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THE PATSY

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED BY GREG LEAMING
FROM GEORGES FEYDEAU'S *LE DINDON*



THE PATSY

“A sense of sensual duality ... fuels
the frenetic action of the play.”

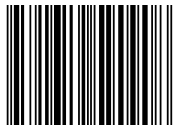
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Farce. Translated and adapted by Greg Leaming. From George Feydeau's Le Dindon. Cast: 9 to 10m., 5 to 6w., 1 to 5 either gender. Lucienne Vatelín is being pursued by the ardent and love-struck Eugene Pontagnac, but the virtuous and faithful woman believes in fidelity. Only when her own husband strays would she pursue a lover of her own. The arrival of Marta Ziegler, an old lover of Lucienne's husband, brings chaos into the household, and Lucienne throws herself into the arms of her husband's best friend to wreak revenge. But on the boulevard, nothing is ever this simple! A prize-winning German boxer, his love-sick wife, an elderly American couple traveling to Paris for the first time, and an assortment of managers, servants, bellboys and ladies of the evening all arrive on the same night at a local hotel where a horrible night of mistaken identities and slamming doors keeps everyone from getting what they need. In a last act of desperation, Lucienne now seeks revenge in the arms of a family friend, making sure that her husband will catch her in flagrante delicto! But when all seems hopeless, true love untangles every bit of mistaken identity, leaving one very happy couple and some very frustrated young suitors. Three int. sets. Approximate running time: 140 minutes. Code: PM3.



Cover Photo: Resident Ensemble Players, Newark, Del., featuring (l-r) Deena Burke, Michael Gotch and Victoria Adams-Zischke. Photo: Paul Cerro. Cover design: Cristian Pacheco.

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“*The Patsy* was originally produced by Resident Ensemble Players (REP) of the University of Delaware, Sanford Robbins, Producing Artistic Director.”

The Patsy was premiered by Resident Ensemble Players in Newark, Del., on Sept. 25, 2015.

Cast:

Lucienne Vatin	Victoria Adams-Zischke
Eugene Pontagnac	Stephen Pelinski
Maurice Vatin	Lee E. Ernst
Jean	Joshua Browns
Ernest Redillon	Michael Gotch
Clotilde Pontagnac	Deena Burke
Marta Ziegler	Jenny Bennett
Gerhard Ziegler	Mic Matarrese
Avaline	Kathleen Pirkl Tague
Henry	Bradley Michalak
Manager of the Hotel Ultimus	Wayne Pyle
Pinchard	Torrey Hanson
Maudie Pinchard	Elizabeth Heflin
Clara	Gracie Lee Brown
Police Inspector	Joshua Browns
Guests of the Hotel Ultimus	Tom Cooksey, Vijay Sarathi, Shea Shell
Gerome	Wayne Pyle
Policeman	Shea Shell

Production Staff:

Director	Steve Tague
Scenic Design	C. David Russell
Costume Design	Martha Hally
Lighting Design	Matthew Richards
Sound Design	John Stovicek
Fight Choreographer	Lee Ernst
Stage Manager	Christopher Michael Borg
Assistant Stage Manager	Laura F. Wendt
Assistant Stage Manager	Kaitlin Kitzmiller

The Patsy

CHARACTERS

Lucienne Vatin

Maurice Vatin: her husband.

Eugene Pontagnac

Clotilde Pontagnac: his wife.

Ernest Redillon

Marta Ziegler: from Munich.

Gerhard Ziegler: her husband.

*Jean: a butler.

Avaline

Henry: a bellhop.

Clara: a maid.

Manager: of the Hotel Ultimus.

Pinchard: an elderly American.

Maudie Pinchard: his wife.

Police Inspector

Guests: of the Hotel Ultimus.

*Gerome: a very old factotum.

*Jean may be doubled with Gerome.

The Patsy

ACT I

SCENE 1

(Paris, MAURICE VATELIN's house. Elegant drawing room, one door upstage, two doors on either side of the stage.)

As the curtain rises, the stage is empty. Shortly, voices are heard approaching from the back, arguing loudly. Suddenly, LUCIENNE, in coat and hat askew, bursts through the door in a panic. She closes the door behind her but not quick enough to prevent a walking stick being thrust in between the door and the door frame by an unseen person [EUGENE PONTAGNAC].)

LUCIENNE. Oh my God!

PONTAGNAC. Madame, please.

LUCIENNE. Go away, go away!

