

The Strange Story of Dr. Heckel and Mr. Jyde

By Jeff Slade

Dr. Harry Heckel lived a life of routine. He woke up at 6:30, took a shower, eat an English muffin with the same fresh orange marmalade he'd always used, and drove to work. He then began his day at the office, where he spent the majority his days listening to his patients, most of whom over-60 year-olds, who would come in for every little problem that made them worry. Whether it was a slight headache, a cough that sounded just a touch raspier than usual, or even a mosquito bite that looked redder than normal, Dr. Heckel was called. Not only did this situation make him regret his decision to start his practice in Boynton Beach, Florida, it made him look back on his reasons for becoming a doctor; to make startling new discoveries in the world of medicine.

The Doctor then proceeded to return home to his darling wife Mrs. Evelyn Heckel at the hour of 7:00 p.m., followed by supper at 7:30 sharp. They then would eat their dinners over a brief discussion of their days, usually consisting of "Hi Honey, how was your day?" and "Fine darling. And how was yours?" "Fine," the final response would be. They would proceed to watch one of their weekly TV shows, and read a book before at last retiring to bed, usually around 10:00. This routine had worked fine for the Heckels for 25 years. However, one evening while pondering over his book, for no particular reason, Dr. Heckel decided to change this ceaseless routine. And so the story of Dr. Heckel and Mr. Jyde began.

The next several months consisted of a sudden change in the ever-consistant daily routine. Dr. Heckel got up earlier, often did not show up to work, and sometimes would not return home until the latest of hours. The basement of the Heckel house had been transformed into the doctor's own personal laboratory, which had only one lock and one key that was kept by Dr. Heckel at all times. He would spend hours upon hours down in that basement working and working until he literally could not work any more. However,

even as the entire town wondered and speculated as to what was going on down in that basement, nobody knew. When approached about it, Dr. Heckel would merely give a little smirk, explaining he did not have any idea what in the world the person was talking about. The only clue that anybody had as to the activities of Dr. Heckel, was a piece of paper Evelyn had found in the his lab coat, entitled "Operation Jyde."

Finally, after six months of these bizarre happenings, Dr. Heckel announced that he was done with his project. He not surprisingly would face the immediate interrogation of his wife. "Now that you're finally done, can you please tell me what the hell you were doing down there?" Evelyn asked. "I'm afraid I cannot darling," responded the doctor. "And I am sorry to inform you that I must not ever reveal to you my work, for if they are disclosed to anyone they will be forever ruined." Although she did not quite understand his reasoning, Evelyn reluctantly trusted her husband, thinking that it was probably best for her sake not to know.

Harry Heckel was ecstatic. He was finally going to be able to use his brilliant creation. It was a warm Friday evening (as they all are in Florida) and the doctor had told Evelyn he was going to a medical convention in Phoenix. He left the house to his waving wife and then preceded to drive only 30 miles away into Miami, stopping at a Holiday Inn he had made reservations at for the weekend. "Hello. Welcome to the Holiday Inn Miami! How can I assist you today?" asked the overly perky receptionist. "Hi. I have reservations for a John Smith." "Alrighty then! Let me just see...yes...here it is. And I have you down for a single non-smoking room for three nights?" "That's correct." Harry Heckel then paid for the room with \$325 exact cash, no identification needed. He checked into the room and

relaxed for a little bit. At about 9:30 p.m. Dr. Heckel left his hotel room carrying only his wallet and a small vile of liquid entitled "Jyde".

Henry Heckel first grabbed something to eat at the hotel, a scrumptious buffet-style dinner. After his meal, he walked into the bathroom of the hotel lobby, still carrying the vile in his right-hand pocket. He went into a stall, made sure nobody was in sight, and drank the liquid from the vile like a pure shot of whisky. The green liquid could truly not have tasted worse. Apparently, while creating this potion, Dr. Heckel did not taken taste into much consideration. However, with much disgust, he was able to gulp down the potion. Five minutes later, Dr. Heckel left the bathroom stall, however there was no semblance of him left. His brown hair was now as blonde as a Barbie, his clean-cut facial hair had turned into a full beard, his frame grew both in height and girth, and his voice was at least three octaves lower. Not to mention his face and body looked at least two decades younger. Harry Heckel walked out of the lobby, went outside, and went into the city of Miami a new man.

