THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

ACT I

Scene One

SETTING: a busy quarter of London. TIME: the morning; dawn.

(The lights rise on a bustling street. The day is sunny and bright, and hope fills the air. This street could easily be any busy area of London. It is one in which the world may be seen coming and going at all times, emphasizing the public nature of being "out and about." Amidst the atmosphere of a bustling street, a newsboy can be heard calling out the latest news, including "The Whitechapel Murderer strikes again!" The homes and the street carry a dingy veneer, save for one particular home of interest. This home, located just shy of center, has been diligently maintained, with a red door of polished wood, and windows of the best quality. This is the home of Dr. Henri JEKYLL..)

(UTTERSON enters holding a long, gift-wrapped present. At about the same time, from one of the houses, ENFIELD is thrust onto the street, wearing only enough clothes to not be completely indecent. A MAID stands in the doorway, looking down to him.)

MAID

If I even smell a single sock of yours near this stoop again, I—

ENFIELD

I don't see how this is any of your business.

MAID

Not my business? That was my sister you—

ENFIELD

What two consenting adults such as your sister and I agree to do—
(ENFIELD notices passersby, or perhaps the audience.)
Hello, ladies. Has nothing to do with you! Unless you wanted to join?

MAID

Don't get too close, dearies. This present may come in pretty paper, but the box is limp.

ENFIELD

Just tired. Give me five minutes.

MAID

Like a dead fish down there.

ENFIELD

A swordfish!

MAID

Smells like one, too.

ENFIELD

She made me self-conscious; her fish is bigger than mine.

(The MAID screams under her breath, and slams the door. ENFIELD speaks to a passerby, or the audience.)

As if this never happened to you.

UTTERSON

I can't say it has happened to me.

(UTTERSON has entered, holding a package and newspaper. He approaches ENFIELD, who is picking up his clothes.)

ENFIELD

John! Good morning!

UTTERSON

Is it really?

ENFIELD

I've had worse. Remember the Lancaster twins? A right War of the Roses, that was.

(Sees the package UTTERSON is carrying.)

What's that?

UTTERSON

This? Merely a gift.

ENFIELD

Bet I know for whom.

UTTERSON

Focus on yourself; we're to meet the commissioner in an hour. Another prostitute was found dead last night.

ENFIELD

I know. I sent him a letter to say I'd be late.

UTTERSON

When?

ENFIELD

Three this morning.

UTTERSON

Why on Earth were you awake at three in the morning?

ENFIELD

I was sleeping.

UTTERSON

How can someone be awake and sleeping at the same time?

(ENFIELD goes to make an obscene gesture. UTTERSON stops him.)

I understand.

(HYDE enters on one side of the street.)

ENFIELD

What can I say? She likes my tongue.

UTTERSON

Keep your tongue to yourself.

ENFIELD

I am not ashamed of my tongue! Are you ashamed of your tongue, cousin?

UTTERSON

Say "tongue" one more time, and I'll—

(HYDE suddenly shakes. He breaks off toward the nice house of the street. As he crosses the street, he stumbles. UTTERSON crosses to him, and tries to help him up.)

Everything all right?

HYDE

No gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene.

UTTERSON

Is that what you think you're doing, convulsing in broad daylight? Avoiding a scene?

HYDE

There is no need to fight.

UTTERSON

I wasn't about to fight you, I—

HYDE

Sir, I am naturally helpless. However, if you would like to profit from this misunderstanding, name your figure.

UTTERSON

Are you bribing me for helping you?

HYDE

How about one hundred pounds for your family?

UTTERSON

Who are you?

HYDE

Very well. Here is thirty for my offense, and another seventy for my sincerest apologies.

(HYDE hands him a pouch of money.)

Do you require anything more?

UTTERSON

Uh—no?

HYDE

Excellent. Have a good day, sir.

(HYDE withdraws a key quickly, opens the door to the house, and exits into the home.)

UTTERSON

Did you mark that man, Richard?

ENFIELD

Not as well as he marked you.

UTTERSON

And that door?

ENFIELD

Never as well as you. Do you know him?

UTTERSON

No.

ENFIELD

The Doctor must; he had a key. Do you?

UTTERSON

No. Why would he?

ENFIELD

Maybe he’s not ashamed of his tongue.

(UTTERSON smacks him with a newspaper.)
Curious, though, considering he has the personality of a bagpipe. Yet, her precious "Gabriel" doesn't have a key?

UTTERSON
Don't. Do you want me to call you "Reginald?"

