

***THE
ISLAND
OF
DR. MOREAU***

A new horror play by
BILL AMOS

Adapted from the novel

By

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Thank you.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

DR. MOREAU, *A reclusive scientist who specializes in vivisection*
EDWARD PRENDICK, *The only survivor of a shipwreck*
MONTGOMERY, *Dr. Moreau's assistant on the island; rescues Prendick*
DAVIS, *Captain of a ship carrying cargo to Dr. Moreau's island*
M'LING, *Dr. Moreau's servant*
SAYER OF THE LAW, *Leader of the Beast Folk and half-man; half-*
HAZUS, *Half-man; half-hyena*
CHIFFOE, *Half-man; half-leopard*
BOFAIR, *Half-man; half-ape*
ISIS, *Half-woman; half puma*

EXTRAS

THE BEAST FOLK, *A society created by Dr. Moreau's scientific experiments*

ACT ONE

Scene 1

[IN BLACK.]

[EDWARD PRENDICK IS LIT DOWNSTAGE RIGHT BY A SPOTLIGHT.]

PRENDICK. The incident of the Lady Vain was well-published. Upon my return to England, I heard all about its sinking in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, though I need not have for the simple fact that I was there. Despite reports that there were no survivors, I stand as evidence to the contrary. I am inclined to think that it was not for my good fortune; for the story that I am about to relate to you exists in my memory as the single greatest horror that I have ever experienced. There were two other survivors, beside myself and though it is not clear to me when the madness struck, I am certain that the lives of those two other men were lost in vain. For, when Montgomery happened upon the lifeboat, I was the only one he found aboard the blood-stained craft.

[THE LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.]

ACT ONE

Scene 2

[LIGHTS UP.]

[AT RISE, PRENDICK IS LYING ON A COT AT CENTER. HE IS DELIRIOUS AND EXHAUSTED. MONTGOMERY SITS IN A CHAIR BESIDE HIM, DABBING PRENDICK'S LIPS WITH A DAMP RAG FROM A SAUCER OF WATER. HE TAKES PRENDICK'S PULSE. A MURMUR OF ANIMAL NOISES IS HEARD OFF STAGE.]

[PRENDICK STIRS AND WAKES.]

PRENDICK. *[DRY-MOUTHED]* All right I suppose.

MONTGOMERY. You were asleep for nearly thirty hours. You're lucky we found you.

PRENDICK. Where am I.

MONTGOMERY. You're aboard a ship called the Ipecacuanha. We're bound for an island in the Pacific.

PRENDICK. What island?

MONTGOMERY. For as long as I've been there, they haven't had a name that I know of.

[DABS PRENDICK'S LIPS AGAIN.]

You were dangerously dehydrated when we found you. You're more stable now, though. Thanks to me.

PRENDICK. Who are you?

MONTGOMERY. My name is Montgomery.

PRENDICK. Are you a doctor?

MONTGOMERY. Of sorts. I specialize in animals, but I know enough about human physiology. You were the only one on the lifeboat?

PRENDICK. No.

MONTGOMERY. I thought as much. There was a lot of blood. What happened?

PRENDICK. I was aboard a ship called the Lady Vain when she sank. The other two men who survived with me killed each other over the last canteen of water.

MONTGOMERY. You didn't fight?

PRENDICK. I did. That is, I tried. I wasn't a very good match.

DR. WATSON. I smoke a pipe and the occasional cigar, myself.

MONTGOMERY. Yet, you're the only one left.

PRENDICK. I didn't kill them.

MONTGOMERY. I didn't say you did. Drink some more water.

[PRENDICK TAKES THE SAUCER FROM MONTGOMERY AND SIPS FROM IT. ANIMAL NOISES GROW LOUDER AND WILDER. A CALAMITY.]

PRENDICK. What is your cargo?

MONTGOMERY. Animals. New specimens for the doctor.

PRENDICK. Doctor?

MONTGOMERY. My employer, Dr. Moreau. It's his island that we're bound for.

PRENDICK. What sort of doctor is he?

MONTGOMERY. *[PAUSE; AVOIDING THE QUESTION]* You're English?

PRENDICK. I am.

MONTGOMERY. I studied medicine in England for a while before the doctor hired me.

[THE ANIMAL NOISES PERSIST AND GROW UNBEARABLY LOUD. MONTGOMERY STANDS AND EXITS.]

What in God's name is going on? Keep those damn things in line!

[RETURNS.]

My apologies, mister...

PRENDICK. Prendick. Edward Prendick.

MONTGOMERY. Yes, Mr. Prendick. You know, I can imagine you must be hungry.

PRENDICK. Starving, actually.

MONTGOMERY. I'll have one of my boys bring you something to eat. How long have you been at sea, after the sinking of the...

PRENDICK. ...The Lady Vain?

MONTGOMERY. *[ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY]* Lady Vain. Right.

PRENDICK. Several days, I think. Perhaps a week. I don't really know. It all runs together after a while.

MONTGOMERY. How did she sink?

PRENDICK. I was below deck when the alert sounded. From what I could gather, we struck a derelict. The ship went down in no time at all.

