

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde by Robert
Louis Stevenson: A plot summary

The narrative begins with Mr Utterson, a lawyer, and his cousin Mr Enfield taking a walk. During their walk, they pass a door to a sinister neglected building which reminds Mr Enfield of a shocking incident concerning it.

Coming home in the early hours of the morning, Enfield witnessed a man collide with a small child...



...and trample over her body without giving it a thought, leaving her screaming.



Enfield is struck by the strange ugliness of the man and the feelings of loathing and repugnance that he provokes in him.

When forced to pay compensation, the man, who is called Hyde, enters a building by the back door and comes out with gold and a cheque bearing the signature of highly respectable man.



The story worries Utterson because he knows that the house Hyde entered is that of a friend and client of his called Dr Jekyll, a highly respected physician and chemist. Jekyll's will has long troubled him because in it he leaves his vast fortune, should he die or disappear to a man called Hyde. What possible connection can there be between him and a man like Hyde? He fears blackmail. He is determined to find out the truth. He says "If he be Hyde [...] shall be Mr Seek".





Utterton visits the eminent Dr Lanyon, a friend to both Jekyll and himself, in the hope of shedding light on the matter but Lanyon reveals that he has long broken off relations with Jekyll because of his unconventional scientific interests and cannot help him. Jekyll is an ambitious over-reacher who wants to go beyond human limits.

Utterson becomes obsessed with Mr Hyde and is determined to see Hyde's face. He hangs around outside the backdoor to Jekyll's house in the hope of meeting him and finally manages to do so. The meeting confirms his worst suspicions. Hyde is small and ape-like and Utterson cannot understand why he is filled with so much "unknown disgust, loathing and fear" in his presence.



Alarmed, Utterson goes round to the elegant front of the house and asks to see Dr Jekyll but Poole, Jekyll's butler, says he is not at home. He explains that Jekyll has ordered the servants to let Mr Hyde come and go as he pleases.



Two weeks later, after a dinner party, at Jekyll's house, Utterson asks him about his will. Jekyll laughs off Utterson's worries and asks him to speak no more of the matter. Jekyll assures Utterson that he has it all under control.

Almost a year later, Hyde brutally murders the elderly Sir Danvers Carew MP in the street in a high class residential district. The crime is witnessed from an upstairs window by a maid who recognises Hyde. Carew is carrying a letter addressed to Utterson. Contacted by the police, Utterson takes them to Hyde's rooms in Soho where they find evidence of a hurried exit. Among other things, they discover the remains of the murder weapon and some burnt papers, including what is left of a cheque book.



Alarmed about the possible involvement of Jekyll, Utterson visits him and is received for the first time in his cabinet (Jekyll's laboratory) , having passed through what had been the operating theatre of a previous occupant.

Jekyll looks ill and badly affected by the news that Hyde is responsible for Carew's murder. When Utterson asks him if he is concealing Hyde, he denies it and promises him that Hyde has gone forever and will not be heard of again. As proof he gives him a letter signed by Hyde in which he thanks Jekyll for his kindness and states that he has escaped safely.

Utterson is reassured but his relief doesn't last long. Mr Guest, Utterson's clerk notices that the handwriting in the letter is very similar to that of Jekyll. It seems evident that Jekyll has forged the letter.

The police can't find Hyde. Tales came out about his cruelty and violence, his strange associates and of how much he was hated but of the man himself there is no trace.

After the seeming disappearance of Hyde, Jekyll once more becomes a public figure much concerned with doing good. He gives dinner parties and he even renews his friendship with Dr Lanyon.

But this all comes to a sudden halt. He severs all ties with his friends including Utterson.

