

Doctor Jeckyll, No Place To Hyde

By Pat Cook

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PUBLISHED BY

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Here's a whimsically warped version of the classic tale of a man's personality split between meek and maniacal. No one could be more meek than poor Henry Jeckyll - scampering to and fro to the whims of both his fiancée and his mother. So when he invents a potion to make weak men brave (well, it started out to cure seasickness), what better subject to use it on than himself? What follows is an experiment that not only makes Jeckyll more aggressive but allows him to grow a lot more hair. "I can grow a mustache in an hour and a half. But I never know where it's going to come out," Jeckyll explains.

After only one treatment of his potion he soon finds himself dodging the police and explaining just how that horse got in his surgery. Throw in a wise-cracking servant, a whining fiancée, an overbearing mother and a man-hungry sister, and suddenly his well-ordered life becomes one long alibi.

On top of all this, he soon finds himself turning into Sir Hyde even without taking the solution. This fast-paced farce is full of fast lines, faster exits and nineteenth century manners. From the same author who gave you *The Legend Of Robin Hood, Sort Of* and *The Three Musketeers, All Swash and No Buckle*.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 M, 5 W)

HENRY JECKYLL: A very meek 19th century physician who's keen on experimenting.

CHIVES: Henry's manservant, a very sarcastic and downtrodden type.

PRUNELLA PEPPERDILL: Henry's loud and pompous fiancée, a bit spoiled.

MADAM JECKYLL: Henry's mother, a large dowager.

ETHYL JECKYLL: Henry's rather dim sister.

ANDRE LaPLUME: A French cabaret owner, a bit sinister and conniving.

MIMI LaPLUME: Andre's rather flirtatious daughter.

OFFICER CRACKLE: An English bobby.

CARLA LaPLUME: Andre's large wife.

SIR HYDE: A rather hairy and coarse type.

(Two actors should play the alter egos in this production because of the quick "ins and outs" called for in the script. Henry should be very neat with a small trimmed mustache. Hyde, on the other hand, may have large mutton chops or scraggly beard and bushy eyebrows. Perhaps a large set of teeth wouldn't hurt.)

Time: The end of the 19th century.

Place: Dr. Jeckyll's waiting room in his home in England.

SETTING

The setting for this classic tale of good and evil is the waiting room of Dr. Henry Jeckyll. The room itself is well furnished with its walls decorated tastefully in large floral prints and potted plants.

There are three entrances to the floor plan. The first door is located on the SR wall and leads to the rest of the house. The second entrance is a large set of double French doors, located on the UPS wall, which leads to a small courtyard and high brick wall. The third door leads to the doctor's workshop and is located on the SL wall.

The furniture is very well-to-do but practical. A typical doctor's waiting room of the time. A small settee is located DSR, with an accompanying table. A longer examining table rests SL near the workshop door. A desk sits on the USR wall, on which sits many test tubes and beakers of chemicals. The rest of the room is occupied with various tables holding instruments and books, along with a pair of bookshelves for research.

PROPS

Several beakers and test tubes with drinkable fluids in them.
A writing pen (old style).
Papers in desk and notepads.
A serving tray with cup and saucer.
A business card.
A woman's wig.
A pair of handcuffs and key.
Several bills of currency (English pounds).
A large knife in desk.
Neck chain with tags on it.
Newspapers.
Dust cloth.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: CHIVES is standing near the desk with his back to the audience. He mixes a few ingredients in two test tubes. Then, turning out, he looks at one tube and laughs maniacally. He then drinks the liquid in one gulp. He waits for the reaction. Suddenly, he reaches for his throat and gags. He gags again and tries to catch his breath. He falls to the floor and flails frantically. Just at that moment, HENRY enters through the SR door reading his notes. He then steps over Chives and moves to a bookshelf. Chives gargles louder and reaches up for the doctor. Finally, Henry sees Chives. He meekly leans over.)

HENRY: Oh, Chives. Still fighting off that summer cold?

CHIVES: *(Through HIS wheezes.)* Yes sir, Dr. Jeckyll.

HENRY: Any luck?

CHIVES: Much better today, sir. Pay no attention.

HENRY: Oh, very good. *(HE goes to his desk.)*

CHIVES: Thank you, sir. *(HE sneezes and gets to his feet.)*

It's really hanging on a bit, sir.

HENRY: So I hear. *(HE picks up an empty test tube and turns to CHIVES.)* Chives, have you been using my chemicals again?

CHIVES: Only the ones you leave lying about with no thought for anyone else, sir.

HENRY: You make that sound ... bad, Chives.

CHIVES: No reproach intended, sir. I know my place.

HENRY: There's a good lad. *(HE goes back to his thoughts and chemicals.)*

CHIVES: I would've been hung long before now, sir, had it not been for you. Yes sir, nothing but a rotting corpse swinging in the breeze ... another trophy for the debtor's prison and a buffet for the birds.

HENRY: Just so long as you can see the difference now.

CHIVES: Yes sir, this is almost better.

HENRY: There you are.

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CHIVES: *(After a slight pause.)* Are you familiar with sarcasm, sir?

HENRY: Don't have time, Chives. *(HE holds up a beaker.)* See here. I just know I am on the threshold of a great discovery.

CHIVES: Which you're going to expound on for hours whether I understand or not or even give a hoot about, something along those lines, sir?

HENRY: That's right. *(HE puts an arm around his MAN-SERVANT and the two of them move DS.)* Chives, have you ever wondered what separates us from the animals?

CHIVES: A big wall?

HENRY: No.

CHIVES: I mean a really big wall.

HENRY: I'm speaking of universal ideas here, the eternal verities.

CHIVES: With barbed wire on top. And broken glass ...

HENRY: What makes us what we are. What elevates us above the lower forms of life. *(HE faces CHIVES.)* Think, man. What keeps you from being a dog?

CHIVES: You don't have a leash. *(After thinking a moment.)* You don't, do you sir?

HENRY: *(Moves to the settee.)* Some people call it the Divine Spark. But, suppose a moment.

CHIVES: Suppose I'm a dog? Sir, if it's about the fleas again ...

HENRY: *(Sits and stares into the beaker.)* Try to stay with me on this.

CHIVES: At your beck and call.

HENRY: I told you to stay out of that place.

CHIVES: What place is that, sir?

HENRY: The Beck and Call.

CHIVES: Yes, sir. Back to your droning on ... ?

HENRY: Oh, right. Chives, suppose we can revive the animal in ourselves. Bring the beast out into the open and examine it. Unleash it.

CHIVES: There's that "leash" word again. Really, sir, I've got a cousin that really looks like a Saint Bernard and if you'd like to take him for a walk ...

End of Freeview

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