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Adapted from the novella by Robert Louis Stevenson

Norman Maine Publishing

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THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE

CLASSIC HORROR/MYSTERY. Adapted from the novella by Robert Louis Stevenson. The respectable Dr. Henry Jekyll creates a serum that transforms him into the sinister, depraved Mr. Hyde, who sets about committing a series of heinous crimes. As time goes on, Dr. Jekyll begins to spontaneously transform into Mr. Hyde against his will and finds that he needs to drink more of his serum in order to keep Mr. Hyde at bay. Then when an ingredient for the serum runs low and new batches fail to work, Dr. Jekyll realizes to his horror that he will soon become Mr. Hyde...permanently. This smart adaptation is true to Stevenson's original story and will captivate audiences with its stunning, innovative staging.

Performance Time: Approximately 60-75 minutes.



Robert Louis Stevenson

ABOUT THE STORY

Author Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) was born in Edinburg, Scotland, and suffered from repeated bouts of illness throughout his life. Stevenson was always looking for a location that would prove beneficial to his health, so he often spent summers in southern England to take advantage of the warmer weather and fresh sea air. While staying in Bournemouth, a large coastal resort town on the south coast of England, he wrote *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Stevenson named the character of Mr. Poole after the nearby town of Poole. The novel was first published in 1886 and became an instant success, spurring many film and stage adaptations. Stevenson's other well-known works include his novels *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped* and his short story "The Bottle Imp."

CHARACTERS

(6 M, 4 F, 1 flexible)

(With doubling: 5 M, 3 F. With ensemble actors: 3 M, 3 F)

DR. HENRY JEKYLL/MR. EDWARD HYDE: Dr. Jekyll is a highly respected physician in London but has secretly engaged in disreputable activities since his youth; Mr. Hyde is known as Dr. Jekyll's protégé, a violent, repugnant, and cruel man; Mr. Hyde is described as looking shorter and a bit younger than Dr. Jekyll and beastlike. (Note: The transformations from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde and back again are reliant primarily on the artistry of the actor with little if any reliance on makeup. Use of eyeglasses, hair extensions, or false teeth may be considered to denote one or the other personality.)

EDITH POOLE: Dr. Jekyll's longtime, loyal housekeeper; female.

HOUSEKEEPER: Mr. Hyde's housekeeper; female.

GABRIEL UTTERSON: A prominent, well-respected London lawyer and one of Dr. Jekyll's oldest friends; reserved, dignified, rational man; male.

MR./MRS. GUEST: Utterson's head clerk and a handwriting expert; flexible.

DR. HASTIE LANYON: Reputable London physician and formerly one of Jekyll's oldest friends; a rational man who views Jekyll's experiments as unscientific nonsense; male.

SIR DANVERS CAREW: Nobleman and chairman of the East India Trading Company; one of Mr. Hyde's victims; elderly with white hair; male.

WOMAN: Young, pregnant victim of Mr. Hyde; wears rags; female.

DORA: Member of the kitchen staff and a victim of Mr. Hyde; female.

POLICEMAN: London police officer; wears a uniform; male.

MR. NEWCOMB: Scotland Yard detective; male.

DOUBLING OPTIONS

WOMAN/HOUSEKEEPER (female)
POLICEMAN/MR. GUEST (male/flexible)
MR. NEWCOMB/ SIR DANVERS CAREW (male)

ENSEMBLE ACTORS

If desired, male and female ensemble actors may be used. They can remain onstage throughout the play. Seated upstage of each aisle, the two actors, in full view of the audience, would then add or subtract a costume piece to portray each of the various roles. Should a director choose to use one male and one female actor to portray the roles, the characters would breakdown accordingly.

POLICEMAN/DANVERS CAREW/NEWCOMB/MR.GUEST
(male)

WOMAN/DORA/HOUSEKEEPER (female)

COSTUMES

Costuming for the play should be Victorian, late 19th-century fashion. This is one production element that should be realistic.

SETTING

Late 19th century, London.

SET

The set is not formally dressed but is simple and abstract, as the focus should rest with the actors and their words and actions. The traffic flow of the action is very important. Explicit stage directions and light cues should achieve the necessary fluency.

Dr. Jekyll's residence. At SR is a platform 8 feet long, 8 feet wide, and 6 inches high. Two Victorian parlor chairs are at the center with a small table between them.

