JEKYLL VS HYDE

THE POTION OF DOOM

First published in Great Britain in 2026 by Farshore

An imprint of HarperCollins*Publishers*
1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

farshore.co.uk

HarperCollins*Publishers*
Macken House, 39/40 Mayor Street Upper, Dublin 1, D01 C9W8

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Illustration copyright © Holly Swain 2026

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A CIP catalogue record of this title is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 0 00 877694 7

Printed and bound in the UK using 100% renewable electricity
at CPI Group (UK) Ltd

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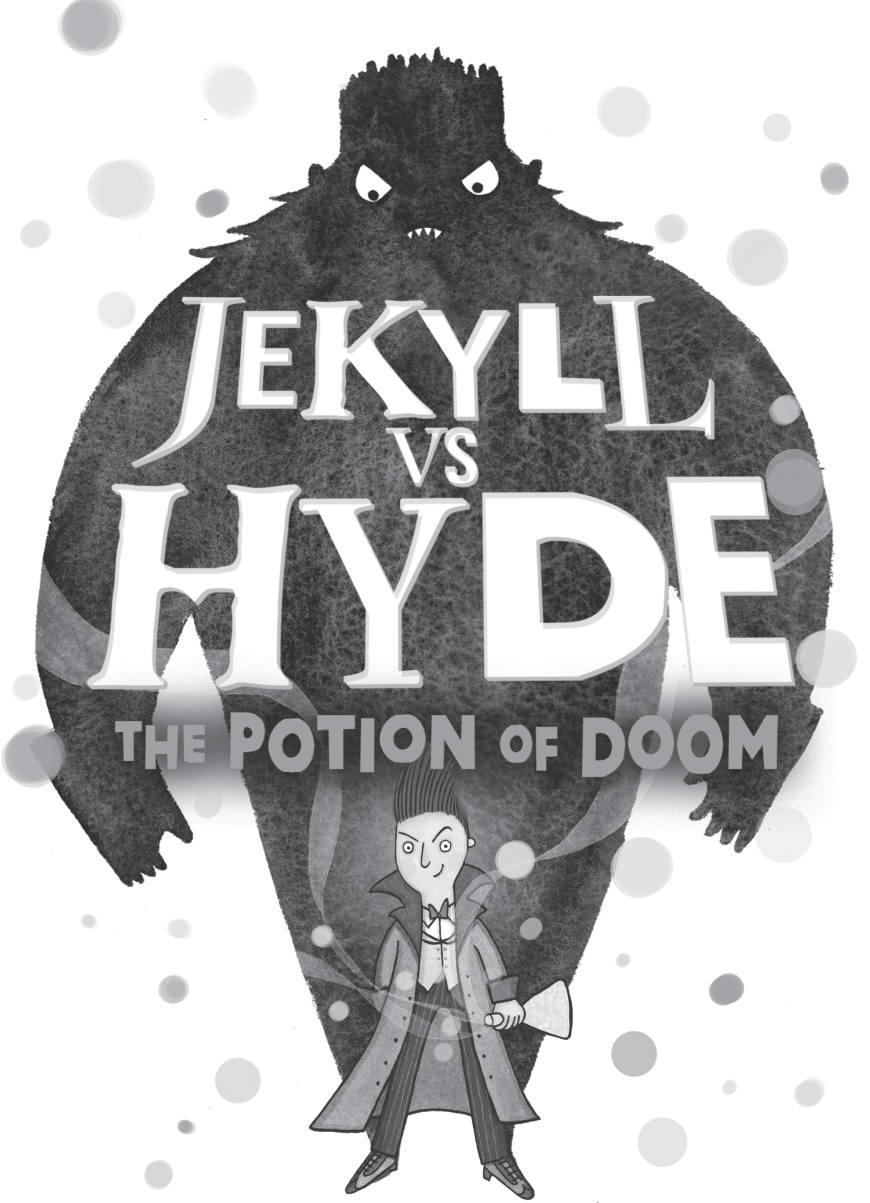