MONTGOMERY. Poor bastards never had a chance?

PRENDICK. No, I suppose not. Can I have some more water?

MONTGOMERY. Of course.

[CROSSES AND CALLS OFF.]

M'Ling!

M'LING. ***[OFFSTAGE]*** Yes, Mr. Montgomery?

[PRENDICK TRIES TO SEE M'LING, BUT MONTGOMERY OBSTRUCTS HIS VIEW.]

MONTGOMERY. Bring Mr. Prendick more water and prepare supper.

M'LING. Yes, Mr. Montgomery.

[MONTGOMERY RETURNS TO HIS SEAT.]

PRENDICK. Who was that?

MONTGOMERY. M'Ling is one of the islanders. He's also an excellent chef. Excuse my curiosity, but I'm fascinated. What happened to the bodies of the other two men who were in the boat?

PRENDICK. They fell into the sea.

MONTGOMERY. As they...

PRENDICK. Fought.

[MONTGOMERY GAZES LONG AT PRENDICK, WHOSE CLOTHES ARE COVERED WITH BLOOD.]

MONTGOMERY. We are beasts, after all. Don't you agree, Mr. Prendick?

PRENDICK. It doesn't surprise you what men will do just to survive?

MONTGOMERY. No. Does it you?

PRENDICK. I spent all the time I needed with those men. I saw what they did to each other; what I did. It scares to me death.

MONTGOMERY. Hold onto that, Mr. Prendick. Where we are going, fear is what keeps you alive.

[PAUSE]

I hope you like wild boar and swordfish. That is tonight's main course. On the island, Dr. Moreau prefers we stick to a strict vegetarian diet. But we're not on the island right now, are we?

PRENDICK. That will be fine. Thank you.

MONTGOMERY. Tell me more about the Lady Vain.

PRENDICK. There isn't very much to be told. I was a passenger on the ship. After it sank I found myself in one of the lifeboats with two other men. That is all.

MONTGOMERY. But it isn't. If it were that simple, Mr. Prendick, I would have pulled three of you from the sea.

PRENDICK. *[EVASIVELY]* I don't remember very much of what happened.

[PAUSE; HE LOOKS AT HIS CLOTHES. THE SIGHT OF THE BLOOD MAKES HIM UNEASY.]

Can I have new clothes?

MONTGOMERY. I'll get you some.

PRENDICK. When will we be arriving at the island?

MONTGOMERY. The trip usually takes twelve days – if the weather is on our side of course. I remember spending twenty-three days at sea after a hurricane set our ship off-course about sixty degrees to the north. I was only working for the doctor just under a year and only made four trips by that time. We had our own ship back them. The one and only time I couldn't oversee the trip, we lost our vessel. Now, we hire whoever will come to the island.

PRENDICK. I see.

[A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. MONTGOMERY ANSWERS. IT IS M'LING WITH FRESH WATER.]

MONTGOMERY. Thank you, M'Ling.

PRENDICK. Thank you. Will you pardon me if I say this all seems rather peculiar?

MONTGOMERY. Which brings me back to the Lady Vain.

PRENDICK. I already told you that I don't remember anything.

MONTGOMERY. I heard you.

PRENDICK. Are there other ports between us and the island?

MONTGOMERY. No. The only port is in the mainland in the opposite direction. Your only option is to come to the island with us and then, maybe, the captain will let you join him back.

PRENDICK. Why would he not?

MONTGOMERY. As far as he's concerned, you're a stowaway. He's a bit of an ass if you ask my opinion. I had to beg him to pick you up in the first place.

PRENDICK. No matter. I still think it would be best for all of us if I just returned with the captain. I'm sure your doctor wouldn't appreciate my interfering with his work. What sort of research did you say it was?

MONTGOMERY. I didn't say. He specializes in bio-chemistry. He worked in England for a while, before coming purchasing the island. I'm surprised you haven't heard of him before. Dr. Moreau made a rather large impression on the medical community there.

PRENDICK. What did he do?

MONTGOMERY. He worked with animals. The same as me. It's complicated.

[A BRIEF PAUSE BETWEEN THEM. AWKWARD SILENCE. THE GROWLING AND SNARLING OFFSTAGE CONTINUES.]

PRENDICK. What kind of animals are you taking to the island?

MONTGOMERY. All kinds. We have bear, a lion, a

timber wolf, several reptiles, and some birds. That's all I can remember right now. But it's a good variety. We're also carrying new supplies.

PRENDICK. What does he do with the animals?

MONTGOMERY. What happened on the lifeboat?

PRENDICK. Please, Mr. Montgomery. I'd rather not.

MONTGOMERY. Very well.

[STANDS.]

I'll see what is keeping your supper and bring you a fresh change of clothes. Rest up. You're still not one hundred percent, yet. Get some food in you tonight. Tomorrow, I'll take you topside for some fresh air.

[MONTGOMERY EXITS. PRENDICK RELAXES AS BEST HE CAN IN HIS COT AS THE ANIMAL NOISES CONTINUE.]

[FADE TO BLACK.]