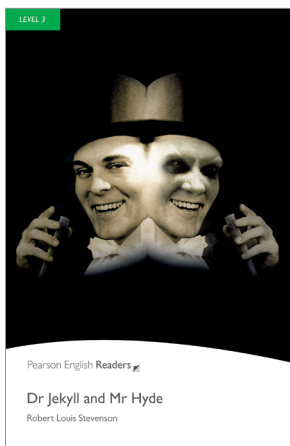


Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Robert Louis Stevenson



About the author

Robert Louis Stevenson was a poet, a travel writer and a novelist. Though he started training as an engineer and then as a lawyer, he was always interested in writing and at the age of twenty-five, began to devote his life to literature. He was a sickly child who had to spend most of the winters in bed and his longing for adventure and travel may be partly accounted for by his search for a cure for his illness. At various times in his life, he lived in France, the United States and in the South Seas, where he became known as 'The Teller of Stories'. This was a fitting title for the person who gave the world the children's classic *Treasure Island* (1883) and the horror story, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). Stevenson died, aged only 44, in 1894 in Samoa.

Summary

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is a classic horror story. Dr Jekyll is a kindly old doctor, with two very old friends, Utterson and Lanyon. Mr Hyde is a smaller, younger man, with a capacity for evil that seems to emanate from him and repels everyone he meets. But there are links between them. Hyde gives the family of a child he has beaten a cheque signed by Jekyll. Hyde has a key to the back entrance to Jekyll's house, and Hyde can come and go at will and give orders to Jekyll's servants. Most disturbing of all for Mr Utterson, Dr Jekyll's lawyer, is the doctor's will, which leaves all the doctor's money to Hyde should the doctor disappear for three months or die. Clearly, Hyde has some power over the doctor, and the lawyer fears he may murder him for his money.

Gradually, Hyde's acts of cruelty get worse, culminating in the murder of a famous man. Finally, we learn the truth about the two men. They are one and the same.

Jekyll has been conducting experiments to release the evil man inside his good self, but the experiments get out of control. Mr Hyde emerges at will and it takes stronger doses of chemicals to return to the form of Jekyll. Jekyll runs out of chemicals and Hyde emerges forever; only to kill himself before he can be captured.

Chapters 1–3: On one of their regular walks through London, Mr Enfield, Mr Utterson's friend, points out a door to a dark, ugly house. He then tells Utterson a story about something that happened to him when he was on his way home one night at three o'clock in the morning. He saw an ugly, little man step on a child and then walk away. Enfield ran after the man and caught him. The crowd of people that had gathered around the little girl were very angry and demanded money from the little man, whose name was Mr Hyde. Hyde went through the door to an ugly house and came back with a cheque signed by another man, who Enfield knew to be kind and famous for his work. Enfield doesn't say who this man is, but Utterson believes he knows anyway that the man is Mr Hyde.

Chapters 4–5: Utterson has Dr Jekyll's will. His beneficiary is Hyde, the ugly, little man who nobody likes and Utterson is very unhappy about this. He goes to see Dr Lanyon, an old friend of both his and Dr Jekyll's, to ask if he knows anything about Mr Hyde. Lanyon knows nothing but he tells Utterson that he no longer sees Jekyll very much because of his strange scientific ideas. One day, Utterson meets Mr Hyde by the door to the old house and he realizes that there is something evil about the man. He asks to see Dr Jekyll, as the door is really a back entrance to Jekyll's house, but Hyde says he is not at home. Later, Utterson goes to the main entrance of Jekyll's house, but the servant also says that the doctor is not at home. He tells Utterson, however, that Mr Hyde is free to come and go in the house and that he can give orders to the servants when Jekyll isn't there. About two weeks, later after a dinner, Utterson asks Jekyll about Mr Hyde, but Jekyll reveals little and he makes Utterson promise to help Hyde with the will if anything happens to him.