ENFIELD
No! God! Sounds like the name of a dog.

UTTERSON
Well, you are a right bitch.

(UTTERSON takes off for the house.)

ENFIELD
I thought we were going to see the commissioner!

(UTTERSON knocks on the door.)

UTTERSON
We will.

ENFIELD
I can't very well tell him you were visiting the Doctor, can I?

UTTERSON
Tell him I needed a quick drink.

ENFIELD
He'll assume you're meeting to mix more than drinks.

UTTERSON
And?

(The door opens, and POOLE invites UTTERSON in.)

ENFIELD
John! How long will you be in there?

UTTERSON
Until I'm done.

(UTTERSON exits into the house. A woman passes ENFIELD, and he suggestively nods to her.)

ENFIELD

See anything you like?

(The woman scoffs, and the street transforms.)

Scene Two

SETTING: the home of Dr. Henri JEKYLL. TIME: immediately after the previous scene.

> *(POOLE escorts UTTERSON into JEKYLL's private study. The room is comfortable, and dressed with elegant taste. It is warmed by a bright, open fire, in a fashion similar to a country house, and furnished with costly, well-polished oak. A closet filled with wine resides within the room, and a few carpets of many plies and agreeable color lay on the floor. A divan, desk, and a cheval-glass fill out the rest of the room. Windows look out to the courtyard. To one side of the room is a door that leads further into the rest of the house.)*

POOLE

It's good to see you, Mr. Utterson.

UTTERSON

Poole, we've been over this. Call me "John."

POOLE

That would be inappropriate, sir.

UTTERSON

Treat me with same respect as yourself.

POOLE

If I did that, I wouldn't call you anything at all.

UTTERSON

Not even "friend?"

POOLE

We're not all of us the best of friends to ourselves.

UTTERSON

You sound like Henri's father!

POOLE

He may have rubbed off on me a little.

UTTERSON

You've worked in this house for thirty years! I imagine you carry more than a little of him.

POOLE

You knew him for ten. Does it equate to say you carry a bit of him with you?

UTTERSON
Enough to wish the best for his daughter.
(Beat.)
Perhaps that's too bold?

POOLE
Are you asking for my opinion?

UTTERSON
That of my friend's.

POOLE
I've found we often ask questions of others when we already have an answer for ourselves. Mr. Utterson.

UTTERSON
You are ever the epitome of appropriate, Mr. Poole.
(Beat.)
Is Dr. Jekyll at home?

POOLE
Not at present, Mr. Utterson. This morning, I have seen only Mr. Hyde.

UTTERSON
Mr. Hyde?

POOLE
Mr. Edward Hyde. Do you know him?

UTTERSON
Not personally. Which room is he in?

POOLE
I saw Mr. Hyde go in by the old dissecting-room door.

UTTERSON
Is that usual for him?

POOLE
For the last several weeks, yes.

UTTERSON
The Doctor reposes a great deal of trust in him.

(JEKYLL appears in the doorway. She seems slightly disheveled.)

JEKYLL
In whom? Mr. Utterson! What an unexpected delight!

UTTERSON
Dr. Jekyll! I was about to call for a dog to sniff you out.

JEKYLL
Has Richard Enfield finished with that woman next door?

UTTERSON
Did you see them?

JEKYLL
I heard them.

POOLE
We all did.

JEKYLL
I couldn't sleep, so I've been looking to my laboratory. Speaking of which…
(She withdraws a note, and hands it to POOLE.)
Poole, could you take this to the chemist?

POOLE
I will call the carriage.

JEKYLL
If you must, but take your time. Enjoy the sunshine!

POOLE
With all convenient speed, then, Doctor.

(POOLE exits into the street.)

JEKYLL
"Dr. Jekyll?"

UTTERSON
You started it! "Mr. Utterson!"

JEKYLL
It's expected of me. I would've thought we were closer than that, by now, to you.

UTTERSON
I'd like to be.

(JEKYLL sees the package UTTERSON is holding.)

JEKYLL

Is that for me? You shouldn't have.

UTTERSON

Oh! Yes. It was no trouble.

(She begins opening the present.)

Enfield and I were at the University, yesterday. The Dean said this was found amidst storage.

(She withdraws a cane made of a tough and heavy wood.)

JEKYLL

This is—was—my father's.

UTTERSON

He certainly had good taste.

JEKYLL

Certainly, though, without him, I'm not sure what to do with it. It doesn't suit me. Perhaps I'll find some use for it… Thank you!

(They appear as though they might kiss, but JEKYLL turns away.)

