

DR JEKYLL & MR HYDE

Robert Louis Stevenson



In each of us two natures are at war — the good and the evil. All our life the fight goes on between them and one of them must conquer. But in our hands lies the power to choose — what we want to be, we are.

Robert Louis Stevenson

STEVENSON'S LIFE

- Born in Edimburgh, on November 13, 1850
- Studied at Edimburgh University
- Mostly sick, suffered from various illnesses
- Loved to travel
- Married Fanny Osbourne
- Wrote Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in 1886
- Died on December 3, 1894

COMPOSING DR JEKYLL & MR HYDE

- The idea for *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* came to RLS as a dream.
- He wrote the first version of the book in three days and then burned it due to criticism from his wife.
- He wrote the second version in three days as well. It became an overnight success and was published in 1886.

THE PLOT

- Dr Jekyll is a scientist who, in order to improve mankind, wants to create a potion that can separate the double nature of man's soul.
- It's the same drug that releases Hyde and restores Jekyll.
- With time, he becomes addicted to it and his evil part, Hyde, becomes stronger and stronger.
- Hydes becomes a criminal and he will commit several crimes.
- His evil double Hyde will eventually dominate and control Jekyll.
- He can either choose to live a life of crime and depravity or to eliminate Hyde by killing himself.
- Mr. Utterson, Jekyll's best friend, investigates into this story. As he understands that there is a strong connection between Jekyll and Hyde .
- He will find the truth after Jekyll's death, by reading two letters left by him.

THEMES

1. The duality of human nature
2. The importance of reputation
3. The effects of society on the individual
4. Reason vs. the supernatural
5. Limits of scientific experimentation

FREUDIAN INFLUENCE

- Freud believed that human beings are powerfully influenced by impulses of which they are not aware .
- They are often expressed in dreams.
- The *ego* is the conscious part of oneself the *ego*.
- The unconscious part is the *id*.
- The *superego* controls the *ego* through the norms of society, ethics and morals.
- In a way Hyde represents Dr. Jekyll's subconscious (*id*), the desire to be freed from society's restrictions.

LONDON

- London represents the geographical , social and psychological division of the main characters. Jekyll and Hyde.
- Dr Jekyll lived in Cavendish Square, one of the wealthiest parts of London.
- My Hyde kept his residence at Soho, which was a ghetto at the time.



CHARACTERS

- MR UTTERSON. The **narrator** of the book. Utterson is a middle-aged lawyer, and a man in whom all the characters confide.
- RICHARD ENFIELD. Mr. Utterson's cousin, a younger man who is a little more lively than his respectable and sedate relative.
- DR LANYON. A former friend and colleague of Dr. Jekyll. Ten years before the events in the novel, he suspended his friendship with Dr. Jekyll because of a disagreement over scientific endeavors.
- Dr. HENRY JEKYLL. A prominent middle-aged doctor described as both tall and handsome. He is also extremely wealthy with a fortune well over two million dollars. He is described as **respected** and **proper**.
- EDWARD HYDE . A small, deformed, disgusting man somewhat younger than Dr. Jekyll who is apparently devoid of a profession.

JEKYLL DRINKS THE POTION

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 immaterial tabernacle which I looked to it to change. But the temptation of a discovery so singular and profound at last overcame the suggestions of alarm. I had long since prepared my tincture; I purchased at once, from a firm of wholesale chemists, 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.

JEKYLL'S TRANSFORMATION

1. 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.
2. Then these agonies began swiftly to subside, and I came to myself as if out of a great sickness.
3. 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, a current of disordered sensual images running like a millrace in my fancy, a solution of the bonds of obligation, an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul.
4. I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine.
5. I stretched out my hands, exulting in the freshness of these sensations; and in the act, I was suddenly aware that **I had lost in stature.**

MR HYDE

1. (...)I stole through the corridors, a stranger in my own house; and coming to my room, I saw for the first time the appearance of **Edward Hyde**.
2. (...) The evil side of my nature (...) was **less robust** and **less developed** than the good which I had just deposed. Again, in the course of my life, which had been, after all, nine tenths a life of effort, virtue and control, it had been much less exercised and much less exhausted. And hence, as I think, it came about that 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 besides (which I must still believe to be the lethal side of man) had left on that body an imprint of **deformity and decay**.
3. 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. In my eyes it bore a livelier image of the spirit, it seemed more express and single, than the imperfect and divided countenance I had been hitherto accustomed to call mine(...)
4. **Edward Hyde**, alone in the ranks of mankind, was **pure evil**.

HYDE'S SCRUTINY

- HYDE = ID = PRIMITIVE DRIVES
- Those are often kept secret to the self
- Morals, expectation, society, ethics contribute on the repression of the self
- Once freed from the control of the EGO/JEKYLL, those drives surface in the form of Hyde who feels:
 1. HAPPY
 2. RECKLESS
 3. YOUNGER
 4. ELATED
- **HYDE = EVIL**



MEANING

- No moral message,
- «Forbidden Knowledge”: like Dr Faustus and Frankenstein, Jekyll wants to go beyond human limits but is inevitably punished in the end.
- The dramatic **conflict** of human nature: man is divided in two parts(a good one and an evil one, a higher and a lower one, spiritual and physical).
- These contrasts can lead to **sin**.
- **Repressing** that part of man’s personality (the instinctive part) only **increases** its **force** and leads to the destruction of the personality.
- Human mind is not a single, well-defined block, but is made up of multiple, often contrasting pieces.
- Dr Jekyll reflects the duplicitous atmosphere of the Victorian society.