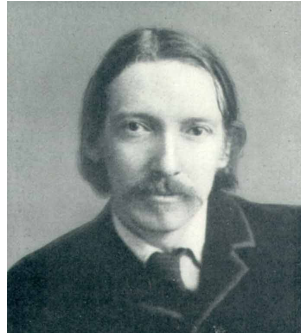


DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

by Robert Louis Stevenson



THE AUTHOR

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, and suffered from respiratory problems throughout his life. He was drawn to writing early in life, but his parents encouraged him to undertake a more profitable profession, so he studied engineering and eventually turned to law, even passing the bar exam. He soon turned to writing, however, beginning with magazine essays and two travelogues describing his trips to the Continent to seek relief for his ailments. In Europe he met Fanny Osbourne, a married American woman who soon divorced her husband to marry Stevenson. They lived for a while in San Francisco, then moved back to Scotland, and eventually settled in Samoa, where Stevenson found some relief for his tuberculosis, but died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1894 at the age of 44.

Stevenson is best known as a writer of adventure stories. His reputation was established with the publication of *Treasure Island* in 1883, followed by *The Black Arrow* (1884), *Kidnapped* (1886), and *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889). The work generally considered to be his masterpiece, however, is a novelette written in a mere three days in 1886 - *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. According to Stevenson, the germ of the plot came to him in an especially vivid nightmare, perhaps brought on by a medical treatment he was receiving that had hallucinogenic properties. Not wanting to forget what he had dreamed, he spent the next three days furiously writing the story, only to tear it up and start over at an equally feverish pace when he was dissatisfied with the results. Like Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, penned five years later, Stevenson's tale speaks of a man divided against himself, outwardly attractive but hiding within the most hideous of evils. The story not only addresses some of the ideas that were becoming current in the psychology of the period (think of Freud's concepts of the id and the ego, for instance), but also has been seen by some as symbolizing the attraction felt by the proper Victorians for the savagery found in the British colonies (cf. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*).

PLOT SUMMARY

The narrative begins with Richard Enfield and his kinsman Mr. Utterson taking their accustomed Sunday walk through London. They pass a scarred door, and Enfield tells Utterson about a peculiar experience he had had earlier. While walking late one night, he had seen a man walk over a little girl without stopping. After apprehending the culprit, he and the child's parents

had threatened him with the law unless he agreed to pay the family one hundred pounds. He calmly agreed to do so, then entered the scarred door with a key and emerged with a check signed by the notable physician Henry Jekyll, which the bank promptly honored.

Uttersson is Henry Jekyll's lawyer, and knows that his old friend has left all his possessions to Edward Hyde, even specifying that, should he go missing for three months or more, Hyde should take control of his property. He first consults Dr. Lanyon, a mutual friend, who can say nothing other than that Jekyll had fallen into some strange scientific ideas. Utterson is determined to meet Hyde, and stakes out the scarred door until one night he encounters the man. Like Enfield, he is impressed with the aura of evil surrounding Hyde, and determines to discover what power the man has over his friend. Two weeks later, Utterson has dinner with Jekyll, and after dinner broaches the subject of the will. Jekyll assures him that, though Hyde may be an unpleasant young man, Jekyll has a profound interest in him. Furthermore, no blackmail is involved, and Jekyll assures Utterson that he can rid himself of Hyde any time he chooses. He also begs Utterson never to mention the matter again, either to him or to anyone else. Utterson reluctantly agrees.

Almost a year later, Sir Danvers Carew encounters Hyde late at night in the street and asks him for directions. For no apparent reason, Hyde bludgeons him to death with a cane, which splinters in the process. The murder is witnessed by a maid. Carew carried a letter for Utterson, and he and Inspector Newcomen of Scotland Yard go in search of Hyde. While searching his apartment, they find a burned checkbook and a fragment of the cane used in the murder, which Utterson recognizes as belonging to Henry Jekyll. Later that day, Utterson visits Jekyll in his laboratory, located directly behind Jekyll's home in the old building with the scarred door, and finds him ill and distraught. The doctor assures Utterson that Hyde will never be heard from again, and gives to his lawyer a letter from Hyde informing him of his planned escape. Utterson takes the letter to his office and shows it to his head clerk Guest, a handwriting expert. When an invitation from Jekyll arrives, Guest compares the two writing samples and finds that they are in the same hand, but that Hyde's letter is disguised with a different slant.

