ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON:
JEKYLL AND HYDE

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in collaboration with
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

LOUIS (Robert Louis Stevenson): a Scot, married to Fanny for 5 years.

FANNY (Francis Stevenson, formerly Osbourne, née Van de Grift): American, born in Indianapolis. Divorced and remarried to Louis in 1880.

SETTING

The “writing room” at Skerryvore, a modest house near Bournemouth, on the south coast of England, October 1885.

A NOTE ABOUT THE PLAY

There’s a story that Stevenson wrote The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in a sort of mad fever dream in just three days. The first person he read the story to was his wife, Fanny Osbourne Stevenson. But Fanny criticized the draft. Allegedly, she accused him of “missing the point of the allegory.” Stevenson flew into a rage and the two of them had an “almighty row” about it that concluded with Stevenson heaving the manuscript into the fireplace where it burned to ashes. The story we know is the second draft, the revised version. I was fascinated with questions about what might have been in the first draft, and what the big fight might have been about. What exactly is “the allegory” in Jekyll and Hyde?

Published in 1886, the story precedes, even anticipates both Freud’s explorations of the unconscious, and the famous murders of Jack the Ripper. Stevenson claimed the story came to him directly from his unconscious mind, presenting itself to him in a series of dreams. He was fascinated with the idea of drawing upon his dreams as a source of inspiration in his writing. He even claimed he could actively set his dreaming mind to work on one story or another, as was the case with Jekyll and Hyde. Then, two years after the publication of the book, Jack the Ripper began his horrifying crime spree. A popular version of Stevenson’s “strange case” was already playing on a London stage at the time, and the play had to be closed because of its disturbing resonance with the awful murders. The two—Jack the Ripper and Edward Hyde—have often been associated together ever since, though almost nothing in
Stevenson’s book is revealed about Hyde’s so-called “terrible crimes.”

The story has generated a huge volume of scholarship and analysis. It has been interpreted as an allegory for late Victorian era homosexuality, as a parable of addiction, as a metaphor for the conflict between Stevenson and his father, and a myriad other interpretations. For me, the addiction theme is central. There is evidence Stevenson was experimenting with a new drug called “cocaine” when he wrote the book, a drug with addictive powers far better understood today than when it appeared in the 1880s. Was Stevenson addicted to a mysterious powder that fueled his writing but was making a monster of him? What was the big fight with Fanny really about? Why did Stevenson burn the manuscript? What was in the original draft? These are some of the driving questions that led us through the development of this play, which I like to think of as “the strange case of Louis and Fanny.”
(Lights up. Evening in the “writing room.” A fireplace, filled with ashes. Garden windows. A sofa, where Louis writes while convalescing.

A table in the corner, with a decanter of red wine, glasses, and some paraphernalia. Matches. A candle.

On the wall, above the fireplace, a painting hangs: “dark streets on a foggy night in London.”

Two gaslight globes flank the moody painting on the wall.

The gas lights flicker to life.

Below, LOUIS sits alone, at night, on the sofa, wrapped in a big “counterpane” blanket, a writing desk on his lap.

He wears a strange “pine-oil respirator” over his nose and mouth [his “pig-snout”].

Dark goggles shield his eyes from the light.

We can hear his breathing, oddly.

He looks down at the blank sheet of paper on his lap-desk.

He cannot write.

He looks up at the light of a full moon beaming in through a window above.)

LOUIS

Bloody hell.

(He rises, revealing a night-shirt and stocking feet.)
He moves to the center of the room, and discovers his reflection in a set of glass doors opening onto the garden of the old house.

He removes the goggles, wincing in pain as the light hits his eyes.

He removes the respirator, and breathes, weakly.

Blinking as his eyes adjust, he studies his fragmented reflection in the diamond-shaped windowpanes of the glass doors.

He coughs a bit—a mysterious chronic respiratory ailment that has plagued him for years.

He sees something in his reflection.

An idea begins to take shape in his imagination.

Slowly, he hunches over, transforming into a "first draft" of the monster, "Edward Hyde."

LOUIS (CONT’D)

Evenin’, Guvnor.

(Intrigued by the idea, he looks about the room for props and costuming to flesh out the character.

He finds a black overcoat, or a cloak, and drapes it over his shoulders.

He finds an aristocratic black top hat, and places it, self-consciously, upon his head.

He withdraws a walking stick from an umbrella stand in the corner—feels the weight of it [deadly if wielded with intent to harm].
He looks into the glass doors again, and strikes a pose, proud, elegant, evil--and quite ridiculous in his night-shirt and stocking feet.

He skulks about the room, imagining himself on the streets of London in the dead of night.

We hear the clip-clop of horse-hooves on cobblestone, and the sounds of London, on the seamy side of town, late at night.

Louis lurks in a dark alleyway as the evil Edward Hyde.

He spots a figure in the distance.

We hear footsteps approaching on the pavement.

Louis, as Hyde, engages the unseen stranger in a hushed, furtive conversation.

LOUIS (CONT’D)  
(as Hyde)  
Hm? Are you addressing me? What if I did? Would you? Explain. In detail. Yes...yes...yes...

(Some sort of intimate sexual interaction is taking place, but we cannot tell exactly what.

Suddenly, Hyde erupts in an explosion of violence, striking out and bludgeoning the imaginary stranger with the walking stick.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)  
(beat)  
I’m out!  

(He laughs wildly, exuberantly--but the laughter brings on a coughing fit.)
The coughing saps his strength; he collapses, helplessly, in paroxysms of coughing, sinking to the floor, as the imaginary scene melts away, till finally, all stop.

Louis lies still, looking up at the moon, barely breathing, slowly regaining his strength.

LOUIS (CONT’D)
Oh, the world is too much with us.

(Weakly, he crawls to the table in the corner.

He pulls himself up, and sits at the table, hunched over so we can't quite see what he's doing.

He pours himself a glass of red wine, and stirs a spoonful of white powder into the dark red liquid.

He drinks the mixture down, fully, desperately.

Slowly he feels the drug's effect.

A timid knock at the study door.

Freeze--listen.

He doesn't answer.

FANNY opens the door, and peaks her head in.)

FANNY
Louis?

(He watches her, unseen, from the shadows.

She enters the room, cautiously, perhaps suspecting the worst.)

FANNY (CONT’D)
Louis?

(She sees him in the corner)

Oh. Hello. You... all right?
LOUIS

Come in then.

(She stays by the door.)

FANNY

Did I hear... coughing?

LOUIS

Wee bit of a bout. All clear now.

Blood?

FANNY

No blood.

Thank Goodness.

LOUIS

Hm. Don’t worry yourself.

(She notices the things all about, the top hat, etc.)

FANNY

What’s all this?

LOUIS

Hm?

FANNY

Not wearing your respirator?

LOUIS

Don’t need it.

FANNY

Doctor Smedley says that pine oil--

LOUIS

I canna breathe in that bloody thing. It’s turned me head into a bloody pine box. I canna think about anything but the smell of pine, pine, pine trees, pine boxes, coffins, Fanny, coffins!

FANNY

Stop it... Pine-oil fumes rejuvenate the lungs, and clear the sinuses--

LOUIS

I’ve got pine-sap cloggin’ up me brain!
FANNY
Suit yourself. (holding them up)
Goggles?

