

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON:

JEKYLL AND HYDE

written by Gary Graves

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."

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON: JEKYLL AND HYDE

(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)

What do you take me for? Animal? Beast? Fiend? Monster on the loose?

(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.  
  
                                FANNY  
Blood?  
  
                                LOUIS  
No blood.  
  
                                FANNY  
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

Hm?

FANNY

Full moon.

LOUIS  
(looks at the moon)

Oh. Hm. Yes.

(back to his writing)

FANNY  
I've been thinking, Louis.  
(he's not listening)

Louis?

LOUIS

Hm?

FANNY

I've been thinking.

LOUIS  
(stops writing)

Thinking?

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?  
(she shrugs)  
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)

FANNY

I saw him again.

LOUIS

Who?

FANNY

Hervey.

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--

LOUIS

Who could've known?

FANNY

Why did I even bring him with me to Paris?

LOUIS

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.

FANNY

He was only nine.



LOUIS

Don't do this to yourself.

FANNY

God punished me for my selfishness.

LOUIS

No.

FANNY

My delusion.

LOUIS

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.

(She stops.)

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?

(beat)

What form?

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.

FANNY

Go on.

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.

FANNY

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.

FANNY

According to whom?

LOUIS

According to...me!

FANNY

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

LOUIS

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.

No. LOUIS

Fast! FANNY

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.

FANNY  
What?

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

FANNY  
Tell what?

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

FANNY  
The truth about what?

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--beggary 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)

LOUIS (CONT'D)

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.

FANNY

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.

Good. Get on with it. FANNY

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

Oh.

What now? FANNY

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

Warn me? FANNY

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

Shocking--why? FANNY

Well...when I was younger...back in me college days. And LOUIS  
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.

Criminal? FANNY

And this is your idea? (beat)

The truth. LOUIS

No, Louis. FANNY

Yes. LOUIS

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

Don't be afraid. LOUIS

What will people say? FANNY

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!

I like him. FANNY

Stop it. LOUIS

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

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

He's not. FANNY

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

He loves you. FANNY

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

He's nice to me. FANNY

Don't. LOUIS

I'll ask him. FANNY

No, you will not. LOUIS

I will. FANNY

You will not! LOUIS

I'll go visit them. FANNY

No. LOUIS

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

Write or whatever? LOUIS

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)

LOUIS

We crack it open.

FANNY

Crack what open?

(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.



Why don't you open it? FANNY

I canna. LOUIS

Why not? FANNY

(Sound of a door creaking open.)

What was that? FANNY (CONT'D)

It's open. Will ya go in? LOUIS

(She walks through the imaginary doorway.)

What do you see? LOUIS (CONT'D)

(She turns and looks back at Louis.)

I see a man. FANNY

Aye. All alone. In his cabinet. Hunched over his writing desk. Feverishly. Writing. LOUIS

What's he writing? FANNY

The "Full Statement of the Case." LOUIS

The case? FANNY

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

Who is Mr. Hyde? FANNY



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.)

LOUIS

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. Grinding 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)

Pain...subsiding. Much better. Alive. Strange sensations. Indescribably new. Incredibly sweet. I'm younger. Lighter.

(he laughs)

I can do anything. Flesh. Touch. Yes, thighs, hips. Dark alleys. The girls sway. And the fellas...the fellas...the fellas. I can feel you. In you. In me. Us. Nothing stops me. Nothing's too good. Or too wicked. Too...evil. Pure freedom. First breath.

(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?

FANNY

He's deformed.

LOUIS

I wouldn't say that.

FANNY

Decayed.

LOUIS

Me. Natural. Human. The lively spirit. More express.  
Singular. Edward Hyde, at yer service.

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?

(beat)

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.

(downs 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)  
I'm running. Running down a long dark alleyway. Unstoppable. Alive. Utterly free.  
(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.

FANNY

A child?

LOUIS

A little girl.

FANNY

A girl?

LOUIS

Alone.

FANNY

No.



FANNY

This is too dark. Too--

LOUIS

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?

FANNY

How to remedy it?

LOUIS

The drug.

FANNY

No.

LOUIS

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

FANNY

Forget about the drug.

LOUIS

I have to get to the cabinet.

FANNY

No.

LOUIS

Carefully, down the stairs, through the back passage--  
(wink)

FANNY

Stop it.

LOUIS

--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.

FANNY

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

LOUIS

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

(MORE)

LOUIS (CONT'D)

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

Choose? Why? Henry Jekyll? Who is Henry Jekyll to me? A poor father indeed.

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

Louis. Don't cry. Please don't. Not now, Louis. Stop it.

(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?

(beat)

Yes?

(MORE)

FANNY (CONT'D)  
(he nods)

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.

FANNY

I am what I am.

LOUIS

What were you doing out in Virginia 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 Virginia 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 couldna 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.)

What? FANNY

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

There's a woman? FANNY

Oh, yes. LOUIS

Who is she? FANNY

She's a lot like you. In every way. LOUIS  
(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.

FANNY

What does she see?

LOUIS

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.

FANNY

Your father?

LOUIS

The other fellow...

FANNY

Hyde.

LOUIS

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

FANNY

Not your father.

LOUIS

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)

FANNY

And the woman?

LOUIS

Hm?

FANNY

What about the woman?

LOUIS

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.)  
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.

FANNY

Louis.

LOUIS

Thrall to the gallows.

FANNY

Can you hear me?

LOUIS

My salts. Back to my cabinet. Child of Hell. Nothing human anymore. Nothing but fear and hatred.

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  
(looks around)

Woods.

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.



What? LOUIS

There. FANNY

What is it? LOUIS

Two photographs. FANNY

What? LOUIS

Of you. Do you remember? FANNY

Photographs? LOUIS

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

Oh, yes, I rather like that one. LOUIS

The great poet. FANNY

Yes. LOUIS

And the other, a devil of some sort. FANNY

Oh. LOUIS

(A distant, ominous sound.

Fanny looks toward the sound.)

What's that? LOUIS (CONT'D)

He's coming. FANNY

Who's coming? LOUIS

There. See for yourself. FANNY

(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)

Ahhhhhhh!!!!!!

(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?  
LOUIS

Song Thrush.  
FANNY

Sweet song.  
LOUIS

FANNY  
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.

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

FANNY  
(seeing something elsewhere)  
Look there.

LOUIS  
What now?

FANNY  
It's you. A little boy. Sick in bed.

LOUIS  
Always sick in bed.

FANNY  
All alone.

LOUIS  
Nothing but me imagination to keep me company.

FANNY  
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.

LOUIS  
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;

FANNY  
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.)

LOUIS (CONT'D)

This is a dream.

FANNY

Yours or mine?

LOUIS

(lies back, closes his eyes)

Don't wake me. I'm dreaming. I'm dreamin' a fine fettle of  
a tale.

No, you're awake.

FANNY

(She looks out into the woods.

Lights change, back to the  
writing room.

LOUIS opens his eyes.)

What?

LOUIS

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.

FANNY

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.)

Where you off to then?

LOUIS (CONT'D)

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