For two months, nothing is seen of Hyde, and Jekyll seems like a new man, cheerful, friendly, and taking a renewed interest in religion and deeds of charity. Suddenly, in January, he refuses to see his friends Utterson and Lanyon. When Utterson becomes concerned and visits Lanyon to discuss the matter, he finds the old doctor pale and seemingly near death. Lanyon explains that he is in shock from an experience he cannot discuss, and that he never wishes to see Henry Jekyll again. He dies two weeks later, and leaves a letter for Utterson with instructions that it is not to be opened until Jekyll's death or disappearance. Some time later, Enfield and Utterson are taking their usual Sunday walk and pass again the scarred door. They decide to enter the courtyard and see if Jekyll is anywhere in sight. They find him by one of the windows and have a brief, pleasant conversation. Suddenly, Jekyll experiences a terrible spasm and slams the window shut. Utterson and Enfield flee in horror, recognizing in the distorted face of their friend the countenance of Edward Hyde.

One night Poole appears at Utterson's house in a dreadful state and asks him to return with him to his master's residence. When they arrive at Jekyll's home, Poole tells Utterson that his master has not been seen for over a week, but that someone is locked in the laboratory - someone who looks and sounds very much like Hyde. For the last week, he has been leaving messages demanding certain chemicals, and each time complaining that they were not pure enough for his purpose. When Utterson demands admittance, the voice inside refuses. The two then break down

the door and find Hyde in his death throes, having taken his own life, and no signs of Jekyll except for a new will leaving everything to Utterson and a thick envelope containing the doctor's confession. Utterson then returns home to read the documents left him by Lanyon and Jekyll.

Upon reading the papers left him by Lanyon, Utterson finds that Jekyll had sent him a letter asking him to go to his home and retrieve a drawer filled with chemicals from the laboratory. He was to take the drawer back to his own home, where a man would call for it. That night, a misshapen man in oversized clothes appeared at his door. Lanyon admitted him and gave him the drawer. He then proceeded to mix the chemicals, and asked Lanyon if his curiosity drove him to see the result of the experiment. Lanyon could not resist, and the man, who was Edward Hyde, drank the mixture and turned into Jekyll before his eyes. Jekyll then told him the whole of his story, which Lanyon was too shaken to commit to writing.

Finally, Utterson reads Jekyll's own account. Jekyll describes himself as a privileged young man who had too strong a desire for the pleasures of life, yet wanted the world to view him as serious and respectable. Unwilling to give up his pleasures, he led a double life while at the same time engaged in scientific researches concerning the essence of man. He set as his goal to separate the two parts of his personality, assuming that each part would be happier without the constraints of the other. Having developed the formula for the transformation, he hesitated out of fear, but soon took the plunge and drank the tincture. After a terrible spasm of pain, he turned into Edward Hyde, a smaller, younger man than himself; he assumed this was the case because the evil side of his personality had been so much less fully developed than the good. After looking at himself in the mirror, he mixed up more of the potion and drank it, returning once again to the personality of Henry Jekyll. Yet the transformation was purely one for the worse, since Jekyll was no better than he had been before, while Hyde was evil incarnate. He soon began to enjoy putting on his secret identity, however, and took steps to facilitate the transformations, such as renting a house in the name of Hyde and, as Jekyll, instructing his servants that Hyde was to have free run of his home. He also made a will making Hyde his beneficiary. As time passed, he began to gain vicarious pleasure from Hyde's evil escapades, reveling in his immunity from being identified with the crimes of his alter-ego while at the same time making amends for Hyde's evil actions where it was possible to do so. Soon, however, the transformation began to occur spontaneously, as he discovered when he went to bed one night as Jekyll and awoke as Hyde. He came to realize that the personality of Hyde was more and more taking over, even as Hyde grew in stature. He determined to get rid of Hyde once and for all, and for two months resisted the lure of the potion. Finally, he gave in to temptation and again drank his tincture. Hyde emerged with a vengeance, and it was on that night that he murdered Sir Danvers Carew. In his remorse, Jekyll realized with joy that he could no longer return to Hyde because the monster was now wanted for murder. Jekyll redoubled his efforts to do good, but found that temptation still stirred within him, and that as Jekyll he succumbed to that temptation. One day in Regent's Park, as he sat on a bench in broad daylight, thoughts of pride came to him, and he suddenly found himself changed into Edward Hyde. Under these circumstances he had arranged with Lanyon to obtain the chemicals from his laboratory, to which he could no longer return because his servants were aware that Hyde was wanted for murder. After changing back into Jekyll, he had returned home and gone to sleep. Soon after waking he again had turned into Hyde, and locked himself in his laboratory. He took a double dose, but six hours later became Hyde again. In the days that followed, he found it harder and harder to retain the character of Jekyll. As Jekyll grew sicker, Hyde grew stronger. Finally, Jekyll ran out of the necessary chemical, and when he sent for a