LOUIS
They make a blind man of me. I canna work in a perpetual state of perfidious darkness.

FANNY
You’ll aggravate your ophthalmia. And then what?

LOUIS
I’ve got to be able to see the page in order to write, don’t I?

FANNY
You’ll lose your eyesight. That’s what. It’s not a metaphor, Louis. It’s not a figurative image. You could go blind. And then where would we be?

(beat)

LOUIS
Right where we are.

(Beat.
He returns to his lap-desk, and begins writing, intently.

She thinks. Looks about. Tidies up.

She wraps him in the counterpane blanket.

She feels his forehead.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)
Please don’t.

FANNY
You’re running a fever.

LOUIS
It’s nothing.

(He writes.)

FANNY (after a bit)
What are you working on?
(He doesn’t seem to hear her.)

FANNY (CONT’D)
(looks up at the moon)
Full moon tonight.

LOUIS

FANNY
Full moon.

LOUIS
(looks at the moon)
Oh. Hm. Yes.
(back to his writing)

LOUIS
I’ve been thinking, Louis.
(he’s not listening)

LOUIS
Thinking?
(stops writing)

FANNY
Upstairs.

LOUIS
‘Bout what?
(beat)
Thinking about what?

FANNY
Oh, things. Story.

LOUIS
Story?

FANNY
Mm-hm.

LOUIS

Have you got an idea?
FANNY
(nodding, yes)

Mm-hm.

LOUIS
Well. Good. Have ya a title?

FANNY
Not yet.

LOUIS
No title?

FANNY
Not yet. For Scribner’s. If they’ll have it.

LOUIS
Why shouldn’t they? Let’s hear it then.

FANNY
Too soon to talk about it.

LOUIS
Why’s that?

FANNY
As you wish.

(He returns to his writing.
She looks up at the moon again.)

FANNY
Did you finish it?

LOUIS
Finish what?

FANNY
The one about the highwaymen.

LOUIS
Hm?

FANNY
The two highwaymen--the two Hamlet-types?

LOUIS
Oh. The Great North Road.

FANNY
Yes. The Great North Road... Well?

LOUIS
Well, what?
FANNY  
You said you’d have it done by the full moon.  

LOUIS  
I did?  

FANNY  
Yes, you promised it would be done. Tonight.  

LOUIS  
Yes, I know I did.  

FANNY  
Well?  

LOUIS  
I burned it.  

FANNY  
You--what?  

(he looks at the fireplace)  
No.  

(she looks in the fireplace, sees a pile of ashes)  
Not another one. No. Why, Louis, why?  

LOUIS  
T’wasn’t any good.  

FANNY  
You spent weeks on that story.  

LOUIS  
Two months, actually. T’wasn’t any good.  

FANNY  
But how do you know that? Maybe it just needed a little more--  

LOUIS  
If it had been a good idea to begin with, I’d have jotted down the whole fine fettle in a few days. It wasna going anywhere, because it wasna any good. It was dead, Fanny. Can you not understand that? Moribund.  

(western accent)  
“A goner!”  
(drops it)  

As they say in the goldfields of California--do they not? So I “Robby burned” it.  

FANNY  
Another one. Ashes.  

LOUIS  
Leave it go, lass.
FANNY
Ashes. Just like the last one—what was it? El Dorado! And the one before that, The Merry Men? And the one before that, Vendetta in the West—

LOUIS
What’s this, the rollcall of the dead?

FANNY
All ashes. Nothing but ashes.
(beat)
You’ve got to finish something, Louis. We are edging toward the abyss.

LOUIS
Let’s save the melodrama for your career on the stage, shall we, Deary?

FANNY
We haven’t paid the rent.

LOUIS
I’m sure Mr. Samuelson will allow us another month before he begins to get litigious.

FANNY
Another month. We’re buying food on credit, Louis.

LOUIS
That’s what credit’s for, Fanny.

FANNY
My hands are black from sorting through the coal to make it stretch.

LOUIS
There’s no need for that.

FANNY
It’s freezing cold in this tomb!

LOUIS
Stop it, will ya! It’s a fine old house. We’re lucky to have it. The spas are right there, the woods, seaside—

FANNY
We can’t afford to go to the spa.

LOUIS
Will ya for once in your life forego this need ya have to turn every little fret into forbodings of apocalyptic doom.
FANNY
I want you to talk to your Father.
(beat)
We need help.

LOUIS
No.

FANNY
Louis--

LOUIS
No, I willna ask that man for another thing so long as I bloody live--

FANNY
Be reasonable.

LOUIS
You know that. But in spite, you’re asking me to grovel, to prostrate meself before that insufferable--

FANNY
We need a little something--

LOUIS
Not another shilling. Do you hear me?

FANNY
Something to tide us over till--

LOUIS
No! Damn you!

FANNY
Lord knows, he can spare it--

LOUIS
Damn you!

FANNY
Stop it!

(Louis suffers another coughing fit.)

FANNY (CONT’D)
Oh, now look what you’ve brought on. Come here.

(She helps him back to the sofa.

He hacks away.)
She smacks him, roughly, on the back several times.)

FANNY (CONT’D)

Get it out. Get it out.

(He coughs more.

The attack subsides.

He lies back, recovering.

She wraps him in the blanket again.)

There we are.

(She puts her ear to his chest and listens.

She sits in silence.

Beat.)

LOUIS

Well?

FANNY

I don’t know what we’re going to do, Louis.

LOUIS

(weakly)

Don’t worry. Great things ahead. Great days.

(Beat.

Fanny rises, and starts out.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)

Where ya goin? (she stops)

Are you leavin’ me then?

(beat)

I saw him again.

Who?

LOUIS

Hervey.

FANNY
LOUIS

What?

FANNY

Again. Last night. I saw him again.

LOUIS

Why didn’t you tell me?

(she looks at him)

What happened?

FANNY

Last night. You were asleep. I was listening to the wind. And I heard his voice. He was calling to me. I got up, and followed the sound. Down the hallway, into the Blue Room. And there he was. Faintly. In the moon light. Just as he was. Back then. But he was smiling. And he spoke to me.

LOUIS

He spoke? What did he say?

FANNY

All his suffering is over. He’s happy. But he misses me. He loves me. He forgives me.

LOUIS

There’s nothing to forgive, darling.

FANNY

I sat with him, till the sun came up, and he was gone. I heard a dove cooing. And he was gone. He’s happy, Louis. He forgives me.

LOUIS

You mustn’t blame yourself, Fanny. You did everything you could.

FANNY

I waited too long. I should have gone to the doctors sooner--

Who could’ve known?

LOUIS

Why did I even bring him with me to Paris?

FANNY

Because you would not be denied. You’re a gifted artist. So you set off for Paris. Ya would not be stopped. Talent and courage. What courage ya have.

LOUIS

He was only nine.
LOUIS
Don’t do this to yourself.

FANNY
God punished me for my selfishness.

No.

FANNY
My delusion.

No.

FANNY
You don’t know what he went through. You didn’t see it. You didn’t hold him in your arms while he was dying. Horribly. Every few hours, he started bleeding from a different place. We’d smell it first. He’d say, “Blood, Mama, get the things.” So sweet a child. Through it all, he never lost his precious spirit. Looking into my eyes, listening to my words, through it all. Not a word of complaint, through it all.

