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Dramatic Publishing

THE PINK PANTHER^(c) STRIKES AGAIN

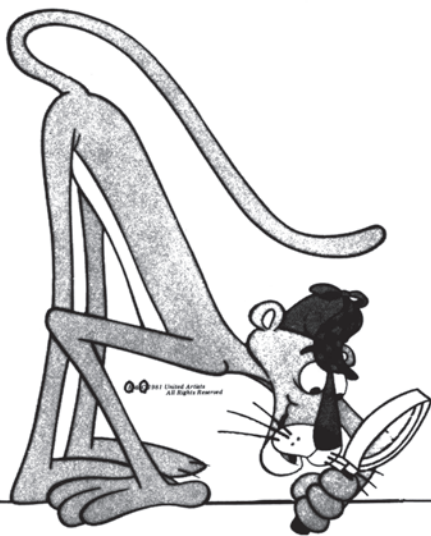
A Full-Length Play

By
WILLIAM GLEASON

Based on the film
by Blake Edwards &
Frank Waldman



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



The world's most unusual criminologist, Chief Inspector Jacques Clouseau – a role originally created by Peter Sellers – fights for his life and for the future of all mankind in the most bizarre and dangerous caper of his brilliantly successful and utterly clumsy career. Paul Dreyfus, once his long-suffering boss, now turned into a raving lunatic, holds the world at bay with the ultimate weapon – The Doomsday Machine. Dreyfus is out to get Clouseau, the man whose undeserved success has driven him crazy, and he threatens to vaporize continents if the nations of the world don't deliver Clouseau to him – alive or, if at all possible, dead! Blissfully unaware of the army of deadly assassins gunning for him, or that the beautiful girl who seeks him out is a Russian agent, Clouseau incredibly stumbles and slips by every attack. However, the world is running out of time because the increasingly-frustrated Dreyfus, doodling with the Doomsday Machine, is running out of patience. At the critical moment, it suddenly appears that Clouseau is finally running out of luck but as that fateful moment arrives, Clouseau fires from the hip and hits – our funnybone!

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WILLIAM GLEASON

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“The Pink Panther Strikes Again”

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(THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN)

ISBN 0-87129-384-6

THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN

A Full-Length Play

for a large and totally flexible cast.

C H A R A C T E R S

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| CLOUSEAU | Chief Inspector of the Surete |
| FRANCOIS | Clouseau's driver |
| CATO | Clouseau's butler |
| DREYFUS | former Chief Inspector; Clouseau's arch-enemy |
| DR. DUVAL | Dreyfus' psychiatrist |
| DRUMMOND | Inspector, Scotland Yard |
| McLAREN | Inspector, Scotland Yard |
| DR. FASSBENDER | inventor of the Doomsday Machine |
| MARGOT | Dr. Fassbender's daughter |
| OLGA | Russian agent; Clouseau's love |
| JARVIS | Dr. Fassbender's butler |
| MRS. JAPONICA | Dr. Fassbender's maid |
| MRS. LEVERLILLY | Dr. Fassbender's housekeeper |
| MRS. BULLOCK | Dr. Fassbender's cook |
| MR. SHORK | Dr. Fassbender's gardener |
| MRS. STUTTERSTUTT | Dr. Fassbender's beekeeper |
| TOURNIER | a bank robber |
| HINDU HARRY | Dreyfus' gangster cohort |
| CAIRO FRED | one of Dreyfus' henchmen |
| MAFIA-TYPE | another Dreyfus' henchman/assassin |
| INMATE | "Indian" inhabitant of lunatic asylum |
| ORDERLIES | at same asylum |

WAITRESSfemale assassin
 ITALIAN, POLISH, JAPANESE
 CHINESE, MEXICAN, SWEDEN
 NIGERIAN, ARABIAN assassins
 CHUCK head waiter at the Mirage Club
 EMCEE at the Mirage Club
 COUPLES spectators at Mirage Club
 FRENCH LADY, FRENCH MAN. lovers in restaurant
 WAITER in same restaurant
 TECHNICIAN in Dreyfus' television studio
 MESSENGER. unfortunate bearer of news for Clouseau
 DESK CLERKS German; one male, one ancient female
 GERMAN GIRL spy with poisoned pretzel
 PINK PANTHERS. stagehand/actors, actresses

Time: The Present

Place: Somewhere in France, England and Germany

ACT ONE

The curtain is closed.