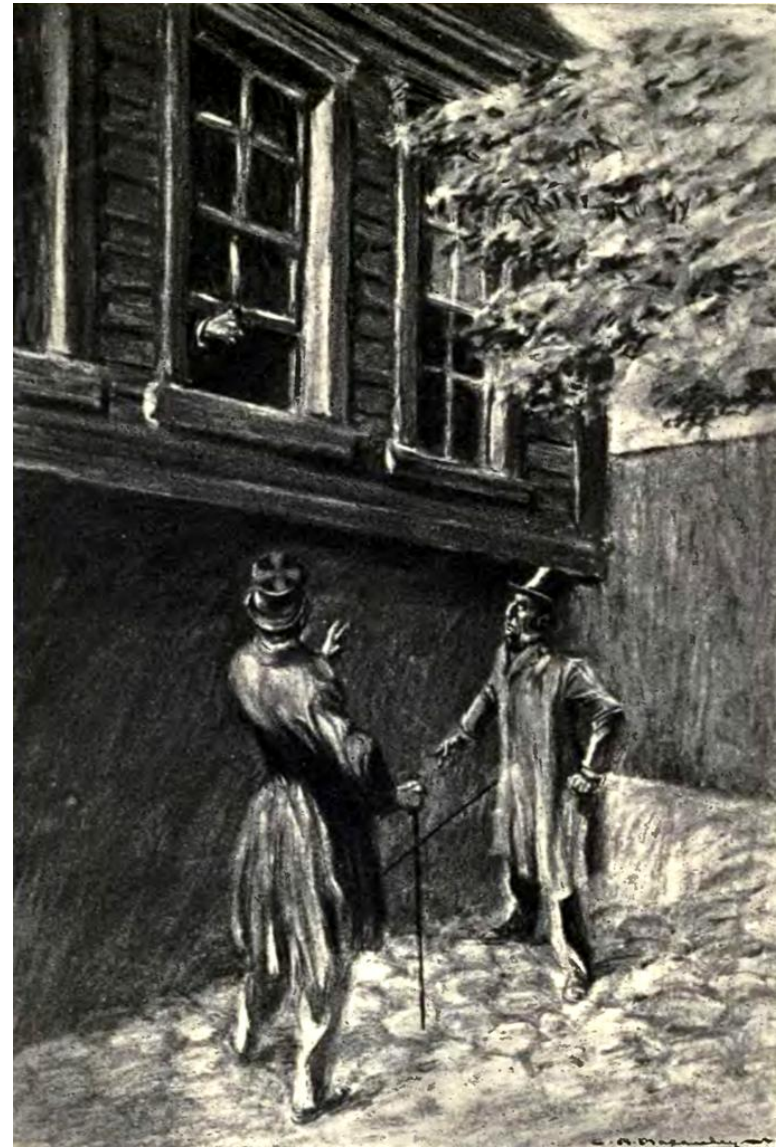
Utterson visits Dr Lanyon in the hope that he can explain why Jekyll has cut himself off from his friends. He finds a man much changed. Dr Lanyon says that he has had a shock and that he will never recover. He refuses to discuss Jekyll.

Three weeks later Lanyon is dead. He leaves a letter for Utterson with instructions that it shouldn't be opened until the death or disappearance of Dr Jekyll.



One Sunday, while walking past Jekyll's house, Utterson and Enfield catch sight of him sitting at a window sadly looking out like a prisoner. Although he seems pleased to see them, his face suddenly changes to an expression of terror and despair and he quickly disappears from view.

Utterson and Enfield are shocked into silence as they continue their walk.