Chapters 6–7: Nearly a year later, a servant sees an old man murdered with a stick from her window. The murderer behaves like an animal and the servant recognizes him as Mr Hyde. She informs the police, who find a letter addressed to Utterson in the old man's pocket. The police visit Utterson and he takes them to Hyde's house, but he isn't there. Utterson then visits Jekyll

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and finds him looking very ill. Jekyll shows Utterson a letter from Hyde in which he says sorry for the things he has done. Later, Utterson shows the letter to his chief clerk, who claims that the handwriting is very similar to that of Dr Jekyll.

Chapters 8–9: For some time, nobody hears anything about Mr Hyde, and Jekyll begins to socialize again. One day, however, Jekyll refuse to see Utterson. Utterson goes to see Lanyon, who is dying. Lanyon tells Utterson that he will know a terrible secret after his death. When Lanyon dies, Utterson receives a letter that can only be opened after Jekyll's death. Utterson, a good and honest lawyer, puts it in his safe. One day, on a walk with Enfield, Utterson decides to shout up to Jekyll from the courtyard and invite him to go with them for a walk. They see Jekyll at the window looking very sick. He refuses their offer kindly, but suddenly Utterson sees a terrible look of fear on Jekyll's face.

Chapters 10–11: Jekyll's servant visits Utterson and tells him something is terribly wrong. Utterson goes with the servant to Jekyll's house and when they knock on the door of the doctor's workroom, they hear a voice that is not his. The servant shows Utterson a note, which was left outside the room asking for a chemical. The handwriting seems to be Jekyll's. The servant also says he saw a person come out of the workroom and he suspects that it's Hyde. They break the door down and find Hyde wearing Jekyll's clothes. He's dead. There's a letter from Jekyll asking Utterson to read Lanyon's letter. Lanyon explains that Jekyll drinks chemicals that transform him into the evil person, Mr Hyde. He says he saw the transformation himself in his office.

Chapters 12–13: We learn about Jekyll's story from a letter he left for Utterson. When he was a young man, Jekyll realized he had a good side, which wanted to work hard as a doctor, and a bad side, which had a great love of fun. He began thinking about the possibility of separating the two sides. Through experiments with chemicals he managed to do this and Mr Hyde was created. At first, Jekyll was happy, but then the experiments got out of control. Hyde began emerging at will, becoming stronger than Jekyll. Jekyll began to worry about the bad things that Hyde was doing. Progressively, Jekyll had to take stronger doses of chemicals to become himself again. Finally, he ran out of chemicals and Hyde emerged forever. Fear of being hung as a murderer, however, makes him commit suicide.

Background and themes

The duality of human nature: The major theme of the novel is the dual nature of the human psyche. Within every person there is a good and bad side. At the end, Dr Jekyll wants to kill (suggested in his name) the part of himself that he hides (an even clearer name parallel).

Good versus evil: The book represents a battle between the two. It seems that evil triumphs in the end, since Mr Hyde overcomes Dr Jekyll.

The limits of science: Can science go too far and unleash forces that we cannot control? This fear is perhaps even more relevant now, at a time of global warming, genetic modification, cloning and nuclear weapons, than when the novel was written.

The weakness of human nature: Stevenson seems to tell us that evil triumphs because human beings are weak-willed. Does Jekyll keep changing into Hyde because Hyde is too strong, or because Jekyll craves the more interesting and exciting evil personality?

Discussion activities

Before reading

- Discuss:** Get students to look at the cover and talk about these questions: *What can you see? Is it a picture of one person or two people? Are the two faces different in any way? Why are they happy?*
- Guess:** Ask students to look at the Word List at the back of the book and guess in small groups what the story is about. Get them to write some predictions in their notebooks.
- Pair work:** Write the following words on the board: *blood, death, funny, love, flowers, black, murder, happy ending, prince*. Put students in pairs and ask them to put the words in the right column of the chart below, depending on whether they always, sometimes or never associate them with horror movies. Then ask them to add another ten words. Get feedback, encouraging students to justify their choices.

ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER

Introduction

After reading

- Pair work:** Put students in pairs to discuss the following questions: *What was life like for Robert Louis Stevenson when he was a child? What did he study? Where did he live? What type of books did he write? What gave him the idea for Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde? What was he writing about? Do you think people have a good side and a bad side?*

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Chapters 1–3

While reading (after Chapter 1)

- 5 **Discuss:** Put students in small groups to discuss the following questions: *How were Utterson and Enfield different? What did they like doing together? Why do you think they were friends? Are you different from your friends in any way? Is it important to be similar to your friends?*

After reading

- 6 **Discuss and research:** Get students to look back at the picture on page 3 and discuss how life was different in this time and place to their lives now. Get feedback and then ask them to do some research to find out about life in Victorian London. They can do oral or written presentations about their findings.

Chapters 4–5

Before reading

- 7 **Guess:** Ask students to make predictions about Mr Hyde in pairs: *Who is he? What does he do? Why did he have a cheque from a famous and honest man? Why was he so bad?*

After reading

- 8 **Role play:** Refer students back to the paragraph on page 12 that begins 'You should know something.' Put the students in pairs. One is Dr Jekyll and one is Mr Hyde. Hyde tells Jekyll about his meeting with Utterson and Jekyll asks questions about what happened.

Chapters 6–7

While reading (p. 14, after, 'she immediately called the police.')

- 9 **Role play:** Put students in pairs. One is the servant and the other is a police officer. Get them to act out the conversation that takes place on the phone.

After reading

- 10 **Discuss:** Put students in small groups to discuss these questions: *Do you think the handwriting on Hyde's letter is really Jekyll's? How can you explain this? Why do people sometimes protect criminals?*
- 11 **Write:** Tell students they are Police Inspector Newcome. Get them to write a report including everything they know about the murder. They must talk about what the servant and Utterson said, finding the body and the visit to Hyde's house.

Chapters 8–9

While reading (p. 22, after 'They heard stories about his crimes.')

- 12 **Discuss:** Put students in small groups to imagine five different crimes that Hyde committed.

After reading

- 13 **Write, ask and answer:** Write 'What did Utterson do on the eighth of January?' on the board and elicit the answer (He had dinner at Jekyll's house). Now tell students to write similar questions about Chapters 8–9. Students then mingle with each other, asking and answering each other's questions.

Chapters 10–11

Before reading

- 14 **Guess:** Put students in pairs and tell one to look at the picture on page 31 and the other to look at the picture on page 37. Students describe their pictures to each other and then together predict what is going to happen.

After reading

- 15 **Pair work:** Write the following words on the board: *knock, God, note, covered, axe, body, will, drawer, gun.* Ask students to talk about how they were relevant to Chapters 10–11.
- 16 **Discuss:** Ask students to discuss why they think Jekyll changed his will.

Chapters 12–13

While reading (p. 39, after 'But it was too late to change my double life.')

- 17 **Pair work:** Ask students to make a list of things that the serious Jekyll perhaps did and things that the fun-loving Jekyll perhaps did. Get them to discuss if these things are really good or bad and how often they do these things. Ask them to discuss what people consider to be good and bad behaviour nowadays.

After reading

- 18 **Write and guess:** Write 'Jekyll's family was poor.' on the board. Elicit which word is wrong from the students (rich not poor). Now students choose a sentence from Chapters 12–13 and rewrite it changing one word. Students mingle, reading out their sentences and the other students have to identify and correct the mistake.
- 19 **Game:** Write the following characters on the board: *Dr Jekyll, Mr Hyde, Utterson, Enfield, Lanyon, Poole.* Divide the students into small groups and give them 10 minutes to think of as many true sentences as they can about the characters without looking back at the book. Now play the game. The teams take it in turns to say a true sentence about a character. They are not allowed to repeat. If they are wrong or can't think of a sentence, they are eliminated.
- 20 **Discuss:** Ask students to discuss in groups the meaning of the story. You can guide them with the following questions: *Is good stronger than evil in the book? Is science sometimes dangerous? Are people weak?*