As the houselights dim, we hear an assortment of sounds associated with mysteries and police dramas.

There can be the maniacal howl of a werewolf, shots, a scream, and then a distant police siren. (The sound of a European police car is preferable but an ordinary siren sound will suffice. The sounds should be brief and you should have fun with them.)

Meanwhile, spotlights play across the curtain.

As the siren fades, several female stagehand-actors, dressed as PINK PANTHERS, dart onto the stage. They can come from L, R, under the curtain and, perhaps, may even run up the aisles.

The moment they are all in position, and picked out by the spots, the PINK PANTHERS turn to the audience. Each puts a finger to her lips and together they make a loud “Shhh!” Then they do a fright jump and race offstage.

We hear the sound of squeaking shoes approaching. (If you can't do the squeaking shoes effect, do the sound of approaching footsteps.)

A PINK PANTHER tiptoes quickly across the stage and off.

The sound of the squeaky shoes/approaching footsteps is getting louder.

A PINK PANTHER races across the stage and exits.

CHIEF INSPECTOR CLOUSEAU of the Surete enters. (He can back out onto the stage through the curtain opening, crawl out backwards under the curtain, or may simply back on from L.)

A spotlight sweeps the stage, picks CLOUSEAU out, and swings past him. It returns and covers CLOUSEAU. He freezes, his back to the audience, then slides toward R and the light follows him. He slides to L, again the light follows. He stops, reaches inside his trenchcoat, and draws an automatic pistol.

CLOUSEAU turns toward the front, aims his automatic at the spotlight, and squeezes the trigger. Nothing happens. He squeezes the trigger again, frantically, but the weapon will not go off. Clouseau's agitation grows. He squeezes again and again with no result.

A PINK PANTHER races across the stage as CLOUSEAU continues to shoot, and she points at something on the gun. He looks at where she is pointing and his lips mouth "Ah! Le safety!"

More PINK PANTHERS enter.

CLOUSEAU, now filled with confidence, snaps off the safety and takes careful aim at the spotlight. As he pulls the trigger,

the PINK PANTHERS all shout “Bang!”

The central spotlight blacks out.

The PINK PANTHERS do a fright jump and race off.

A musical theme can be used as exit music here, possibly something light and French by Offenbach.

CLOUSEAU, now triumphant, turns to swagger off but he is stopped as he sees a high-style French LADY enter from L. She moves with the accentuated flair of a fashion model. She pauses, takes out her compact and checks her makeup.

As the LADY does this, the PINK PANTHERS enter with a tiny table covered with a red checkered tablecloth and two small chairs. They set the table and chairs down at L and exit. As soon as the furniture arrangement is in place, the LADY seats herself.

The music cuts out.

CLOUSEAU approaches the seated LADY and smiles hopefully at her. She nods her head slightly. He looks R and L, slightly unsure and tentative. He removes his hat and sits down at the table, facing the audience. He smiles at the LADY, looks out over the audience, smoothes his mustache and nervously clears his throat.

A prim WAITER enters from R and looms over the table.

CLOUSEAU (to the LADY). Cafe au lait? (She nods. He looks to the WAITER and raises two fingers. The WAITER nods and exits. CLOUSEAU drums his fingers on the table, then smiles

and gestures expansively with both arms.) Ah! There is nothing like it! (The LADY tilts her head inquisitively. CLOUSEAU gestures again and explains.) Springtime in Paris. It is the panacea. Even the most atrophied soul must respond to the glories of Paris in the springtime, even the darkest of hearts. Birds buzzing. Bees singing. Expectation hangs in the air like the scent of cherry blossoms. Love. Joy. Life. Paris.

