



Strange case of

# Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

by Robert Louis Stevenson



## 10. Henry Jekyll's full statement of the case

I was born to a large fortune, endowed with excellent parts, inclined by nature to industry, fond of the respect of the wise and good among my fellowmen, and with every guarantee of an honourable and distinguished future. The worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition that I found it hard to reconcile with my imperious desire to carry my head high, and wear a grave countenance before the public.

I concealed my pleasures and when I reached years of reflection, and began to take stock of my progress and position in the world, I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of me. Many a man would have blazoned such irregularities as I was guilty of; but I hid them with an almost morbid sense of shame.

It was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspirations than any particular degradation in my faults, that made me what I was, and severed in me those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature.

Though so profound a double-dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite; both sides of me were in dead earnest; I was no more myself when I laid aside restraint and plunged in shame, than when I laboured at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief

of sorrow and suffering. And it chanced that the direction of my scientific studies, which led wholly towards the mystic and the transcendental, reacted and shed a strong light on this consciousness of the perennial war among my members.

With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth, by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two.

I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. I advanced infallibly in one direction and in one direction only. It was on the moral side, and in my own person, that I learned to recognise the thorough and primitive duality of man; I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both.

If each, I told myself, could 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 securely on his upward path, doing the good things in which he found his pleasure, no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil.



It was the curse of mankind that in the agonised womb of consciousness, these polar twins should be continuously struggling. How, then were they dissociated?

I began to perceive more deeply than it has yet been stated, the trembling immateriality, the mist-like transience, of this seemingly so solid body in which we walk attired. But my discoveries were incomplete. Enough then, that I not only recognised my natural body from the mere aura and effulgence of certain of the powers that made up my spirit, but managed to compound a drug by which these powers should be dethroned from their supremacy, and a second form and countenance substituted, none the less natural to me because they were the expression, and bore the stamp of lower elements in my soul.

I hesitated long before I put this theory to the test of practice. I knew well that I risked death; for any drug that so potently controlled and shook the very fortress of identity, might, by the least scruple of an overdose or at the least inopportunity in the moment of exhibition, utterly blot out that which I looked to it to change.

But the temptation of a discovery so profound overcame the suggestions of alarm. I had long since prepared my tincture; I purchased at once, from a chemist, a large quantity of a particular salt which I knew, from my experiments, to be the last ingredient required; and late one accursed night, I compounded the elements, watched them boil and smoke together in the glass, and when

the ebullition had subsided, with a strong glow of courage, drank off the potion.

The most racking pangs succeeded: a grinding in the bones, deadly nausea, and a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death.

Then these agonies began swiftly to subside, and I came to myself as if out of a great sickness. There was something strange in my sensations, something indescribably new and, from its very novelty, incredibly sweet. I felt younger, lighter, happier in body; within I was conscious of a heady recklessness, an unknown freedom of the soul. I knew myself at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked and the thought, in that moment, delighted me. I stretched out my hands, and I was suddenly aware that I had lost in stature.

There was no mirror, at that date, in my room; that which stands beside me as I write, was brought there later on and for the very purpose of these transformations. I determined, flushed with hope and triumph, to venture in my new shape as far as to my bedroom. I stole through the corridors, a stranger in my own house; and coming to my bedroom, I saw for the first time the appearance of Edward Hyde.

The evil side of my nature was less robust and less developed than the good which I had just deposed. Edward Hyde was so much smaller, slighter and younger than Henry Jekyll. Even as good shone upon



the countenance of the one, evil was written broadly and plainly on the face of the other. Evil had left on that body an imprint of deformity and decay. And yet when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather of a leap of welcome. This, too, was myself. It seemed natural and human. 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 are commingled out of good and evil: and Edward Hyde, alone in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil.

Hurrying back to my cabinet, I once more prepared and drank the cup, once more suffered the pangs of dissolution, and came to myself once more with the character, the stature and the face of Henry Jekyll.

I had now two characters as well as two appearances, one was wholly evil, and the other was still the old Henry Jekyll.

I had but to drink the cup, to doff at once the body of the noted professor, and to assume, like a thick cloak, that of Edward Hyde. I smiled at the notion; it seemed to me at the time to be humorous; and I made my preparations with the most studious care. I took and furnished that house in Soho, to which Hyde was tracked by the police; and engaged as a housekeeper a creature whom I knew well to be silent and unscrupulous.

On the other side, I announced to

my servants that a Mr Hyde (whom I described) was to have full liberty and power about my house in the square. I next drew up that will to which you so much objected; so that if anything befell me in the person of Dr Jekyll, I could enter on that of Edward Hyde without pecuniary loss. And thus fortified I began to profit by the strange immunities of my position.

