

THE  
STRANGE  
CASE OF

*Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON  
AFTERWORD BY ULRICH BAER



DR JEKYLL  
AND  
MR HYDE



ROBERT LOUIS  
STEVENSON

FOREWORD BY HELEN DUNMORE

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# The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Robert Louis Stevenson

## *CONTENTS*

[Title Page](#)

[Foreword by Helen Dunmore](#)

[Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Epigraph](#)

[Story of the Door](#)

[Search for Mr Hyde](#)

[Dr Jekyll was Quite at Ease](#)

*The Carew Murder Case*

*Incident of the Letter*

*Remarkable Incident of Dr Lanyon*

*Incident at the Window*

*The Last Night*

*Dr Lanyon's Narrative*

*Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case*

*Notes*

*Biographical note*

*Copyright*

*FOREWORD*

The world of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is one of locked doors, secrets, watchers and witnesses. It is a world where feeling must be muffled, and relationships simmer with what is withheld.

It is also, almost entirely, a male professional world. The focus is on those who dominated and shaped Victorian Britain. Robert Louis Stevenson, child of the Scottish professional middle class, knows what lies beneath its dissembling of individuality in the service of social order and cohesion. As the hidden, unruly self grows powerful, it may bear the fruit of nightmare.

The story opens in the company of the respectable, and obliges us to see the action through their eyes. Utterson, the lawyer, is coolly undemonstrative, and forms friendship where he feels no warmth.

Richard Enfield, 'the well-known man about town', is young enough to be more expressive, but he already knows that it's best not to try to open the locked doors of others' lives, for fear of scandal. The 'great' Dr Lanyon is enraged by anything which does not fit his rational, scientific principles.

He has seen himself as the professional brother of Dr Jekyll, but that brotherhood has been destroyed by Jekyll's inadmissible, 'unscientific' conduct.

These are the citizens who ponder the erratic behaviour of Dr Jekyll, and watch and wait for Mr Hyde. Their cramped emotional and verbal repertoires must capture Mr Hyde's evil as well as Dr Jekyll's ambiguity.

The evil of Mr Hyde is beyond doubt. It is florid, brutal, terrifying. He is identified with the snake and with the ape, and yet there is a cunning in his cruelty which is all too human. Descriptions of him are tense with fascination: Hyde moves 'with extraordinary quickness', he gives 'a hissing intake of the breath', he tramples calmly over a child's body 'like some

damned Juggernaut'. He is evasive and he must be hunted. Indeed he must be *hunted out*, for the good of the tribe. In Utterson's words: 'If he be Mr Hyde, I shall be Mr Seek.'

This observation is one of the many instances where Stevenson pairs the evil and the respectable, as if matching a pack of cards. Naturally the most dramatic comes as Stevenson pairs and blends the Jekyll/Hyde identities, but there are many others. Stolid Mr Utterson is transformed while asleep in

his 'great, dark bed' into an intuitive, imaginative man, seduced by evil and longing to see 'the face of a man without bowels of mercy'. Utterson and Enfield together witness an instant of 'abject terror and despair' on the face of Dr Jekyll. Utterson, in a rare moment of self-knowledge, says, 'God forgive us, God forgive us,' as if he realises that they are all in some way implicated in the horror that has overtaken Jekyll.

Enfield nods his assent. They have watched and witnessed evil and a subtle paralysis has made them its accomplices.

What terrifies them most is that Mr Hyde is not a stranger at all. He belongs where they belong. He possesses the key to the door, and uses it.

They long to see his face, perhaps because they fear that they will recognise it. Dr Jekyll, after all, has been one of them.

In all this, Stevenson speaks prophetically of the respectability and banality of an evil safely lodged in civil society, which cannot be cast out because it has grown there, and claims its rights there. Dr Jekyll imagined that he was in control, and could enter and leave his world of licence at will. He was entirely mistaken. The child trampled underfoot without a second of concern, the 'aged and beautiful gentleman with white hair'

beaten to death in the public street, are all too familiar to the twenty-first-century reader.

Equally familiar is the passivity of the witnesses. A maid watches the savage murder of Sir Danvers Carew from her attic window. She records every detail of the event with almost supernatural clarity, but she does not intervene. She does not even cry out. She faints, as the victim's bones are



shattered and the body jumped upon by Mr Hyde. Similarly, when Mr Hyde tramples the child, the act is witnessed, but cannot be stopped.