PONTAGNAC *(trying to push the door open each time that LUCIENNE closes it on him)*. Madame! If you'd just let me—

LUCIENNE. I'll do no such thing, monsieur ... ! What are you doing? *(Shouting offstage.)* Jean, Augustine! Dear God, there's no one here ... !

PONTAGNAC. Madame. Please!

LUCIENNE. No! No!

PONTAGNAC *(finally entering the room)*. I beg you, madame, listen to me!

LUCIENNE. How dare you?! I forbid you to enter my house, monsieur. Get out!

PONTAGNAC. Madame, please, my intentions may not be pure, but I swear they're not dangerous ... *(He goes to her.)*

LUCIENNE *(drawing away)*. You're mad!

PONTAGNAC *(following her)*. Yes, you're right, for you! I adore you and I'll do anything to make love to you!

LUCIENNE *(stopping)*. I won't listen to any more of this! Leave my home!

PONTAGNAC. Oh my god, you're making it worse! That passion! That fire! I tell you I love you. *(He starts to pursue her again.)* I've dogged your footsteps all week. You must have seen me.

LUCIENNE. Don't be vulgar, monsieur. Of course I didn't see you.

PONTAGNAC. You certainly did. You know it! A lady always notices when she's being followed.

LUCIENNE. The arrogance!

PONTAGNAC. I'm not arrogant; just observant.

LUCIENNE. I don't care what you are—I don't know you!

PONTAGNAC. I know, and it's killing me! Oh, madame!

LUCIENNE. Monsieur!

PONTAGNAC. Oh, Marguerite!

LUCIENNE. My name is Lucienne!

PONTAGNAC. Thank you. Oh, Lucienne!

LUCIENNE. How dare you!

PONTAGNAC. But you just told me your name!

LUCIENNE. For heaven's sake, who do you think you're dealing with, monsieur? I am a respectable woman!

PONTAGNAC. I know. That's why I adore you. Respectable women drive me mad.

LUCIENNE. Stop that. If you don't get out, I will call my husband.

PONTAGNAC. What! You have a husband?

LUCIENNE. I certainly have.

PONTAGNAC. To hell with the idiot!

LUCIENNE. An idiot? My husband?

PONTAGNAC. Beautiful women always have idiots for husbands. How dare he let such a creature go out walking alone.

LUCIENNE (*backing up*). We'll just see how the idiot treats you. You won't leave?

PONTAGNAC. Leave you? Never!

LUCIENNE (*calling to the right*). Maurice!

PONTAGNAC. What a ridiculous name!

LUCIENNE. Maurice!

SCENE 2

(*VATELIN enters R.*)

VATELIN. Yes, my dear?

PONTAGNAC (*aside*). Uh, oh! It's Vatin! Damn!

VATELIN (*recognizing PONTAGNAC, aside*). Good heavens! It's Pontagnac! (*To PONTAGNAC.*) My dear friend!

LUCIENNE (*aside*). What?

PONTAGNAC. Vatin, how ... how ... how wonderful to see you!

VATELIN. Are you well?

PONTAGNAC. Oh, yes, very well!

LUCIENNE (*aside*). He knows him.

PONTAGNAC. What a wonderful surprise.

VATELIN. What do you mean a surprise? This is my house, after all.

PONTAGNAC. What? No, I mean, for you! What a surprise this must be for you! SURPRISE! Ha, ha, ha!

VATELIN. Yes, it is!

LUCIENNE. It most CERTAINLY is! *(To VATELIN.)* You know this gentleman?

VATELIN. Why yes, I do.

PONTAGNAC *(panicking)*. Yes, why we're, uhm, you know, uhm ... SURPRISE! *(Taking a coin out of his pocket and pressing it into LUCIENNE's hand, whispering to her.)* Here, take this, go buy yourself something nice.

LUCIENNE. What is this? A tip?

VATELIN *(not noticing anything)*. Something the matter?

PONTAGNAC. Something the matter, with me? No, don't be silly. What could possibly be the matter?

(VATELIN turns upstage.)

LUCIENNE. Take this back. What in heaven's name do you think you're doing?

PONTAGNAC. My god, I'm so sorry! Please, just don't say anything!

VATELIN. Pontagnac, I had just about given up hope of ever having you here to my home to meet my new bride! And here you are!

LUCIENNE. Yes, here you are! Every bit of you!