Dr. Jekyll's laboratory. At CS is a platform 12 feet long, 8 feet wide, and 18 inches high. A lab table (36 inches high) runs parallel to the downstage side of the platform. Two small stair units are attached to this platform on the SR and SL sides. Suspended over the laboratory table is the suggestion of a large Victorian mirror. Only the top molding piece (4-6 feet long), and a portion of the two side moldings (uneven with one measuring 12 inches and the other 18 inches) are visible. There is a cabinet with a lock on it.

Dr. Lanyon/Mr. Utterson's study. At SL is a platform 8 feet long, 8 feet wide, and 12 inches high. There is a Victorian desk with two chairs on opposite sides.

Aisles. There are two aisles onstage. The SR aisle runs between Dr. Jekyll's residence and Dr. Jekyll's laboratory. The SL aisle runs between Dr. Jekyll's laboratory and Dr. Lanyon/Mr. Utterson's study.

Police Station/Mr. Hyde's quarters in Soho. Played at stage level.

PROPS

Misc. vials	2 Sets of keys
Walking cane, for Mr. Hyde	2 Glasses of wine
Police whistle	Invitation
Bag of coins	Hat and coat, for Dr. Lanyon
Check	Baby carriage
Legal-sized envelope	Newspaper
Key	Checkbook
Papers	Baby doll
Satchel, for Carew	Container filled with powder
Sealed, stamped envelope	Glass
Gold watch, for Carew	Vial filled with red liquid
Lab notebook	Large envelope
Pen or pencil	Serving tray
Letter	Beaker
Stack of letters	

SOUND EFFECTS

Chimes striking midnight

Music may serve to underscore the action and to facilitate transitions between scenes. Several of Mendelssohn's string quartets could serve this purpose.

"MY INTERESTS
HAVE TAKEN ME
AT TIMES
BEYOND THE BOUNDS
OF RATIONALITY."

-DR. JEKYLL

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE

JEKYLL: *(Voiceover.)* I was born in the year 1843 to a large fortune, endowed besides with excellent parts, inclined by nature to industry, fond of the respect of the wise and good among my fellow men, and, thus, as might have been supposed, with every guarantee of an honorable and distinguished future. Indeed, I have always sought to display as dignified a countenance as possible in the public eye. *(A special fades in on an elegant and distinguished Dr. Henry Jekyll in his laboratory UCS, staring straight ahead into a downstage unseen mirror, the upper frame of which is suspended.)* Hence it came about that I concealed my pleasures—the women and gambling, the drinking, the too-frequent use, I'm afraid, of laudanum. From the high views that I had set before me, I regarded and hid them with an almost morbid sense of shame. I have long reflected on that hard law of life, which lies at the root of religion and is one of the most plentiful springs of distress. Though so profound a double-dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite. Both sides of me were in dead earnest. *(Places his hand upon the "mirror" and traces the features of his face.)* I was no more myself when I laid aside restraint and plunged in shame than when I labored in the eye of day, at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering. The direction of my scientific studies led wholly toward the mystic and transcendental. On the moral side, in my own person, I have learned to recognize the primitive duality of man. *(Focuses his attention on the lab table before him and begins mixing a solution from several vials.)* From an early date—even before the course of my scientific discoveries had begun to suggest the most naked possibility of such a miracle—I dwelt with pleasure, as a beloved daydream, on the thought of the separation of

these two elements. *(Drinks the solution.)* If each, I told myself, could but be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that is unbearable. *(Racking pangs of anguish ensue as Jekyll's transformation into Hyde occurs.)* In the agonized womb of consciousness, these polar twins would cease their continuous struggle for the soul of man.

(Slowly recovering, Hyde struggles to stand, looks in the mirror, and smirks to himself. Lights cross-fade to DSR, where Dr. Jekyll's longtime housekeeper, Edith Poole, appears.)

POOLE: *(To audience.)* Poole. Edith Poole. Dr. Jekyll's housekeeper for 20 years now. I can tell you what I know, but it won't be the whole story. Don't know if we'll ever know that...the whole thing. Been ten days now since Mr. Utterson came over, and he and I went into the Doctor's room. But I'm getting ahead now. *(Stage lights fade in. Walking cane in hand, Hyde crosses from the lab door SL into the street, SL aisle. A young pregnant Woman clothed in rags enters DSL. Her head bowed, she walks down the street.)* Was two years ago last month, February of 1883. Early morning it was when there came a screaming from around the corner such as I never heard.

(Poole exits DSR. Hyde, coming downstage on the SL aisle, and the Woman, coming from DSL, collide DCL.)

HYDE: Out of my way there, woman! *(Strikes Woman with his cane, sending her sprawling and screaming onto the street.)*

Watch where you're going, will you?

