

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

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DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE

Have you ever wished to be someone else? Have you ever looked at someone you know and thought, 'He does what he wants. Why shouldn't I do what I want?' And have you then thought that if you looked like someone else, only for one day, you would be free to do anything you wanted? And nobody could blame you for it. Nobody would ever know that it was you, because it wasn't you! How exciting to change into someone else! Just for a day, or perhaps from time to time, not too often. Because if you changed into that other person often, then you might become that other person — and you might find it difficult to be yourself again.

These are dangerous thoughts for someone to have, especially for Doctor Jekyll. Because Doctor Jekyll is a very clever scientist, and he has found a way of turning this dream into reality ...

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Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

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ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Retold by
Rosemary Border

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

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Database right Oxford University Press (maker)

First published in Oxford Bookworms 1991

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

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ISBN 978 0 19 479170 0

A complete recording of this Bookworms edition of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is available on audio CD ISBN 978 0 19 479149 6

Typeset by Hope Services (Abingdon) Ltd

Printed in Hong Kong

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Illustrated by: Paul Dickinson

Word count (main text): 12,520 words

For more information on the Oxford Bookworms Library, visit www.oup.com/bookworms

e-Book ISBN 978 0 19 478643 0

e-Book first published 2012

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The mysterious door

Mr Utterson the lawyer was a quiet, serious man. He was shy with strangers and afraid of showing his feelings. Among friends, however, his eyes shone with kindness and goodness. And, although his goodness never found its way into his conversation, it showed itself in his way of life. He did not allow himself many enjoyable things in life. He ate and drank simply and, although he enjoyed the theatre, he had not been to a play for twenty years. However, he was gentler towards other men's weaknesses, and was always ready to help rather than blame them. As a lawyer, he was often the last good person that evil-doers met on their way to prison, or worse. These people often carried with them memories of his politeness and fairness.

Mr Utterson's best friend of his distant cousin called Richard Enfield, who was well known as a fun-loving 'man about town'. Nobody could understand why they were friends, as they were different from each other in every way. They often took long walks together, however, marching through the streets of London in companionable silence.

One of these walks used to take them down a narrow side-street in a busy part of London. It was a clean, busy, friendly street with bright little shops and shiny doorknockers. Near the end of this street, however, stood a dark, mysterious, windowless building. The door had neither bell nor knocker and looked dusty and uncared for. Dirty children played fearfully on the doorstep, and nobody ever opened the door to drive them away.

One day, as Mr Enfield and his friend passed the building, Mr Enfield pointed to it.

'Have you ever noticed that place?' he asked. 'It reminds me of a very strange story.'

'Really?' said Mr Utterson. 'Tell me.'

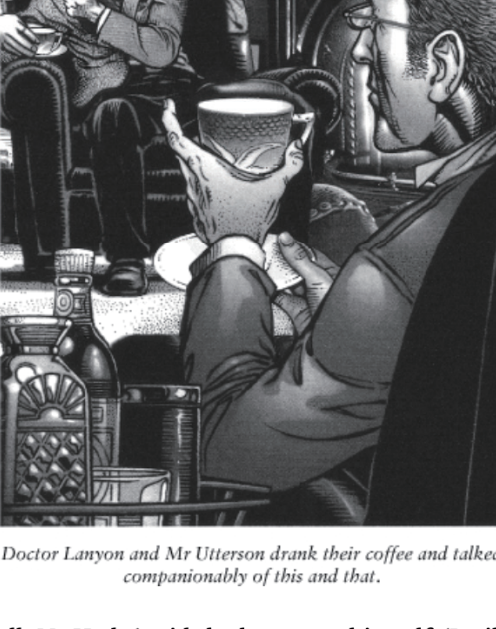
'Well,' began Enfield, 'I was coming home about three o'clock on a black winter morning, when suddenly I saw two people. The first was a short man who was walking along as fast as the street, and the second was a little girl who was running as fast as she could. Well, the two bumped into each other and the child fell down. Then a terrible thing happened. The man calmly walked all over the child's body with his heavy boots, and left her screaming on the ground. It was an inhuman thing to do. I ran after the man, caught him and fetched him back. There was already a small crowd around the screaming child. The man was perfectly cool, but he gave me a very evil look, which made me feel sick in my stomach. The child's family then arrived, and also a doctor. The child had been sent to fetch the doctor for a sick neighbour, and was on her way home again.

"The child is more frightened than hurt," said the doctor — and that, you would think, was the end of the story. But, you see, I had taken a violent dislike to the short man. So had the child's family — that was only natural. But the doctor, who seemed a quiet, kindly man, was also looking at our prisoner with murder in his eyes.

"The doctor and I understood each other perfectly. Together we shouted at the man, and told him we would tell this story all over London so that his name would be hated.

"He looked back at us with a proud, black look. "Name your price," he said.

"We made him agree to a hundred pounds for the child's family. With another black look, the man led us to that door over there. He took out a key and let himself into the building. Presently he came out and handed us ten pounds in gold and a cheque for ninety pounds from Coutts's Bank. The name on the cheque was a well-known one.



'I ran after the man, caught him and fetched him back.'

"See here," said the doctor doubtfully, "it isn't usual for a man to walk into an empty house at four in the morning and come out without another man's cheque for nearly a hundred pounds."

"Don't worry," said the man with an ugly look, "I'll stay with you until the banks open, and change the cheque myself."

