

The English Theatre of Hamburg

Established 1976

presents

HERE LIES JEREMY TROY

A Farce by Jack Sharkey

Premiere on 15 November, 2018

Preview Performances on 12, 13 and 14 November

Performances Tuesday to Saturday at 19.30 Hours;
Matinee Performances at 11.30 Hours on Tuesdays
and Fridays Beginning 20 November

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HERE LIES JEREMY TROY

Dear English Teachers, Students of English and Friends,

The English Theatre of Hamburg will premiere **HERE LIES JEREMY TROY** by Jack Sharkey on 15 November, 2018, with the usual preview performances at reduced prices on 12, 13 and 14 November. Bookings for this evergreen American farce have already started. See the cover of this study guide for ticket information. The text of the play may be obtained at theatre@samuelfrench-london.co.uk or www.amazon.com Teachers interested in being invited to a dress rehearsal of the play should write to marketing@englishtheatre.de.
THE ENGLISH THEATRE OF HAMBURG

About the Playwright

Jack Sharkey (1931-1992) was born on May 6, 1931 in Chicago, Illinois. He began writing when he was 10 years old. He graduated from college with a BA in the Creative Writing Field of the English major. After that, he taught school for two years from 1953 to 1955. In mid-1955, Mr. Sharkey enlisted in the Army. He served at Sandia Base, New Mexico as a Special Services worker. He wrote, produced, and directed one show per month for the Enlisted Men's Club. In 1958, Mr. Sharkey went to New York to begin a full-time freelance writing career. He wrote science fiction stories and novels, humor articles, and mystery novels. In 1961, he returned to Chicago where he worked as joke editor for *Playboy Magazine* and then was Editor of the *Allstate Insurance Company Magazine* for 11 years from 1964-75. At the end of 1975, he went exclusively into playwriting, which he continued until a few months before his death. He has 83 published plays written under his own name and four others - Rick Abbot, Monk Ferris, Mark Chandler, and Mike Johnson. Mike Johnson wrote only stage thrillers. All the other plays are comedies and/or musicals. The plays continue to be performed all around the world. Some of the many titles are **TAKE A NUMBER, DARLING; WHO'S ON FIRST; ONCE IS ENOUGH; HONESTLY, NOW; MEANWHILE, BACK ON THE COUCH; SAVING GRACE; KISS OR MAKE UP; THE MURDER ROOM; RICH IS BETTER; DOUBLE EXPOSURE; PLAY ON; LET'S MURDER MARSHA; DRACULA: THE MUSICAL; BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, REALLY; WOMAN OVERBOARD; HOPE FOR THE BEST; SLOW DOWN, SWEET CHARIOT; AND ON THE SIXTH DAY; MY HUSBAND THE WIFE.**

About the Play

Jack Sharkey wrote his first of many stage comedies, **HERE LIES JEREMY TROY**, in 1965. The lead character, Jeremy Troy, works as a successful New York lawyer, and he and his wife are living the American Dream. But Jeremy has a long-held secret regarding his profession that he has kept from everyone including his wife. His boss is coming to dinner that evening and will, Jeremy hopes, announce that he is going to make him a full partner in the law firm. Unfortunately, Jeremy and his wife are visited the same day by an old college friend, an unsuccessful painter, who now lives by sponging off former classmates. When the freeloader discovers Jeremy's secret, that he has created a fake law diploma for himself, he threatens to reveal the fact to Jeremy's boss unless he is allowed to reside in Jeremy's house. He orders an artist's model from an agency, but Jeremy's wife is the only one there when the model, arrives. When the wife gets the mistaken impression that Jeremy has hired a prostitute, she walks out on him. Jeremy is desperate. He must have a wife to present to his boss that evening, so he hires the beautiful but incompetent young model to play the part of his wife for the evening. Panic and confusion follow when the boss appears and Jeremy's real wife unexpectedly returns. Jeremy passes his wife off as royalty (Princess of Rumania) and begs her to play the part for just one evening because the boss already thinks the model is his wife. Can Jeremy survive all the chaos without his secret being revealed? Or will he finally be ruined by the web of lies he continues to spin? This is classic farce at its best by one of America's finest farceurs.