WOMAN: *(Screaming.)* No, sir. Stop. Please. Don't strike me, I beg you.

HYDE: Why are you up at this hour anyway? Well? Answer me!

WOMAN: Please, sir. I am not well. I am with child, and something is wrong, I think.

HYDE: Something wrong, huh? No doubt the child has no father. That's what's wrong, isn't it? Well? (*Ashamed, the young Woman bows her head.*) I thought as much. You're all alike, the whole lot of you. I ought to kill you now and spare you and your child an inescapable life of misery.

WOMAN: Do not strike me again, good sir.

HYDE: Good sir, is it? And what are you doing here? Where are you going?

WOMAN: I wish to see Dr. Jekyll to ask if he might examine me.

HYDE: Jekyll?

WOMAN: I have no money, but I've heard he is a good man...and kind.

HYDE: A good man, you say? Not like me, you mean. (*"Strikes" her with his cane and "kicks" her in the stomach.*) Tramp!

(The Woman's screams alert a nearby Policeman, who enters DSR, and Mr. Utterson, who enters DSL. Both rush to the scene. Policeman blows his whistle.)

POLICEMAN: (*Shouts.*) Hold there!

(Utterson rushes over to the Woman.)

UTTERSON: Good God! (*To Hyde and Woman.*) What's happening here?

(Policeman pulls Hyde to one side.)

POLICEMAN: (*To Hyde.*) Your name, sir?

WOMAN: (*To Utterson.*) We ran into each other.

HYDE: (*To Policeman.*) Hyde. Edward Hyde, 17B Folgate, Soho. (*To Utterson.*) Not as it appears, sir. It was she who collided with me.

POLICEMAN: And you attack her for the accident of running into you?

WOMAN: My mind was elsewhere. (*Moans and doubles over in pain.*)

HYDE: (*To Policeman.*) She is a harlot, sir. Her own absence and that of countless others would serve to cleanse the streets of London.

POLICEMAN: Cleansing the streets of London is hardly your personal responsibility.

UTTERSON: In fact, your own name, Mr. Hyde, would stink from one end of London to the other should such a disgrace emerge into the public eye.

HYDE: If you choose to make capital out of this accident, I am naturally helpless. No gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene. Name your figure.

UTTERSON: Gentleman? I doubt that, sir. One-hundred pounds for the girl and her child.

HYDE: (*Aghast.*) One-hundred pounds!

UTTERSON: No less. That should settle it, then.

POLICEMAN: (*To Hyde.*) Come on, now. No need for any scandal. One-hundred pounds.

HYDE: Very well. Come with me. (*Starts toward the lab door.*)

UTTERSON: (*To Policeman.*) Go on ahead. I'll take the girl to Dr. Jekyll's around the corner. (*To Woman.*) Come along, miss.

(Utterson helps the Woman to her feet and leads her DSR to the residence of Dr. Jekyll. Meanwhile, the Policeman follows Hyde to the lab door entrance, into which Hyde disappears after unlocking it with a key. The Policeman waits on the stoop outside the door. Miss Poole enters DSR to greet Utterson.)

POOLE: Good heavens! Mr. Utterson! What are you doing here at this hour?

UTTERSON: Sorry to bother you, Miss Poole. There's been a disturbance around the corner, I'm afraid. Might I prevail upon you to summon the doctor?

POOLE: Of course, of course. Come in. I'm not sure he's risen yet this morning. Haven't heard him stirring anyway.

UTTERSON: (*Glancing toward Woman.*) It's rather urgent, you see.

POOLE: Yes, I can see that. Let me fetch him at once.

UTTERSON: Thank you.

POOLE: He'd want to help, he would.

(*Miss Poole exits DSR. Mr. Hyde emerges from the lab door, carrying some coins in a bag and a check.*)

HYDE: Ten pounds in gold and a check for the balance at Coutt's payable to the bearer.

POLICEMAN: (*Looking at check.*) This is not your signature, Mr. Hyde.

HYDE: But it is genuine, sir. Have no concern of that.

POLICEMAN: Excuse me, sir, but the whole business looks a bit suspicious to me. A man does not, in real life, walk into a side door in early morning and come out of it with another man's check for close to a hundred pounds.

HYDE: Set your mind at rest. I will stay with you till the banks open and cash the check myself.

