

**THE
PARISIAN
WOMAN**

BY **BEAU
WILLIMON**

INSPIRED BY HENRI BECQUE'S
LA PARISIENNE



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

THE PARISIAN WOMAN
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THE PARISIAN WOMAN was originally produced on Broadway by Marc Routh, Richard Frankel, Tom Viertel, Steven Baruch, Steve Traxler, Grad/Ragy, Jam Theatricals, and Gabrielle Palitz, in association with Marvin Rosen, Andy Okoskyn/Ivanna de Benito, Peter and Susan Crampton Davis, Peggy Hill, Terrence and Lori Street, Lucille Werlinich, Cecelia Joyce Johnson/Deep End Productions, Thomas Kranz/Robert Shelley, and Joe Watson. It was directed by Pam MacKinnon, the scenic design was by Derek McLane, the costume design was by Jane Greenwood, the lighting design was by Peter Kaczorowski, the projection design was by Darrel Maloney, the sound design and original music were by Broken Chord, and the production stage manager was Charles M. Turner III. The cast was as follows:

CHLOE	Uma Thurman
PETER	Marton Csokas
TOM	Josh Lucas
JEANETTE	Blair Brown
REBECCA	Phillipa Soo

THE PARISIAN WOMAN was commissioned by the Flea Theater (Jim Simpson, Artistic Director; Carol Ostrow, Producing Director) in New York City.

THE PARISIAN WOMAN was originally produced by South Coast Repertory.

CHARACTERS

CHLOE

PETER

TOM

JEANETTE

REBECCA

SETTING

A well-appointed townhouse in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Washington, D.C. A bay window with curtains that looks out onto the street. French doors upstage that lead to a foyer and front door (offstage) and the stairwell, of which we can see the lower portion.

The present.

TRANSITIONS

The director may wish to choreograph action among the characters during the transitions between scenes, and is at full liberty to do so.

THE PARISIAN WOMAN

Scene 1

It's late November, brisk and windy outside. Chloe enters dressed for the weather—scarf, coat, etc. She's texting on an iPhone—completely absorbed—as she removes her scarf. Peter appears in the hallway, watches her for a moment.

PETER. Hello.

CHLOE. Hey.

PETER. Who are you writing?

CHLOE. Everybody.

PETER. What?

CHLOE. Twitter.

PETER. When did you start Twitter?

CHLOE. If it's good enough for the president, it's good enough for me.

We hear a text alert.

PETER. Is that—you just sent a tweet?

CHLOE. No. Somebody texted.

She starts typing a reply.

PETER. Who?

CHLOE. Christ, Peter.

PETER. I'm just curious.

CHLOE. You're going to lose me if you keep going like this...

PETER. Give me your phone.

She smiles, eyes narrowing. Slowly she takes the phone out of her coat and holds it aloft. Lets it hang there. Then sets it on the coffee table and walks away, taking off her coat and hanging it up, as Peter goes and picks up the phone. He presses the screen, looks up with dismay.

What's your passcode?

CHLOE. Your birthday.

PETER. Really?

CHLOE. Don't be so vain. It's *my* birthday.

He starts to type. As he does...

Be careful. Once you stop trusting me, what do we have left?

A pause as they lock eyes. Peter hesitates, then...

PETER. Here.

He hands her back the phone. She puts it back in her coat pocket.

CHLOE. It's getting worse...

PETER. I know...

CHLOE. It used to make me smile—that you were so jealous. I was flattered. But now? Promise you'll stop.

PETER. Sweetheart...

CHLOE. Promise me.

PETER. I'll stop. I promise.

CHLOE. *(Placing her arms around him.)* Now give me a kiss...

They kiss. Then—

PETER. I just need to know one thing...

CHLOE. Oh God...

PETER. Do you love me?

CHLOE. A little less every day.

PETER. *(Breaking away.)* Please—I'm serious. It drives me crazy—all these...*people* you spend time with...

CHLOE. Can I help it—that people like me?

PETER. Young men.

CHLOE. Yes. Some of my friends are young men. I enjoy young people. They keep *me* young.

PETER. But they want to be more than your friends.

CHLOE. They're harmless.

PETER. You encourage them.

CHLOE. I flirt a little. So what? That's who I am. It's why *you* fell in love with me, isn't it?

PETER. I just don't want anybody *else* falling in love with you.

CHLOE. I can't control who falls in love with me.

PETER. Give me your phone.

CHLOE. You promised.

PETER. Let me see it.

CHLOE. I was texting my friend Jeanette Simpson. *Jeanette. A woman.*

PETER. What is Jeanette Simpson doing / texting you?

CHLOE. If you want to know what she wrote me, I'll tell you—as soon as you stop acting like a jealous ass.

PETER. Okay, you're right. You're right. I just get so... And you're... I just—

CHLOE. Sometimes I think you'd be better off with someone else.

PETER. But it's *you* I love. Don't destroy that, Chloe. It's easy to cheat. But once you've done it, you can't take it back. If you remain faithful to me—you keep your self-respect, you keep your dignity. The day you start lying to me...