Summary of Jack Sharkey's
HERE LIES JEREMY TROY

Setting: A living room in the Troy home in New Jersey, USA. Stairs ascend to an upper level where doors leading to the bathroom, guest room and main bedroom are visible.

Time: 1965, February

Act I

A weekday morning. Jeremy Troy has led his wife, his boss, and his friends to believe that he is a qualified lawyer. The truth is he worked as a file clerk in a university years ago where he met his wife, Kathryn, at a social event. She told him she admired men who used their brains, so, to impress her, he said he was studying law. Jeremy then created a fake diploma from the University Law School, and when the school took graduation pictures, he joined a group of students and had his photo taken with them. With the graduation photo and the fake diploma, he was able to pass himself off as a lawyer and join a reputable New York law firm. This lie is the source of all of Jeremy's troubles.

A painting of George Washington, the first president of the United States, hangs on a wall in Jeremy's house. According to a famous story about Washington, his father was angry when he saw that someone had chopped down his cherry tree. When asked who did it, George, still a young boy, replied, "I cannot tell a lie. I chopped down the cherry tree." Since then Washington has had the legendary reputation of a man who never lied. It is ironic that in this house full of lies Washington's picture is present.

Because one of the partners in Jeremy's law firm has recently died, he is hoping that he will be promoted to the highly esteemed status of partner to take that person's place. He has, therefore, invited his boss, Mr. Ivorsen, to a fancy dinner at his home that evening, hoping the boss will announce his promotion.

For three weeks Jeremy has been working hard on a complicated case for the law firm that he is confident will impress his boss and prompt him to offer him the partnership. Jeremy calls a cab and leaves for work, forgetting the envelope that contains the case documents. Kathryn realizes his mistake and calls the cab company, asking them to notify Jeremy's cab driver of the problem so he can return home and get the case documents.

While Kathryn is waiting for her husband to return, Charlie Bickle, an old university acquaintance whom Jeremy has not seen for years, turns up unexpectedly at the Troy home. He intends to talk his way into being accommodated there for as long as possible. Charlie is an artist who went to the university where Jeremy worked. Because he is a mediocre, struggling painter, he has been freeloading off alumni, staying with one after the other in alphabetical order. He is up to "T" now so he thinks it is Jeremy Troy's turn to house and feed him.

Jeremy returns home to get the case documents he left behind. When he sees Charlie he falls backward in a dead faint because he knows Charlie could expose his secret regarding his professional qualifications. Kathryn revives her husband and, concluding that Jeremy needs rest, she insists on taking the case documents to Jeremy's boss, Mr. Ivorsen, herself. She takes a cab, leaving Jeremy to deal with their unexpected and unwanted guest.

Jeremy wants Charlie out of their house before his boss arrives for dinner that evening. Charlie, however, soon spies Jeremy's fake diploma and graduation picture and realizes he can blackmail Jeremy into letting him stay. Before Jeremy can stop him, Charlie makes a phone call to a modeling agency and hires Tina Winslow to come to Jeremy's house to sit for a portrait. Shaken by this intrusion into his life, Jeremy goes to the bedroom to get a tranquilizer to calm his nerves. Then he has a better idea. He decides to pour the entire bottle of tranquilizers into the coffee pot on the table so that when Charlie drinks it, he will pass out. Then Jeremy can hide him in the cellar until the evening dinner is over and his boss has gone home.

In the meantime, Kathryn returns. She was so worried about Jeremy that she sent the case documents on with the cab driver and took another cab home. Jeremy, lying again, tells Kathryn that Charlie has to stay because he has come to them to die. Having convinced Kathryn of this, he leaves the house quickly to try to stop the model at the nearby bus stop before she reaches his house.

After Jeremy leaves, Charlie wanders into the guest room out of sight, and Kathryn greets the model, Tina, at the door. As Tina casually lets her hair down and takes her shoes and stockings off, she tells Kathryn that her agency instructed her to come to the Jeremy Troy home. Kathryn misunderstands everything that Tina tells her and comes to the false conclusion that Jeremy hires prostitutes from an agency for a little fun on the side. She is distraught.

