



FACES

By Stephen Duckham

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FACES

A Play by

STEPHEN DUCKHAM

Inspired by a short story by
Charles Dickens

CHARACTERS

LANDLORD/LANDLADY)
OLD SANDY	An old Yorkshire Farmer) 2020
HENRY STANDING	An American tourist)
CLARA	A Victorian Lady)
ANTHONY CHASE	A Victorian Gentleman)
BAPTISTA	An Italian manservant) 1852
GIOVANNA	An Italian maidservant)
SIGNOR DELLOMBRA	An Italian Nobleman)

Notes on the set

As the play is set in two different periods, the main set is that of the Fennimore Inn. As you will see in the set description, it is suggested that only the bare essentials in both scenery and furniture is used.

While the story is related by OLD SANDY, the characters in his story move around as though they are in their own setting. The lighting should cross fade as indicated from dim interior of the Inn to bright Italian sunlight.

At no time in the play must the characters from one period look at, or make eye contact with, those from the other period.

If the part is a LANDLADY, she should be referred to as Mary Daily.

Scene - The Fennimore Inn. Present day.

The set is fairly open with just a suggestion of the Fennimore Inn, a slightly secluded hostelry in a remote part of the Yorkshire Moors. To stage right is a wall piece with a door set in it. This should have the ability to open both to on stage and off. Upstage is a small area of the bar. The only furniture is a bar table and two chairs stage left and a second table and chairs to the right of centre. On the bar are various glasses and bottles etc.

[Opening music blends into the sound of a fierce wind outside. The LANDLORD is at the bar and OLD SANDY is sitting on the left chair at the table stage left. HE is finishing his drink.]

LANDLORD Wind's blowing wild tonight, Sandy.

SANDY Ay, there's a storm approaching.

LANDLORD *[Crossing down to the right of the table.]* Want another, or are you heading off home?

SANDY I've not long been here. I'll have another.

LANDLORD *[Chuckles and takes SANDY'S empty glass.]* Storm won't keep you from your nightly tippie! Although there's no one here for you to talk to tonight.

SANDY There will be. Wind tells me a visitor be comin'.

LANDLORD *[Another chuckle.]* If you say so. *[HE moves back to the bar. Suddenly the door is flung open – opening on stage – and HENRY, an American in his mid-30's, enters.]*

HENRY My God, what a night!

LANDLORD Here, let me help you.

[HENRY moves into the scene brushing drops of rain off his coat. The LANDLORD moves to the door and shuts it.]

HENRY Thank you. The wind wrenched the door right outa my hand.

LANDLORD No harm done. It's a tough old door!

HENRY I was out walking and the wind started up so damn quickly.

LANDLORD It does that on the Moors. Many a traveller is taken by surprise.

HENRY Well, I certainly was.

LANDLORD *[Moving to the bar.]* Can I get you anything?

HENRY Scotch on the rocks, please.

[The LANDLORD moves behind the bar to pour the drink. Suddenly there is a loud clap of thunder.]

LANDLORD There's your storm, Sandy.

SANDY Ay.

HENRY Good evening.

SANDY Evenin'.

LANDLORD Are you on holiday in these parts?

HENRY Just for a few days. I'm over here on business in London, but wanted to visit this part of the UK. My family ancestors hale from this part of Yorkshire.

LANDLORD Really? It's a lovely part of the country.

HENRY Sure is.

LANDLORD There you are. Two fifty-five, please.

HENRY Thanks. *[HE pays for the drink and takes his glass. Another clap of thunder.]*
Gee, this weather could wake the dead.

SANDY Not wake the dead. It'll just stir the spirits into walkin'.

HENRY Spirits?

LANDLORD Now Sandy. *[To HENRY.]* Don't mind Old Sandy. He likes to tell tales of what was supposed to have happened around these parts.

SANDY Not tales. Truth.

HENRY I'm not sure I believe in ghosts.

[Another clap of thunder.]

SANDY Thunder and lightning. Tells you things.

HENRY What things?

SANDY When a friend is coming to visit you unexpectedly.

HENRY *[Humouring SANDY.]* OK.....

SANDY Without his own knowledge, he sends an invisible messenger, to put the idea of him into your head.

LANDLORD Don't let him hinder you with his tales...

HENRY It's OK. I'm intrigued. *[HE sits at the table opposite SANDY.]*

SANDY You walk along a crowded street where you live and see the face of a passing stranger who looks like your friend. Then another face passes who looks like him. So, you begin to have a strange foreknowledge that presently you'll meet your friend - which you do, though you believed him to be out of town. What do you call that?

- HENRY Well I guess it's not that uncommon to see a resemblance.
- SANDY Uncommon? No, it's not uncommon. It's as common as apples on the trees of the old Manor House. And that reminds me..
- LANDLORD *[Under his breath.]* Oh, here we go....
- SANDY What of the old lady who lived at the Manor House?
- HENRY *[Slightly caught up in Sandy's tale.]* What about her?
- SANDY One night, while playing bridge after dinner, she suddenly shrieks and leaps up from the table; white showing through her rouged cheeks. "My sister in France is dead! I saw her face in the playing card and felt her cold touch on my back," she says. And minutes later a messenger comes to tell her that what she had seen and felt was true. Now what do you think of that?
- HENRY Well, that is pretty weird.
- LANDLORD Old wives' tale, I call it! *[HE laughs.]*
- SANDY You can laugh, John Daily, but it's true, I tell yer.
- HENRY I guess in these wild parts all sorts of stories have been handed down.
- SANDY Ay. But none so strange as the one of an English gentleman's daughter.
- HENRY Oh? What happened to her?
- SANDY She ran away from her home here.
- HENRY When was this?
- SANDY Spring of 1852. The girl had quarrelled with her parents over the man she wanted to marry. A gentleman called Anthony Chase. Her parents forbade her to see him. They wanted her married to the son of the Lord of the Manor. She rebelled and, on a night like this one, left the family home. Her parents were distraught with grief and it is said because of her actions, she, and all of her descendants, were cursed by the spirits of her family.
- LANDLORD *[Crossing to above the table and placing a glass in front of SANDY.]* Here you are, old man. Quench your thirst with *this* spirit; and don't bother our visitor.
- HENRY It's OK. I'd like to hear the story.
- [More thunder claps.]*
- SANDY As I said, it was a night such as this one. The young girl had run away to London to be with Anthony, and next day they eloped to Italy where they were married in secret.
- [Soft Italian Music comes in as the story is retold. The action is ghost like with characters from 1852 moving around, oblivious to the surroundings. At no time do the characters from either period see each other. The lights change to warm Italian sunlight as CLARA and ANTHONY enter from right and cross to*