PONTAGNAC. Yes, every bit! I mean, no! Not every bit, just most of me—I mean, it's just, you know, so hard to find the time ...

VATELIN. Darling, this is Eugene Pontagnac, one of my very dearest friends.

PONTAGNAC. Madame!

LUCIENNE. Monsieur, how very interesting to meet you in just this way.

(She offers her hand, PONTAGNAC grabs it and shakes it in as businesslike a way as possible.)

VATELIN. But maybe I shouldn't be introducing you two.

LUCIENNE. No? Why is that?

VATELIN. Oh, he's a devil, this one, a real monster. Can't look at a woman without chasing after her. Doesn't matter who it is!

LUCIENNE. Oh really?

PONTAGNAC *(laughing)*. No, of course not, absolutely not true!

VATELIN. Of course it is! Everyone knows your reputation. Anything in a dress.

PONTAGNAC. Oh, now, wait a minute, you're exaggerating . . .

LUCIENNE. How sad for a woman to think she's special when in fact she's only part of a herd! But won't you sit down, monsieur.

VATELIN *(laughing)*. I don't think my wife approves of you at all, Pontagnac.

PONTAGNAC. I don't think she does!

LUCIENNE. It seems to me, gentlemen, you have a pretty low opinion of women! At least when you go after one at a time, the wooer shows some respect for the wooed. But following anyone you might see in the street? Willy Nilly?

PONTAGNAC. Oh, boy, here we go!

VATELIN. Oh, now, don't be silly. Who would follow women in the street like that? Lechers, lunatics, dirty old men.

LUCIENNE *(to PONTAGNAC)*. Will you choose, or shall I?

PONTAGNAC. Why would you ask me that, madame, I would never ...

VATELIN. My wife is just speaking in theory, of course.

LUCIENNE. Of course!

PONTAGNAC. Oh, good! (*Aside.*) How did we get into this?

LUCIENNE. No, a real lover would make love gracefully, slowly—show some real deference—not pound away like he’s trying to tear down the castle wall!

PONTAGNAC. Of course not, now what did I do with my hat ...

LUCIENNE. But not everyone thinks that way—take the man who has been following me all afternoon.

PONTAGNAC. Oh, my god

VATELIN. Someone has been following you?

LUCIENNE. All week!

PONTAGNAC. Oh, now let’s just change the subject ...

VATELIN. Can you believe a man could be that crude? To follow my wife like that? Especially now that she’s happily married!

PONTAGNAC. Whoever he was, I’m sure he was following your wife with tact, discretion ...

LUCIENNE. Now don’t be silly. Maurice, he was just laughable, really ...

PONTAGNAC (*aside*). Oh, thanks.

VATELIN. I don’t care! It’s just humiliating—my wife, my new bride, being chased around town by some disgusting old lecher, some worthless pig!

PONTAGNAC. Now wait a minute ...

VATELIN. I’d like to get my hands on the bastard!

LUCIENNE. Really? Well that shouldn’t be too hard, should it, monsieur?

PONTAGNAC. Oh my, look at the time!

VATELIN. What? Do you mean he knows him?

LUCIENNE. Quite well, don't you, monsieur? Now what was his name?

PONTAGNAC. You can't be serious!

LUCIENNE. Yes, come on, what was that name? Pont ... Ponta ... Ponta ... what?

PONTAGNAC. Pontawhat! Exactly, that's it.

LUCIENNE. Pontagnac!

VATELIN. Pontagnac? You?

PONTAGNAC (*laughing*). Yes, it was! Ha ha! I'll bet you didn't see that coming, did you? Ha ha! (*Weakly*.) Surprise!

VATELIN (*bursts out laughing*). You rascal!

PONTAGNAC (*relieved at VATELIN's laughter*). Of course I knew this was your wife! I said to myself, "This will be GREAT! I'll pretend to follow her, and then ..."

LUCIENNE. Pretend?

PONTAGNAC. And then, when I get to their house, will they be shocked!

VATELIN (*laughing*). Nonsense! You had no idea who my wife was until this moment! You accidentally followed the wife of a friend and wasted your whole day!

PONTAGNAC. All right. All right! I made a mistake. You're not angry?

VATELIN. Angry? Me? Of course not! You're a friend of mine! If someone follows my wife around town without my knowing it, it would make me look like a fool. I sit here thinking all is right with the world while she's being pursued up and down the boulevard. Then, when her assailant meets me, he realizes she's a married woman. And suddenly we both look like idiots. But in this case, it's all different: I know you, you know me, you know my wife, I know you know her, you know I know you know her, we all know each other! No one gets hurt, no one looks like a fool!