In these passages Stevenson echoes James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. Both writers savagely indict the bourgeois city by developing it as a site of vicious murder. In both books there are witnesses, but these remain hidden, and do not prevent the crimes. During the murder of young Dalcastle in *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* 'the moon shone full', just as Sir Danvers Carew is murdered in a lane 'brilliantly lit by the full moon'. Illumination offers no protection, but only a disturbing, hallucinatory clarity. The murder-witnesses' perceptions are sharpened, while their will to act is paralysed, as if by a drug.

Dr Jekyll insists in his Statement of the Case that the drug which he takes to transform himself into Mr Hyde is intrinsically neither good nor evil. What it does is to release inhibitions. In fact the drug makes the murderer as dynamic as the witnesses are passive: 'it but shook the doors of the prison-house of my disposition; and like the captives of Philippi, that which stood within ran forth.'

This image of the prison-house is one of many in the story which relate to enclosure, imprisonment and inhibition. Stevenson explores this whole question very sensitively. On one hand, the result of liberation from the code of respectability is a flowering of evil, as when Mr Hyde is liberated from the being of Dr Jekyll. But on the other, respectability itself creates a social and inner 'prison-house' which cripples men such as Dr Jekyll, and leads directly to their search for licence, rather than freedom.

Stevenson brilliantly ensures that it is impossible for Utterson, Enfield, Lanyon or the reader to place Mr Hyde safely on the far side of the door, to render him 'other' and therefore harmless. Mr Hyde is forever appearing in unexpected places, using his own key or knocking so softly and civilly that

we feel confident in opening up to him. He lives at the heart of things, no matter how much he is denounced as animal and alien. In this chilling and wonderful piece of fiction, Mr Hyde penetrates the household of

society and makes it his own, as he has long ago penetrated the body and spirit of Dr Jekyll.

–*Helen Dunmore, 2003*

[Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde](#)

[To Katharine de Mattos<sup>1</sup>](#)

*It's ill to loose the bands that God decreed to bind; Still will we be the children of the heather and the wind.*

*Far away from home, O it's still for you and me That the broom is blowing bonnie in the north countrie.*

[Story of the Door](#)

Mr Utterson the lawyer was a man of a rugged countenance, that was never lit by a smile; cold, scanty and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment; lean, long, dusty, dreary and yet somehow lovable. At friendly meetings, and when the wine was to his taste, something eminently human beamed from his eye; something indeed which never found its way into his talk, but which spoke not only in these silent symbols of the after-dinner face, but more often and loudly in the acts of his life. He was austere with himself; drank gin when he was alone, to mortify a taste for vintages; and though he enjoyed the theatre, had not crossed the doors of one for twenty years. But he had an approved tolerance for others, sometimes wondering, almost with envy, at the high pressure of spirits involved in their misdeeds,

and in any extremity inclined to help rather than to reprove. 'I incline to Cain's heresy<sup>2</sup>,' he used to say quaintly: 'I let my brother go to the devil in his own way.' In this character it was frequently his fortune to be the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of down-going men.

And to such as these, so long as they came about his chambers, he never marked a shade of change in his demeanour.

No doubt the feat was easy to Mr Utterson; for he was undemonstrative at the best, and even his friendships seemed to be founded in a similar catholicity of good nature. It is the mark of a modest man to accept his friendly circle ready-made from the hands of opportunity; and that was the lawyer's way. His friends were those of his own blood, or those whom he had known the longest; his affections, like ivy, were the growth of time, they implied no aptness in the object. Hence, no doubt, the bond that united him to Mr Richard Enfield, his distant kinsman, the well-known man about town. It was a nut to crack for many, what these two could see

in each other, or what subject they could find in common. It was reported by those who encountered them in their Sunday walks, that they said nothing, looked singularly dull, and would hail with obvious relief the appearance of a friend. For all that, the two men put the greatest store by these excursions, counted them the chief jewel of each week, and not only set aside occasions of pleasure, but even resisted the calls of business, that they might enjoy them uninterrupted.

It chanced on one of these rambles that their way led them down a by-street in a busy quarter of London. The street was small and what is called quiet, but it drove a thriving trade on the weekdays. The inhabitants were all doing well, it seemed, and all emulously hoping to do better still, and laying out the surplus of their gains in coquetry, so that the shopfronts stood along that

thoroughfare with an air of invitation, like rows of smiling saleswomen. Even on Sunday, when it veiled its more florid charms and lay comparatively empty of passage, the street shone out in contrast to its dingy neighbourhood, like a fire in a forest; and with its freshly painted shutters, well-polished brasses, and general cleanliness and gaiety of note, instantly caught and pleased the eye of the passenger.