LOUIS
He loves you.

(Beat.)

FANNY
I have to go.

(She starts out again.)

LOUIS
Wait.

Go where?

FANNY
Back to Paris.

LOUIS
Paris--now?

(beat)

For how long?

FANNY
I don’t know.

LOUIS
All right. Then we’ll go back to Paris.
FANNY
No. I want to be...

LOUIS
I see. And what do you imagine you would use for money, Francis Matilda Van de Grift Osbourne Stevenson?

(Beat.
He goes to her, wraps her in the huge blanket, together with him.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)
Don’t leave me, Fanny. I beg of you. I love ya. Sultana.

(She smiles, faintly.
They sit together.
Beat--what now?)

LOUIS (CONT’D)
I’ve a new idea.

FANNY
A new idea?

LOUIS
Novel. Not so long.

FANNY
(looks at the ashes)

Another novel?

LOUIS
No ordinary novel. A different kind of story. More than a story. Much more than all that.

Go on.

FANNY

LOUIS
I know what the problem is, Fanny.

FANNY
What problem?

LOUIS
The big problem. With me. With me writing.

(beat)
I’ve been hiding. Here. At Skerryvore.
Hiding from what?

LOUIS
All me life I’ve been hiding. One way, or t’other. We’re selling ourselves short, Fanny. Scrambling after pennies. The fast money. Cheap, tinsel-thin stories. Pretty lies. To mask the truth.

FANNY
We write stories, Louis.

LOUIS
We’ve got to aim higher, Deary. Much higher. No more penny dreadfuls. No more children’s books. They’re nothin’ but craven acts of prostitution. Time to make a clean break with all o’ that. Face up to the task, once and for all. Tell a story worthy of the art. Unchain Prometheus. At last.

FANNY
Prometheus is a classic over-reacher.

LOUIS
Truth, Fanny. Pure truth.

FANNY
What are you talking about?

LOUIS
Art is truth. Is it not?

FANNY
Art is many different things. Does every work of art have to be “Truth?”

LOUIS
If it’s to be a great work of art, yes.

FANNY
What’s a “great work of art?”

LOUIS
A recognized accomplishment.

FANNY
Recognized by whom?

LOUIS
By the world.

FANNY
The world doesn’t recognize anything. Individuals recognize things. Privileged individuals.
LOUIS
Truth!

FANNY
What is “truth,” for Heaven sake?

LOUIS
Truth is what cannot be denied. Truth is what remains when all artifice is stripped away.

FANNY
What about craft? What about simply telling a good story? A good yarn to transfix the imagination, and pass the time in the sweeter realms of thought, hm?

LOUIS
I’m not speaking of mere entertainment. I’m speaking of great art. Greatness.

FANNY
It doesn’t exist.

LOUIS
Of course, it exists. The extraordinary. Truly great art.

According to whom?

FANNY
According to...me!

LOUIS
Oh, I see. Well, I’m glad we’ve cleared that up--

In order to achieve greatness, you’ve got to get to the rock bottom of it. You’ve got to get to the truth. The truth of it. When we see that, when we feel it in our bones, when we know it’s there before us, we know something sublime has been revealed to us. We know we’re in the presence of a great work of art, a Mona Lisa, a statue of David, a Divine Comedy--

FANNY
Oh, bullshit!

(beat)

LOUIS
There’s me frontier gal... (western accent)

“Silverado Sal.”
FANNY
Just write a good story, Louis. Finish something, and send it off to Longman’s. You don’t need to rival the greats.

LOUIS
I will not be a hack!

(beat)
I’ve a great book in me, Fanny, at least one--

FANNY
Treasure Island is a great book--

LOUIS
It’s kid’s stuff.

FANNY
It’s highly under-rated.

LOUIS
No more children’s books!

(beat)
I’ve something different in mind. I just need a worthy vehicle. The right story.

FANNY
The right form.

LOUIS
Story.

FANNY
Form.

TOGETHER
Character!

(beat)

FANNY
I wish you’d write a play.

LOUIS
No. I can’t. I’ve tried--

FANNY
There’s a lot of money in plays.

LOUIS
I don’t understand the theater. Plays. I’m not any good at it--

FANNY
A good comedy--could make a fortune.
LOUIS
No.

FANNY
Fast!

LOUIS
I write books. That’s what I’m good at. That’s what I do. If you want to go—go!

(beat)

FANNY
I thought you said you had an idea.

LOUIS
I do. Indeed, I do. And it’s come to me...from in here...
(his head)
From me dreams.

What?

FANNY

LOUIS
I’ve made up me mind. Got to tell it.

Tell what?

FANNY

LOUIS
The truth, Fanny. I’m telling the truth. And the truth will set us free.

The truth about what?

FANNY

LOUIS
Shall I tell you a story?

(She smiles.
She sits.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)
It’s been brewin’ in me for years. Since me college days. Only now it’s all come together in me mind, congealed, as it were. Fully formed in me brain. Come to me in a dream. A series of dreams. You see, Fanny, I’ve discovered how to tap into me dreams. In order to open up me mind. To take me writing into a new realm, the realm of the inner mind, the realm of dreams.

FANNY
How is that possible?
LOUIS
I call them me "Brownies."

FANNY
What?

LOUIS
Me Brownies. Fabricators of me dreams. Little creatures in me head that spin "the stuff that dreams are made on." You remember the little underground dwarves of the Nibelung? Me Brownies are much the same, only they spin stories, instead of golden thread.

FANNY
Louis...

LOUIS
Don’t be alarmed, me dear. Though it may seem madness to you, I assure you, i’t’isn’t. I’ve harnessed them. I’ve done it. It used to be, these little fiends played about randomly upon the bare stage, the little theater in me mind. There they played like a band of children that slipped into a house at night, and found it empty. But now, I’ve mastered them, with discipline. Like loving slaves, all the while I sleep.

FANNY
I don’t go in for this sort of thing much.

(Lights slowly change.)

LOUIS
A long time ago, I had a dream. Back when I was still in school. Still in Edinburgh. Old Edinburgh. Fortress of me youth. The dark Old Town. I remember it well. Roamin’ about the back alleys and byways of that cold wet Pleasure Palace in Hell. I had a dream back then. I was a doctor. Standing on a stage, in a theater. But not an ordinary theater, it’s a surgical theater. I’ve spent a long day here. Me heart is pounding. Me teeth are on edge. Before me, on a dissecting table, a monstrous malformation, a bloody surgeon’s saw in me hand.

(the dream shifts)
Then I’m walking in a heavy rain. A foggy night in the Old Town. I come across South Bridge, turn up High Street, and enter a door that leads to a long stairway. I’m to lodge here, in a room at the top of the stairs. I climb the stairs. All night long, in my soaking wet clothes, I climb the stairs. Stair after stair, in endless series. Every other flight, a reflector lamp flares as I pass. All night long, I brush by people passing down the stairs--beggarly women of the street; weary, muddy, working men, poor scarecrow men, pale ghostly women--all drowsy, weary, like meself, all single, alone, all brushing by me as they pass.

(MORE)
Finally, at the top of the stairs, there’s no room here, there’s a window. I look through the window, and I see the sun peakin’ over distant mountains.