"So we all went off, the doctor and the prisoner and myself, and spent the rest of the night at my house. In the morning we went together to the bank. Sure enough, the cheque was good, and the money was passed to the child's family."

"Well, well," said Mr Utterson.

"Yes," said Enfield, "it's a strange story. My prisoner was clearly a hard, cruel man. But the man whose name was on the cheque was well known all over London for his kind and generous acts. Why would a man like that give his cheque to a criminal?"

'And you don't know if the writer of the cheque lives in that building?' asked Mr Utterson.

'I don't like to ask,' said his friend. 'In my experience, it's not a good idea to ask too many questions, in case the answers are ugly, violent or bad. But I've been thinking of the place a little. It doesn't seem like a house. There's no other door, and the only person who uses that door is the man I've just described to you. There are three windows on the side of the house, which look down onto a small courtyard. The windows are shut, but they're always clean. There's a chimney too, which is usually smoking. So somebody must live there.'

The two men continued on their walk. Then Utterson broke the silence.

'Enfield,' he said, 'you're right about not asking too many questions. However, I want to ask the name of the man who walked over the child.'

'Very well,' said Enfield. 'He told us his name was Hyde.'

'What does he look like?'

'He's not easy to describe, although I remember him perfectly. He's a strange-looking man. He's short, but has a strong, heavy body. There's something wrong with his appearance, something ugly and displeasing — no, something hateful. I disliked him at once.'

Mr Utterson thought deeply. 'Are you sure he used a key?' he asked.

'What do you mean?' asked Enfield in surprise.

'I know it must seem strange,' said his friend. 'But you see, if I don't ask you the name on the cheque, it's because I know it already ...'

'Well, why didn't you tell me?' said his friend rather crossly. 'Anyway, he did have a key, and he still has it. I saw him use it only a week ago.'

Mr Utterson looked at him thoughtfully, but said nothing more.

In search of Mr Hyde

After dinner that evening Mr Utterson went into his office and unlocked a cupboard. He took out an envelope. It contained the will of Doctor Henry Jekyll, and was written in the doctor's own handwriting.

'If I die, or if I disappear for more than three months,' the will began, 'I wish to leave everything I own to my dear friend Edward Hyde.'

This will had both worried and annoyed Mr Utterson. To a lawyer it was an unusual and dangerous kind of will. It was bad enough when Edward Hyde was only an unknown name, but now that the lawyer knew something about Hyde, the will worried him more than ever. It had seemed like madness before; now it began to seem shameful. With a heavy heart Mr Utterson replaced the envelope in the cupboard, put on his coat and went to see his old friend Doctor Lanyon.

Doctor Lanyon was enjoying his after-dinner coffee. 'Come in, old friend!' he cried. The two men had known each other since their school days. They sat for several minutes, drinking coffee and talking companionably of this and that. At last Mr Utterson mentioned the thoughts that were worrying him.

'I suppose, Lanyon,' he said, 'that you and I are Henry Jekyll's oldest friends?'

'I suppose so,' said Doctor Lanyon, 'but I don't often see him now.'

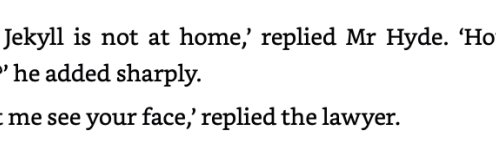
'Really?' said Mr Utterson in surprise. 'I thought you and he were interested in the same things.'

'We were at one time,' said Doctor Lanyon. 'But more than ten years ago Henry Jekyll became too — well, imaginative for me. He developed some strange, wild, unscientific ideas. I told him so, and I've seen very little of him since then.'

Mr Utterson looked at his friend's red, angry face. 'Only a disagreement about some scientific question,' he thought. 'It's nothing worse than that.' Calmly he continued, 'Did you ever meet a friend of Jekyll's — a man called Hyde?'

'Hyde?' repeated Lanyon. 'No, never.'

Soon the lawyer said goodnight and went home to bed, where he lay awake for a long time thinking about Enfield's description of Hyde, and Doctor Jekyll's will. When at last he fell asleep, he was troubled by dreams. In his mind's eye he saw a faceless man marching over the child's body. Then he saw his old friend Jekyll in bed, while the same faceless figure stood over him. The facelessness of that figure worried him deeply.



Doctor Lanyon and Mr Utterson drank their coffee and talked companionably of this and that.

'Very well, Mr Hyde,' said the lawyer to himself, 'I will find you, and I will see your face for myself.'

During the next few weeks Mr Utterson spent many hours in the narrow street where Enfield had seen Hyde. He waited patiently near the mysterious door, hoping for a sight of Mr Hyde — and one dry, clear winter night he was successful. The street was empty and silent and small sounds carried a long way. The lawyer heard footsteps. He stepped back into the shadows and waited. A short figure turned the corner and walked towards the mysterious door. Although Mr Utterson could not see his face, he felt a strong, almost violent, dislike for the stranger.

Mr Utterson stepped forward and touched him on the shoulder. 'Mr Hyde?'

'Yes, that's my name,' said the stranger coolly. 'What do you want?'

'I see that you're going in. I'm an old friend of Doctor Jekyll's. My name is Utterson. You must have heard my name — may I come in with you?'

'Doctor Jekyll is not at home,' replied Mr Hyde. 'How did you know me?' he added sharply.

'First let me see your face,' replied the lawyer.

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