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opening extract from

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

written by

Robert Louis Stevenson – retold by Peter Crowther

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THE CHARACTERS



Dr Henry Jekyll

Can this respectable doctor resist the strange powers of Mr Hyde?



Edward Hyde

Who is this man and what is the mysterious hold he has over Dr Jekyll?



Mr Utterson

Mr Utterson is Dr Jekyll's friend and lawyer. Can he solve the mystery? Can he save his friend?

Richard Enfield

What information does Richard Enfield possess? Will he save or condemn Dr Jekyll?





Poole

Poole is Dr Jekyll's faithful butler. Can he save his master from himself?

Dr Hastie Lanyon

Dr Lanyon witnesses a terrifyingly strange event. How will he react?





Inspector Newcomen

Inspector Newcomen is one of Scotland Yard's finest. Can he discover Edward Hyde's true identity, and solve a brutal murder?



DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE

'You know,' Enfield said to his friend Utterson the lawyer as they strolled through a down-at-heel part of London, 'that house over there is etched in my mind in connection with a strange story.'

'Indeed?' Utterson remarked, looking at the sinister block of buildings at which his friend was pointing. 'Do tell.'

'I was coming home late, about three o'clock of a black winter morning, and my way lay through this part of town. Just here, where we are standing, I saw the oddest thing. Some fellow trampled calmly all over a young girl, then left her screaming on the ground.'

'Whatever for?'

Enfield shook his head. 'No reason, save that she ran into him by accident.'

'So the girl's fault, then?'

'Perhaps. But the man – a singularly distasteful fellow to be sure – made to walk off, until I collared him and then called a doctor to the scene to attend the child.'

'Was the fellow drunk?'

'Not to my knowledge. A crowd built up baying for his blood, but the doctor and I held them off.'

'And this house,' Utterson said, 'how is it relevant?'



'Under threat of a lawsuit on the part of the girl's parents – which would surely have been successful – we managed to persuade him to pay one hundred pounds as compensation for his behaviour. At first the fellow was reluctant, but I think he feared the crowd, and finally he

led us to this very dwelling, disappeared inside, and returned with ten pounds in coin and a cheque for the balance.'

'Hmph!' Utterson snorted. 'I'll wager the cheque was—'

'No,' Enfield interrupted. 'I was wary myself, but we all repaired to my rooms until the bank opened later that day. When we went down to the bank they confirmed that the cheque was genuine, and the family got their ninety pounds.'

'And that was the end of it?'

Enfield shrugged and nodded, and the pair started to walk again.

'What was the fellow's name?'

'Hyde,' Enfield replied, his voice little more than a whisper. 'Edward Hyde. But that wasn't the name on the cheque.'

Utterson stopped again. 'Edward Hyde, you say?'

Enfield nodded. 'Whatever is the matter, my dear Utterson?'

'Nothing, my dear chap. I thought for a moment I knew the fellow – or knew of him.'

As they passed by a jetty where a young boy sat, his line cast out into the murky water, Enfield said, 'You didn't ask me the name on the bounder's cheque.'

Utterson nodded, smiling grimly, and, after a few seconds, he said, 'That is because I believe I know it already.' What he did not say was that he knew the owner of the house whose rear entrance was the very door that Enfield had pointed out.





Back at his own house, Utterson lost no time in retrieving some documents from his safe. He leafed through them until he found an envelope bearing the words 'Dr Henry Jekyll's Will'. He

opened the envelope and, by the flickering light of a candle, he discovered the sentence he sought: in the event of Jekyll's death, all possessions were to pass into the hands of the doctor's 'friend and benefactor' Edward Hyde. Moreover, the document continued, if the doctor were to disappear for a time exceeding three months, Hyde should step fully into Henry Jekyll's shoes. He would be free of any financial obligations save the payment of a few small sums to the doctor's household.

'I have no idea what might be going on, nor what hold this Hyde fellow might have on you, Henry Jekyll,' Utterson whispered to the room, 'but I swear I will make it my business to find out.'



For the next few days, Utterson did make it his business to spend as much time as possible in the vicinity of the building his friend Enfield

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

One evening, at a little after ten o'clock, his patience was finally rewarded. He heard footsteps echoing down the street. Utterson withdrew into a shop doorway and waited. A man appeared out of the gloom into the small pool of gaslight, reached into his pocket, and produced a key. He was small – almost stunted – and plainly dressed, his face shrouded by the brim of his hat. Although he glanced furtively from side to side, he failed to spot Utterson until he was across the street and almost at the door to the house.



'Mr Hyde, I think?' Utterson said softly as he stepped out of the shadows.