new supply, it lacked the efficacy of the original batch; he became convinced that the original had contained some unknown impurity that had made it work in the first place. He finished his confession shortly after taking the last available draught of the old mixture, not knowing whether Hyde would take his own life or die on the scaffold, and left it to be found by Utterson and Poole.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Henry Jekyll - A respectable doctor who, as a result of testing his experiments on himself, turns into the evil Edward Hyde.
- Richard Enfield - He saw Edward Hyde walk right over a young girl in the street and told the tale to his friend Utterson.
- Gabriel John Utterson - A distant relative of Enfield, he is Henry Jekyll's lawyer, and is determined to unravel the mystery of why Jekyll should leave all he has to the disreputable Edward Hyde.
- Dr. Hastie Lanyon - A friend of Jekyll and Utterson, he strongly disapproves of Jekyll's scientific ideas and dies of shock after seeing Hyde metamorphose into Jekyll before his eyes.
- Poole - Jekyll's butler, who provides very little information to those investigating the strange series of incidents until he seeks out Utterson near the end of the story.
- Sir Danvers Carew - An elderly member of Parliament murdered in the street by Edward Hyde.
- Inspector Newcomen - An officer from Scotland Yard who investigates the Carew murder.
- Mr. Guest - Utterson's head clerk, an expert in handwriting who compares letters from Jekyll and Hyde and finds that they are in the same hand, but that the latter is disguised through the use of a different slant.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“I incline to Cain's heresy; I let my brother go to the devil in his own way.” (Utterson, ch.1, p.11)

“Poor Harry Jekyll, my mind misgives me he is in deep waters! He was wild when he was young - a long while ago, to be sure; but in the law of God there is no statute of limitations. Ay, it must be that; the ghost of some old sin, the cancer of some concealed disgrace: punishment coming, *pede claudo*, years after the memory has forgotten, and self-love condoned, the fault.” (Utterson, ch.2, p.28)

“Utterson, I swear to God, I swear to God I will never set eyes on him again. I bind my honor to you that I am done with him in this world. It is all at an end.” (Jekyll, ch.5, p.40)

“I saw that, of the two natures that contended in my field of consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both; and from an early date, even before the course of my scientific discoveries had begun to suggest the most naked possibility of such a miracle, I had learned to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved day-dream, on the thought of the separation of these elements. If each, I told myself, could but be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin; and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path, doing the good things in which he found his pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil.” (Jekyll, ch.10, p.80-81)

“The doom and burden of our life is bound forever on man’s shoulders, and when the attempt is made to cast it off, it but returns upon us with more unfamiliar and awful pressure.” (Jekyll, ch.10, p.81)

“I have observed that when I wore the semblance of Edward Hyde, none could come near to me at first without a visible misgiving of the flesh. This, as I take it, was because all human beings, as we meet them, commingled out of good and evil; and Edward Hyde, alone in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil.” (Jekyll, ch.10, p.84)

