



Strange case of

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

by Robert Louis Stevenson



2. Search for Mr Hyde

That evening Mr Utterson came home to his bachelor house in sombre spirits and sat down to dinner without relish. 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.

Though he took charge of it now that it was made, he 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, 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.

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. 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 leaped up the sudden, definite presentment 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 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 patients. "If anyone knows, it will be Lanyon," he had thought.

Dr Lanyon - a hearty, healthy, dapper, red-faced gentleman, with a shock of hair prematurely white, and a boisterous and decided manner, at the sight of Mr Utterson, sprang up from his chair and welcomed him with both hands. The geniality 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 and 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," said he, "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 the 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 I have seen devilish little of the man. Such unscientific balderdash," added the doctor, flushing suddenly purple, "would have estranged Damon and Pythias."

"Did you ever come across a protégé of his, one Hyde?"

"Hyde?" repeated Lanyon. "No. Never heard of him."

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, besieged by questions.

Six o'clock struck on the bells of the church and still he was digging at the problem. Now his imagination was engaged, or rather enslaved, Mr Enfield's tale went by before his mind in a scroll of lighted pictures. He would be aware of the lamps of a nocturnal city; then of the man walking swiftly; then of a child

running and when these met, that human Juggernaut trod the child down and passed on regardless of her screams.

The figure had no face by which he might know it and thus sprang up and grew apace in the lawyer's mind a singularly strong curiosity to behold the features of the real Mr Hyde. If he could but once set eyes on him, he thought the mystery would lighten and perhaps roll altogether away. He might see a reason for his friend's strange preference, even for the startling clause of the will. At least it would be a face worth seeing: the face of a man who was without bowels of mercy; a face which had but to show itself to raise up, in the mind of the unimpressionable Enfield, a spirit of enduring hatred.

From that time forward, Mr Utterson began to haunt the door in the by-street of shops. In the morning before office hours, at noon when business was plenty, at night under the face of the fogged city moon, by all lights and at all hours the lawyer was to be found on his chosen post.

"If he be Mr Hyde," he had thought, "I shall be Mr Seek."

And at last his patience was rewarded. It was a fine dry night; frost in the air; the streets as clean as a ballroom floor; the lamps, unshaken by any wind, drawing a regular pattern of light and shadow. Small sounds carried far and the approach of any passenger preceded him by a long time.

Mr Utterson had been some minutes at his post, when he was aware of an odd light footstep drawing near. His attention had never before been so sharply and decisively arrested; and it was with a strong, superstitious prevision of success that he withdrew into the entry of the court.

The steps drew swiftly nearer. The lawyer could soon see what manner of man he had to deal with. He was small and very plainly dressed and the look of him, even at that distance, went somehow strongly against the watcher's inclination. He made straight for the door and drew a key from his pocket like one approaching home.

Mr Utterson stepped out and touched him on the shoulder as he passed. "Mr Hyde, I think?"

Mr Hyde shrank back with a hissing intake of the breath. But his fear was only momentary; and though he did not look the lawyer in the face, he answered coolly enough: "That is my name. What do you want?"

"I see you are going in," returned the lawyer. "I am an old friend of Dr Jekyll's. Mr Utterson, you must have heard of my name; and meeting you so conveniently, I thought you might admit me."

"You will not find Dr Jekyll; he is from home," replied Mr Hyde, blowing in the key.

"Will you do me a favour?" said Mr

Utterson.

"With pleasure," replied the other. "What shall it be?"

"Will you let me see your face?" asked the lawyer.

Mr Hyde appeared to hesitate, and then, as if upon some sudden reflection, fronted about with an air of defiance; and the pair stared at each other pretty fixedly for a few seconds.

"Now I shall know you again," said Mr Utterson. "It may be useful."

"Yes," returned Mr Hyde, "it is as well we have met; and a propos, you should have my address." And he gave a number of a street in Soho.

"Good God!" thought Mr Utterson, "can he, too, have been thinking of the will?" But he kept his feelings to himself.

"And now," said the other, "how did you know me?"

"By description," was the reply.

"Whose description?"

"We have common friends," said Mr Utterson.

"Common friends," echoed Mr Hyde, a little hoarsely. "Who are they?"

"Jekyll, for instance," said the lawyer.

“He never told you,” cried Mr Hyde, with a flush of anger. “I did not think you would have lied.”

“Come,” said Mr Utterson, “that is not fitting language.”

The other snarled aloud into a savage laugh; and the next moment, with extraordinary quickness, he had unlocked the door and disappeared into the house.

The lawyer began slowly to mount the street, pausing every step or two and putting his hand to his brow like a man in mental perplexity.

The problem he was debating as he walked, was one of a class that is rarely solved. Mr Hyde was pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice; all these were points against him, but not all of these together could explain the hitherto unknown disgust, loathing and fear with which Mr Utterson regarded him.

“God bless me, the man seems hardly human!” he said. “O my poor old Harry Jekyll, if ever I read Satan’s signature upon a face, it is on that of your new friend.”

Round the corner from the by-street, there was a square of ancient, handsome houses and at the door of one, which

wore a great air of wealth and comfort, Mr Utterson knocked. A well-dressed, elderly servant opened the door.

“Is Dr Jekyll at home, Poole?” asked the lawyer.

“I will see, Mr Utterson,” said Poole, admitting the visitor, as he spoke, into a large, low-roofed, comfortable hall warmed by a bright, open fire, and furnished with cabinets of oak. “Will you wait here by the fire, sir?”

This hall, in which he was now left alone, was a pet fancy of his friend the doctor’s; and Utterson himself was wont to speak of it as the pleasantest room in London. But tonight there was a shudder in his blood; the face of Hyde sat heavy on his memory; he felt a nausea and distaste of life; and in the gloom of his spirits, he seemed to read a menace in the flickering of the firelight.

Poole presently returned to announce that Dr Jekyll was gone out.

“I saw Mr Hyde go in by the old dissecting room, Poole,” he said. “Is that right, when Dr Jekyll is from home?”

“Quite right, Mr Utterson, sir,” replied the servant. “Mr Hyde has a key.”

“Your master seems to repose a great deal of trust in that young man, Poole.”

“Yes, sir, he does indeed. We have all orders to obey him.”

“I do not think I ever met Mr Hyde?” asked Utterson.

“O, dear no, sir. He never dines here,” replied the butler. Indeed we see very little of him on this side of the house; he mostly comes and goes by the laboratory.”

“Well, good-night, Poole.”

And the lawyer set out homeward with a very heavy heart.

“Poor Harry Jekyll,” he thought, “my mind misgives me he is in deep waters! This Master Hyde must have black secrets, by the look of him; secrets compared to which poor Jekyll’s worst would be like sunshine. Things cannot continue as they are. It turns me cold to think of this creature stealing like a thief to Harry’s bedside; poor Harry, what a wakening! And the danger of it; for if this Hyde suspects the existence of the will, he may grow impatient to inherit. I must put my shoulders to the wheel if Jekyll will only let me.”

For once more he saw before his mind’s eye, as clear as transparency, the strange clauses of the will.