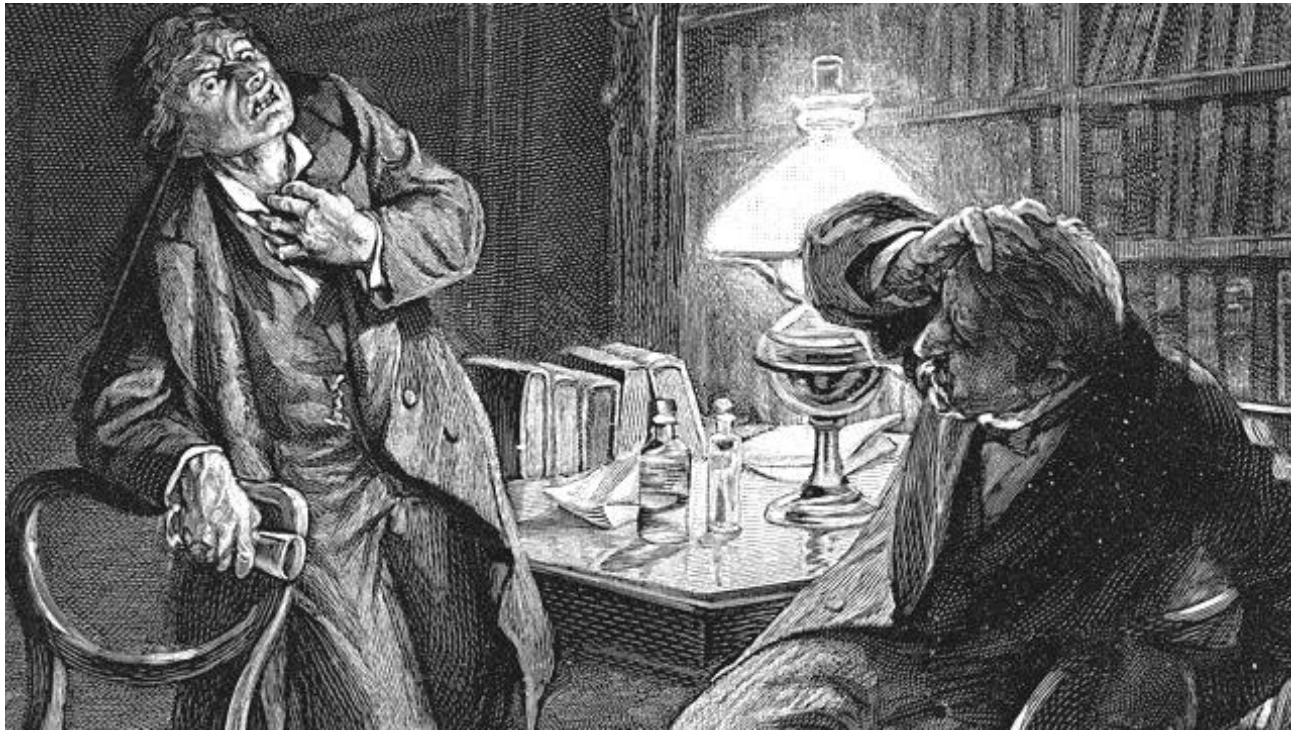


One windy evening Dr Jekyll's terrified butler fetches Utterson to his master's house: he is convinced that his master has been murdered and that Hyde is in his master's cabinet. Poole breaks down the red baize door which gives entrance to Jekyll's cabinet.

Inside, lying on the floor, there is a small, deformed person wearing Jekyll's clothes. He is twitching and holding a vial. On the desk there is a copy of Jekyll's will with Hyde's name crossed out and Utterson's inserted instead. There is no trace of Jekyll. There is a large packet for Utterson with a letter instructing him first to read Lanyon's narrative and then the enclosed journal.

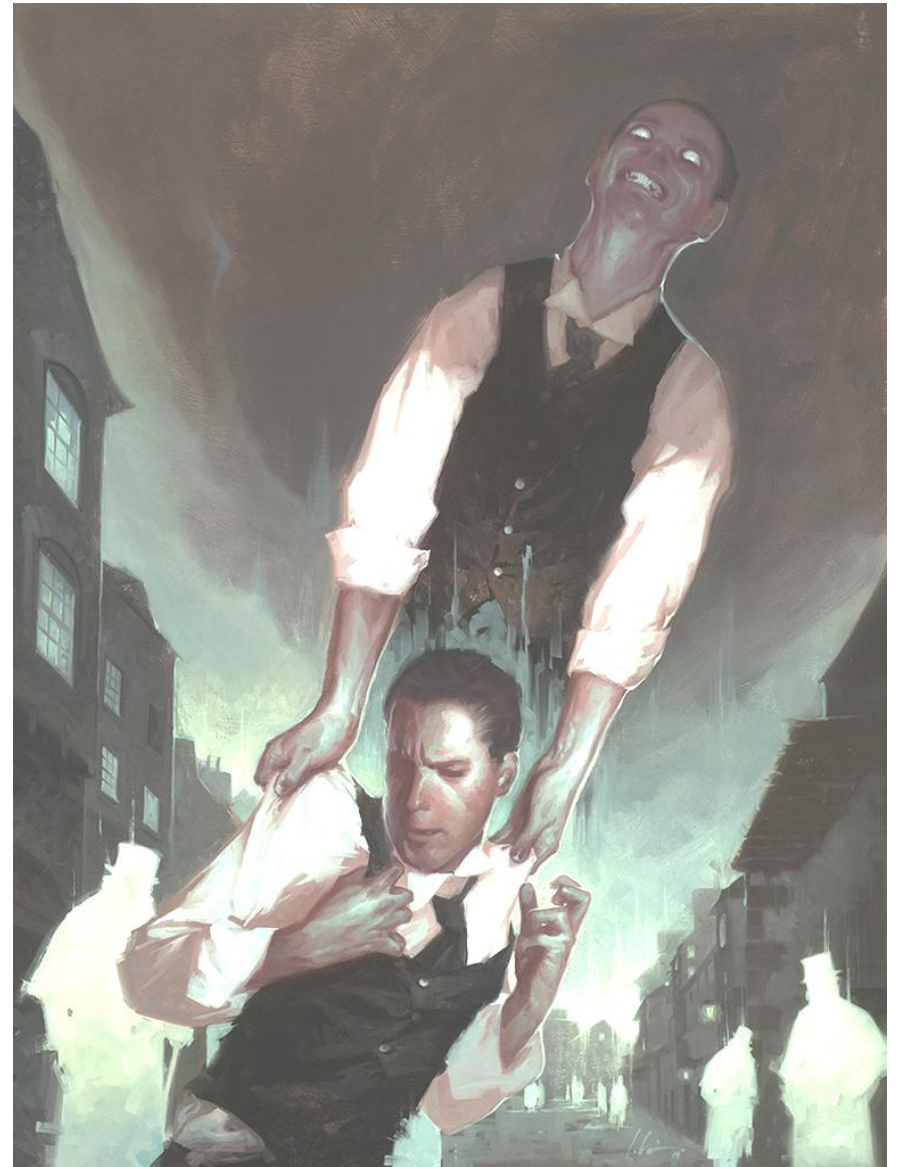
The novella ends with two first person narratives: Dr Lanyon's account of events and Dr Jekyll's full statement of the case.