Think of it - I did not even exist! Let me but escape into my laboratory door, give me but a second or two to mix and swallow the draught that I had always standing ready; and whatever he had done, Edward Hyde would pass away like the stain of breath upon a mirror; and there in his stead, quietly at home would be Henry Jekyll.

The pleasures which I made haste to seek in my disguise were undignified. In the hands of Edward Hyde, they soon began to turn toward the monstrous.

When I would come back from these excursions, I was often plunged into a kind of wonder at my vicarious depravity. This familiar that I called out of my own soul, and sent forth alone to do his good pleasure, was a being inherently malign and villainous. Henry Jekyll stood at times aghast before the acts of Edward Hyde. It was Hyde and Hyde alone, that was guilty. Jekyll was no worse; he woke again to his good qualities seemingly unimpaired; he would even make haste, where it was possible, to undo the evil done by Hyde. And thus his conscience slumbered.



I met with one accident. An act of cruelty to a child aroused against me the anger of a passer-by, whom I recognised the other day in the person of your kinsman. There were moments when I feared for my life; and to pacify their too just resentment, Edward Hyde had to bring them to the door, and pay them in a cheque drawn in the name of Henry Jekyll.

Some two months before the murder of Sir Danvers, I had been out for one of my adventures, had returned at a late hour, and woke the next day in bed with somewhat odd sensations. It was in vain I looked about me; in vain I saw the decent furniture of my room in the square and the pattern of the bedcurtains; something still kept insisting that I was not where I was; that I had not wakened where I seemed to be, but in the little room in Soho where I was accustomed to sleep in the body of Edward Hyde.

I smiled to myself, and began lazily to inquire into the elements of this illusion, occasionally, even as I did so, dropping back into a comfortable morning doze. I was still so engaged when, in one of my more wakeful moments, my eyes fell upon my hand. Now the hand of Henry Jekyll was professional in shape and size: it was large, firm, white and comely. But the hand which I now saw, clearly enough, in the yellow light of a mid-London morning, lying on the bedclothes, was lean, knucky and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair. It was the hand of Edward Hyde.

Terror woke up in my breast as sudden and startling as the crash of cymbals;

and bounding from my bed I rushed to the mirror. At the sight that met my eyes, my blood was changed into something exquisitely thin and icy. Yes, I had gone to bed Henry Jekyll, I had awakened Edward Hyde. How was this to be explained? How was it to be remedied? And then with an overpowering sweetness of relief, it came back upon my mind that the servants were already used to the coming and going of my second self. I had soon dressed, as well as I was able, in clothes of my own size: had soon passed through the house, and ten minutes later, Dr Jekyll had returned to his own shape and was sitting down to breakfast.

This inexplicable incident, this reversal of my previous experience, seemed to be spelling out the letters of my judgment; and I began to reflect more seriously than ever before on the issues and possibilities of my double existence.

That part of me which I had the power of projecting, had lately been much exercised and nourished; it had seemed to me of late as though the body of Edward Hyde had grown in stature, and I began to spy a danger that, if this were much prolonged, the balance of my nature might be permanently overthrown and the character of Edward Hyde become irrevocably mine. The power of the drug had not been always equally displayed. In the beginning, the difficulty had been to throw off the body of Jekyll, it had of late gradually but decidedly transferred itself to the other side. I was slowly losing hold of my original and better self, and



becoming slowly incorporated with my second and worse.

Between these two, I now felt I had to choose. 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. I chose the better part and was found wanting in the strength to keep to it.

For two months I was true to my determination; for two months, I led a life of such severity as I had never before attained to, and enjoyed the compensations of an approving conscience. But time began at last to obliterate the freshness of my alarm; I began to be tortured with throes and longings, as of Hyde struggling after freedom; and at last, in an hour of moral weakness, I once again compounded and swallowed the transforming draught.

My devil had been long caged, he came out roaring. I was conscious of a more unbridled, a more furious propensity to ill. It must have been this, I suppose, that stirred in my soul that tempest of impatience with which I listened to the civilities of my unhappy victim. With a transport of glee, I mauled the unresisting body, tasting delight from every blow; and it was not till weariness had begun to succeed, that I was suddenly, in the top fit of my delirium, struck through the heart by a cold thrill of terror and fled from the scene of these excesses.

I ran to the house in Soho, and destroyed my papers; thence I set out through the lamplit streets, gloating on my crime, light-headedly devising others in the future. Hyde had a song upon his lips as he compounded the draught, and as he drank it, pledged the dead man.

The pangs of transformation had not done tearing him, before Henry Jekyll, with streaming tears of gratitude and remorse, had fallen upon his knees and lifted his clasped hands to God; and still, between the petitions, the ugly face of my iniquity stared into my soul. I embraced anew the restrictions of natural life! With what sincere renunciation I locked the door by which I had so often gone and come, and ground the key under my heel!