(another shift)
Then I’m back out on the streets again, in me soaking wet clothes, trudging onward, back to another day of monstrous operations.

(beat)
Don’t you see? It’s me.

FANNY
The doctor?

LOUIS
Me. And me other.

FANNY
Your other what?

LOUIS
All me life, Fanny, one life in the waking world, and the other, in slumber, a dream life. Two worlds. Two different people. In one.

(He goes to his “medicine” and prepares a dose.)

FANNY
Is that it?

LOUIS
Hm?

FANNY
Is that your idea?

LOUIS
I haven’t even started yet. It’s all come clear to me. The whole thing. Well, nearly the whole thing.

FANNY
(regarding his medicine)
What’s that?

LOUIS
Hm?

FANNY
What have you got there?

LOUIS
What--this? New medicine.

(coughs a bit)
FANNY
From Dr. Balfour?

LOUIS
Mm-hm. Marvelous stuff. Done wonders for this bloody cough.

What is it exactly?

LOUIS
Exactly? It’s called “Cocaine.” Extract of a plant from... South America somewheres. You mix it with a fine Bordeaux, and it does wonders for the whole system.

FANNY
I don’t like Dr. Balfour. I don’t trust him.

LOUIS
Believe me, he knows his stuff.

FANNY
Dr. Smedley says he has a very shady reputation.

LOUIS
Well, what do you expect from a man named Smedley?

FANNY
Dr. Smedley’s credentials are impeccable.

LOUIS
All I know is that this stuff has opened up a new world to me. Cleared me lungs, cleared me mind, fired up the imagination.

FANNY
Are there any deleterious side-effects from this “new medicine” that we should know about?

LOUIS
None whatsoever. It’s a gift from the gods.

(a toast)
Thank you, Dr. Balfour.

(he downs the concoction)

Ahhh... (he feels the effect coming on)

FANNY
Sensations?

LOUIS
Aye. Like life to a dead man. I’ve never felt so alive.
FANNY
Good. Get on with it.

LOUIS
Hm? Oh, yes.
(takes his position)
Oh.

FANNY
What now?

LOUIS
Well, I feel I should, I really must warn you, darling...

FANNY
Warn me?

LOUIS
You may find it a bit...shocking.

FANNY
Shocking--why?

LOUIS
Well...when I was younger...back in me college days. And later. I lived a very different sort of life. A rather...libertine sort of life. Licentious even, some might say. There are things I did...that might seem...shocking to you now. Shocking even to meself. Sinful to some. Criminal things.

FANNY
Criminal?
(beat)
And this is your idea?

The truth.

LOUIS

FANNY
No, Louis.

LOUIS
Yes.

FANNY
No. Don’t. I don’t want to know this--

LOUIS
Don’t be afraid.

FANNY
What will people say?
LOUIS
I don’t care.

FANNY
Just tell a good story, Lou. You don’t have to reveal anything about who you really are. You want to be the victim of scandal and gossip?

LOUIS
We already are!

FANNY
Yes, but his could ruin us. We have bills to pay, Louis. Please, forget about this idea, and just write another good yarn--write another Pirate Story--

LOUIS
No.

FANNY
Tommy would love that.

LOUIS
No. And don’t call him Tommy.

FANNY
Why not? He’s your father.

LOUIS
Nobody calls him Tommy.

FANNY
I do.

LOUIS
You’re flirting...with my father.

FANNY
Oh, stop it.

LOUIS
You are.

FANNY
Stop it!

LOUIS
You laugh at his jokes. You...touch him--

FANNY
I do not!

LOUIS
He’s an imbecile!
FANNY
I like him.

LOUIS
Stop it.

FANNY
You stop it. What is it between you two?

LOUIS
He’s a dottering old fool, and a damned tyrant--

FANNY
He’s not.

LOUIS
It’s pathetic--what he’s become.

FANNY
He loves you.

LOUIS
He thinks I’m going to hell! I’m a curse upon the family.

FANNY
He’s nice to me.

LOUIS
Don’t.

FANNY
I’ll ask him.

LOUIS
No, you will not.

FANNY
I will.

LOUIS
You will not!

FANNY
I’ll go visit them.

LOUIS
No.

FANNY
You can stay here and...write, or whatever--

LOUIS
Write or whatever?
FANNY
We need money, Louis! What are we going to do? You’re father would love it if you wrote another *Treasure Island*.

LOUIS
Yes, he would, wouldn’t he. In between his bouts of dementia.

FANNY
We’ll make it a gift. Give him another adventure story. He would be thrilled.

LOUIS
Maybe you can get him to sign over the whole family estate while you’re at it.

FANNY
Oh, please.

LOUIS
Is that your plan, Fanny? Is that the famous Vandergrifter in action?

FANNY
Damn you, Robert Louis Stevenson!

LOUIS
There’s no need to ask my father for anything. We’re doing just fine on my earnings, thank you very much.

FANNY
We’re destitute!

(beat)
What are you trying to prove, Louis?

LOUIS
We don’t need his money. It’s not worth it.

FANNY
Then what?

(beat)
We crack it open.

LOUIS
Crack what open?

FANNY
(he taps his head)
You’re mad.

(he smiles)

LOUIS
You want to hear it, or not?
(Beat.

She sits.)

FANNY

For Heaven sake, get on with it.

(He sets the stage.)

LOUIS

It begins on a foggy night.

FANNY

Where?

LOUIS

In London.

FANNY

London where?

LOUIS

Somewhere in Soho.

FANNY

Somewhere?

LOUIS

There is a doorway.

FANNY

A doorway?

LOUIS

Yes, it all begins with a door.

FANNY

Oh. I see.

LOUIS

On a side street. A certain sinister block of buildings. Not exactly clear where. At the base of a two-story facade. No windows above. Only a single door below. Marked by neglect. And disuse. No bell, no knocker on this door. Where does it lead? Into a house. The house of...Dr. Jekyll. But this is the rear entrance, the back passage, into the home of--

(Fanny giggles.)

What is it?

FANNY

Nothing.
LOUIS
Why are you laughing?

FANNY
You just said...

(more laughter)

LOUIS
What?

FANNY
The “back passage?”

(Beat.)

LOUIS
Yes. As I was saying, a prominent London physician, an eminently “respectable” gentleman. At the back of the house, there is a medical theater. For viewing dissections.

FANNY
The one from your dream.

LOUIS
Very like that. But now the theater is dark, and morbid. We climb a stairway--

FANNY
--the stairs--

LOUIS
--to the doctor’s private office, behind the theater, his private cabinet, where he often works alone, late into the night.

(he stops)

FANNY
What’s wrong? Louis?

LOUIS
Open it.

FANNY
What?

LOUIS
The door.

FANNY
Where?

LOUIS
Right there.
FANNY
Why don’t you open it?

LOUIS
I canna.

FANNY
Why not?

(Sound of a door creaking open.)

FANNY (CONT’D)
What was that?

LOUIS
It’s open. Will ya go in?

(She walks through the imaginary doorway.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)
What do you see?

(She turns and looks back at Louis.)

FANNY
I see a man.

LOUIS

FANNY
What’s he writing?

LOUIS
The “Full Statement of the Case.”

