so-called lady here? (pointing to Isabelle) And you, pretty one, with becoming eyes, would you know this pilgrim hoodlum?

**Isabelle**

Alas sir. I know him only too well. He's the ingrate who deceived me with a promise of marriage.

**Pierrot**

This affair looks very dark.

**Harlequin**

If all the girls of today had as many husbands as they do promises of marriage, they'd have near enough to change like the weather. (towards a clerk) Go tell the chain gang not to leave yet. I have another one for them. (to Isabelle) But, is your story really

**Isabelle**

Wait, sir. Here read.

**Harlequin** (opening a paper)

I am very embarrassed. For two days, I've had a rheumatic which prevents me from seeing well.

(The clerk who went out returns.)

Clerk Sir, the chain gang won't go until you do.

**Harlequin** (to Pierrot)

Wait, read this.

**Pierrot**

Me, sir? You know quite well I have never learned to read.

**Harlequin** (to Isabelle)

Read it then. I cede my judicial rights to you.

**Pierrot** (writing)

The one who admits not to know how to read or write, owing to his judicial rank.

**Isabelle**

I subscribe.

**Harlequin** (to Cinthio)

And that's all that's required. What do you say to that, Mr. Rogue?

**Cinthio**

I say, sir, that no one treats a person of my quality in this manner.

**Harlequin**

Ah, my little companion, you wish to make a joke; let's go see if you look funny dancing from the end of a rope.

**Isabelle**

No, Mr. Commissariat, there is no punishment cruel enough to punish his perfidy. To what has my despair reduced me? I left my family to follow him. I've been exposed to a thousand hazards, for you know the risks that a

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girl runs by herself.

### **Harlequin**

She runs even more when she is with someone.

### **Isabelle**

I became a wench in the inn of Harlequin, where I hid my name under that of Glandine. He came to lodge in this hotel, for his misfortune and mine for it is very hard to see someone hang someone one so tenderly loves boo hoo. (she cries)

### **Pierrot** (crying)

Boo, hoo.

### **Harlequin** (toward Cinthio)

You will pay for making my secretary cry, rogue. Make the rope extra thick here's a rogue who's got a tough neck to break.

### **Cinthio**

I admit my fault, but Mr. Commissariat, you have to pardon love.

(Cinthio draws a purse and gives money to the Commissariat.)

### **Harlequin** (taking the money)

No, no, I claim to do my duty honorably. I will use this money to give you a fancy funeral.

### **Cinthio**

But, Mr. Commissariat, give me quarter. I am ready to marry her.

### **Pierrot**

He's right. It's better to marry than hang.

### **Isabelle**

Me, traitor, marry you after all your infidelities? I renounce your love, I don't want a heart as corrupt as yours.

### **Cinthio** (on his knees)

Ah, mercy, miss, may love make you forget a crime that love itself has committed.

(Harlequin and Pierrot are also throwing themselves on their knees.)

### **Harlequin**

Listen, miss, if he is hung you won't be any fatter. You've done enough.

### **Pierrot**

Provided he pays handsomely for my writings, I advise you to forgive him. It's punishment enough to have a wife.

### **Isabelle**

Ingrate, I ought to hate you, but I feel I don't.

### **Harlequin**

Ah, then you're good friends. Presently the business may be wound up. It is right to tell you that the Commissariat and the clerk are impostors who put on these clothes to make you marry.

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**Cinthio**

It's true, my word. A procedure that's cost me quite a bit of trouble.

**Harlequin**

Sir, in honor of this wedding, we must entertain ourselves. Come, bring on the band and call in everybody in the inn.

(All the comedians leave with guitars and parody big bands.)

**Chorus**

Follow, follow, love,  
Let us become inflamed.  
Oh, oh, oh, how sweet  
It is to love.

**Mezzetin** (singing)

For Hymen one is destined.  
All the same,  
Sing a song.  
Goddam, let Glandine love,  
For in her season,  
She'll play mischief  
And have a son like herself.

**Chorus**

Follow, follow, love,  
Let us become inflamed.  
Oh, oh, oh, how sweet  
It is to love.

**Hymen**

A girl is vain to pretend  
Marriage is charming.  
Vain for her to contradict.  
He wishes her a lover  
And nothing is so much to be feared  
As the age of fifteen years.

**Chorus**

Follow, follow, love,  
Let us become inflamed.  
Oh, oh, oh, how sweet  
It is to love.

**Trio**

A lover in the woods,  
Sick of chasing,  
Wants to give up the prize.  
But one isn't made of wood,  
And sometimes one makes a mistake.

WAYWARD WENCHES BY JEAN-FRANCOIS REGNARD

Chorus

Follow, follow, love,  
Let us become inflamed.  
Oh, oh, oh, how sweet  
It is to love.

CURTAIN