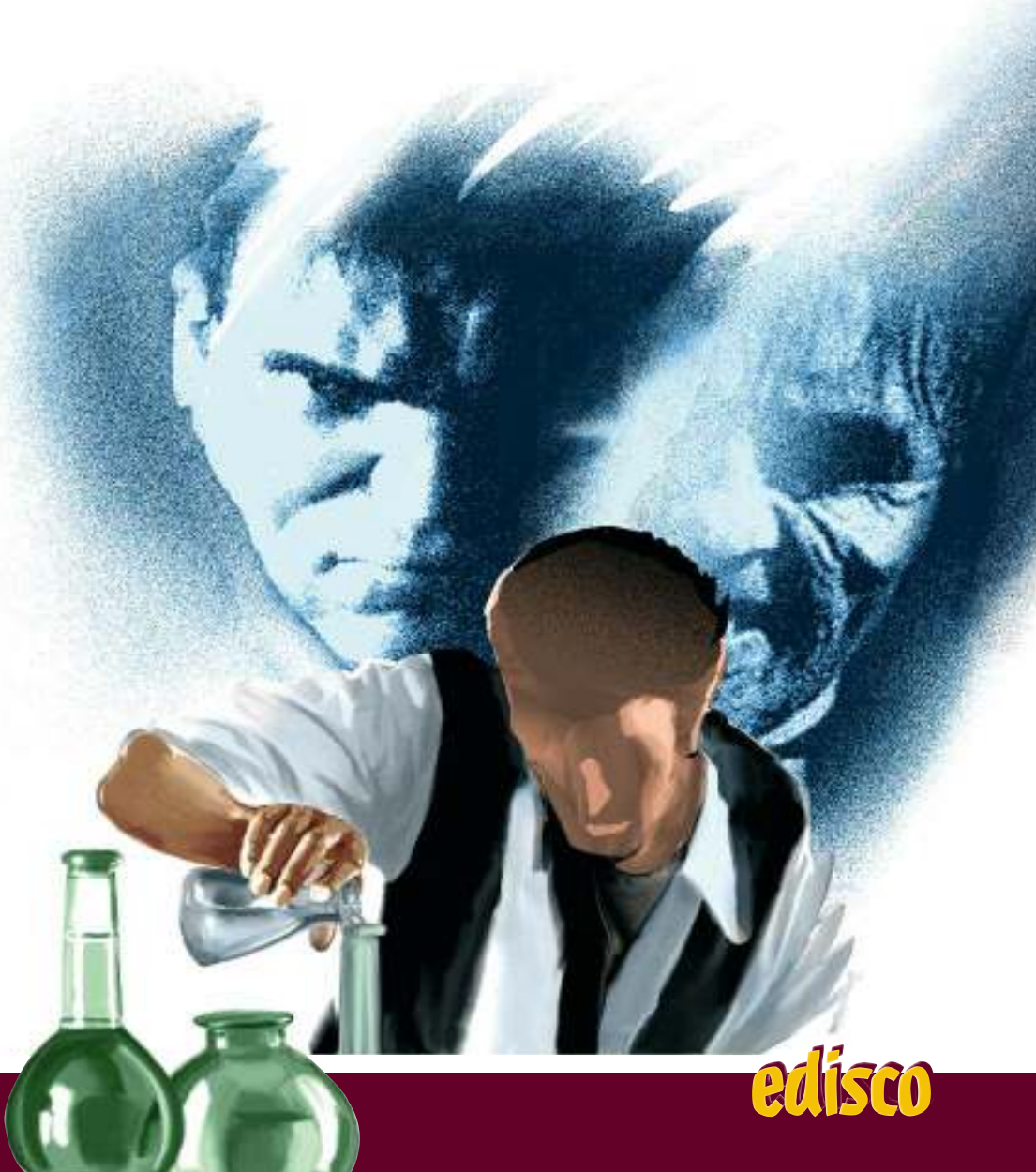


elementary

R A I N B O W S

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Robert Louis Stevenson



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The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Adaptation, dossiers and activities
by Daniela Paola Madrigali



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The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

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The author

Robert Louis Stevenson



Life. Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on 13th November 1850. His father Thomas was an engineer. From his mother, Margaret, Robert inherited¹ lung² disease: in fact he was a frail³ child who was often ill. When he was forced to stay in bed, he liked listening to adventure stories very much: his nurse ‘Cummy’ read Victorian novels⁴ and religious tales⁵ to him.

