

# **THE SHIT SELLER By T. Gueulette**

Translated and adapted by F. J. Morlock



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etext by Dagny

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CHARACTERS

LEANDRE:

HARLEQUIN

GILLES

CATIN

THE APOTHECARY

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**LEANDRE:** Listen, my dear Harlequin—

**HARLEQUIN:** Yeah, sir, I'm not deaf.

**LEANDRE:** Always joking as usual, but it's not a question of that, I've always told you my troubles and misfortunes.

**HARLEQUIN:** Yes, sir.

**LEANDRE:** I have some pain, my dear Harlequin, it's surely not against the charming Isabelle, for never was there a more honest and civil girl, for she loves me always, but yet you know well enough that I usually spend the night with her.

**HARLEQUIN:** Yes, sir.

**LEANDRE:** It's not against fortune that I have so much ill will; thanks to Heaven I've always got the wherewithal to pay for a bottle for a friend.

**HARLEQUIN:** I really wish I had enough to pay for a fat chick and a dozen bottles of wine.

**LEANDRE:** Won't you ever become modest, my dear Harlequin, the good example and civility you see in me, won't they ever make you improve?

**HARLEQUIN:** But, sir, they say, like valet, like master.

**LEANDRE:** That's true, everybody says that.

**HARLEQUIN:** You've got a mistress, you've got the wherewithal; if I had only a quarter of a mistress and two pieces of wherewithal, I would be happier than a Pope.

**LEANDRE:** Shut up, insolent; there's no necessity of speaking of such persons as that; but I promise you a good bottle of sherry wine if you will take an interest in my misfortune.

**HARLEQUIN:** Talk fast, 'cause I'm really thirsty.

**LEANDRE:** You know that rogue of a clodhopper, Gilles who has rooms near here?

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**HARLEQUIN:** Yes, I know him, I've put him out of countenance a hundred times.

**LEANDRE:** Well, he's a dirty fellow, who comes every day (words don't stink) to put his excrement, his scurvy tricks at my door.

**HARLEQUIN:** And for this you will give me a bottle of wine?

**LEANDRE:** You are always so impatient—

**HARLEQUIN:** If you want me to do as much to him, you have only to say so, it will be soon done, that will be money well earned.

**LEANDRE:** Hey, no.

**HARLEQUIN:** Hell, it's because you are making my mouth water.

**LEANDRE:** Listen to me.

**HARLEQUIN:** If it was only a matter of doing this to oblige a friend, I would do it in a big bowl.

**LEANDRE:** Will you shut up?

**HARLEQUIN:** Because you make me wanna go right now. (go dew dew he means)

**LEANDRE:** Keep it up!

**HARLEQUIN:** Sir, don't get annoyed, but hurry up, I'm pressed.

**LEANDRE:** I want to punish this insolent who has the audacity—

**HARLEQUIN:** To shit at your door.

**LEANDRE:** But what is it makes him do it? What! because I hit him with a stick a few times.

**HARLEQUIN:** If you did that to me, I would have shit in your bed, I would. But, sir, don't bother yourself, I promise to avenge you. There he is coming out, let's go back in. You will see beautiful sport, it's just come to me—something in my head which won't be of straw.

**LEANDRE:** You see, my dear Harlequin, how your master confides all his troubles to you.

**HARLEQUIN:** Come on, I tell you, we are going to see fine sport.

(Harlequin and Leandre go into their lodgings.)

**GILLES:** (entering) Since I no longer have my Uncle, I'm bored at home, I don't know what to do with my ten fingers, for in the end I cannot always scratch myself; I've got to get married; my wife will scratch me, I will scratch her, we will scratch each other; I'll beat her, she'll beat me, we will beat each other, and then we'll make peace, and then— By Jove, here she is; when you speak of the wolf you see his tail. I would really like for her to talk to me. (Catin enters and Gilles turns to her) By Jove, now that's what they call a fine well kept ass, a good—

**CATIN:** What are you looking at there, Mr. Gilles?

**GILLES:** Miz, I was ogling you, and what are you doing like this all alone?

**CATIN:** I get your joke, but to marry it's necessary to have wherewith, and I haven't enough to pay for a pint of wine, or indeed a cup of Swiss coffee.

**GILLES:** So much the better, me neither.

**CATIN:** So much the worse, and the saucepan?

**GILLES:** We won't go that far, that leads to nothing. Right, right, what's it matter, look at me, I'm not employed, nor twisted, nor hunchbacked, I will find wherewithal, if it were only those who have income that commit folly there wouldn't be so many cuckolds.

**CATIN:** All that is fine and good Mr. Gilles, but there must be cash.

**GILLES:** Ah, Miz, you've got enough for the two of us, but by Jove, I am indeed ready to have a look at you before things go any further.

**CATIN:** Hey, why's that?

**GILLES:** Strut, walk circle around me.

**CATIN:** Like this, Mr. Gilles?

**GILLES:** Yes, very nice, for I don't want to buy a pig in a poke; why, will you tell me about it a little?

**CATIN:** What?

**GILLES:** Are you really a girl everywhere?

**CATIN:** Oh, much. You can count on my being so, just like my mother was after having brought me into the world. I can't say more.

**GILLES:** Oh! if that's the way it is, I have nothing to say, for assuredly your mother wasn't a man.

**CATIN:** Yes, but Mr. Gilles, I am amusing myself here like a brat, your butt is a beast that can ride a donkey;

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if you think I'm going to marry without anything, or without knowing how to get something. I am your servant, Mr. Gilles.

(CATIN LEAVES.)

**GILLES:** (alone) By Jove, she's right: I've got to find something to do. Let's see. (he enumerates all the jobs) If I had income I wouldn't have so much trouble to find a job. Come on, it's necessary that I look for one; I will marry Catin, I will have many little children, all the girls will be Catins and all the boys will be Gilles. By Jove, I'll really have a lot of family.