(The WAITER enters with two coffees on a tray. He places them on the table, clicks his heels and exits. The LADY reaches out gracefully and sips her coffee.)

CLOUSEAU. You have lovely hands. (The LADY returns her cup to the table.) I know something about hands. (He raises his hands.) I have hands myself. That makes me something of an expert. And so when I say you have beautiful hands, you can rest assured that this is true. (He looks deeply into the Lady's eyes.) It seems sadly ironic that a man, such as myself, a man who rejoices in the simple pleasures of life, a man who can spend a contented afternoon warching a puppy laugh or a child chase his tail in the grass . . . how poetically ironic that such a man should spend his life fighting tooth and nail with the most vicious criminal elements of society. But . . . it is my duty. (The LADY yawns.) I travel a lonely road. No time for love. But, still . . . at moments like this . . . (He inhales, smiles and gestures.) . . . how nice it would be to share the joys of life with someone special. (He looks toward the LADY.) To share a glance. To laugh as one. (He chuckles. Slowly he reaches out and takes her hand.) To have a hand to hold. (He stares into her eyes as he clutches her hand. Then he speaks quietly.) How nice that would be.

(A tall, handsome, French MAN enters R, a sportscoat draped over his shoulders like a cape. The LADY rises and faces him. CLOUSEAU watches. The MAN holds out a single rose. The LADY moves toward the MAN and they embrace passionately.)

CLOUSEAU. Perhaps your friend would like to join us? (The MAN and LADY ignore him and sweep off R. CLOUSEAU looks out over the audience and drums his fingers on the table again.)

(The WAITER enters and stands over the table.)

WAITER. Will there be anything else, m'sieur?

CLOUSEAU (distracted and speaking quietly). No. (He sits up suddenly, very businesslike.) No. That will be all. (He rises.)

WAITER (gesturing). A lovely day, is it not?

CLOUSEAU (putting on his hat). I hadn't really noticed.

WAITER (reprimanding CLOUSEAU). What kind of man is it that doesn't notice a spring day in Paris?

CLOUSEAU. A man who is more concerned with *duty* than the weather. A dedicated public servant who is even now on his way to visit a former associate in an insane asylum. I am Chief Inspector Jacques Clouseau of the Surete. (CLOUSEAU and the WAITER look at each other. CLOUSEAU hands him a bill as payment.) Keep the change.

WAITER (looking at the bill). There is no change.

CLOUSEAU (straightening his coat and squaring his shoulders). Keep it anyway. (He strides off. The WAITER shakes his head, mutters and strides off.)

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: The PINK PANTHERS quickly clear off the table and chairs.

(Upstage, DR. DUVAL enters carrying a life-sized, stuffed dummy. The dummy is battered and patched with a painted face that bears an unmistakable resemblance to Clouseau. There is a desk and two chairs UL. DUVAL places the dummy in the chair facing his desk, then crosses and sits behind the desk. We hear a knock from offstage.)

DUVAL. Come in.

(DREYFUS enters smiling.)

DREYFUS. Good morning, Paul.

DUVAL (gesturing). Move Clouseau and have a seat.

DREYFUS (crossing to chair). You mean I don't have to purge subconscious demons on your psychiatrist's couch today?

DUVAL. Not unless you want to.

DREYFUS (picking up the dummy and looking at its face).

Poor old Clouseau. You've taken a lot of abuse these last three years. (He laughs and puts the dummy down, then sits and reclines comfortably.) I can do without the couch this morning, doctor. This is quite comfortable.

DUVAL (holding out cigarettes). Smoke?

DREYFUS (frowning). Doctor. I'm surprised.