He followed his father’s wish⁶ to study engineering but his real interest was the art of writing. He also studied Law⁷ at Edinburgh University. He rebelled against his family’s middle-class values⁸ and quarrelled⁹ with his father because Robert Louis was against the strict Calvinistic doctrine in which he was educated.



Fanny Osbourne

He started a bohemian life in Edinburgh: he liked going into the Old Town dressed in an original way, so that people gave him the nickname¹⁰ of ‘Velvet Jacket’.

Then he went to France to cure his bad health and there he met his future wife, Fanny Osbourne, who was American. She was already married and had two children, so she divorced, went to California where Robert Louis followed her and they got married in 1880. Robert’s bad health and love of adventure made him decide to take a South Seas cruise¹¹ on board the yacht *Casco*: he sailed¹² from San Francisco to the Marquesas Islands. He also visited Tahiti, the Hawaiian Islands and the Samoan Islands. In the letters that he wrote

1. *inherited*: had the same characteristics as his parents.
2. *lung*: organ in your body that you breathe with.
3. *frail*: weak.
4. *novel*: long, imaginary, written story.
5. *tales*: stories about exciting imaginary events.
6. *wish*: desire.
7. *Law*: the system of rules that people in a country must obey.
8. *values*: ideas about what is right and wrong.
9. *quarrelled*: had a disagreement.
10. *nickname*: an informal name.
11. *cruise*: holiday on a large ship.
12. *sailed*: started a journey by boat or ship.

to his friends, Robert described his cruises and adventures with great enthusiasm. He also wrote a book of essays¹³ on the various islands: ‘*In the South Seas*’. The beauty of those islands impressed him so much that he bought some land in Apia, one of the Samoan Islands, where he built the ‘Vailima’ house. Fortunately his health improved a little, thanks to the good climate. However, he died suddenly on 3rd December 1894 at the age of 44.



On the verandah of Vailima, Samoa, 1892.

Works. R. L. Stevenson wrote essays, poems, short stories and novels. He is famous in particular for his adventure stories. His best-known novels are:

- *Treasure Island*, published in serial form¹⁴ in the boy’s magazine “Young Folks” in 1882 and then as a book in 1883; it is set on a remote desert island and tells the story of a treasure hunt¹⁵ with pirates. The book brought him money and fame.
- *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, published in 1886; it deals with the theme of good and evil.
- *Kidnapped*, published in the same year as Dr Jekyll; it is set in Scotland and is the story of a young orphan, David Balfour, who is defrauded¹⁶ and kidnapped¹⁷ by his uncle.
- *The Master of Ballantrae: A Winter’s Tale*, published in 1889; it is a historical novel and is the story of a struggle¹⁸ between two brothers, the Master of Ballantrae and his younger brother Mr Henry, who represent respectively good and evil.

13. *essay*: short piece of writing about a particular subject.

14. *serial form*: printed in numerous separate parts.

15. *hunt*: act of looking for something that is difficult to find.

16. *defraud*: to get money illegally

from a person or an organization by tricking them.

17. *kidnap*: to take somebody away illegally and keep them as a prisoner, especially in order to get money.

18. *struggle*: fight, battle.



BEFORE READING

1 What do you already know? Choose the right option.

- a. Who is Dr Jekyll ?
 - A famous scientist
 - A novelist
 - A mathematician

- b. Who is Mr Hyde?
 - Dr Jekyll's friend
 - Dr Jekyll's bad side
 - Dr Jekyll's cousin

2 Look at the picture on page 10 and answer these questions.

- a. What does the man look like?
-
- b. Who do you think he is: Dr Jekyll or Mr Hyde?
-
- c. What kind of person do you think he is?
-

3 Match some of the key words from this chapter to their definitions.

- a. lawyer 1. Long stick a person uses as an aid for walking.
- b. wild-looking 2. Paper you can use as a form of money.
- c. cheque 3. To write your name on something.
- d. cane 4. A person whose job is to give legal advice.
- e. sign 5. With a cruel expression.
- f. wicked 6. Very bad.
- g. reliable 7. Someone you can trust because he is honest and sincere.
- h. trample 8. To walk on someone.

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

A strange man

Chapter 1

Mr Utterson, the lawyer, was a man that did not often smile, did not speak much and was very reserved. He was tolerant, reliable¹ and helpful: that's why his friends trusted² him.

Every Sunday he had a walk with his cousin Mr Richard Enfield. They said nothing but they considered their walks the most important event of the week. On one of these walks they went down a quiet small street in a busy area of London. Mr Enfield stopped and pointed his walking cane³ to a sinister⁴ building with a black door that was on the other side of the street: the ugly building had two floors, no windows and it was very dirty.

