



Strange case of

# Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

by Robert Louis Stevenson



## 4. The Carew murder case

Nearly a year later London was startled by a crime of singular ferocity, rendered all the more notable by the high position of the victim.

The details were few and startling. A maid servant living alone in a house not far from the river, had gone upstairs to bed about eleven. The lane, which the maid's window overlooked, was brilliantly lit by the full moon. She became aware of an aged gentleman with white hair, drawing near along the lane; and advancing to meet him, another very small gentleman, to whom at first she paid less attention.

The older man bowed and accosted the other with a very pretty manner of politeness. It appeared as if he were only inquiring his way.

Presently the maid's eye wandered to the other, and she was surprised to recognise in him a certain Mr Hyde, who had once visited her master and for whom she had conceived a dislike.

He had in his hand a heavy cane but he answered never a word, and seemed to listen with an ill-contained impatience. And then all of a sudden he broke out in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot, brandishing the cane, and carrying on like a madman.

The old gentleman took a step back, with the air of one very much surprised and a trifle hurt; and at that Mr Hyde broke out of all bounds and clubbed him to the earth. And next moment, with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim under foot and hailing down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered. At the horror of these sights and sounds, the maid fainted.

It was two o'clock when she came to and called for the police. The murderer was gone long ago; but there lay his victim in the middle of the lane, incredibly mangled.

The stick with which the deed had been done, had broken in the middle under the stress of this insensate cruelty; and one splintered half had rolled in the neighbouring gutter - the other, without doubt, had been carried away by the murderer.

A purse and gold watch were found upon the victim: but no cards or papers, except a sealed and stamped envelope which bore the name and address of Mr Utterson.

This was brought to the lawyer the next morning. "I shall say nothing till I have seen the body," said he; "this may be very serious."

He drove to the police station, whither the body had been carried.

As soon as he came into the cell, he nodded. "Yes," said he, "I recognise him. I am sorry to say that this is Sir Danvers Carew."

"Good God, sir," exclaimed the officer, "is it possible? Perhaps you can help us to the man." And he briefly narrated what the maid had seen, and showed the broken stick.

Mr Utterson had already quailed at the name of Hyde; but when the stick was laid before him, he could doubt no longer; broken and battered as it was, he recognized it for one that he had himself presented many years before to Henry Jekyll.

"Is this Mr Hyde a person of small stature?" he inquired.

"Particularly small and particularly wicked-looking, is what the maid calls him," said the officer.

"If you will come with me in my cab," Mr Utterson said, "I think I can take you to his house."

It was by this time about nine in the morning, and the first fog of the season. A great chocolate-coloured pall lowered over heaven, but the wind was continually charging and routing these embattled vapours; so that as the cab crawled from street to street, Mr Utterson beheld a marvelous number of degrees and hues of twilight. The dismal quarter of Soho seen under these changing glimpses, with its muddy ways, and slatternly

passengers, seemed, in the lawyer's eyes, like a district of some city in a nightmare. The thoughts of his mind, besides, were of the gloomiest dye.

The cab drew up before the address indicated. This was the home of Henry Jekyll's favourite; of a man who was heir to a quarter of a million sterling.

An ivory-faced and silvery-haired old woman opened the door. Yes, she said, this was Mr Hyde's, but he was not at home; he had been in that night very late, but he had gone away again in less than an hour; there was nothing strange in that; his habits were very irregular, and he was often absent; for instance, it was nearly two months since she had seen him till yesterday.

"Very well, then, we wish to see his rooms," said the lawyer.

In the whole extent of the house, Mr Hyde had only used a couple of rooms; furnished with luxury and good taste, but at this moment, they bore every mark of having been recently and hurriedly ransacked; clothes lay about the floor, lock-fast drawers stood open; and on the hearth there lay a pile of grey ashes, as though many papers had been burned.

From these embers the inspector disinterred the butt end of a green cheque book, which had resisted the action of the fire; the other half of the stick was found behind the door; and as this clinched his suspicions, the officer declared himself delighted. A visit to the bank, where

several thousand pounds were found to be lying to the murderer's credit, completed his gratification.

"You may depend upon it, sir," he told Mr Utterson: "I have him in my hand. He must have lost his head, or he never would have left the stick or, above all, burned the cheque book. We have nothing to do but wait for him at the bank."

This last, however, was not so easy of accomplishment; for Mr Hyde had numbered few familiars; his family could nowhere be traced and the few who could describe him differed widely. Only on one point were they agreed; and that was the haunting sense of unexpressed deformity with which the fugitive impressed his beholders.