FANNY
The case?

LOUIS
*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

FANNY
Who is Mr. Hyde?
LOUIS
(as Dr. Jekyll)
I was born in the year Eighteen-Fifty, 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.

FANNY
This is you.

(He smiles at her, and resumes his tale.)

LOUIS
The worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition, that I found hard to reconcile with a desire to carry my head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public. Hence it came about that I began to conceal my pleasures, and commit myself to a profound duplicity in life. I began to hide these irregularities beneath an almost morbid sense of shame. Thusly, those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man’s dual nature, were severed in me, to begin with, and set my inclination so.

FANNY
Inclination toward...what?

LOUIS
Though so profound a double-dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite; both sides of me were in dead earnest; 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.

FANNY
Shame over what?

LOUIS
It chanced that my scientific studies, all but accidentally, fortuitously, revealed a whole new understanding of this perennial war among my members.

FANNY
You’re making this up.

LOUIS
With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth, by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two.
FANNY

Good versus evil.

LOUIS

A primitive duality. Two natures contending in the field of one consciousness. Even before the course of my scientific discoveries had begun to suggest the most naked possibility of such a miracle, I had learned to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved day-dream, on the thought of separating these two elements. If each, I told myself, could but be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable.

(struts about the room)
The unjust might go his own way, and his upright twin could walk steadfastly and securely on the upward path, doing good, no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence at the hands of his evil other. The curse of mankind is that the two are bound together in us, in the womb of consciousness, polar twins, perpetually at war with one another. How, then, might they be...

FANNY

Dissociated.

(He lights a candle.)

A light from my laboratory began to shine upon the subject. Certain agents I found to have the power to shake and pluck back that fleshly vestment, even as a wind might toss the curtains of a pavilion. I managed to compound a drug by which these two elemental forms might be separated, one from the other.

FANNY

A drug? Wait, wait--a drug?

LOUIS

Yes, a drug, a new drug.

FANNY

That’s impossible.

LOUIS

It’s not impossible. It’s chemistry.

FANNY

Ha! You’re not serious.

LOUIS

Deadly serious. You canna imagine what manner of drugs they’re coming up with these days. Anything is possible.
FANNY
Rubbish.

LOUIS
It’s not rubbish. It’s modern science.

FANNY
Rubbish!

LOUIS
All right, it’s a literary device.

FANNY
It’s awful.

LOUIS
It’s not. It’s plausible, given the form.

FANNY
It’s too material.

LOUIS
Too material?

FANNY
For an agent of change, it’s too material. You need something more spiritual. You need a moral agent. What—a magic potion? Oh, you’re not serious?

LOUIS
It’s all part of the dream. All of this. The whole thing came to me in my dreams. Don’t question it.

FANNY
Easy for you to say.

LOUIS
It’s not a magic potion, it’s modern science. He’s a scientist.

FANNY
He’s a monster.

LOUIS
Why do you say that?

FANNY
Because I can see it coming.
(beat)
I don’t like it, Louis.

(Stunned silence.)
LOUIS
Damn you.

FANNY
Damn yourself.

LOUIS
I should’ve known. “It’s too material.” Too material?

FANNY
In my opinion.

LOUIS
You’ve no idea where I’m headed with this. No idea. Will you give it a bleedin’ minute? I’ve barely gotten started. Will you give it a chance? Give it a chance.

(She sits back, and listens.

Returning to the table, where the candle burns, he prepares another dose of his “medicine.”)

LOUIS (CONT’D)
I hesitated long before putting my theory to the test of practice, knowing well I would run the risk of death, or worse, from any drug that so potently controlled and shook the very edifice of identity. But the temptation of a discovery so singular and profound, has at last overcome my suggestions of alarm.

FANNY
Temptation, yes. I like that.

LOUIS
I prepare the tincture, mixing a particular salt, which I know, from my experiments, is the last ingredient required.

FANNY
Midnight tolls.

(A church bell tolls in the distance.)

LOUIS
I stir the elements together, boil them in a glass beaker, watch the smoke rise, and when the ebullition settles...

FANNY
He drinks it.

(He downs a glass of the wine concoction.)
He gasps.)

FANNY (CONT’D)

Louis? (He chokes.)
Are you all right? (He contorts.)
What’s wrong with you?

LOUIS
Racking pangs. Grind ing in my bones. Deadly nausea. What is this? Birth? Death?

(He cries out.)

FANNY
Louis?

(He writhes on the floor.

Slowly recovers.)

LOUIS
(as Hyde)

(he laughs)

(a deep breath, exhale)
Ah, new life.

(he refills his wine glass from the decanter)

FANNY
He’s sold himself a slave to evil.

LOUIS
Care for a taste?

(He offers her the glass of red wine.

She looks at the glass, but doesn’t take it.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)

Maybe later. (sets the wine down)
The strangest thing is... I’ve grown shorter.
FANNY

Shorter?

LOUIS

(looks at his reflection)
Yes. There. You see me? You see my reflection?

(She looks at the reflection over his shoulder.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)

Edward Hyde. (to her)
‘Ou are you then?

He’s deformed. FANNY

I wouldn’t say that. LOUIS

Decayed. FANNY

LOUIS


FANNY

Pure evil.

LOUIS

For just an instant. Then back, another cup... (he downs the glass of wine)
...once more... (shudders, gasps, quickly recovers)
And I come to...Henry Jekyll.

(He blows out the candle.)

FANNY
This came to you in a dream?

LOUIS
A series of dreams. I told you, it started years ago.

FANNY
Two characters in one. Interesting. But why?

LOUIS
Freedom. Wouldn’t you like to be able to do anything you want? In perfect anonymity? The perfect disguise: another man. A perfectly respectable...doctor.
FANNY
Freedom to do what?

LOUIS
All the things you always wanted to do, but didn’t. Because you were afraid. Afraid of the consequences. Afraid of the scandal. Afraid of the law. Afraid of the moral implications. Free from all that. What would you do?

FANNY
I want you to stop seeing Dr. Balfour. I don’t like this medication, Louis. I don’t trust it. I want you to discontinue it.

LOUIS
You should try it. It’s done wonders for me. Like a burst of new life. Every dose. There’s something special about this batch—I didn’t follow too closely when he went on about it—but it works wonders on my lungs. Everything. Like a marvelous tonic. It’s opened up me mind.

FANNY
No, thank you.

LOUIS
No?

FANNY
No, thank you.

LOUIS
No?

FANNY
No, thank you.

LOUIS
Just as well.

FANNY
I don’t like this, Louis. I don’t like it at all.

LOUIS
The fatal cross-roads. Two characters, two appearances, one wholly evil, the other... I but drink from the cup, doff the identity of the noted professor...

(puts on the cloak and hat, grabs the walking stick)

And assume that of Edward Hyde. And thus...I begin to profit by the strange immunities of my position. Pleasure. I spring headlong into the sea of liberty. My safety complete. I don't even exist! Ha!

(pours another glass of wine)
Simply escape through my laboratory door, mix and swallow a draught of the solution, and whatever Edward Hyde does passes away like a stain of breath upon a mirror. And there in his stead, quietly at home, trimming the midnight lamp in his study, the irreproachable Henry Jekyll.

FANNY
What does he do?