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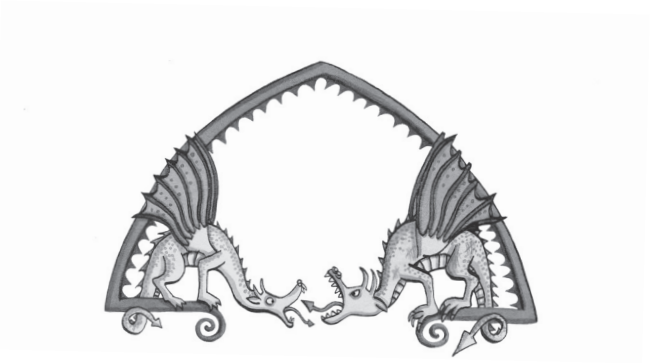
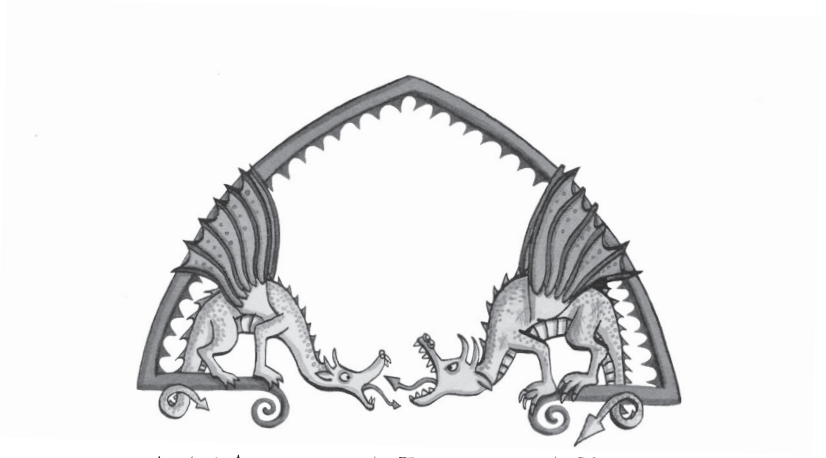
JACK MEGGITT-PHILLIPS
ILLUSTRATED BY HOLLY SWAIN



'Has the greed of curiosity too much command of you? Think before you answer, for it shall be done as you decide . . .'

Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, 1886



THE CURSED BLESSING

MR AND MRS JEKYLL were not Mr and Mrs Jekyll for very long.

They met each other at a Scrabble-themed disco party on Saturday, were married on Monday, and had the beginnings of a baby brewing in Mrs Jekyll's belly by Wednesday. But by the time it came round to Friday, they realised they didn't really like each other and that they had quite possibly made the biggest mistake of their lives.

They had initially been drawn to each other because they were so very different. Mr Jekyll was a nervous man who apologised to tables whenever he bumped into them, while Mrs Jekyll was so overflowing with confidence that she was more likely to jump on the

tables and sing songs on them.

At the beginning, Mr Jekyll was charmed by his wife's boldness, and she found his shyness adorable. But after too much time in each other's company, she wanted to chop off his head whenever he said sorry, and he began to miss the days when he could eat in a restaurant without a companion who always climbed on the table stood in the soup.

As the baby grew in Mrs Jekyll's belly, so did their resentment for one another. The bud of dislike blossomed into a dandelion of hatred, so that by the time the child was ready to make his grand entrance into the world, his two parents could no longer bear to be in the same room. This made the scene in the hospital rather uncomfortable.

"You're an odious oaf! You're a nit-brained nincompoop! You're the foulest fiend of humanity!" screeched Mrs Jekyll between contractions.

"Well, you, my dear, you . . . Ah, well, yes, um. Aha! Yes, you are exactly the sort of person who would be late to return a library book!" said Mr Jekyll in his firmest voice.

The argument paused for a brief moment, so Mrs Jekyll could finish off the business of giving birth. Mr

Jekyll apologised individually to each of the doctors and nurses for having used his firmest voice in front of them.

Mr Jekyll was in the middle of making his last apology to the nurse delivering the baby, who told him she was too busy to entertain a conversation at that precise moment, when he first caught sight of his son.

For the first time in their lives, Mr and Mrs Jekyll found something in common. They both loved this teeny, tiny child.

"He is marvellous," said Mr Jekyll, kissing his son's head.