“Have you ever noticed that door?” he asked. “Every time I see it, I think of a very strange thing that happened on a black winter morning while I was coming home at about three o'clock.”

1. *reliable*: someone you can trust because they are sincere and honest.

2. *trusted*: believed.

3. *cane*: long stick used as an aid for walking.

4. *sinister*: evil, dangerous.



Mr Utterson and Dr Jekyll walking in the street
(from Victor Fleming's, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, 1941).

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde



“The little man knocked her down, trampled on her; ...”
(from Stephen Frears' *Mary Reilly*, 1995).

“Oh! What was that?” asked Mr Utterson.

“A strange little wild-looking⁵ man was walking quickly and, down a side street, a little girl of eight or ten was running: they ran into one another. The little man knocked her down⁶, trampled⁷ on her, went away and left her screaming⁸ and crying on the ground. I immediately ran after him, took him by the collar and brought him back to the little girl's own family. He gave me such a wild angry look that I felt afraid. Soon a doctor arrived: he said that the girl was all right, but everybody hated⁹ the wicked¹⁰ man, especially the doctor and the women who wanted to attack him. The man was cool¹¹ and smiled with derision.

“We told him that he had to pay the poor girl's family one hundred pounds. It was a big sum of money but the man agreed¹², also because he did not want a scandal.

“We followed the man to the door over there. He took out a key, opened the door, went in and then came out with a cheque¹³ and ten pounds in gold. To my surprise the cheque

5. *wild-looking*: expressing violence.

6. *knocked down*: hit the girl very hard so that she fell.

7. *trampled*: put his feet on the girl.

8. *screaming*: making a loud high cry because she was hurt.

9. *hated*: disliked very much.

10. *wicked*: immoral, cruel, corrupt.

11. *cool*: (here) calm.

12. *agreed*: had the same opinion.

13. *cheque*: piece of printed paper used instead of money.

A strange man

was signed by a well-known man in London. I thought it was false and asked the man: ‘Did you steal¹⁴ it?’ He laughed at me and answered that it was good.”

“Don’t worry, I will stay with you until the bank opens and we cash the cheque,” he said.

“So the doctor, the child’s family, the evil¹⁵ man and myself spent the night in my house, and the following day after breakfast we went to Coutts Bank: the cheque was genuine!”

“It’s a bad story. And the man that signed¹⁶ the cheque is the opposite of that wicked being: a respected and honest gentleman. Perhaps¹⁷ that horrible little man is blackmailing¹⁸ him.”

“Does the man that signed the cheque live there?” asked Mr Utterson.

“No, he doesn’t. I noticed his address: he lives in some square in this part of the town – I don’t remember exactly.”

“And you never asked about the place with the door?” said Mr Utterson.

“No, I didn’t. I never ask questions that can cause trouble.”

“A very good rule¹⁹. I agree with you,” said the lawyer.

“But I observed the place carefully,” continued Mr Enfield.

14. *steal*: take something that belongs to someone else without permission.

15. *evil*: bad.

16. *signed*: wrote his name on something.

17. *perhaps*: maybe.

18. *blackmailing*: forcing him to do something by threatening to tell people embarrassing or secret information about him.

19. *rule*: habit, principle.



Watercolour showing the main hall in Coutts Bank (1900).

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

“Nobody goes in or out. I saw only the strange man going in and out. There are three windows on the first floor that look on the courtyard²⁰: they are always closed, but I think someone lives there, because the chimney²¹ is generally smoking.”

They continued walking for a while in silence, then Mr Utterson asked:

“Do you know his name?”

“Yes, his name is Hyde.”

“Hm,” said Mr Utterson. “And what does he look like?”

“He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance²² but I don’t know exactly what it is... a feeling of deformity; what is certain is that when I saw him, I immediately disliked him.”

The two men went on walking silently, then Mr Utterson asked again:

“Are you sure that he used a key to open the door?”

“Yes, of course!” answered Enfield, a bit surprised. “I saw him use it a week ago.”

“I know that my question seems strange. I won’t ask you the name of the person that signed the cheque because I already know it.”

“Let’s not talk of this again”, said Mr Enfield.

“With all my heart”, answered Mr Utterson.



“There is something wrong with his appearance but I don’t know exactly what it is... a feeling of deformity’.

20. *courtyard*: an open area with walls or buildings around it that is usually part of a large house.

21. *chimney*: a structure through which

smoke from a fire can go up into the air through the roof of a building.

22. *appearance*: the way that somebody looks to other people.