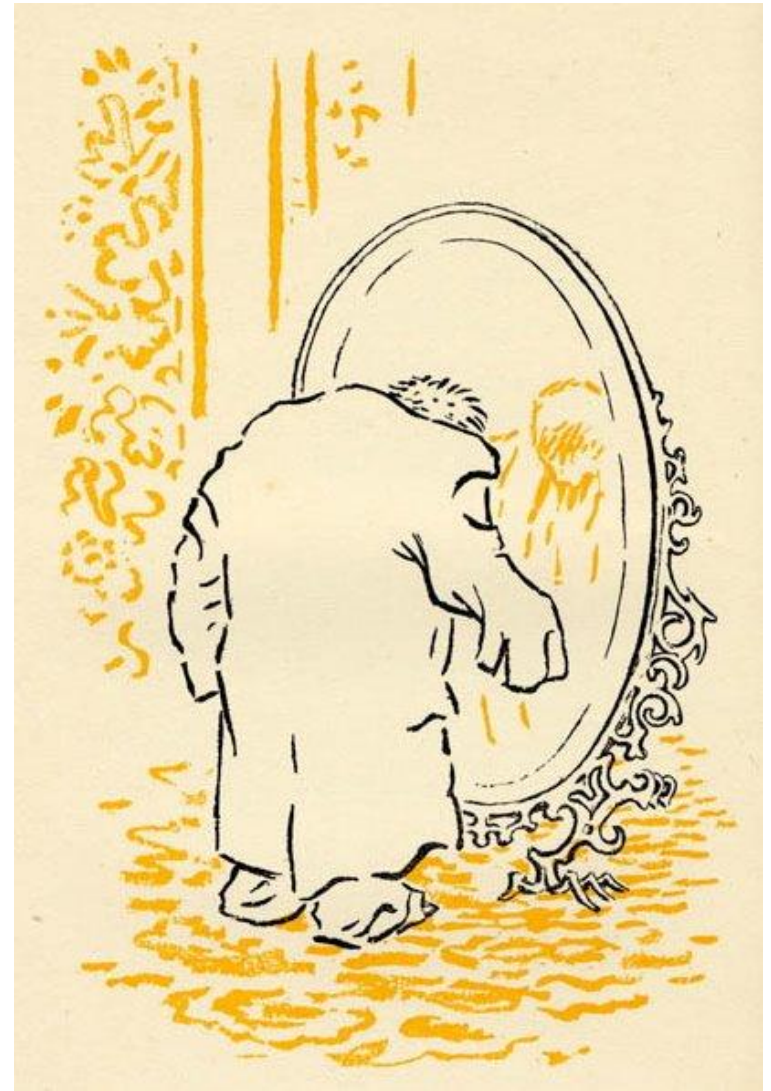
Dr Lanyon's narrative tells of how he discovered that Jekyll and Hyde are the same man. Jekyll asks him to do him a strange favour: to go to his house and get some chemicals and then to wait until midnight when a man will come to get them. The man proves to be Hyde and on making and taking a potion he becomes Jekyll before Lanyon's eyes. The shock of this discovery is too much for Lanyon: he sickens and dies.