Tina asks for a cup of coffee, and Kathryn pours one for her and one for herself. The two women sit on the couch, Kathryn angry at Tina and Tina bewildered at Kathryn's attitude toward her. After they each drink one cup, however, the tranquilizers in the coffee start taking effect. They begin laughing at every little thing, and Kathryn asks Tina if she would like another "coff o cuppee". When Tina becomes tired, Kathryn tells her to go upstairs and sleep in their guest room. Tina makes it upstairs but goes into the bathroom by mistake.

When Tina is in the bathroom, Charlie comes out of the guest room, and Kathryn laments to him that her husband has lied and deceived her. Kathryn is, of course, talking about her mistaken impression that Jeremy hires prostitutes, but Charlie assumes she is talking about the lie that he is a qualified lawyer. Charlie tries to calm Kathryn, but she is too upset to be placated. In her drugged state she swings wildly at Charlie and knocks him out.

Jeremy returns to warn Kathryn not to drink the coffee and instead discovers Charlie out cold on the floor. He thinks his plan was successful, but Charlie revives and tells Jeremy that Kathryn has been drinking the coffee. After a frantic search, they find her asleep in the guest room. Jeremy drags her downstairs while Charlie gets a tray of ice cubes to put down the back of her neck to wake her up. When she feels the ice Kathryn comes awake instantly, shrieking and giggling hilariously. Then Jeremy gets her to sip a powerfully strong cup of instant coffee. It works. Kathryn remembers how angry she is about the "prostitute" but nothing Jeremy can say will change her mind. She gets her coat and leaves the house slamming the front door.

Then Tina floats downstairs and asks who Jeremy and Charlie are. The two men introduce themselves and start questioning her to find the source of Kathryn's outrage. Finally, they realize that she must have thought that Tina was a prostitute that Jeremy hired. A light goes on in Jeremy's head. Since his boss, Mr. Ivorsen, has never met his wife, he asks Tina if she will play the part of his wife for the evening so the party can go on as scheduled. Tina considers the idea because, as well as modeling, she would also like to become an actress. When Jeremy claims that Charlie is a talent scout who will be watching her performance, she agrees enthusiastically to play the role.

Act II

At 7 o'clock that evening, Jeremy, Charlie and Tina await the arrival of Mr. Ivorsen. Tina is preparing the meal when Ivorsen rings the doorbell. Jeremy greets

his boss and Charlie brings Ivorsen a martini. Tina comes into the living room to introduce herself and, much to Jeremy's surprise, she uses an American southern accent. She thinks speaking with an accent will impress the talent scout that Charlie is pretending to be. Ivorsen finds Tina, now posing as Kathryn, charming. While Tina is in the kitchen Ivorsen asks what Charlie does for a living. Jeremy tells his boss that Charlie is an orthodontist. Much to Jeremy's relief, Ivorsen asks where the bathroom is because he would like to wash up before dinner.

In Ivorsen's absence, they can all stop pretending, but then the real Kathryn unexpectedly walks through the front door. She explains that she could not let Jeremy down with his boss coming to dinner. Now Jeremy finds himself in a dilemma. He has two wives. Tina comes out of the kitchen and Jeremy explains to Kathryn that the young woman is an artist's model who came to the house for Charlie to draw. Not believing this, Kathryn says, "Oh, sure! Sure! And I'm the Princess of Rumania." Ivorsen hears this as he comes out of the bathroom and believes what Kathryn has just said. Delighted that he is in the presence of royalty, he kisses her hand and treats her with great reverence as they all sit down for the evening meal that Tina has prepared. Kathryn has no choice but to go along with the charade in order to help Jeremy save face. Ivorsen asks her why she has come to New Jersey and, before she can answer, Jeremy tells him that she has given up her throne for love, and that she and Charlie are engaged to be married.

Ivorsen hints that he would like to spend the night at the Troy house because he does not want to drive home in the February snowfall. Alarmed by this, Jeremy says that might be a problem because Charlie and the "Princess" will be using the guest room and he and "Kathryn" will be using the bedroom. Ivorsen then suggests that he share the guest room with Charlie, and the "Princess" can share the bedroom with "Kathryn." Their discussion about who should sleep where is interrupted by the main course which "Kathryn" brings in. She calls it "Chicken in the Wood" because she rolled up three fresh eggs in each portion of steak, all of which are shaped like little logs of wood. Everyone looks forward to eating the meal until Ivorsen cuts his steak and there is an audible crunching sound. "Kathryn" explains that she had to leave the eggs in their shells so they would not run all over the dish. They all quickly lose their appetite and start drinking wine.

