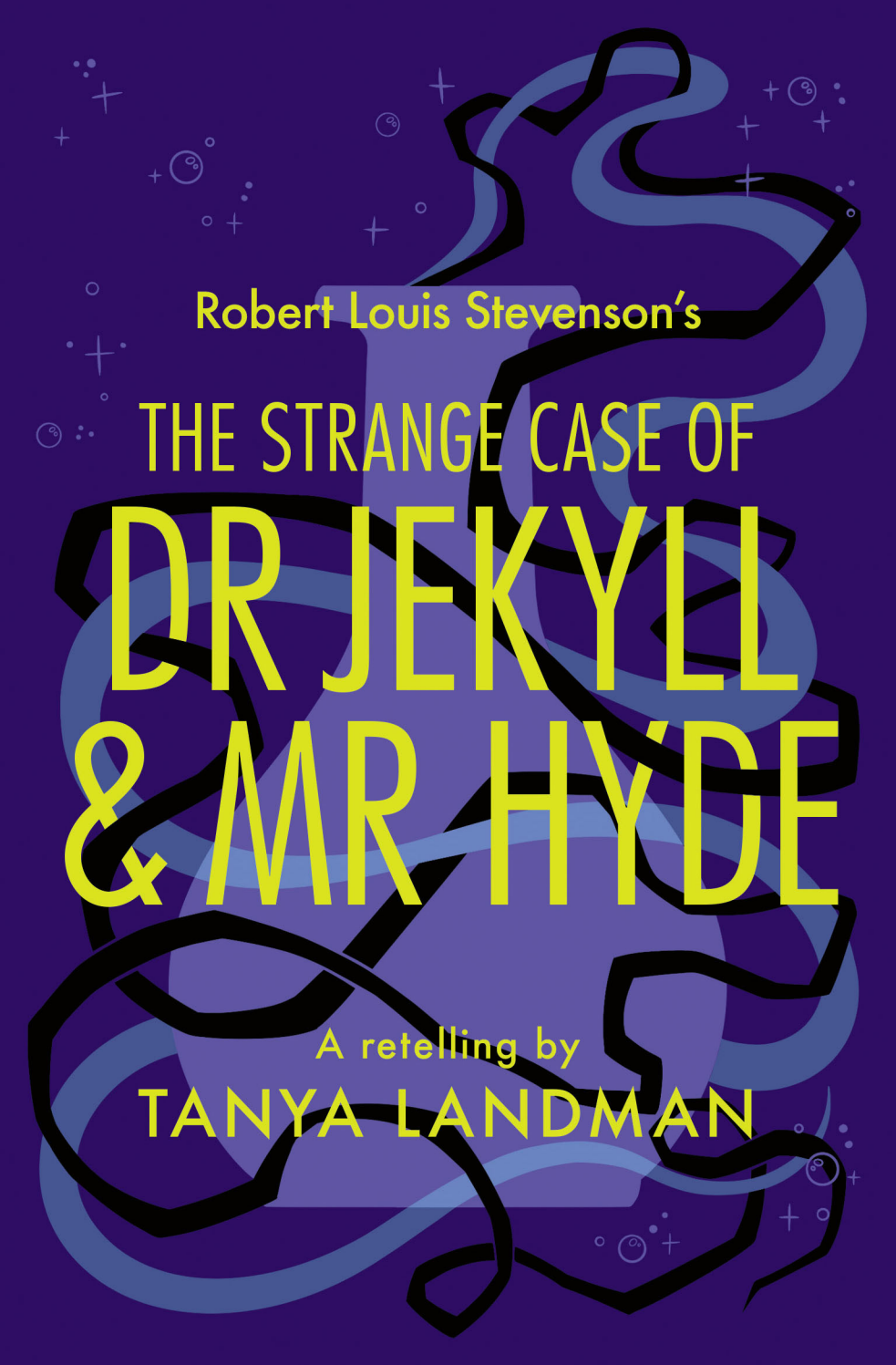
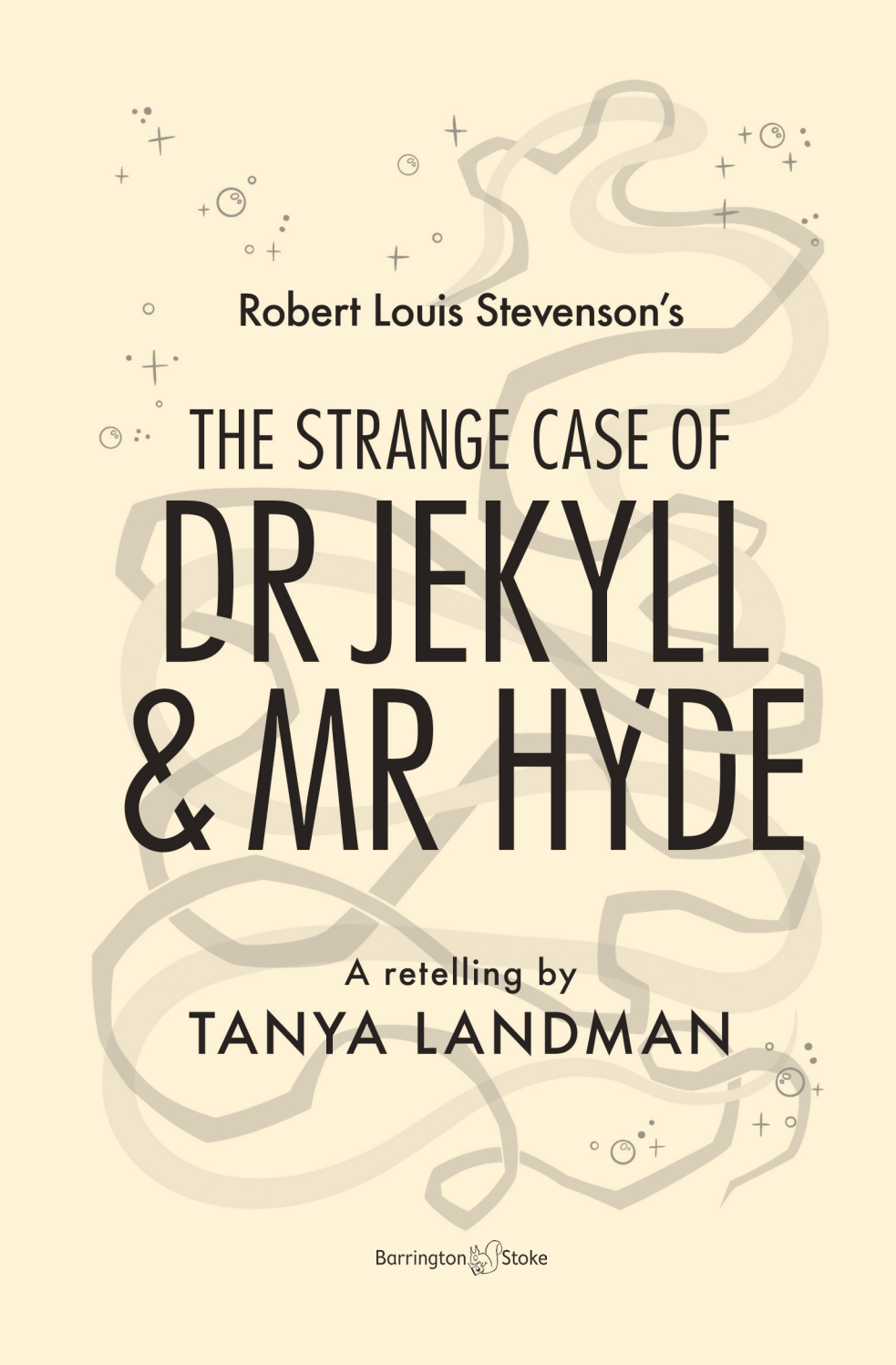