DUVAL (remembering). Of course. You quit.

DREYFUS. Three months ago. There was a time when your forgetfulness would have made me feel very rejected. (He smiles.)

DUVAL (returning the smile). But not now.

DREYFUS. A little rejected, perhaps. Did you do it intentionally?

DUVAL. Why would I do that? (He doodles on a piece of paper.)

DREYFUS. A patient you consider to be completely rehabilitated . . . on your recommendation due to appear before the Sanity Board. Your reputation on the line. A little test?

DUVAL. Not long ago, an obvious trick like that would have sent you into a towering rage.

DREYFUS (gesturing toward the dummy). And poor old Clouseau would have silently, passively submitted to another massacre. (He puts the dummy on his lap.) It's a miracle you were able to keep putting him back together. (He pats the dummy.) Poor old Clouseau. And there was a time when I couldn't even speak his name.

DUVAL. There was a time when you would have joyfully killed him.

DREYFUS. Yes. I was a sick man, wasn't I? We've come a long way.

DUVAL (doodling again). And you're not even a little bothered when you think of Clouseau?

DREYFUS (smiling and patting the dummy). Not even a little bit. Do you believe me?

DUVAL. If you say so.

DREYFUS. I could be lying. You're a good psychiatrist, but I might be a better liar.

DUVAL. For your sake, I hope you're not. Sooner or later you'd run into Clouseau and then . . . back here . . . for life. No more chances for another hearing.

DREYFUS. Day after day, coming here, knowing that on certain mornings you will be particularly morose and testy because you've had a fight with your wife . . . like this morning.

DUVAL (taken aback). How did you know that?

DREYFUS. It's the only time you doodle.

DUVAL. I keep forgetting you were Chief Inspector of the Surete.

DREYFUS. And will be again.

DUVAL. But Clouseau is the Chief Inspector.

DREYFUS. Until a better man comes along.

DUVAL. Well, in that case, Inspector Clouseau better start looking to his laurels.

DREYFUS (sitting up, tense). You mean? (The dummy falls to the floor.)

DUVAL. The Board is meeting at two this afternoon.

DREYFUS (rising). This afternoon!

DUVAL. If everything goes the way I expect it to, you'll be out of here tomorrow. (DREYFUS tries to speak but cannot. His eyes fill with tears and he puts out his hand. DUVAL smiles and shakes Dreyfus' hand.) See you at two. (DREYFUS nods and starts to cross off. DUVAL suddenly shouts.) Clouseau!

DREYFUS (stopping, turning slowly toward DUVAL, with a confident smile). Some people would consider your methods most unorthodox, doctor.

DUVAL (smiling). Just making sure you aren't a better liar than I am a psychiatrist.

DREYFUS. Two o'clock. (He smiles.) I think I'll take a walk. Marvelous morning. (He strides off.)

(The PINK PANTHERS enter and clear away the office props. They place a small bench downstage. Meanwhile, CLOUSEAU and his driver, FRANCOIS, enter R and cross in. FRANCOIS looks around uneasily.)

FRANCOIS. This place gives me the creeps.

CLOUSEAU. You probably just have an aversion to lunatics.

You must admit the grounds are quite lovely. I suppose it has a soothing effect upon the troubled brains of the populace.

FRANCOIS. Remember, Inspector, you're supposed to sign the order to transport Jean Tournier to prison today.

CLOUSEAU. Ah, Tournier the bank robber. I will be happy to sign that order. It's life for him this time.

FRANCOIS. The order is on your desk. Priority one.

CLOUSEAU. I won't be long. A brief but pleasant chat, a few kind words of encouragement for my old comrade, Dreyfus.

FRANCOIS. Does he know you're coming?

CLOUSEAU. No, I want it to be a surprise.

FRANCOIS. Do you think this visit is a good idea? I mean, he's been incarcerated for nearly three years, and . . .