The next day, came the news that the murder had been overlooked, that the guilt of Hyde was patent to the world, and that the victim was a man high in public estimation. It was not only a crime, it had been a tragic folly. Jekyll was now my city of refuge; let but Hyde peep out an instant, and the hands of all men would be raised to slay him.

There comes an end to all things. It was a fine, clear, January day and The Regent's Park was full of winter chirrupings and sweet with spring odours. I sat in the sun on a bench; the animal within me licking the chops of memory; the spiritual side a little drowsed, promising subsequent penitence, but not yet moved to begin.

A qualm came over me. I began to be aware of a change in the temper of my



thoughts, a greater boldness, a contempt of danger, a solution of the bonds of obligation. I looked down; my clothes hung formlessly on my shrunken limbs; the hand that lay on my knee was corded and hairy. I was once more Edward Hyde. I was the common quarry of mankind, hunted, houseless, a known murderer, thrall to the gallows.

My reason wavered, but did not fail me utterly. I have more than once observed that in my second character, my faculties seemed sharpened to a point and Hyde rose to the importance of the moment. My drugs were in one of the presses of my cabinet; how was I to reach them? The laboratory door I had closed. If I sought to enter by the house, my own servants would consign me to the gallows. I saw I must employ another hand, and thought of Lanyon. Then I remembered that of my original character, one part remained to me: I could write my own hand; and once I had conceived that kindling spark, the way that I must follow became lighted up from end to end.

Thereupon, I arranged my clothes as best I could and, summoning a passing hansom, drove to an hotel. As I entered, I looked about me with so black a countenance as made the attendants tremble; they took my orders and brought me wherewithal to write. Hyde in danger of his life was a creature new to me; shaken with inordinate anger, strung to the pitch of murder, lusting to inflict pain. Yet the creature mastered his fury, with a great effort of will, and composed two important letters, one to Lanyon and one to

Poole.

When the night was fully come, he set forth hunted by his fears, chattering to himself, skulking through the less frequented thoroughfares, counting the minutes that still divided him from midnight.

When I came to myself at Lanyon's, the horror of my old friend perhaps affected me somewhat. A change had come over me. It was no longer the fear of the gallows, it was the horror of being Hyde that racked me. I received Lanyon's condemnation partly in a dream; it was partly in a dream that I came home to my own house and got into bed. I slept with a profound slumber which not even the nightmares that wrung me could avail to break.

I awoke in the morning shaken, weakened, but refreshed. I still hated and feared the thought of the brute that slept within me, and I had not of course forgotten the appalling dangers of the day before; but I was once more at home, in my own house and close to my drugs.

I was stepping across the court after breakfast, drinking the chill of the air with pleasure, when I was seized again with those indescribable sensations that heralded the change; and I had but the time to gain the shelter of my cabinet, before I was once again raging and freezing with the passions of Hyde.

It took on this occasion a double dose to recall me to myself - and alas! - six hours after, as I sat looking sadly in the fire, the



pangs returned, and the drug had to be re-administered. In short, from that day forth it seemed only by a great effort as of gymnastics, and only under the immediate stimulation of the drug, that I was able to wear the countenance of Jekyll.

At all hours of the day and night, I would be taken with the premonitory shudder; above all, if I slept, or even dozed for a moment in my chair, it was always as Hyde that I awakened.

The powers of Hyde seemed to have grown with the sickliness of Jekyll. And certainly the hate that now divided them was equal on each side. With Jekyll, it was a thing of vital instinct. He had now seen the full deformity of that creature that shared with him some of the phenomena of consciousness, and thought of Hyde, for all his energy of life, as something not only hellish but inorganic.

The hatred of Hyde for Jekyll was of a different order. His terror of the gallows drove him continually to commit temporary suicide but he loathed the despondency into which Jekyll was now fallen, and he resented the dislike with which he was himself regarded. Indeed, had it not been for his fear of death he would long ago have ruined himself in order to involve me in the ruin.

My punishment might have gone on for years, but for the last calamity which has now fallen. My provision of the salt, which had never been renewed since the date of the first experiment, began to run low. I sent out for a fresh supply and mixed

the draught. I drank it and it was without efficiency. You will learn from Poole how I have had London ransacked; it was in vain; and I am now persuaded that my first supply was impure, and that it was that unknown impurity which lent efficacy to the draught.

About a week has passed, and I am now finishing this statement under the influence of the last of the old powders. This is the last time that Henry Jekyll can think his own thoughts or see his own face in the glass. Nor must I delay too long to bring my writing to an end. Should the throes of change take me in the act of writing it, Hyde will tear it in pieces.

Half an hour from now, when I shall again and forever re-endue that hated personality, I know how I shall sit shuddering and weeping in my chair, or pace up and down this room. Will Hyde die upon the scaffold? Or will he find courage to release himself at the last moment? This is my true hour of death, and what is to follow concerns another than myself. Here then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end.