(*Hyde locks the door. Miss Poole enters DSR.*)

POOLE: A strange occurrence, Mr. Utterson. I tapped lightly on the Doctor's door so as not to startle him...no answer. I called out his name several times. Still no answer. Well, I'm a bit worried with all the goings-on, so I cracked the door ever so slightly, though he's admonished me for doing so before. He's gone, Mr. Utterson. Not even slept in his bed.

UTTERSON: Hmm...probably called out on some emergency or other.

POOLE: But I would have heard him, Mr. Utterson. I'm a light sleeper, you know.

UTTERSON: Yes. Well, we shall see. Don't worry, Miss Poole. I'll check into it. I'm sure it's fine. I'll take the girl, here, to Dr. Lanyon.

POOLE: Oh, he won't much like that when he finds out...the master, I mean. But I don't suppose there's any choice, is there?

UTTERSON: No. Sorry for the disruption, Miss Poole. I'm sure you'll tell Henry I called. Good morning.

POOLE: Good morning.

(Poole exits DSR. Utterson leads the Woman out.)

WOMAN: Dr. Lanyon?

UTTERSON: A friend of mine, and of Dr. Jekyll's, too. At least he used to be. Brilliant scientist.

(With Hyde in tow, the Policeman sees Mr. Utterson and quickly crosses to him.)

POLICEMAN: Mr. Utterson, sir?

UTTERSON: Yes?

POLICEMAN: *(Showing him the check.)* Have a look at this.

(Utterson looks at the check and then at Hyde.)

UTTERSON: Henry Jekyll?

POLICEMAN: Is it a forgery, sir, do you think?

UTTERSON: Mr. Hyde?

HYDE: It is the genuine thing. Have no doubt of it.

POLICEMAN: *(To Utterson.)* He wishes to go to the bank himself, sir, to have it verified.

(Pause as Utterson thinks.)

UTTERSON: *(To Policeman.)* Very well. Have you the time, good sir, to escort Mr. Hyde to the bank yourself? I must get the young lady to Dr. Lanyon's.

(Hyde reacts with disgust at the mention of Lanyon's name.)

POLICEMAN: Of course, sir. *(To Hyde.)* Come along, then.

(Policeman escorts Hyde off through the SR aisle and they exit USR.)

WOMAN: *(To Utterson.)* Frightful man.

UTTERSON: Something wrong with his appearance, is there not?

WOMAN: His appearance and his actions, both.

UTTERSON: He gives a strong feeling of deformity, though I can't specify the exact point. I suspect blackmail of the good doctor.

WOMAN: Blackmail?

UTTERSON: Yes. An honest man paying through the nose for some of the capers of his youth.

WOMAN: But Dr. Jekyll was not at home, was he?

(Utterson looks at the Woman for a moment.)

UTTERSON: Come. We must get you to Dr. Lanyon's.

(Utterson and the Woman start to exit LT. Woman crosses up the SL aisle and exits USL. Utterson enters Lanyon's study on the platform at LT. Lights cross-fade. Miss Poole appears DSR.)

POOLE: *(To audience.)* Well, it worried me, of course...his being gone. But it wasn't the first time. Dr. Jekyll was no saint, I can tell you that. Might have been over at Brooks's again, for all I know. He kept up appearances, and folks thought very highly of him. Well...except for Dr. Lanyon.

They had their differences, but Dr. Jekyll was basically a very good man.

(Dr. Jekyll enters DSR, carrying a legal-sized envelope, and approaches Miss Poole.)

JEKYLL: Miss Poole...

POOLE: *(Startled.)* Oh, Doctor! Didn't know as you were in.

JEKYLL: Sorry, didn't mean to startle you. Of course, I was in. Where else would I be?

(Pause.)

POOLE: Yes, sir. Sorry, sir.

JEKYLL: However, I shall be out for the greater part of the day. I must stop by Mr. Utterson's, and then I'll be picking up a few items at Harrods.

POOLE: Very good, sir.

(Jekyll starts out, stops, and turns back to Poole.)

JEKYLL: Oh, and Miss Poole?

POOLE: Yes, sir?

JEKYLL: I'll be visiting with Mr. Utterson about a new will I've drawn up. I'm reminded of something I've been meaning to mention.

POOLE: Of course.

JEKYLL: An associate of mine, an Edward Hyde, shall on occasion be visible here in the square. He's a bit shorter than I, a bit younger, and has an unusual look about him. You cannot mistake him for any other. He will introduce himself by name. But other than that, he is to be allowed his independence and solitude. Kindly grant him full liberty about the house with full access to the laboratory, won't you? He has the appropriate keys. **[END OF FREEVIEW]**