LOUIS
Which one?
FANNY
Hyde. What does he do? What is he?

LOUIS
A man of many interests. Pleasure-seeker for one.

FANNY
What sort of pleasure?

LOUIS
Undignified pleasures. At first. Then a turn toward the monstrous.

(down the wine)

FANNY
You’re over-doing it, Louis.

LOUIS
I’m walking along King’s Row. It’s well past midnight. The fog is thick. Air is cold. Feel alive. In the mood...for murder. Who’s this fella? You poor foolish boy. Come meet your maker. Dance naked on the tabletop. I dismember him in the gutter. A heap of butchered flesh.

(Sound of a police whistle in the distance.

Sound of footsteps running on pavement.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)

(footsteps fade)

It’s raining. Love the rain. Let it come down.

(to Fanny)

Evenin’, Miss. All alone?

FANNY
What are you trying to tell me, Louis?

LOUIS
What ya think?

(beat)

I’ve done some terrible things, Fanny.

FANNY
We’ve all done terrible things. Doesn’t mean we should go and write a book about it.

LOUIS
He kills them. And butchers them. With his surgeon’s kit. A bloody monster in hell. Sex. And death.
FANNY
Don’t do this. Don’t go forward with this.

LOUIS
I’m afraid there’s no going back now.

(back in the story)
I return from my excursion, plunged into a kind of wonder at my vicarious depravity. This familiar I call forth and send to do my pleasure is inherently villainous. His every thought is centered on himself. He takes a bestial pleasure in the torture of others. A man of stone. At times, I stand aghast at Edward Hyde. But it is he, and he alone, that is the guilty one. I awaken unimpaired.

FANNY
And thus your conscience sleeps.

LOUIS
Word spreads: Killer on the Loose! Spring-heeled Jack! All London Terrified! Police out in force! Still, he strikes again. And again. Will nothing stop this madman, this beast, this monster lurking in the back-streets and alleyways of this filthy, seething Gomorrah, this Great Wen, this oozing sebaceous cyst of a city--my Empire of Pleasure!

(beat)

FANNY
We’ll be ruined.

LOUIS
We’ll be rich.

FANNY
Longman’s will never publish this. And if they do, we’ll be ruined.

LOUIS
It’s the truth, Fanny.

FANNY
The truth. I don’t want to know the truth, Louis. Can you understand that?

LOUIS
You’re afraid of it.

FANNY
No, I just don’t want to know! (beat)

How does it end?

LOUIS
What?
FANNY
Your...story. How does it end?

LOUIS
Not sure yet.

FANNY
You don’t have an ending?

LOUIS
I’ll know soon enough. I’ll dream it.

FANNY
Your dreams...worry me. Lately.

LOUIS
They’re meant to, Fanny. That’s what sells, eh?

FANNY
I can tell how this story ends, Louis. And I don’t like it. I don’t like it at all.

LOUIS
Trust me.

FANNY
What are you trying to say? You don’t even have an ending.

LOUIS
It’s a dream.

FANNY
You’re making this up as you go.

LOUIS
It’s a dream!

FANNY
Writing is a rational process, Louis. You’ve got to get a point across. You’ve got to take a moral stance. These things don’t happen by accident. What are you trying to say?

LOUIS
Since when are you an authority on the subject? You’ve barely even been published.

FANNY
I’ve been published!

LOUIS
Two short stories, and a few chapters on your own.

FANNY
And what have you had published lately?
LOUIS
If it wasn’t for me, you would never have written a word, much less been included in Scribner’s.

FANNY
I am not your creation—much as you’d love to think so.

LOUIS
Without my letters, to my friends, you wouldn’t have a word in print.

FANNY
Putting me in my place, is that what you think you’re doing? Well, to hell with you.

LOUIS
I didn’t mean that.

FANNY
I don’t think you know who you’re dealing with here.

LOUIS
I think I do. (beat)

Enter Mr. Hyde.

FANNY
No.

LOUIS
Cold morning air.

FANNY
No!

LOUIS
Just after dawn. There’s a child on the street.

A child?

FANNY
A little girl.

LOUIS
A girl?

FANNY
Alone.

LOUIS
No.
Yes. A little girl.

Stop it.

All alone.

I won’t stand for this. I won’t allow it. It’s wretched. It’s horrible.

It’s an act of...

Cruelty.

No. Carelessness.

A child?

It’s the hook. (western accent)

“Now we got’em, Sal.”

No.

But it all begins to unravel. Jekyll is undone, utterly undone. He begins to lose control of his transformations.

No little girl.

Then back out on the streets.

No!

End of a long night of forbidden pleasures, my identity as the good doctor now fully restored, I return home, enter through the back way-- (wink)

Through the theater, up the stairs, and off to sleep in the bedroom of the old place. (He curls up on the sofa.)
This is too dark. Too--

But I wake, the next day, with an odd sensation. I look about. My hand...it’s grown lean, corded, knuckly, hairy. I’m Hyde!

(jumps up, looks at his reflection)

I went to sleep, Henry Jekyll, and awoke, Edward Hyde. How is this possible?

How to remedy it?

The drug.

No.

But it’s well on in the morning; the servants are up and about.

Forget about the drug.

I have to get to the cabinet.

No.

Carefully, down the stairs, through the back passage--

(wink)

Stop it.

--across the open court, through the anatomical theatre, and into my cabinet sanctuary. Mix the liquid, drink it down, the minutes pass, and finally... Dr. Jekyll returns.

That’s enough o’ that stuff, Louis. It’s doing something to you.

I’m losing the ability to change back. Double the dose. Triple it. Whatever the risk.

(MORE)
In the beginning, the difficulty was to throw off Jekyll. Now, increasingly, it's the other way round.

FANNY
Make him choose. Choose. One of two natures. Which one is it? Which one are you?

LOUIS

FANNY
Father?

LOUIS
You want me to surrender all the appetites I now indulge and pamper?

FANNY
Would you surrender all your hopes and aspirations to be something better? Are you merely the sum of all your appetites? To be Hyde is to be utterly despised and friendless.

LOUIS
Yes. I know. I'm so sorry.

(He begins to weep.)

FANNY

(The weeping subsides.)

FANNY (CONT'D)
Can we get through a day without one of your crying spells?

LOUIS
I'm sorry. Yes. You're right. You're always right.

(looks at the medicine)

Take it away. Get rid of it. All of it. Throw it into the fireplace.

FANNY
Do you mean it?

LOUIS
I will suffer the fires of abstinence.

FANNY
Truly?

Yes?

(MORE)
Yes.

(She goes to him--hugs him.)

LOUIS
I love you.

FANNY
Don't start crying again.

LOUIS
(crying a bit)
I won't. I won't.

FANNY
You can choose the better part.

LOUIS
I know that. I know that. Of course. Choose the better part. Choose the better part. Choose the better part.
(beat)
Let me be...the good doctor. The elderly, respectable doctor, surrounded by elderly, respectable friends, all cherishing honest hopes. The discontented doctor.

FANNY
Louis--

LOUIS
Good bye, freedom. Good bye, youth. Farewell forever to the light step, to leaping, spring-heeled impulses, to all the secret pleasures I so enjoy--
(looks at the medicine)

FANNY
Be strong, Louis.