“To cast in my lot with Jekyll, was to die to those appetites which I had long secretly indulged and had of late begun to pamper. To cast it in with Hyde was to die to a thousand interests and aspirations, and to become, at a blow and forever, despised and friendless. The bargain might appear unequal; but there was still another consideration in the scales; for while Jekyll would suffer smartingly in the fires of abstinence, Hyde would not be even conscious of all that he had lost. Strange as my circumstances were, the terms of this debate are as old and commonplace as man; much the same inducements and alarms cast the die for any tempted and trembling sinner; and it fell out with me, as it falls with so vast a majority of my fellows, that I chose the better part and was found wanting in the strength to keep to it.” (Jekyll, ch.10, p.90)

“My devil had been long caged, he came out roaring.” (Jekyll, ch.10, p.91)

“Jekyll was now my city of refuge; let but Hyde peep out an instant, and the hands of all men would be raised to take and slay him.” (Jekyll, ch.10, p.93)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Robert Louis Stevenson lived at the same time during which the theories of Freud about the makeup of the human psyche were becoming popular. To what extent does his *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* reflect Freud’s views of the id, the ego, and the superego? Is man hopelessly divided against himself? Does Stevenson see any hope for one who seeks to keep the savage within under control? Use specifics from the novel to support your answer.

2. Some critics have seen in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* a parable of British colonialism, with civilized man seeking to control the savagery of uncultured man, but instead being fascinated by and eventually drawn into the savagery that he outwardly deplors. Evaluate this interpretation of Stevenson's short novel. Which aspects of the story fit this reading and which do not? Support your answer with details from the story.
3. Some critics have seen in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* a parable of British colonialism, with civilized man seeking to control the savagery of uncultured man, but instead being fascinated by and eventually drawn into the savagery that he outwardly deplors. Compare and contrast Stevenson's treatment of this theme with that of Joseph Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*. Do both writers deal with the heart of man in the same way, or do they have important differences in their approaches? Use details from both works to support your arguments.
4. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* may be read as a cautionary tale against the possible dangers of unfettered scientific advances, and as such contains many parallels with Mary Shelley's famous Gothic novel *Frankenstein*. Do the two books view science and its dangers in the same way? If so, what are the important points the two have in common? If not, what are the most significant differences you see in the two treatments?
5. As a story of a man seeking to distance himself from the powers of corruption within while still enjoying the pleasures of dissipation, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* has much in common with Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Compare and contrast the two works in terms of their understanding of human nature, their conception of man's inner corruption, and the possibility of man controlling his evil desires.
6. The two doctors in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* serve as foils for one another. Discuss the contrasting characters of Jekyll and Lanyon and show how the traits of one serve to emphasize and bring out those of the other. With which of the characters is the author more sympathetic? Why do you think so?
7. Discuss the main conceit of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* - the idea that each man is a contradictory combination of good and evil - in the light of Paul's description of himself in Romans 7:14-25. Is Stevenson's view of human nature a biblical one or not? Support your analysis both from Scripture and the novel.
8. In Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the author argues that the wicked part of man, once indulged, will inevitably conquer. To what extent is this true? Analyze Stevenson's concept of human evil in the light of biblical teaching, and support your argument with specifics from both Scripture and the novel.
9. In analyzing Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, do you find in it any hope of redemption? Does Stevenson suggest any possibility of man controlling his sinful urges? If you find hope at the end of the story, in what does it rest? If not, what about the author's worldview leads you to the conclusion that no hope exists?

10. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* was written in an age when Darwin's theory of evolution was becoming increasingly popular. In what ways does the novel reflect Darwinism, with its emphasis on violent struggle for survival? Is Hyde intended to be a throwback to man's evolutionary past? If so, does Stevenson believe that man can ever really separate himself from animals? Why or why not?
11. In Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the purpose of Dr. Jekyll's experiments is to liberate himself - to free his evil side from the constraints of conscience and to free his good side from the constant temptation to evil. To what extent does he succeed and in what ways does he fail? What does this tell you about Stevenson's understanding concerning the essence of human nature?
12. Near the end of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Jekyll sits on a park bench, enjoying nature and thinking about what a good man he is compared to others. No sooner does that thought enter his mind than he is violently transformed into Hyde. What does this incident tell us about Stevenson's understanding of the essence of human evil? Discuss the various ways in which pride is a factor in the story, and evaluate Stevenson's treatment of the subject in the light of Scripture.
13. Victorian society is often thought to have been repressive, with the implication that such repression of man's natural drives is harmful. Discuss the idea of the repressiveness of Victorian society in the light of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Did Stevenson think the society in which he lived was repressive? Did he think this was good or bad? Support your arguments with specifics from the novel.
14. In Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the mysticism of Jekyll is contrasted with the rationalism and materialism of characters such as Utterson and Lanyon. Victorian England was certainly rationalistic in its devotion to science. Would you conclude, then, that Stevenson was a throwback to Romanticism, with its interest in the supernatural? Develop an argument as to whether the author is best classified as a Romantic or a rationalist, supporting your points from the story.
15. Considering the failure of Jekyll to purge himself of evil by separating Hyde in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, do you believe that the author pictured man as having two natures, one good and one evil, or merely an evil nature that was kept under wraps only by the severest disciplines exercised by oneself and society? Use both Scripture and details from the novel to support your analysis.
16. Victorian Englishmen often took seriously the "science" of physiognomy - the idea that a person's traits could be read by observing his bodily, and especially facial, features. To what extent is this concept central to the plot of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*? To what extent is it undermined by Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*? To what extent do people act on such assumptions today, though they would openly disavow such unscientific thinking?

17. To what extent is Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* a detective story? Remember that the original readers did not come to it already knowing the connection between Jekyll and Hyde. How does the author build suspense and prepare the reader for the shocking ending? To what extent does our knowledge of the ending diminish the effectiveness of the tale and our ability to enjoy it as the original readers would have done?
18. In Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, most of the story is seen through the eyes of the lawyer Utterson. Why do you think the author makes this choice? How would the story have been different if it, like the last chapter, had been told through the eyes of Jekyll himself? How would such an approach have affected the impact of the story on the reader? How would it have altered the main themes of the novel?
19. Discuss the use of contrasting places in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. How do contrasts between Jekyll's house and his laboratory and between London in daylight and London at night help communicate the themes of the novel?
20. In Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, to what extent is Jekyll responsible for the actions of his alter-ego? Did Jekyll consider himself responsible? Did Stevenson consider him responsible? Relate your answer to the tendency of people today to evade responsibility for their evil actions by blaming them on factors beyond their control.
21. In Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, we find a powerful picture of "the lure of the Dark Side." Compare and contrast the treatment of this theme with that found in the Star Wars movies. In what ways is Anakin Skywalker like Dr. Jekyll? What do the two stories share in their understanding of the nature of human wickedness?
22. Near the beginning of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Utterson says, "I incline to Cain's heresy; I let my brother go to the devil in his own way." Discuss the extent to which the Victorian values of minding one's own business and keeping silent about anything potentially embarrassing or controversial contribute to the progress of the plot and the development of its themes. Does Stevenson approve of these values or find them ultimately damaging? Support your argument with details from the story.
23. In the last chapter of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Dr. Jekyll describes his struggle with temptation in the following words: "To cast in my lot with Jekyll, was to die to those appetites which I had long secretly indulged and had of late begun to pamper. To cast it in with Hyde was to die to a thousand interests and aspirations, and to become, at a blow and forever, despised and friendless. The bargain might appear unequal; but there was still another consideration in the scales; for while Jekyll would suffer smartingly in the fires of abstinence, Hyde would not be even conscious of all that he had lost. Strange as my circumstances were, the terms of this debate are as old and commonplace as man; much the same inducements and alarms cast the die for any tempted and trembling sinner; and it fell out with me, as it falls with so vast a majority of my fellows, that I chose the better part and was found wanting in the strength to keep to it." Evaluate Jekyll's description of the nature of temptation in this passage. To what extent does he paint an accurate picture of that with which all people struggle, and to what extent is his scenario unique to the peculiar circumstances of his experiment?

24. To what extent is it true that our real personalities are revealed by the way we act when no one is looking? If we could act in any way we choose without fearing the consequences, what would we choose to do? How does Robert Louis Stevenson answer this question in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*? What does his answer suggest about which character was more real, the doctor or his monstrous alter-ego? What does it suggest about Stevenson's understanding of human nature in general?