

## **Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson**

### **Characters**

**DOCTOR HENRY JEKYLL**, Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Civil Law, Doctor of Laws, and Fellow of the Royal Society. “A large, well made, smooth faced man of fifty.” Jekyll describes himself as “endowed with excellent parts, inclined by nature to industry, fond of the respect of the wise and good among my fellow men... the worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition.” In order to indulge his faults without compromising his respectable character, Jekyll creates a potion which will enable him to separate the dual sides of his nature – with disastrous consequences.

**MR EDWARD HYDE**. A younger man; “pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile.” He bears himself “with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice.” He inspires “disgust, loathing and fear” in everybody who comes into contact with him. Hyde is, of course, the man into whom Jekyll transforms himself – at first deliberately, and then, as Hyde seizes control, Jekyll finds himself involuntarily becoming Hyde.

**MR UTTERSON** Dr. Jekyll’s lawyer, who becomes concerned for his friend and fascinated by the mystery of Jekyll and Hyde. Utterson’s calm and forgiving nature, and his loyalty to friends, means that “it was frequently his fortune to be the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of down-going men.”

**RICHARD ENFIELD** Utterson’s friend and kinsman, a man about town who has witnessed one of Hyde’s atrocities and tells him about it.

**DR. LANYON** An old friend of both Utterson and Jekyll. Dr. Lanyon quarrelled with Jekyll, considering Jekyll’s experiments and theories to be “unscientific balderdash” and “scientific heresies”.

**POOLE** Dr. Jekyll’s loyal servant. Poole never knew the truth about Hyde and sought to protect his master until the end.

**A CHILD** is knocked over by Hyde in the street. Her family and friends are ready to take their revenge against Hyde, who pays them off at Enfield’s suggestion.

**SIR DANVERS CAREW** An “aged and beautiful gentleman with white hair”, Sir Danvers is murdered by Hyde in a vicious and unprovoked attack.

**MAID** A witness to Hyde’s attack on Sir Danvers, the Maid’s evidence means that Hyde becomes a wanted murderer. From now on, it is no longer safe for Jekyll to become Hyde.

**INSPECTOR NEWCOMEN** of Scotland Yard. A police inspector who investigates Hyde’s murder of Sir Danvers.

**HYDE'S LANDLADY** An "ivory-faced and silvery-haired old woman", "silent and unscrupulous", with "an evil face, smoothed by hypocrisy". She rents rooms to Hyde, allowing Jekyll to maintain the illusion that Hyde is a separate person.

**MR GUEST** Utterson's clerk, a handwriting expert who points out the similarity between Jekyll's handwriting and that of Hyde.

**BRADSHAW** Jekyll's footman

**HOUSEMAID, COOK** More of Dr. Jekyll's many servants, all of whom are very upset and disturbed by the disappearance of Jekyll and the appearance of Hyde.

**A WOMAN** Another victim of Hyde's. She offers him a box of matches, and he attacks her.

### **Synopsis of the book**

#### **STORY OF THE DOOR**

Mr. Utterson, a respected lawyer, is walking with his friend Mr. Enfield when they pass a doorway in a sordid part of town. Enfield tells Utterson how he once saw a man trample a small child and leave her screaming on the ground. Enfield caught the man and, with the help of an angry crowd, persuaded him to pay the child's family £100 in compensation for her injuries. The man, who gave his name as Edward Hyde, went in at this doorway and returned with a signed cheque in the name of Henry Jekyll. Utterson, a friend of Jekyll's, is concerned. Why is his friend giving money to such a terrible man as Hyde? Utterson suspects that Jekyll is being blackmailed by Hyde.

#### **SEARCH FOR MR. HYDE**

Utterson is worried about Jekyll's will, which states that if Jekyll disappears for three months or more, all Jekyll's money and possessions will go to Hyde. Utterson decides to investigate. He goes to see Dr. Lanyon, a mutual friend of Utterson and Jekyll. Lanyon tells Utterson that he has quarrelled with Jekyll over scientific matters, and does not see him much any more. Lanyon insists that he has never heard of Mr. Hyde.

Deciding to seek out Hyde himself, Utterson waits at Hyde's doorway in Soho, and eventually encounters Hyde, who fills him with "disgust, loathing and fear". Utterson then goes to see Jekyll, who is not at home. Jekyll's loyal servant, Poole, tells Utterson that all Jekyll's servants have orders to obey Hyde. Utterson is now convinced that Hyde is blackmailing Jekyll, and afraid that Hyde will murder Jekyll in order to obtain the money left to him in Jekyll's will.

#### **DR. JEKYLL WAS QUITE AT EASE**

Utterson questions Jekyll about his relationship with Hyde, and begs him to tell him the truth. Jekyll refuses to explain, saying that “my position is a very strange one.” Jekyll asks Utterson to look after Hyde, if anything should happen to Jekyll. Reluctantly, Utterson promises.