The background is a deep purple with abstract, swirling lines in a lighter shade of purple and black. Scattered throughout are small white stars, some with multiple points, and small circles, some containing a plus sign or a dot.

Robert Louis Stevenson's

THE STRANGE CASE OF
**DR JEKYLL
& MR HYDE**

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Barrington  Stoke

Published by Barrington Stoke
An imprint of HarperCollins*Publishers*
1 Robroyston Gate, Glasgow, G33 1JN

www.barringtonstoke.co.uk

HarperCollins*Publishers*
Macken House, 39/40 Mayor Street Upper,
Dublin 1, DO1 C9W8, Ireland

First published in 2026

Text © 2026 Tanya Landman
Cover illustration © 2026 Amy Blackwell
Cover design © 2026 HarperCollins*Publishers* Limited

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ISBN 978-0-00-878910-7

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

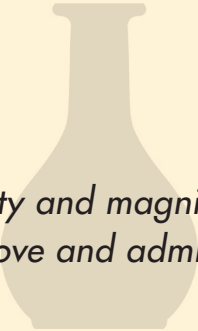
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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Printed and bound in India by Replika Press Pvt. Ltd.

FPO (fsc placeholder)



*To the mighty and magnificent Mary,
with love and admiration*

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1

STORY OF THE DOOR

Mr Utterson was a lawyer.

He was a long, lean, dull man who never smiled and was awkward in other people's company. Yet there was something loveable and very human about Mr Utterson. He was very strict with himself but had a great tolerance for other men's high spirits and the misdeeds that sometimes resulted from them. If a man chose a downward path towards disaster, Mr Utterson was often the last good and honest friend he could count on for help.

On Sundays, it was a habit of Mr Utterson's to stroll the streets of London with Mr Richard Enfield. Mr Enfield was Mr Utterson's distant relation and close friend.

On one of these rambles, the pair went down a clean and cheerful little street that shone out in contrast to its dingy neighbourhood like a fire in a forest. The houses and shops were freshly

painted and polished. But two doors down from the corner was a passageway that led to a gloomy backyard. On the other side of it was a sinister block of a building that thrust itself onto the street. The whole place looked as if it had suffered years of neglect. It was two storeys high but had no windows. The only door had no knocker or bell, and its paint was peeling.