"Let me ask you something," Harry said to his cab driver. "Shoot," the man replied, clearly not afraid of conversation. "What if you could just completely change yourself, be able to be one person at one time, and a completely different one the next?" "I'm afraid I don't quite get what you mean there sir," the cab driver responded. "Like a transformation. Like you drink something and become this whole new person. Would you do it?" "Why would anybody want to completely change who they are? It seems to me like anyone who would do that would need to focus on fixing the problems in his real life before just switching to a new one." "But what if that person didn't want to change lives. He just wanted to escape his for a little while. Would it be okay then?" "Hey man, I'm just a cab

driver. I'm not some life guru or something. Alright then, that'll be \$23.58," he said as they pulled up to one of the bars recommended by the concierge. The doctor paid the cab driver, with a gracious tip for engaging in such a thought-provoking conversation. "Hey! I didn't catch your name," the cab driver said before they parted ways. "Oh, sorry how rude of me. Name is Jyde, Robert Jyde."

Robert Jyde was having a great inaugural night. He was finally able to do all of the things Harry Heckel had not done for the last 25 years of his life. Drinking, yelling, dancing, Jyde was living the life Heckel had never even thought about having. His confidence was staggering. He approached women like they were kittens; not shying away from saying whatever came to his mind. When it came time for him to leave, all of the people at the bar knew and loved Robert Jyde. The next day Jyde lived his new life as opposite as possible from the routine that had plagued him the last two-and-a-half decades of his life. He slept in till 12:00, relaxed by the pool, eat on his own time, and never once thought about anything to do with a schedule. Before long, Rpbert Jyde was ready to hit the city again.

Everything was going as planned. Jyde was having another awesome time at a different recommended bar in Miami. Then, out of the corner of his eye, he caught the eye of a woman looking strikingly similar to Evelyn Heckel sitting alone at the bar. Jyde spent the next half hour attempting to figure out if it was indeed her or if his mind was simply playing tricks on him as some cruel game of morality. When he finally took the bar seat next to her, his suspicions were confirmed; it was most definitely Evelyn Heckel. Having no idea of what to say or what to do, the words "Long night?" were all that could make it out of the absolutely stunned man's mouth. "You could say that," Evelyn quickly responded, as she downed what didn't seem to be the first of drinks. "Do you mind me asking what's

bothering you?" asked Jyde. "Well, me and my husband were living a great life. No problems in 25 years of marriage. Then one day, he decides to go crazy and lock himself up in a basement for six months, working on some experiment on god knows what! Oh, I wouldn't even call it a perfect marriage anyways. We were living the same damn day over and over again for 25 years. Maybe he felt as trapped as I did. Whatever though, you don't want to hear any of this crap," she said to her new acquaintance as she downed yet another drink. "You actually have no idea how much this amuses me," proclaimed Jyde. It truly did amuse him, as he was finally hearing what his wife really thought for the first time in their entire marriage. As the night went on, more drinks went in and the toll was getting substantially high.

The next morning Harry Heckel woke up to a familiar scene. Himself lying down on the right side of the bed, while his wife, Evelyn, was on the left. However, something about this morning was different, because he was not in the form of Harry Heckel, but the form of Robert Jyde, the character Harry had created to escape the very situation he was in. As he was due to transform back into Harry Heckel in three hours, Jyde went outside for much needed breath of fresh air. His wife had technically cheated on him, as she slept with another man, but that other man was him.... "so is that really cheating?" thought Jyde. He then resolved that the best thing to do was go back to the room and tell Evelyn the truth. The entire truth. That he is really her beloved husband and that he will never again transform into Robert Jyde. However, as he nervously returned to reveal this shocking news, Evelyn was gone. Only a note remained that read:

Dear Robert,

Although it may seem unorthodox, I would like to thank you. I would like to thank you for inadvertently saving my marriage. When I woke up this morning, as much fun as I had with you last night, the only thought I had was of how I missed and loved my dearest husband. When Harry returns home I plan to tell him everything. I truly hope he will come to forgive me, as I now realize how important he really is to me. I know you and I had a special connection, but it just wasn't the same. I truly hope you find whatever it is you're looking for.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Heckel

It was at that moment that Harry Heckel knew what he was looking for when he decided to change into Robert Jyde. He wanted adventure, he wanted danger, he wanted to find out if he was really happy, and by god he wanted something different. But, after doing all of these things and going on the wildest adventure of his life, Harry Heckel realized that what he truly wanted was the very routine he had been living for the previous 25 years, with the same woman he had loved for 25 years. He had just lost sight of it though over time. So, Harry Heckel returned from his "convention" to hear his wife tell him a story of a bad mistake she made in Miami and how it only made her realize how much she loved him. He knew he had to act somewhat mad, because his wife had just technically cheated on him. So he did, and he soon came to forgive her. But in time their lives returned to normal. Harry Heckel woke up at 6:30, took a shower, eat his English muffin with the very same orange marmalade and went to work just like he had for the past 25 years of his life. Only now it was different, as he appreciated every minute second of his normalcy. And if you

ask him today, Harry will tell you his newfound happiness is due only to one man and one man only: Mr. Robert Jyde.