Dr Jekyll's full statement of the case reveals the story of a peculiar addiction. Jekyll tells us that he was born into affluence and achieved both professional and social success, gaining the respect of his contemporaries. What disturbs him though are the secret pleasures which he conceals in order to preserve his respectability. He cannot live without indulging desires which, though harmless, are nevertheless frowned upon by good society. He leads a double life. His secret vices fill him with shame.

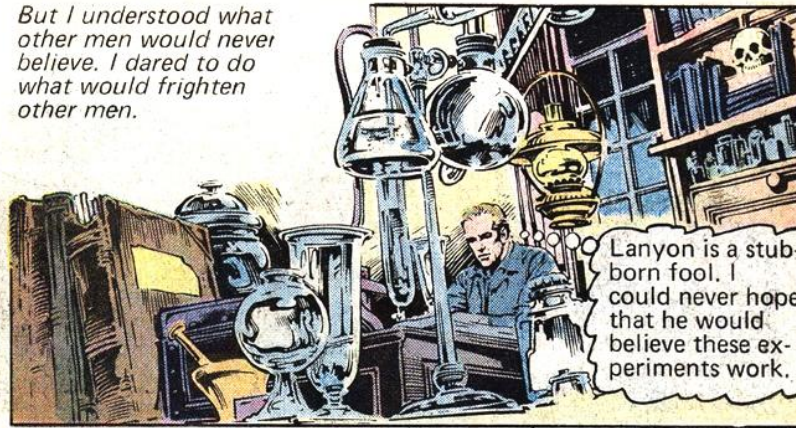


He comes to realize "that man is not truly one, but truly two" and begins to experiment - flying in the face of scientific orthodoxy - with the possibility of separating the two sides of man so that the evil part may go its own way leaving the better half free from temptation.

The potion he discovers has unexpected results: instead of liberating his higher part he becomes Hyde, a younger, smaller, ape-like version of himself, uninhibited by social convention and dedicated to desire.



But I understood what other men would never believe. I dared to do what would frighten other men.



Lanyon is a stubborn fool. I could never hope that he would believe these experiments work.



Come Edward Hyde. I want to be evil.



The goodness in me was overcome by the magic drug.



I'm smaller than Jekyll and younger, too. That's because his goodness kept me locked up without a chance to grow.



But I'm free now for any adventure and pleasure. The beast is loose and will do its worst!

In becoming Hyde, Jekyll experiences an intoxicating sense of liberation, and it is this that causes him time and time again to transform into Hyde. Hyde provides him with a means of indulging his unrespectable desires without compromising his respectability. But with the passage of time Hyde's tastes and behaviour become more violent, cruel and perverted and Jekyll loses control of the transformations



He needs increased dosages of the drugs in order to get rid of Hyde and become Jekyll.

When he becomes Hyde unexpectedly while in a London park he enlists Lanyon's help and reveals his secret to him.

But now with Hyde getting stronger he runs out of an essential ingredient.

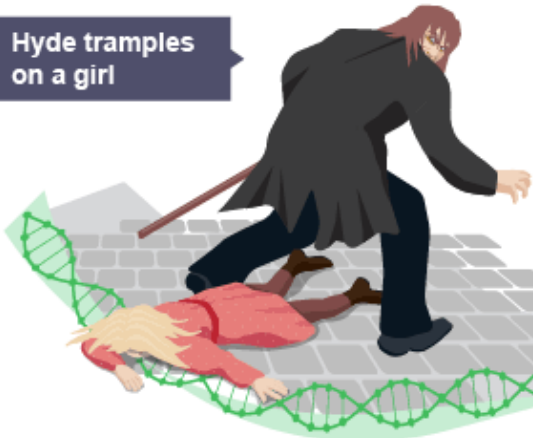




A prisoner of his cabinet and increasingly desperate, Jekyll/Hyde (?) sends Poole in search of the ingredient but it is nowhere to be found.

Jekyll and Hyde fear and despise each other. The statement ends with Jekyll preparing to end his life.

Hyde tramples on a girl



Jekyll's friend Utterson meets Hyde



Hyde murders Carew and goes missing



Lanyon gives Utterson a letter



Utterson finds Hyde dead in Jekyll's clothing



Utterson reads Lanyon's letter



The true identity of Mr Hyde is revealed



Extras

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