CLOUSEAU. Yes, poor devil. I remember the last time we saw each other. He didn't even know me. He bit my leg.

FRANCOIS. Yes, exactly. So, perhaps, the surprise of seeing you . . .

CLOUSEAU. Oh, it's sure to be an emotional moment. Two old friends . . .

FRANCOIS. Friends?

CLOUSEAU. Compatriots. Brothers in arms, so to speak.

(A MAN with an Indian headdress enters L. He carries a toy bow and rubber tipped arrow and stops to stare at CLOUSEAU and FRANCOIS.)

FRANCOIS (seeing the MAN). Get a load of the looney-bird over there.

CLOUSEAU (angrily). Bite your tongue, Francois. How petty of you to belittle one who is less fortunate than you. As

dedicated public servants, we should refrain from using such epithets.

FRANCOIS (with his head hanging). I'm sorry, Inspector.

CLOUSEAU. Sorry or not, I am still ashamed of you. Wait for me at the car. And never let me hear you say "looney-bird" again.

FRANCOIS. Yes, sir. (He sulks off R. The MAN with the head-dress stares blankly at CLOUSEAU. CLOUSEAU crosses toward him and raises his hand in the Indian peace sign, palm out. The MAN slowly raises his hand and thumbs his nose at CLOUSEAU.)

CLOUSEAU (smiling). Ah! I see you are an archer. (The MAN stares at CLOUSEAU dully.) May I see your bew? (He gestures toward the bow.)

MAN. My bew?

CLOUSEAU. Yes, your bew.

MAN. I don't have a bew.

CLOUSEAU (irritated). Don't tell me you don't have a bew. It is right there in your hands. (He reaches for the bow and there is a short, fierce tug of war until CLOUSEAU pulls the bow and arrow from the Man's hands.) Thank you. (He tests the action of the bow.) Ah, a fine weapon and deadly in the right hands. (He points off R.) Do you see that limb which angles down over the path?

MAN. No.

CLOUSEAU. Keep your eye on it. (He draws back, aims and lets the arrow fly. It arches high offstage. The heads of the MAN and CLOUSEAU rise and fall with the arrow.)

DREYFUS (offstage). Oooooowwww!

MAN (chuckling). Nice shot.

(DREYFUS staggers on with an arrow stuck to his forehead.)

CLOUSEAU (thrusting the bow into the Man's hands). Your bow is defective.

MAN. Are you going to scalp him?

CLOUSEAU. Get out of here, you looney-bird. (The MAN crosses off L, chuckling as he goes. CLOUSEAU crosses toward the staggering DREYFUS.)

DREYFUS. Help . . . help . . .

CLOUSEAU. Do not be afraid, mon ami. I will help you. (He steps in front of DREYFUS, reaches up and yanks the arrow free. DREYFUS yells as he sees CLOUSEAU.)

DREYFUS (with his eyes wide). Oh, God! Clouseau!

CLOUSEAU. Please. There is no need to thank me.

DREYFUS. Thank you?

CLOUSEAU. For saving your life. I removed the arrow. (Helpfully.) Let me inspect the damage.

DREYFUS (angrily). No! (He checks his temper.) No, it's all right. Someone . . . (He rubs his head.) . . . I was hit on the head, that's all.

CLOUSEAU. Yes. You have received the large beump.

DREYFUS. Beump?

CLOUSEAU. What?

DREYFUS. You said beump.

CLOUSEAU. Yes, I know that. Such a beump could be serious. You could have a concussion.

DREYFUS. What are you doing here? (Hopefully.) Have you been committed?

CLOUSEAU. Of course not. I may be many things, but I am not the lunatic. No, I have come to spread a little sunshine, to sprinkle the stardust of friendship over this neurotic landscape. I have come to visit you, my old friend. (DREYFUS sighs. CLOUSEAU hugs DREYFUS and holds him at arm's length.) Let me have a look at you. (He looks DREYFUS over and