**HARLEQUIN:** (entering with a large barrel) Ah, hello, Gilles; how are you doing?

**GILLES:** Very well, no money, no troubles, and you?

**HARLEQUIN:** I've set myself up as a negotiator of merchandise.

**GILLES:** The Devil! and what are you selling?

**HARLEQUIN:** (making him smell a probe that he pulls from the barrel) Here, see if you know this merchandise?

**GILLES:** (holding his nose) By Jove, yes, I make it every day; it's shit; is that what you're selling?

**HARLEQUIN:** Truly, yes. There's a big market for it. Where are you coming from?

**GILLES:** Never heard tell of that, and I see so much of it in the streets that no one touches.

**HARLEQUIN:** That's because there are so many folks who have other professions; that they never think of it.

**GILLES:** Why, as for me, to whom you are speaking, who doesn't know any profession, I've never thought of it at all. Oh, how much I've lost! But to whom do you sell it?

**HARLEQUIN:** To many folks, but especially to the apothecaries. Stay here, you are going to see.

(THE APOTHECARY ENTERS.)

**HARLEQUIN:** Sir, would you like to buy my merchandise; I'll make you a good price!

**APOTHECARY:** Let's have a look, sir, let's have a look.

**HARLEQUIN:** Taste it, sir, examine it, you won't find any better.

**APOTHECARY:** The merchandise could be in better condition. But look, price is everything. How much will you take?

**HARLEQUIN:** I want seven shillings.

**APOTHECARY:** Come on, that's too much; will you take five?

**HARLEQUIN:** Oh! I can't, sir, I would lose too much.

**GILLES:** (aside) He would lose by it?

**HARLEQUIN:** Believe me, sir, don't let me go. I furnish one of your colleagues who doesn't haggle; he perhaps would give me more.

**APOTHECARY:** Here then, there's your seven shillings since you won't be beaten out of 'em.

(APOTHECARY PAYS MONEY, TAKES THE BARREL AND LEAVES.)

**HARLEQUIN:** Well, didn't I swindle him? And if the merchandise ages, I would have had more.

**GILLES:** By Jove, now here's something admirable! I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it. Come on, now that's what's done. I will make myself a seller of shit. I was seeking a profession, this one isn't difficult, I will be master at once, and Catin will have nothing to reproach me with. Mr. Harlequin, I am much obliged to you.

(GILLES LEAVES.)

**HARLEQUIN:** (alone, laughing) Strange fish! I've given him a profession with which he's going to make a great fortune, but at least our neighborhood will be neat, he won't shit at our door any more, and Mr. Leandre will give me a tip. Here's the apothecary who doesn't seem very satisfied with his merchandise, let's get outta here.

(HARLEQUIN LEAVES.)

**APOTHECARY:** (alone) If I could catch that insolent, that bold face who sold me shit for honey, I'd show him that it's not with an apothecary that he must make sport of. I don't dare complain of the cheat they played on me, because everybody would laugh at me. What to do? I must be patient while fuming.

**GILLES:** (entering with a cask) Who wants my shit? Money for my shit? It's very fresh.

**APOTHECARY:** Now there's one of those bold faces or someone who intends to mock me.

**GILLES:** Ah! Sir, take advantage of a good price, I'm very pressed to sell.

**APOTHECARY:** You are a wise guy.

**GILLES:** Sir, sir, one doesn't treat an honest merchant the way you do.

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**APOTHECARY:** (giving him a whack) A merchant my ass.

**GILLES:** I bet your ass isn't as well made as this one here. But taste, before you scorn the merchandise, you will see that it's worth more than that of before.

**APOTHECARY:** (taking a stick) This rogue will pay for the other one.

**GILLES:** Before you gave seven shillings for a little barrel? Well, I will give you this one which is three times as big for ten shillings, reckon that as a find.

**APOTHECARY:** (beating him and breaking the cask over his body) Here, Shit Seller, keep your merchandise for yourself and get out of here.

(THE APOTHECARY LEAVES.)

**GILLES:** (alone) Thief, thief, I am a ruined man, ruined, there are no cops here.

**HARLEQUIN:** (entering) What's making you shout?

**GILLES:** Ah! My colleague, you see how they treat merchants.

**HARLEQUIN:** You must make a complaint to the Commissioner.

**GILLES:** I consent to do it.

**HARLEQUIN:** Perhaps you made some mistake. Still the profession isn't difficult.

**GILLES:** No, truly, I assure you the merchandise was good, smell it rather, you ought to know it. This villainous apothecary, my ass, didn't even want to taste it.

**HARLEQUIN:** Perhaps he had a cold.

**LEANDRE:** It must be hoped, Mr. Gilles that you will be luckier than before; continue forever.

**GILES:** By Jove, sir, I am very disgusted with commerce.

**LEANDRE:** Now, trust me, don't come shit at people's door any more; keep your merchandise for yourself.

**HARLEQUIN** **We've given you, on your body, a piece of your specimen .**

**CATIN:** (entering) Hey, my poor Gilles, what are you doing there? One doesn't know how to come near you.

**GILLES:** You see, I wanted to erect a shop to be in a condition to marry you, I made myself a Seller of Shit.

**CATIN:** I smell it plainly, simpleton; I don't want a husband who can be so stupid, I want to be the one that makes it. Your servant, sir. (she goes away)

**LEANDRE:** Nor I a neighbor who comes every day to shit at my door. (he leaves)

**HARLEQUIN:** And as for me, I never want to speak to a man who knows so little about selling his merchandise.

(HARLEQUIN LEAVES.)

**GILLES:** (alone) In that case, goodbye. By Jove, life in this world is really difficult.

**CURTAIN**