(He heads for the medicine.

She blocks his way.)

FANNY (CONT'D)
No, Louis. No more.

(He turns away.)

LOUIS
Two months pass. I stick to it. For two months I lead a life of absolute severity. I enjoy the rewards of a clean conscience. But I'm tortured with longings for... God, I want out. Just let me out. Let me out!
(he turns on her)
Get away from there.
FANNY
Louis?

LOUIS
Move aside.
(beat)
I won’t say it again.

(She moves aside.

He sits at the table, and
prepares another draught of his
medicine.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)
Call it a moment of moral weakness. He gives in. He can’t resist.

FANNY
He loves evil more than he loves good.

LOUIS
It’s not that simple, Fanny.

FANNY
Yes, it is. It’s as simple a thing as there is. Goodness. Love. Companionship. Choose those.

LOUIS
Is that what you did? Is that who you are? The good one?
(beat)
Admit it: there’s another side to you. The side who’ll do anything, anything to get what you want, anything to prosper, to enjoy this brief taste of freedom we call life.

I am what I am.

LOUIS
What were you doing out in Virgina City? All on your own in the fabled lands of the Comstock Lode? They say a whole netherworld of vice and depravity sprung up in the old mine tunnels and caverns underneath Virgina City. That true? A shadow-world of sin and iniquity in the hollows of the Silver Mountain. What were you really doing out there, Deary? How’d a woman like you get by in the wilds of the rip roarin’ West? Is there not another side to you?

FANNY
I did what I had to do to survive. Put the glass down.

(He drinks.

She tries to stop him.)
They struggle.

He shoves her away.

He polishes off the glass.

LOUIS
I’m out again! You thought you had me all caged up, but now I’m back, and I come roarin’ out with the spirit of hell awake in me and ragin’. It’s a rampage. Ecstasy. First one, then another, and another, and another. Tasting delights, all the night long. Till weariness finally succeeds, and I enter the world of delirium.

(lights change)

A mist rises. My life is forfeit. I run from the sight of so many pleasures. Alive, trembling, possessed by lust, gratified, stimulated. My love of life screwed to the topmost peg!

(sound of running footsteps again, a distant police whistle)

Running, running, running, through the lamplit streets--ha, look what I’ve got away with, ya dapper fools! Who’s next, I wonder, hm? What more? Ever, ever higher. Faster still.

(He hears something in the house--crouches--a paranoid delusion.)

What’s that? Who’s out there?

(All stop.)

Are we not alone?

FANNY
I don’t know.  

(seizing the excuse to leave)

I’ll go see.

(starts out)

LOUIS
No.

(she stops)

I don’t want you to leave. Promise me you won’t leave me here. I couldn’t survive without you, Fanny. You’re ma beatin’ heart, ma soul mate. You’re all the world to me. I just want you to be happy.

FANNY
I am happy. I love you. Louis. I do.

(She starts to go.)

LOUIS
There’s a woman.

(She stops.)
FANNY

What?

LOUIS

There’s a woman. In the story. I haven’t told you about her yet.

FANNY

There’s a woman?

LOUIS

Oh, yes.

FANNY

Who is she?

LOUIS

She’s a lot like you. In every way.

(He looks at her.)

What does she do?

LOUIS (CONT’D)

She sees the whole thing.

FANNY

What whole thing?

LOUIS

The whole thing.

FANNY

What do you want from me, Louis?

LOUIS

Just hear it through.

FANNY

You don’t even have an ending.

LOUIS

Just hear what I’ve got.

(beat)

Help me with the ending.

(She listens, by the door.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)

She lives alone. In a house not far from the river. Maid servant by day. Tired, at night, she heads upstairs to bed. Saint Albans tolls eleven.

(church bell tolls in the distance)

Fog lifts. Cloudless night sky. Full moon lights the lane below as she gazes out her window.
What does she see?

An older gentleman approaches down the street below, a handsome old goat, with silver hair. Up the street, from the other way, comes another gentleman, a rather small fella.

(he dresses as Hyde, in the cloak and hat, with the walking stick)

She sees the two men encounter one another. The older gent says something to the smaller one. A signal of some sort. A look of interest? Interested in what? What ya got? The deal is sealed. Notice the old man’s face, caught in the moonlight, kindly, old-world, content. Just picture me father.

Your father?

The other fellow...

Hyde.

Heavy walking stick in hand. You know what one o’ these can do? He smiles.

Not your father.

A great flame of anger! The old fella steps back, with a look of surprise on his face. And then I break loose on ‘im. I club him to death. Like an ape. Trample him under me feet. A storm of blows. I kill ‘im.

(beat)

And the woman?

Hm?

What about the woman?

What about her?
FANNY
What does she do?

LOUIS
Oh. She...faints. Dead away. Horrified.

FANNY
She faints?

LOUIS
Well, she’s...horrified.

FANNY
Weak.

LOUIS
What do you mean weak?

FANNY
Why doesn’t she do something?

LOUIS
She’s horrified. She faints. She’s just a maid. She just sees it.

FANNY
Precisely--”just a maid.” It’s weak. Why not have her do something? That’s your woman?

LOUIS
She identifies him.

FANNY
Who? The fiend? How?

(beat)

LOUIS
That’s all I’ve got.

FANNY
What?

(He shrugs.)

FANNY
That’s it?

LOUIS
For the moment.

FANNY
Forget about this story. It’s no good. It’s fool’s gold. A mirage. A bad dream, Louis. The wrong direction now. It’s too Russian. Stop reading the Russians. We need to pay the butcher.
LOUIS
When poverty blows in, art flies out the window--that your idea of it?

FANNY
If you like.

(Louis looks at his reflection.)

FANNY (CONT’D)
There’s only one way this story can end. And I don’t want to hear it. Do you understand me, Louis?
(he doesn’t respond)
Louis?

(He gets an idea.)

LOUIS
Hyde vanishes.

FANNY
What?

LOUIS
He’s gone. Vanished.

FANNY
What do you mean? He’s run away? He’s gone into...hiding?

LOUIS
And Dr. Jekyll...is just fine. The good doctor. Happily ever after.

(beat)

FANNY
That’s your ending?
(he looks at her)
You’re joking.

LOUIS
You want it to sell, don’t you?

(beat)
The good doctor is fine. He lives out his comfortable life, in his surgeon’s theater, and his cozy cabinet, chatting with his well-heeled gentlemen friends, drinking fine wine, and smoking fine cigars, in heated conversations about the finer points of literary theory, while we quietly rule the world. God save the queen.

(He locks the door, and pockets the key.)
FANNY
What are you doing, Louis?

(He turns toward her. She grabs the walking stick to defend herself.)

FANNY (CONT'D)
Stop it.

LOUIS
Months go by. Till one fine, clear, January day. I’m out for a walk--me the doctor. Wet under foot. Frost has melted. Cloudless sky overhead. Regent's Park. Winter chirrupings. Sweet, first inklings of spring. I’m sitting in the sun, on a bench. The animal within me licks his chops. Memories flood my mind...

(feels nauseous)

Ugh.

(shudders)

Changing.

(transforms into Hyde)

Me again. Quarry of mankind, hunted, houseless, murderer, monster.

LOUIS
Thrall to the gallows.

FANNY
Can you hear me?