UTTERSON

What's the matter?

JEKYLL

I was up all night, and I feel a little unlike myself. It may be best if I lie down.

UTTERSON

How many nights have you been awake in a row?

JEKYLL

Can we not do this now?

UTTERSON

Do I dare ask what kind of work you're doing?

JEKYLL

Here we go…

UTTERSON

I'm concerned for you!

JEKYLL
You're concerned for yourself. But fret not; I won't be turning to my research journals for warmth.

UTTERSON
You're not turning to anything for warmth.

JEKYLL
What do you want me to say?

UTTERSON
That you're interested!

JEKYLL
It's not that simple.

UTTERSON
It is, if you want it!

JEKYLL
You're such a man, you know that?

UTTERSON
What else should I be?
(Beat.)
What are you studying?

JEKYLL
Whatever I please, outside of the "everyday trivialities of medicine."

UTTERSON
They've put you under house arrest.

JEKYLL
Nonsense! They are obligated to allow a certain portion of the staff time for independent study.

UTTERSON
Who else is doing this "independent study" program?

JEKYLL
All the female doctors.

UTTERSON
Aren't you the only one?

JEKYLL

Yes.

(Beat.)

UTTERSON

You should take time off for yourself.

JEKYLL

Perhaps.

UTTERSON

I could take it off with you.

JEKYLL

I could only imagine what people would say about that.

UTTERSON

Think about it: the two of us, alone. We'd make a grand time out of it.

JEKYLL

I'm sure we would.

(They are about to kiss again, and again the mirror flickers, and JEKYLL moves away from UTTERSON.)

UTTERSON

Talk to me!

JEKYLL

There's nothing to say.

UTTERSON

Who is this Hyde fellow?

JEKYLL

Don't be jealous, Gabriel.

UTTERSON

Too late.

JEKYLL

You're jealous, because you're unaware.

UTTERSON

Yes! How long have you known him?

JEKYLL

A few months, but it feels like a lifetime.

UTTERSON

And he has a key to your home?

JEKYLL

How do you know—never mind. This is absurd.

UTTERSON

What am I supposed to think?

JEKYLL

He's a patient! You know I can't talk to you about—

UTTERSON

Do you know that he had a right fit outside your door this morning?

JEKYLL

He's troubled.

UTTERSON

He's a freak!

JEKYLL

I won't indulge your delusions.

UTTERSON

Then I'll spare you the deluge.

(UTTERSON goes to exit.)

JEKYLL

John!

UTTERSON

Oh, it's John, now, is it?

JEKYLL

Yes. John. I have something for you.

(She withdraws a sealed envelope from her desk, and gives it to UTTERSON.)

UTTERSON

Am I supposed to know what this is?

JEKYLL
As my lawyer, John Utterson, you should have this: my revised will.

UTTERSON
Revised?

JEKYLL
The principle change is that of my benefactor. In the case of my decease, all my possessions are to go to my friend, the freak, Mr. Edward Hyde.

UTTERSON
Hyde?

JEKYLL
Yes. This should prove my point.

UTTERSON
How?

JEKYLL
If I intended to love the man and be with him, why would I not marry him?

UTTERSON
I'm sure this makes sense to you, but to me—

JEKYLL
It will. In time.

UTTERSON
Henri, please. I am a man to be trusted. Make a clean breast of this in confidence, and I assure you I can get you out of it.

JEKYLL
I am painfully situated, John; my position is a very strange one. It is one of those affairs that cannot be mended by talking to other people.

UTTERSON
Please, Henri. Let me in.

JEKYLL
My mind cannot house more voices, John! I would trust you before any man alive, ay, before myself, if I could make the choice. But it isn't what you think. It is not as bad as that. The moment I choose, I can be rid of Mr. Hyde. I give you my hand upon that. But this is a private matter, and I beg of you to let it sleep.

(Beat.)

UTTERSON

I have no doubt you are perfectly right.

JEKYLL

Good. But since we have touched upon this business—for the last time, I hope—there is one point I should like you to understand. I have a really great interest in poor Hyde's remediation into society. If I'm taken away, John, I wish you to promise me that you will bear with him, and get his rights for him. I think you would, if you knew all.

UTTERSON

I can't pretend that I shall ever like him.

JEKYLL

I don't ask that. I only ask for justice. And when that inevitably fails, I ask you to help him, for my sake, when I am no longer here. Promise me, Gabriel. Please.

(Beat. He nods, and goes to the door.)

Are you upset with me?