"A *magician* is marvellous," said Mrs Jekyll crossly. "A *Victoria sponge* is marvellous. This boy is far finer than any cake or conjurer. He is spectacular. THAT is the word to describe him."

This argument continued for several weeks. After they finally agreed that no word would ever be able to describe the wonder and beauty of their son, Mr and Mrs Jekyll moved on to their next topic of debate. Namely, the baby's name.

Mr Jekyll felt that their son should be given a nice, sensible name, like Henry. Mrs Jekyll preferred

something more daring, like Maverick. They mashed the two together and settled on Hen*rik*, which neither of them felt was remotely good enough for their little angel.

Mr and Mrs Jekyll had stayed with each other because they thought that having a baby would bring them closer together, but they soon learned that babies often create more disagreements than they solve. They got divorced, and Mrs Jekyll simply changed her name to *Ms* Jekyll, because she had no intention of returning to her previous surname of Crabblefeather-Lightly.

They kept living in the same house, because they couldn't agree on a selling price. Mr Jekyll decorated the top half in the style of an especially dull maths classroom, while Ms Jekyll covered the bottom half in leopard-print wallpaper and filled it with things that would give you a headache if you looked at them for too long.

Mr Jekyll looked after Henrik for the first half of the day, and Ms Jekyll for the second. They devised a pulley system for the baby's basket, so that they could exchange their child without having to see one another. They both wanted to be the favourite

parent, so they spoiled him with presents and compliments.

"Henrik, my lovely lollipop, you are so much like your mother," said his mother. "You shall shine on the stage like a diamond among pebbles."

"Henrik, my dear boy, when I see you, it is like looking in the mirror," said the boy's father. "You were born to be a health and safety maintenance engineer – just like me!"

The Jekylls wanted to spend as much time with Henrik as possible, so his father woke him up early, and his mother kept him up late. This meant that Henrik was tired, often cranky, and had an extremely high opinion of himself.

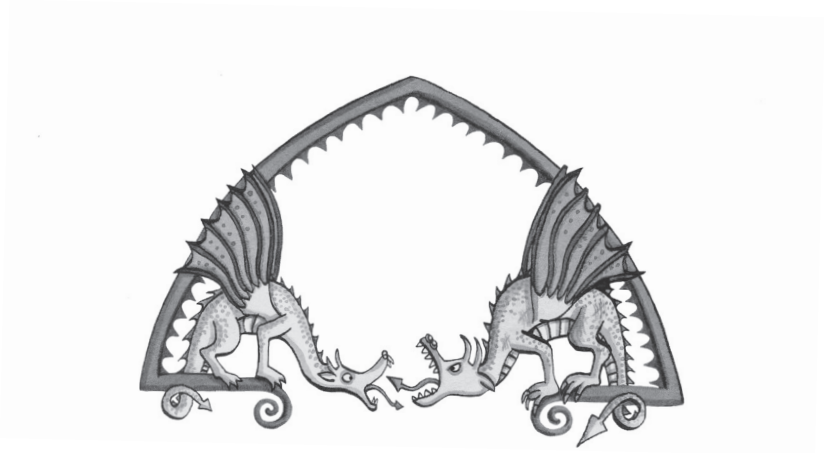
As soon as he could walk, he waddled about with the air of a king inspecting his courtiers. As soon as he could talk, he used his words to make demands. It's hardly surprising that Henrik became a rather horrid child, taking what he wanted from the world without any fear of the consequences.

And then one day, he went too far.

In the pages that follow, he will be responsible for creating a monster. And, on the day that an ancient manor burns to the ground, he will be responsible for

a dead body.

But the only thing you need to know right now is that it all started for Henrik Jekyll when he found out about the Hyde Potion.



THE HELPLESSLY HELPFUL

HENRIK DIDN'T FIND OUT about the Hyde Potion until the day that the scarlet package arrived on the Jekylls' doorstep, over a decade after he was born.

During those years, Henrik had become a cunning little piece of work. He regularly lied, he refused to go to school, and he had learned how to manipulate his parents. Light-up trainers, the most tropical of goldfish, talking waffle makers – there wasn't anything that he couldn't trick his parents into purchasing for him. He had spoiled himself rotten, and now he craved a distraction worthy of his time.

As usual, Henrik Jekyll got exactly what he wanted.