Chloe holds up her hand for him to stop. We hear keys in the door.

CHLOE. It's my husband.

The door opens, revealing Tom.

TOM. Peter...

PETER. Hey Tom...

TOM. This is a surprise.

CHLOE. Peter is looking at houses in the neighborhood...

TOM. Is that right?

PETER. Uh...well—with the divorce...

TOM. Oh yes. Chloe told me. I'm so sorry.

PETER. It's for the best. Not all marriages are meant to last, hm?

TOM. (*To Chloe.*) What is it—something like fifty percent of marriages end in divorce these days?

CHLOE. More than that I think. And the number is even higher for infidelity.

PETER. Anyway, I've been a bit of a gypsy for the past few months. Staying with friends, hotels. I thought it was time to pony up and buy a place of my own.

TOM. So what have you seen? In the neighborhood?

PETER. There's an open house somewhere... I haven't been yet... I just decided to pop in and say hey to Chloe before I headed over.

TOM. It's a great neighborhood. We're very happy here. Aren't we, darling?

CHLOE. Very.

PETER. Yes, I could definitely picture myself at home here.

TOM. Thirsty?

PETER. I can't stay long—the open house starts at—

TOM. One drink. What're you having?

PETER. Bourbon. Neat.

TOM. Just how I like it.

CHLOE. (*As Tom heads to the liquor cabinet.*) Let me check those glasses. The housekeeper always forgets to dust them.

Once over at the liquor cabinet, Chloe holds glasses up to the light, presumably checking for dust. She talks softly with her husband, out of earshot from Peter.

TOM. Did I interrupt something?

CHLOE. Hardly—he came uninvited.

TOM. He's really getting out of control, huh?

CHLOE. Nothing I can't handle.

She hands him two glasses, he proceeds to pour the drinks.

What did Kelly say?

TOM. He canceled.

CHLOE. Why?

TOM. “Things came up” he said.

CHLOE. Is he trying to get out of it?

TOM. I don’t know. But I won’t let him. Even if I have to camp out on the South Lawn.

CHLOE. Then why are you here?

TOM. I wanted some moral support before I headed back to the front lines.

CHLOE. Moral support.

TOM. Okay—immoral support.

CHLOE. You mean get lucky.

TOM. But since you have a guest...

CHLOE. I really didn’t know he was coming.

TOM. It’s fine. I’m glad he’s here.

CHLOE. You’re glad...?

Tom makes his way over to Peter with the drinks. Hands one to him.

TOM. So how are you? Aside from the house hunting?

PETER. I’m good. And you?

TOM. I’m alright. Been working my ass off lately.

PETER. Busy, then?

TOM. I could use a vacation.

PETER. I’ve got a great little cabana in Turks and Caicos. You’re welcome to use it.

CHLOE. Not so little. It’s a five-bedroom, isn’t it?

PETER. It was. Before Maria.

TOM. Maria?

PETER. The hurricane.

CHLOE. Oh no...

PETER. Not worth rebuilding. The kids prefer skiing anyway. I bought a one-bedroom for myself though. Brand new. I still have business there.

THE PARISIAN WOMAN

by Beau Willimon

inspired by Henri Becque's *La Parisienne*

2 men, 3 women

Set in Washington, D.C., where powerful friends are the only kind worth having, *THE PARISIAN WOMAN* follows Chloe, a socialite armed with charm and wit, coming to terms with politics, her past, her marriage, and an uncertain future. Dark humor and drama collide at this pivotal moment in Chloe's life, and in our nation's, when the truth isn't obvious and the stakes couldn't be higher.

"In 1885, all Paris was talking about Becque's scandalous La Parisienne, which focused on heroine [Clotilde], whose morals were a matter of political and personal convenience. ...Fast-forward to the present, when corruption has become such an everyday part of our politics that we don't blink when congressmen announce that they're voting the way their rich donors tell them to... in Willimon's THE PARISIAN WOMAN, the scene is not Paris but Trump's Washington, and the heroine is Chloe—[a] magical creature with the power to hold the fate of a nation's political elite in the palm of her hand."

—**The Village Voice**

"[Chloe] lays down the law, seduces, and casts aside. But what does she want, and what is she prepared to give to take it? Willimon's play feels market-fresh, stuffed as it is with references to Donald Trump, and the jockeying of the ambitious to attain power... but in Chloe, who is monstrous and charming all at once, we see how power corrupts. ...[Chloe] shows that the true nexus of deal-making [in Washington]...happens far away from the floor of the Senate."

—**TheDailyBeast.com**

"...[a] surprising play about power, privilege, and manipulation in modern day Washington, D.C. ...[It's] thoroughly engaging, keeping us on our toes and leaning in. ...brilliance [is] stitched into every bit of wordplay. THE PARISIAN WOMAN is best left to be discovered for its twists and turns..."

—**FrontMezzJunkies.com**

Also by Beau Willimon

BREATHING TIME
FARRAGUT NORTH
SPIRIT CONTROL
and others

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