Ivorsen jumps up and asks where their television set is. He wants to watch Perry Mason, a show he never misses. Jeremy tells him it is downstairs in their recreation room. With his boss out of the way, Jeremy

tries again to explain the events of the day to his real wife, Kathryn, who remains in disbelief. When she asks why Jeremy apologized to her earlier, he tells her he thought she had found out that he has no law diploma. He confesses to Kathryn that he faked his diploma so he could make her think he was somebody important. Kathryn understands and is impressed that Jeremy went to all that trouble because he was in love with her. She tells him how much she loves him too. They go into the kitchen together to have some privacy.

Charlie and Tina sit on the couch and make small talk, but are soon kissing each other. They do not know that Ivorsen has come upstairs during a TV commercial and seen them kissing. After a while Kathryn and Jeremy return to the living room and see that Tina is phoning her father to tell him she is spending the night. Jeremy tells her to use the phone upstairs in case Ivorsen comes back and overhears her conversation. Charlie joins Tina, and Ivorsen returns from watching television to find Kathryn, the "Princess," alone with Jeremy. He tells them he is deeply troubled because he saw Jeremy's "wife" and Charlie being intimate on the sofa.

Pretending to be upset, Jeremy tells Ivorsen that tomorrow, when the others have gone, he will have a talk with Charlie, and the "Princess" will have a talk with "Kathryn." As for sleeping arrangements, Jeremy suggests that "Kathryn" and the Princess take the guest room and Ivorsen and Charlie take the bedroom. Jeremy says he will sleep on the sofa.

Ivorsen goes upstairs to the bedroom. Tina and Charlie descend the stairs to reveal that her father, with whom she has just spoken on the phone, will not allow her to spend the night. They have a plan, however. Charlie will use Ivorsen's car to drive Tina home and he will tell Ivorsen in the morning that she has gone shopping. Tina will, in fact, go shopping and bring the groceries to the Troy house. After Charlie and Tina leave, Kathryn goes to bed upstairs in the guest room. She knows Jeremy would prefer to sleep with her on a nice, soft bed instead of the sofa, but to keep up the ruse for Ivorsen she tells him she is going to lock the door and will not open it if he knocks. Alone and sad, Jeremy, who is not sleepy yet, turns the lights off and goes down to the recreation room to watch TV.

Before long Tina and Charlie return to the house, looking disheveled after crashing Ivorsen's car and sinking it into ten feet of snow. Tina goes upstairs to take a hot shower and Charlie phones her father to tell him the bad news. They weren't hurt, he says, but the car was destroyed. He asks Tina's father to come and pick her up but her father declines because he

doesn't want to get out in the nasty weather either. After kissing Tina goodnight Charlie goes to bed in the main bedroom where Ivorsen is snoring away. Tina tries the door to the guest room, but it is locked. She knocks at the door, but there is no answer. Kathryn does not answer because she thinks it is Jeremy knocking on the door. Tina gives up and walks downstairs where she sees the sofa made up as a bed. Thinking it must be for her she lies down between the sheets.

Tired enough to sleep now, Jeremy returns to the living room. In the dark he undresses down to his shorts and goes to the sofa. There is a loud scream. Charlie turns the upstairs light switch on, and the real Kathryn and Ivorsen also come out of their rooms. They see Jeremy and Tina standing on the sofa, wrapped in the same sheet. Kathryn sobs and falls into Charlie's arms. But Ivorsen, happy to see Jeremy and "Kathryn" properly paired, returns to bed.

Act III

Early the following morning, Tina is asleep on the sofa with her legs exposed. She is alone until Charlie comes out of the bedroom and sees her. At first he scowls, still upset about seeing her with Jeremy on the sofa, but when he sees her bare legs, he forgets that, grabs his sketch pad and goes downstairs to draw her legs. Kathryn comes out of the guest room and joins Charlie and Tina. Then a hunched figure emerges from the bathroom; it is Jeremy. Having slept in the bathtub all night, his spine is bent so that he looks like a question-mark.