Mr Enfield pointed at it with his walking stick. "See that door?" he said to Mr Utterson. "I can tell you a very odd story about that."

"Really?" said Mr Utterson in a tight voice. "What's that?"

"I was walking home along here after a night out," Mr Enfield began. "It was about three in the morning. The place was deserted. Everyone was fast asleep, but street after street was all lit up as if a carnival parade was about to begin. And then I saw two figures – a small man walking very fast and a little girl running from the opposite direction. Not surprisingly, the two crashed into each other at the corner. But then came the horrible part: the man trampled calmly over the girl's body and left her screaming on the ground. It sounds like nothing, but it was hellish to see. The man didn't

seem human, but like some damned juggernaut, an unstoppable machine.

“I ran after him and brought him back. The girl’s family had heard her screams, so by then there was a group of very angry people gathered around her. Yet the man was perfectly cool and calm. He didn’t put up any resistance when I got him but gave me a look so ugly it made me drip with sweat.

“It turned out the girl had been sent to fetch a doctor, and then he arrived as well. The doctor examined her and said she was not much hurt, and you’d think that would have been the end of it. But it was very odd. I had taken a dislike to that small man at first sight, as had the girl’s family.

“That seemed natural. What struck me was the doctor’s reaction to him. He was a dry, dour Scottish man. You know the type – normally about as emotional as a bagpipe. Yet that doctor had turned white with a desire to kill the small man. I knew what was in the doctor’s mind just as he knew what was in mine. But as killing was out of the question, we did the next best thing. We told the man that if he did not put things right, we would make such a scandal that his name would

stink from one end of London to the other. If he had any friends, he would lose them.

“All the time we were talking to the small man, we had to keep the girl’s mother and aunts and sisters from attacking him. They were as wild as harpies. I never saw such a circle of faces filled with hate! And the man at the middle of it all simply stared back at us and sneered as if he were the devil himself.

“‘If you choose to make capital out of this accident by blackmailing me,’ said he, ‘I am naturally helpless. Every gentleman wishes to avoid a scandal. Name your price.’

“In the end, we agreed the small man would give a hundred pounds to the girl’s family as compensation. He went off to fetch the money, and the doctor and I followed him. Where do you think he went? Straight to that door in the sinister building. He whipped out a key, went in and came back with ten pounds in cash and a cheque for ninety pounds.

“That cheque was not signed by him. I won’t tell you whose name was on it, but it was a very well-known and very respectable gentleman. I assumed the cheque was a fake, but the man swore it was not. He declared that he would stay with me

until the banks were open, cash the cheque himself and hand the money over.

“So we all set off together to my house – the doctor, the child’s father, the small man and myself. We spent the remainder of the night there. After we had breakfasted, off we all went to the bank. I handed the cheque to the clerk and told him I thought it was a fake. But no. That cheque was real.”

“Ah,” said Mr Utterson.

“It’s a bad story, isn’t it?” Mr Enfield sighed. “The man who trampled down that poor child was a damnable creature. The person who signed that cheque for him is a perfect gentleman, so it must be that he is being blackmailed. Paying the price for some youthful indiscretion. Blackmail House is what I call that place with the door now.”

A silence fell over the two men until Mr Utterson asked, “The man who signed the cheque, does he live in that building?”

“No,” said Mr Enfield.

“And have you ever asked anyone about it?” said Mr Utterson.

“No! If I started asking questions, it’d be like starting a stone rolling down a hill. It sets off other stones, and before you know it, some old bird gets

knocked on the head in his own back garden and there's such a scandal the whole family have to change their name. No, I make it a rule that the shadier things look, the less I ask about them."

"A very good rule," said Mr Utterson. It was one he mostly followed himself.

"However, I have noticed some things about the place," Mr Enfield said. "There's only that one door, and the only person who goes in or out is the damnable man I met that night. There are three windows on the first floor that look out over the backyard but no windows on the ground floor. There's a chimney, and smoke comes out, so someone must live there. But I can't be sure who – the buildings here are so packed together it's hard to tell where one ends and another begins."

The pair walked on in silence.

And then Mr Utterson said, "Your rule not to ask questions is a good one, Enfield. But I want to ask the name of the man who walked over the child."

"Well ..." said Mr Enfield. "I can't see what harm that would do. It was a man by the name of Hyde."

"What does he look like?" asked Mr Utterson.

“He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance, something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, yet I don’t know why. He must be deformed somewhere – he gives off that feeling. Yet I can’t tell you how or where!”

Again, the men walked in silence, and then Mr Utterson asked, “You’re sure he had a key?”

“My dear sir ...” Mr Enfield protested.

“I know my curiosity seems strange,” said Mr Utterson. “But the fact is, I didn’t ask you the name of the man who wrote that cheque, as I already know who he is ... So if you have been inexact at any point in your story, please correct it.”

“I have been exact in every detail!” Mr Enfield replied a little crossly. “Hyde had a key and still does. I saw him use it only a week ago.”

Mr Utterson sighed very deeply but said nothing more.

When they finished their walk, both men agreed to never discuss the matter again. They shook hands on it and parted.