LUCIENNE. That makes no sense!

VATELIN. I know! Isn't it great? Doesn't bother me at all.

LUCIENNE. Oh, for god's sake!

VATELIN. And if anyone has made a fool of himself today, it's you.

PONTAGNAC. Me?

VATELIN. Absolutely! It's always embarrassing to be caught in the act like this!

PONTAGNAC. Not in this case. Because of my mistake, I've had the pleasure of seeing you again, and of finally meeting your new wife.

VATELIN. My good friend!

LUCIENNE (*aside*). How touching! (*Aloud.*) What a pleasure it's been bringing you both together like this.

VATELIN. I think you will have to apologize to Lucienne, though.

PONTAGNAC. Of course! I do hope you will forgive me, madame!

LUCIENNE. All of you bachelors are the same, thinking every woman is out there just for the plucking!

VATELIN. But he's not a bachelor, he's married.

LUCIENNE. He is not!

VATELIN. Yes, he is.

LUCIENNE. You are not!

PONTAGNAC. Um, well, uh, yes, sort of ...

LUCIENNE. Just how did THAT happen?

PONTAGNAC. Well, you know, city hall, a woman at your side, someone asks a few questions, you say, "Yes," just because you don't want to make a fuss, and then suddenly, poof, you're married.

LUCIENNE. That is absolutely unforgivable.

PONTAGNAC. What, being married?

LUCIENNE. Carrying on the way you do. What does your wife have to say about all of this?

PONTAGNAC. Um, I don't really keep her informed.

LUCIENNE. Do you think that's the right way to behave?

PONTAGNAC. Oh, it's not THAT bad ...

LUCIENNE. Giving away all of the attention you have promised to your wife to any woman you meet on the street?

PONTAGNAC. I'm not giving it away, I'm loaning it.

LUCIENNE. You're spending all of the capital on which you based your marriage!

PONTAGNAC. Just a little bit of the interest.

LUCIENNE. How would you like it if your wife behaved the same way?

PONTAGNAC. That's a completely different situation.

LUCIENNE. Just like all men! Well, I think it would serve you right if your wife started behaving just like you do, making eyes at every man on the street, having affairs all over town. We'd see how you like it.

PONTAGNAC. That's disgusting!

VATELIN. Now Lucienne, don't lecture our friend, here.

LUCIENNE. I'm talking to you, too.

VATELIN. Me?

LUCIENNE. Yes, you! If you ever start acting like your friend, here, it won't take me long to find a lover! Our friend here won't be the only patsy in this town!

PONTAGNAC (*suddenly interested*). Really?

VATELIN. What are you so happy about?

PONTAGNAC. Me? I'm not! I just said, (*With exaggerated darkness.*) "Really," you know, as in, "Oh my god, that's just horrible ..."

LUCIENNE. It's your wife I feel sorry for.

PONTAGNAC. Oh me too. It breaks my heart, every single time!

VATELIN. I hope you'll bring her to see us one day soon.

Lucienne and I would be thrilled to meet her.

PONTAGNAC (*aside*). That's not going to happen! (*Aloud.*)

Of course, she'd be thrilled to meet you both, but I'm afraid it's out of the question.

LUCIENNE. Why is that?

PONTAGNAC. Rheumatism. Horrible! Just has her crippled.

VATELIN. Really?

PONTAGNAC. Oh yes, poor thing hasn't been able to stand up straight for years! Confined to a wheelchair.

VATELIN. No.

PONTAGNAC. Yes. Grown men weep when they see her poor mangled hands, her shriveled legs. And she drools. All the time.

Has to have a little bucket around her neck. Very sad. Very sad.

VATELIN. Oh my.

PONTAGNAC. But I do love the little gargoyle. I really do.

VATELIN. Well, then we must go visit her, introduce ourselves.

PONTAGNAC. Wonderful idea!

VATELIN. Where is she?

PONTAGNAC. Um, Juneau.

VATELIN. Alaska?

PONTAGNAC. Yes, brisk, cold weather, lots of snow, only thing that makes her feel better! Brrrr!

VATELIN. That's a little far.

PONTAGNAC. Ah, but what can I do? Her health, you know.

LUCIENNE. What a pity, I'd love to have a nice long chat with her.

PONTAGNAC. Ah well ...