Two doors from one corner, on the left hand going east, the line was broken by the entry of a court; and just at that point, a certain sinister block of building thrust forward its gable on the street. It was two storeys high; showed no window, nothing but a door on the lower storey and a blind forehead of discoloured wall on the upper; and bore in every feature the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence. The door, which was equipped with neither bell nor knocker, was blistered and distained.

Tramps slouched into the recess and struck matches on the panels; children kept shop upon the steps; the schoolboy had tried his knife on the mouldings; and for close on a generation no one had appeared to drive away these random visitors or to repair their ravages.

Mr Enfield and the lawyer were on the other side of the by-street, but when they came abreast of the entry, the former lifted up his cane and pointed.

‘Did you ever remark that door?’ he asked; and when his companion had replied in the affirmative, ‘It is connected in my mind,’ added he, ‘with a very odd story.’

‘Indeed?’ said Mr Utterson, with a slight change of voice, ‘and what was that?’

‘Well, it was this way,’ returned Mr Enfield: ‘I was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o’clock of a black winter morning,

and my way lay through a part of town where there was literally nothing to be seen but lamps. Street after street, and all the folks asleep –

street after street, all lit up as if for a procession, and all as empty as a church – till at last I got into that state of mind when a man listens and listens and begins to long for the sight of a policeman. All at once, I saw two figures: one a little man who was stumping along eastward at a good walk, and the other a girl of maybe eight or ten who was running as hard as she was able down a cross-street. Well, sir, the two ran into one another naturally enough at the corner; and then came the horrible part of the thing, for the man trampled calmly over the child's body and left her screaming on the ground. It sounds nothing to hear, but it was hellish to see. It wasn't like a man; it was like some damned [Juggernaut](#)<sup>3</sup>. I gave a view halloo, took to my heels, collared my gentleman, and brought him back to where there was already quite a group about the screaming child.

He was perfectly cool and made no resistance, but gave me one look, so ugly that it brought out the sweat on me like running. The people who had turned out were the girl's own family; and pretty soon the doctor, for whom she had been sent, put in his appearance. Well, the child was not much the worse, more frightened, according to the sawbones; and there you might have supposed would be an end to it. But there was one curious circumstance. I had taken a loathing to my gentleman at first sight. So had the child's family, which was only natural. But the doctor's case was what struck me. He was the usual cut-and-dry apothecary, of no particular age and colour, with a strong Edinburgh accent, and about as emotional as a bagpipe. Well, sir, he was like the rest of us: every time he looked at my

prisoner, I saw that Sawbones turned sick and white with the desire to kill him. I knew what was in his mind, just as he knew what was in mine; and killing being out of the question, we did the next best. We told the man we could and would make such a scandal out of this, as should make his name

stink from one end of London to the other. If he had any friends or any credit, we undertook that he should lose them. And all the time, as we were pitching it in red hot, we were keeping the women off him as best we could, for they were as wild as harpies. I never saw a circle of such hateful faces; and there was the man in the middle, with a kind of black sneering coolness – frightened too, I could see that – but carrying it off, sir, really like Satan. “If you choose to make capital out of this accident,” said he, “I am naturally helpless. No gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene,” says he.

“Name your figure.” Well, we screwed him up to a hundred pounds for the child’s family; he would have clearly liked to stick out, but there was something about the lot of us that meant mischief, and at last he struck.

The next thing was to get the money, and where do you think he carried us but to that place with the door? – whipped out a key, went in, and presently came back with the matter of ten pounds in gold and a cheque for the balance on Coutts’s, drawn payable to bearer, and signed with a name that I can’t mention, though it’s one of the points of my story, but it was a name at least very well known and often printed. The figure was stiff, but the signature was good for more than that, if it was only genuine.

I took the liberty of pointing out to my gentleman that the whole business looked apocryphal, and that a man does not, in real life, walk into a cellar door at four in the morning and come out of it with another man’s cheque for close upon a hundred pounds. But he was quite easy and sneering. “Set your mind at rest,” says he; “I will stay with you till the banks open, and cash the cheque myself.” So we all set off, the doctor, and the child’s father, and our friend and myself, and passed the rest of the night in my chambers; and next day, when we had breakfasted, went in a body to the bank. I gave in the cheque myself, and said I had every reason to believe it was a forgery. Not a bit of it. The cheque was genuine.’