UTTERSON

How could I be?

(He withdraws his business card and places it on her desk.)

In case you need me.

JEKYLL

I know how to get a hold of you.

UTTERSON

I know. It's merely a reminder.

(UTTERSON exits. JEKYLL has a solemn moment. HYDE appears.)

HYDE

He's a good looking man.

JEKYLL

Shut up.

(JEKYLL begins busywork to distract her. HYDE mirrors her actions.)

HYDE

Wears a lot of layers. Ever get much of a look under them?

JEKYLL

Shut up.

HYDE

How's his endurance?

JEKYLL

Shut up! Give me one single minute, please!

HYDE

Someone's got her Olivers in a Twist.

JEKYLL

I hate your voice.

HYDE

It's your voice.

JEKYLL

And I hate it.

HYDE

What's troubling you, Henri?

JEKYLL

The source of one's problems shouldn't be allowed to ask what's troubling them.

HYDE

What have I done?

(JEKYLL gives HYDE a look.)

Oh, right. But you had fun, didn't you?

JEKYLL

Shut up. This isn't about having fun.

HYDE

Life is about having fun! That's what people are meant to do!

JEKYLL

You're not people. Shut up.

HYDE

I'm part of you, you're a person, a person is a singular component of people; ergo, I am people!

JEKYLL & HYDE

Shut up!

(Beat.)

HYDE

You should sleep with him.

JEKYLL

I can't sleep at all, let alone with someone else.

HYDE

It's a perfectly normal thing to do.

JEKYLL

For normal people! But normal people don't have to fear what they'll awake to in the morning.

HYDE

It's only been—what? Months? And you're already on the verge of a scientific breakthrough! I wouldn't be surprised if you completed your research in just a few years.

JEKYLL

I don't think I can last years.

HYDE

Good thing you altered the will, then.

(He laughs, but JEKYLL does not.)

Oh, come now! That's funny!

JEKYLL

Not in the slightest.

HYDE

You wanted this!

JEKYLL

I didn't want this. It wasn't supposed to be like this.

HYDE

Stop filling your tub with self-pity, would you? Unless you're planning on drowning in it.

JEKYLL

Is that what you want?

HYDE

It'd be quieter.

(No response.)

Do you even know what a joke is?

JEKYLL

That wasn't funny.

HYDE

Get over yourself! We have a great thing going, you and I.

JEKYLL

There is no "you and I."

HYDE

You mean "us."

JEKYLL

"We."

HYDE

(Thinking she said "Oui.")

Yes?

JEKYLL

No! The royal "we!" Me! Alone. Singular.

HYDE

You're terribly selfish, you know that?

JEKYLL

How terrible for you.

HYDE

Such a whiny little thing. Imagine your only existence being to have to listen to you, and your drivel.

JEKYLL

You're supposed to be helping me!

HYDE

I am! You posed a problem, and I provided a solution.

JEKYLL

The solution can't be to just run around drinking, gambling, doing whatever you please!

HYDE

If there are rules, you're the only one following them.

JEKYLL

Father said the only way to success is by keeping your nose to the grindstone.

HYDE

If you want a short nose. Who was your father? Cyrano?

(Beat.)

When you keep your nose down, you can't see them passing you by. Look up, Jekyll! They've locked you up, and hidden you away, like some gorgon behind the glass. Don't let them turn you to stone.

(Beat.)

You can't beat them at their game playing by their rules. If you play by their rules, you'll die in here.

JEKYLL

So, I should have fun, and stop them from having theirs?

HYDE

That'd be impossible. No! Everyone should be doing what they please!

JEKYLL

They wouldn't like that.

HYDE

Which usually means it's the right thing to do.

(Beat. HYDE begins massaging JEKYLL.)

You sent Poole to get more?

JEKYLL

Yes.

HYDE

Does he know what it's for?

JEKYLL

No.

HYDE

Going to tell him?

JEKYLL

No.

HYDE

Probably for the best. Innocent ignorance, and all that.

JEKYLL

Mmhmm…

(JEKYLL has closed her eyes, enjoying the massage immensely. She is calm.)

You're right.

HYDE

I often am.

JEKYLL

I should sleep with Gabriel.

(HYDE begins kissing her neck. At first, she enjoys it, and then realizes what is happening.)

What're you doing?

HYDE

What you want.

(Beat. HYDE then begins kissing her neck and face again, his hands moving over her body.)

JEKYLL

I don't know if this is—

HYDE

Think of it as masturbation.

(The lights fade out. The scene transforms.)