LOUIS

FANNY
Listen to my words.

LOUIS
A woman speaks. Another woman--not you. She asks me for a light. I smack her in the face. Spring-heeled Jack. That’s me. Then it’s home again, to bed, to bed, to sleep, and it’s me again, shaken, but refreshed. God, I despise this thing in me, but thank god I’m in this house, close by my salts, oh, thank you, thank you, thank you.

FANNY
Louis, you’re dreaming. You’re somewhere else. Can you hear me?
LOUIS
I’m changing. Again. He’s coming!

(He scrambles for the medicine.)

FANNY
(cutting him off)
No!

(threatens him with the walking stick)

LOUIS
I need that. You don’t understand. That’s all that’s keeping me alive. That’s all there is now. Just a little taste. Then sit and look into the fire. Just watch the fire. Constant now. Fire. Have to be on it all the time. Every minute. Only way to control it. Manage it. Keep up the fight.

(he shivers)
It can come at any moment. Don’t sleep, don’t even doze, don’t blink an eye--wake up as him. All eaten up. Emptied out. Fever. Weak, yes. Weak as can be. Only one thought in my mind now: him.

(beat)
The slimy pit yawns before me.

FANNY
Stop it, Louis.

LOUIS
The dead usurp the living. He’s knit to me closer than a wife, closer than an eye, caged in me flesh, struggling to be born, scrawling blasphemies, burning letters, destroying the portrait of me father. Chaos is the norm of the world. Things are never what they seem. All conventional wisdom is false: crime pays, cheaters prosper!

(pauses--dizzy)
Oh, my head.

(He faints--out cold.)

FANNY
Louis? Louis, are you all right? Don’t tell me you’ve fainted.

(advances, cautiously, walking stick in hand)
Louis?

(She pokes him with the stick.

No response.

Carefully, she kneels.)
Feels for a pulse.

Nothing.

She listens to his heart—nothing!

Is he dead?

She sits up, and looks at the door.

Lights change.

Sunlight beams through trees—a dream/memory.

Birds chirp.

LOUIS opens his eyes.)

LOUIS
Fanny?

FANNY
Yes, Louis?

LOUIS
Where am I?

FANNY
Woods. (looks around)

LOUIS
Woods—where?

FANNY
Forest. Come on. (She stands and offers her hand.

He takes her hand.

They walk together through the woods.)

LOUIS
It’s beautiful. But where are we? The south of France? The old place, where we met? In the woods there?

FANNY
Look.
LOUIS
What?

FANNY
There.

LOUIS
What is it?

FANNY
Two photographs.

LOUIS
What?

FANNY
Of you. Do you remember?

LOUIS
Photographs?

FANNY
One, like an angel, wrapped in Percy Shelley’s red cape.

LOUIS
Oh, yes, I rather like that one.

FANNY
The great poet.

LOUIS
Yes.

FANNY
And the other, a devil of some sort.

LOUIS
Oh.

(A distant, ominous sound.

Fanny looks toward the sound.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)
What’s that?

FANNY
He’s coming.

LOUIS
Who’s coming?

FANNY
There. See for yourself.
(Big sound.)

FANNY (CONT’D)

Rising out of the mist. A god stands above us. The Romans called him Janus.

LOUIS

Janus?

FANNY

A great two-faced giant of a god. One face looking forward into the future, the other back into the past, always, both at once. A god of new beginnings...and endings! *

LOUIS

This god is a monster. I will do battle with you!

(Louis wrestles with the giant god.)

FANNY

Foolish little man, you wrestle with a god. Why? You will lose.

LOUIS

Fight to the death!

FANNY

You are weak. You are insignificant.

LOUIS

No!

FANNY

I cast you into darkness. Forever.

LOUIS

(cries out)

Ahhhhhhhh!!!!!

(he’s falling)

I’m falling. Falling into everlasting darkness. Help me!

(His cry echoes in the void as the lights change again.

Fanny and Louis lie in the sun, beaming in through trees again--back to the tranquil dream in the woods.

A bird calls.)

FANNY

You hear that?
Meadowlark?

Song Thrush.

Sweet song.

The human body is one part dungeon, one part pleasure garden: you can’t simply drain evil out of a personality, and leave just the good. The two are inextricably mixed.

Why can’t I live together with my self? Centaur-like, half animal, half divine.

Look there.

(seeing something elsewhere)

What now?

It’s you. A little boy. Sick in bed.

Always sick in bed.

All alone.

Nothing but me imagination to keep me company.

When I was sick and lay a-bed, I had two pillows at my head, And all my toys beside me lay To keep me happy all the day.

And sometimes for an hour or so I watched my leaden soldiers go, With different uniforms and drills, Among the bed-clothes, through the hills;

And sometimes sent my ships in fleets All up and down among the sheets; Or brought my trees and houses out, And planted cities all about.
LOUIS
I was the giant great and still
That sits upon the pillow-hill,
And sees before him, dale and plain...

TOGETHER
The pleasant land of counterpane.

LOUIS
(he looks at Fanny)
Mummy.

FANNY
No.

LOUIS
I don’t want to grow up.

FANNY
But we must. Mustn’t we?

LOUIS
Toil and sweat. Why? Why should I work for a living, when I can swing a cutlass with pirates? Adventure. Take me.

FANNY
There’s a fine lad.

LOUIS
Mr. Hyde is not the villain.

FANNY
No?

LOUIS
It’s Dr. Jekyll. He’s the real villain. He’s a hypocrite. He’s the hypocrite that lets out the beast. Cruelty. Malice. Selfishness. Cowardice. These are diabolic in man. I just want to be free of it all.

(She kisses him on the cheek.

They kiss on the lips.)

This is a dream.

LOUIS (CONT’D)

Yours or mine?

FANNY

LOUIS
(lies back, closes his eyes)
Don’t wake me. I’m dreaming. I’m dreamin’ a fine fettle of a tale.
FANNY

No, you’re awake.

(She looks out into the woods.

Lights change, back to the
writing room.

LOUIS opens his eyes.)

LOUIS

What?

FANNY

(stunned, she looks at him)

Louis? I thought you were...

(beat)

LOUIS

I think maybe I was. I’ve got it.

Got what?

FANNY

LOUIS

Me ending. I’ve got the end. I dreamt it. You...

(She stands.)

Give me the key.

LOUIS

I don’t want to lose you, Fanny. I don’t believe I could
survive without you. I mean it. I swear it. Sultana.

(He gives her the key.

She goes to the door, and unlocks
it.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)

Where you off to then?

FANNY

Upstairs. For a bit. Then...

(beat)

LOUIS

That so? Back to work for me.

(beat)

Goodbye, Fanny. I love ya.

*
(She smiles, and goes.

Alone, he looks about.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)
Here then, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end.

(looks up at the moon)

Ow.

(winces in pain)

Damn me eyes.

(looks about)

Where are ya?

(He finds his goggles.

Puts them on.

Finds his respirator.)

LOUIS (CONT’D)

Breathe your last.

(Puts the respirator on.

Wraps himself in the great counterpane blanket.

Sits on the couch with his lap-desk.

And returns to his writing.

We hear him breathing in the mask, oddly.

Writing, alone, in the moonlight.

Blackout.)

THE END