‘Tut, tut!’ said Mr Utterson.

‘I see you feel as I do,’ said Mr Enfield. ‘Yes, it’s a bad story. For my man was a fellow that nobody could have to do with, a really damnable man; and the person that drew the cheque is the very pink of the proprieties, celebrated too, and (what makes it worse) one of your fellows who do what they call good. Blackmail, I suppose; an honest man paying through the nose for some of the capers of his youth. Blackmail House is what I call that place with the door, in consequence. Though even that, you know, is far from explaining all,’ he added; and with the words fell into a vein of musing.

From this he was recalled by Mr Utterson asking rather suddenly: ‘And you don’t know if the drawer of the cheque lives there?’

‘A likely place, isn’t it?’ returned Mr Enfield. ‘But I happen to have noticed his address; he lives in some square or other.’

‘And you never asked about – the place with the door?’ said Mr Utterson.

‘No, sir, I had a delicacy,’ was the reply. ‘I feel very strongly about putting questions; it partakes too much of the style of the Day of Judgement. You start a question, and it’s like starting a stone. You sit quietly on the top of a hill, and away the stone goes, starting others; and presently some bland old bird (the last you would have thought of) is knocked on the head in his own back garden, and the family have to change their name. No, sir, I make it a rule of mine: the more it looks like Queer Street<sup>4</sup>, the less I ask.’

‘A very good rule, too,’ said the lawyer.

‘But I have studied the place for myself,’ continued Mr Enfield. ‘It seems scarcely a house. There is no other door, and nobody goes in or out of that one, but, once in a great while, the gentleman of my adventure.

There are three windows looking on the court on the first floor, none below; the windows are always shut, but they're clean. And then there is a chimney, which is generally smoking, so somebody must live there. And

yet it's not so sure, for the buildings are so packed together about that court that it's hard to say where one ends and another begins.'

The pair walked on again for a while in silence, and then – 'Enfield,'

said Mr Utterson, 'that's a good rule of yours.'

'Yes, I think it is,' returned Enfield.

'But for all that,' continued the lawyer, 'there's one point I want to ask: I want to ask the name of that man who walked over the child.'

'Well,' said Mr Enfield, 'I can't see what harm it would do. It was a man of the name of Hyde.'

'Hm,' said Mr Utterson. 'What sort of a man is he to see?'

'He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance, something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary-looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir, I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory, for I declare I can see him this moment.'

Mr Utterson again walked some way in silence, and obviously under a weight of consideration. 'You are sure he used a key?' he enquired at last.



‘My dear sir...’ began Enfield, surprised out of himself.

‘Yes, I know,’ said Utterson; ‘I know it must seem strange. The fact is, if I do not ask you the name of the other party, it is because I know it already. You see, Richard, your tale has gone home. If you have been inexact in any point, you had better correct it.’

‘I think you might have warned me,’ returned the other, with a touch of sullenness. ‘But I have been pedantically exact, as you call it. The fellow had a key, and, what’s more, he has it still. I saw him use it, not a week ago.’

Mr Utterson sighed deeply, but said never a word, and the young man presently resumed. ‘Here is another lesson to say nothing,’ said he. ‘I am

ashamed of my long tongue. Let us make a bargain never to refer to this again.’

‘With all my heart,’ said the lawyer. ‘I shake hands on that, Richard.’

### [Search for Mr Hyde](#)

That evening Mr Utterson came home to his bachelor house in sombre spirits, and sat down to dinner without relish. It was his custom of a Sunday, when this meal was over, to sit close by the fire, a volume of some dry divinity on his reading desk, until the clock of the neighbouring church rang out the hour of twelve, when he would go soberly and gratefully to bed. On this night, however, as soon as the cloth was taken away, he took up a candle and went into his business room. There he opened his safe, took from the most private part of it a document endorsed on the envelope as Dr Jekyll’s Will, and sat down with a clouded brow to study its contents.