Tina asks Charlie to get her clothes from upstairs and he does so. Jeremy works his way downstairs and Tina tries to use her massage skills to unkink his back. Ivorsen comes out of the bedroom happy to see that Jeremy is with "Kathryn." He tells Jeremy he has an important announcement to make at breakfast and goes into the bathroom. Charlie returns downstairs with Tina's clothes which she takes into the kitchen to change. Charlie starts to work seriously (and angrily) on Jeremy's back. While yelling from the pain Charlie is causing him, Jeremy tries to explain why he and Tina were on the couch together. Charlie is successful in getting Jeremy to stand up straight, but he still does not believe him. Kathryn comes downstairs and is also not satisfied with the explanation Jeremy tries to give. She and Charlie, feeling like victims, go into the kitchen to get breakfast. They bring out a tray of toast, coffee etc.

By now, Tina has had enough of pretense and misunderstandings. She tells Kathryn that she, not Jeremy, was the one knocking on her door last night and that she slept on the couch because that was the

only place left. Jeremy, in the dark, stepped on her stomach and that is why she jumped up and screamed. Kathryn believes her. Tina writes out a check for a large amount of money to cover the cost of a new car for Ivorsen and gives it to Charlie. She then grabs her purse and coat and leaves, slamming the front door. When Charlie sees that Tina has signed the check, “Tina Winslow Rockefeller” he runs after what he thinks is a wealthy young woman.

Ivorsen comes downstairs and is delighted to find himself alone with the “Princess.” He tells her it would be an honor if she would butter his toast for him. Kathryn does so but spreads the butter much too thick. When finished, she slaps the toast, butter side down onto the outstretched palm of his hand. Shocked, he asks her why she did that, and she, as fed up with the charade as Tina was, says, “Because I am Kathryn Troy, this is my house and I’ll do anything I want in it. She exits into the kitchen and Ivorsen, curious as to what has been going on, follows her.

Jeremy, dressed for work, comes downstairs and sees Kathryn and Ivorsen coming out of the kitchen. She has told Ivorsen the whole story about Jeremy having no law diploma. Surprisingly Ivorsen is not angry. He says, “When I meet a man who is living a lie... a man who cons other people into living an even bigger lie

—there is only one conclusion to be reached: There stands a real lawyer!”

Tina returns with Charlie and they all put their heads together to figure out how Jeremy can get his law diploma and continue working. Ivorsen says he will put him on paid vacation so he can study for the exam and he points out that in New York State he can take the exam without having a university diploma. Just four years clerking in a law office are sufficient and Jeremy has worked in the law firm much longer than that. He recalls, however, that he has to have lived in New York for at least six months to take the exam. On hearing this, Charlie comes to the rescue. He says that he has to get a new apartment in New York City and will take out the lease under Jeremy’s name. Jeremy’s problem is solved. Kathryn still loves him dearly, now that she knows the whole story, and Charlie and Tina announce that they have decided they want to get married.

Ivorsen declares loudly for all to hear, “Well—it’s like I’ve always maintained: Honesty is the best policy!” The portrait of George Washington, who reportedly never told a lie, falls with a crash to the floor. Startled, they all turn and look to see where the sound came from.

Blackout

Objective Questions

1. Why does Kathryn call the cab company after Jeremy leaves for work?
2. What job title does Jeremy want in the law firm?
3. Why does Charlie Bickle come to Jeremy’s home?
4. What kind of work does Kathryn mistakenly think Tina does?
5. Why does Jeremy put tranquilizers in the coffee pot?
6. Who does Mr. Ivorsen first think Kathryn is?
7. What does “Kathryn” serve for dinner?
8. Why does Tina scream in the night?
9. What name does Tina sign on the check to cover the cost of a new car for Ivorsen?”
10. When does Kathryn finally believe that Jeremy is telling her the truth?

Interpretative Exercise

1. “Oh! What a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.” What does this quotation, from a poem by Sir Walter Scott, mean and how does it apply to the play.
2. Why is it ironic that Jeremy has a picture of George Washington hanging in his home?