### **THE CAREW MURDER CASE**

London is shocked by a vicious, motiveless crime. An elderly gentleman, Sir Danvers Carew, is beaten to death by Mr Hyde with a weighted cane. The attack is witnessed by a maid, and Hyde leaves his cane behind. Utterson recognises the cane as belonging to Hyde, and takes a police inspector to Hyde’s lodgings in Soho. But it appears that Hyde has fled. He seems to have packed hurriedly, and burned most of his papers. The police hope to be able to track him down, but as he has neither friends or family, this proves difficult.

### **INCIDENT OF THE LETTER**

Utterson goes to see Jekyll, who is sick, and seems devastated at the news that Hyde is a murderer. Jekyll shows Utterson a letter from Hyde, in which Hyde claims he has a secret means of escape. Jekyll promises Utterson that Hyde will never be heard of again. Utterson tells Jekyll of his belief that Hyde meant to murder Jekyll. Jekyll covers his face with his hands, telling Utterson that he has learned a terrible lesson.

Utterson shows Hyde’s letter to his clerk, Mr. Guest, who points out that Hyde’s handwriting is very like Jekyll’s. Utterson is appalled at the thought that Jekyll is forging letters for a murderer.

### **REMARKABLE INCIDENT OF DR. LANYON**

After the death of Sir Danvers, Hyde is not seen for two months. He seems to have vanished completely.

Meanwhile, Dr Lanyon becomes ill. He tells Utterson that, “I have had a shock, and I shall never recover.” When Utterson mentions Jekyll, Lanyon says that Jekyll is dead to him.

Lanyon dies, leaving a letter for Utterson which is “not to be opened till the death or disappearance of Dr. Henry Jekyll”. Utterson is tempted to open it, but resists, placing the letter in his safe.

### **INCIDENT AT THE WINDOW**

Utterson and Enfield are passing the doorway where Enfield first saw Hyde, when they realise that the street is a by-way to Dr. Jekyll’s. They call on Jekyll and see him standing at a window. Jekyll refuses to leave the house to join his friends, and they see a terrifying expression on his face.

## **THE LAST NIGHT**

Utterson receives a visit from Poole, who's worried about his master, Jekyll. Poole and the other servants believe that Mr Hyde has murdered Dr Jekyll and locked himself in his laboratory. For days, the servants have been following written orders from Jekyll. Poole shows Utterson a series of notes, begging him to go to the wholesale chemist and find a particular drug.

Utterson and Poole break down the door into Jekyll's laboratory and discover Edward Hyde, dead. He has obviously poisoned himself.

In the lab, Poole and Utterson find a letter to Utterson from Jekyll. Jekyll instructs Utterson to read Dr. Lanyon's letter first, and then read his own explanation.

## **DR. LANYON'S NARRATIVE**

Dr. Lanyon tells of a strange, desperate letter he once had from Jekyll. Saying that "if you fail me tonight, I am lost", Jekyll begged Lanyon to go to his house, collect a phial and powders, and give them to a man who would call for them. Lanyon did as Jekyll requested, and Hyde arrived to collect the drugs. When Hyde added the powder to the liquid and drank it, his features seemed to melt and alter – and he became Dr. Jekyll! Sickened by the knowledge that Jekyll and Hyde were one and the same, Dr. Lanyon never recovered from the shock.

## **HENRY JEKYLL'S FULL STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

Finally, Utterson reads Dr. Jekyll's own narrative, in which he explains the truth behind Edward Hyde's existence.

Jekyll explains that he had always been haunted by a contradiction in his nature. He aspired to be "honourable and distinguished", devoting himself to high-minded study and helping others. Yet part of his nature always wished to "lay aside restraint and plunge in shame."

Jekyll's scientific studies led him to believe that the human body is not solid – that it is transient and can be changed. Jekyll believed that he can separate the dual sides of his nature. He created a potion, which changed his body into that of Edward Hyde – the embodiment of all the evil in Jekyll's nature.

At first, Jekyll enjoyed becoming Hyde to indulge in all the pleasures from which Jekyll had to restrain. But soon Hyde became stronger and more vicious. Increasingly, Jekyll found that he was trapped in Hyde's body, and forced to take more and more of his drug in order to become Jekyll again. Meanwhile, Hyde's crimes became worse...

When Hyde murdered Danvers, Jekyll realised that he could no longer become Hyde, or he risked being caught and hanged. For months, he stayed away from Hyde, and became more virtuous than ever. But he became too smug. One day in

Regent's Park, just as he reflected upon his superiority to other men, he found himself changing into Hyde involuntarily – without even taking his drug.

Jekyll was terrified. This was the moment when he begged for Dr. Lanyon's help, and revealed to Lanyon the truth about Jekyll and Hyde.

From this moment on, Hyde was the stronger of the two. Jekyll was forced to take more and more drugs in order to remain himself – and eventually, his supply ran out. When he tried to create more of the drug, it did not work. He realised that the original batch of a certain salt must have been contaminated, and it was only the impurity which made the drug effective. He searched all of London for a supply of the salt which would replicate the original effect, but was not successful.

Jekyll's letter ends as he sits down to wait for his final, inevitable transformation into Hyde. A transformation from which there can be no return.