The will was holograph, for Mr Utterson, though he took charge of it now that it was made, had refused to lend the least assistance in the making of it; it provided not only that, in case of the decease of Henry Jekyll, MD, DCL, LL D, FRS, 5\_etc., all his possessions were to pass into the hands of his 'friend and benefactor Edward Hyde'; but that in case of Dr Jekyll's

'disappearance or unexplained absence for any period exceeding three calendar months', the said Edward Hyde should step into the said Henry Jekyll's shoes without further delay, and free from any burden or obligation, beyond the payment of a few small sums to the members of the doctor's household. This document had long been the lawyer's eyesore. It offended him both as a lawyer and as a lover of the sane and customary sides of life, to whom the fanciful was the immodest. And hitherto it was his ignorance of Mr Hyde that had swelled his indignation; now, by a sudden turn, it was his knowledge. It was already bad enough when the name was but a name of which he could learn no more. It was worse when it began to be clothed upon with detestable attributes, and out of the shifting, insubstantial mists that had so long baffled his eye, there leapt up the sudden, definite presentiment of a fiend.

'I thought it was madness,' he said, as he replaced the obnoxious paper in the safe, 'and now I begin to fear it is disgrace.'

With that he blew out his candle, put on a greatcoat, and set forth in the direction of Cavendish Square, that citadel of medicine, where his friend, the great Dr Lanyon, had his house and received his crowding patients. 'If anyone knows, it will be Lanyon,' he had thought.

The solemn butler knew and welcomed him; he was subjected to no stage of delay, but ushered direct from the door to the dining room, where Dr Lanyon sat alone over his wine. This was a hearty, healthy, dapper, red-faced gentleman, with a shock of hair prematurely white, and a boisterous and

decided manner. At sight of Mr Utterson, he sprang up from his chair and welcomed him with both hands. The geniality, as was the way of the man, was somewhat theatrical to the eye, but it reposed on genuine feeling. For these two were old friends, old mates both at school and college, both thorough respecters of themselves and of each other, and, what does not always follow, men who thoroughly enjoyed each other's company.

After a little rambling talk, the lawyer led up to the subject which so disagreeably preoccupied his mind.

'I suppose, Lanyon,' he said, 'you and I must be the two oldest friends that Henry Jekyll has?'

'I wish the friends were younger,' chuckled Dr Lanyon. 'But I suppose we are. And what of that? I see little of him now.'

'Indeed!' said Utterson. 'I thought you had a bond of common interest.'

'We had,' was his reply. 'But it is more than ten years since Henry Jekyll became too fanciful for me. He began to go wrong, wrong in mind; and though, of course, I continue to take an interest in him for old sake's sake, as they say, I see and I have seen devilish little of the man. Such unscientific balderdash,' added the doctor, flushing suddenly purple,

['would have estranged Damon and Pythias.'](#)<sup>6</sup>

This little spurt of temper was somewhat of a relief to Mr Utterson.

'They have only differed on some point of science,' he thought; and being a man of no scientific passions (except in the matter of conveyancing), he even added: 'It is nothing worse than that!' He gave his friend a few seconds to

recover his composure, and then approached the question he had come to put.

‘Did you ever come across a protégé of his – one Hyde?’ he asked.

‘Hyde?’ repeated Lanyon. ‘No. Never heard of him. Since my time.’

That was the amount of information that the lawyer carried back with him to the great, dark bed on which he tossed to and fro until the small hours of the morning began to grow large. It was a night of little ease to his toiling mind, toiling in mere darkness and besieged by questions.

Six o’clock struck on the bells of the church that was so conveniently near to Mr Utterson’s dwelling, and still he was digging at the problem.

Hitherto it had touched him on the intellectual side alone, but now his imagination also was engaged, or rather enslaved, and as he lay and tossed in the gross darkness of the night and the curtained room, Mr Enfield’s tale went by before his mind in a scroll of lighted pictures. He would be aware of the great field of lamps of a nocturnal city; then of the figure of a man walking swiftly; then of a child running from the doctor’s; and then these met, and that human Juggernaut trod the child down and passed on regardless of her screams. Or else he would see a room in a rich house, where his friend lay asleep, dreaming and smiling at his dreams; and then the door of that room would be opened, the curtains of the bed plucked apart, the sleeper recalled, and, lo! there would stand by his side a figure to whom power was given, and even at that dead hour he must rise and do its bidding. The figure in these two phases haunted the lawyer all night, and if at any time he dozed over, it was but to see it glide more stealthily through sleeping houses, or move the more swiftly, and still the more swiftly, even to dizziness, through wider labyrinths of lamplit city, and at every street corner crush a child and leave her screaming. And still the figure had no face by