COLLINS
CLASSICS

ROBERT LOUIS
STEVENSON

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE

Robert Louis Stevenson

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History of Collins

In 1819, Millworker William Collins from Glasgow, Scotland, set up a company for printing and publishing pamphlets, sermons, hymn books and prayer books. That company was Collins and was to mark the birth of HarperCollins Publishers as we know it today. The long tradition of Collins dictionary publishing can be traced back to the first dictionary William published in 1824, *Greek and English Lexicon*. Indeed, from 1840 onwards, he began to produce illustrated dictionaries and even obtained a licence to print and publish the Bible.

Soon after, William published the first Collins novel, *Ready Reckoner*, however it was the time of the Long Depression, where harvests were poor, prices were high, potato crops had failed and violence was erupting in Europe. As a result, many factories across the country were forced to close down and William chose to retire in 1846, partly due to the hardships he was facing.

Aged 30, William's son, William II took over the business. A keen humanitarian with a warm heart and a generous spirit, William II was truly 'Victorian' in his outlook. He introduced new, up-to-date steam presses and published affordable editions of Shakespeare's works and *Pilgrim's Progress*, making them available to the masses for the first time. A new demand for educational books meant that success came with the publication of travel books, scientific books, encyclopaedias and dictionaries. This demand to be educated led to the later publication of atlases and Collins also held the monopoly on scripture writing at the time.

In the 1860s Collins began to expand and diversify and the idea of 'books for the millions' was developed. Affordable editions of classical literature were published and in 1903 Collins introduced 10 titles in their Collins Handy Illustrated Pocket

Novels. These proved so popular that a few years later this had increased to an output of 50 volumes, selling nearly half a million in their year of publication. In the same year, The Everyman's Library was also instituted, with the idea of publishing an affordable library of the most important classical works, biographies, religious and philosophical treatments, plays, poems, travel and adventure. This series eclipsed all competition at the time and the introduction of paperback books in the 1950s helped to open that market and marked a high point in the industry.

HarperCollins is and has always been a champion of the classics and the current Collins Classics series follows in this tradition – publishing classical literature that is affordable and available to all. Beautifully packaged, highly collectible and intended to be reread and enjoyed at every opportunity.

Life & Times

About the Author

Robert Louis Stevenson could be described as a career novelist. That is to say, he fashioned himself as a story teller and wrote as much as he humanly could for his rather short life, which ended aged 44. He wrote a dozen novels and a number of collections of short stories.

Stevenson is best known for two books that fall into entirely different genres: *Treasure Island* (1883) and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). The former was his first novel and the one that put him on the literary map at the age of 33. Stevenson was beset by ill health, so writing became an escape while convalescing. In this instance he took himself away to the high seas to a world filled with lawless pirates, intent on finding buried treasure.

His Works

The clichéd image of the fictional 19th-century pirate was born with *Treasure Island*. Stevenson put together a collection of pirate characteristics in Long John Silver and his crewmen, which have become standards used in many other pirate stories since. However, Stevenson's pirates were not charismatic and engaging rogues or anti-heroes. They were seagoing outlaws and villains, driven by selfishness and greed, and readily willing to kill.

Parallels have been drawn between Long John Silver and Robin Hood, but the former has no loyalty in his band of men and is not motivated by a desire to help anyone. On the contrary, he only uses the other pirates for his own ends and turns his back when he no longer needs their protection.

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is entirely different. *Treasure Island* is essentially a boy's adventure story, while this novel investigates the disturbing psychology behind split person-

ality disorder, or schizophrenia. In Victorian times, there was an inevitable religious overtone to the interpretation of psychological conditions, so Stevenson saw the dual personality of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde as a conflict between the good and evil sides of the personality. The implication being that we all suffer a similar conflict, but this case was heightened and amplified by Dr Jekyll imbibing a drug potion. In fact, there is such a pronounced change in personality that Dr Jekyll alters in appearance and posture when he metamorphoses into Mr Hyde.

It seems likely that the drug potion used by Dr Jekyll is representative of opium, which was taken in opium dens in London in the late Victorian era. At first the potion enables him to switch from one persona, or alter ego to the other at will. However, the dosage is increased until he can no longer control the situation and Mr Hyde becomes all consuming. In effect, the subconscious animal mind overpowers the conscious human mind, because his primal needs and desires are allowed to develop and grow.

This is evidently also an expression of the feelings of suppression that Stevenson felt in Victorian society. There was such a pressing requirement to behave in a certain way, which denied acknowledgement of the baser instincts, that Dr Jekyll was the personification of this frustration in Stevenson and other Victorian men. Dr Jekyll is compelled to transform into Mr Hyde so that he can do things that polite society would have normally found scandalous.

In the end, the inner turmoil is too much for Dr Jekyll. He feels more human as Mr Hyde, yet society views him as being more human as Dr Jekyll. Aware that his desire to remain as Mr Hyde forever will conflict with the values of society, he ends things so that others do not have to witness his indulgence.

The book evidently struck a chord with Victorian society, judging by its success and by its lasting impact. We now use the term 'a Jekyll and Hyde character' to describe someone with unpredictable behaviour or violent mood swings. In addition, the concept of character transformation has been borrowed many times over in fiction.

Contribution to Literature

Like many Victorian novelists, Robert Louis Stevenson was highly regarded by his contemporaries and writers of other generations. It is easy now to forget that English literature had to start somewhere and that those who 'invented' the novel had no precedent.

For Stevenson the novel was only a century or so old and there was still plenty of room to try new approaches to the narrative form. To be successful was to be pioneering, which meant that one had to be innovative and visionary in outlook, as well as being able to weave together a compelling story.

By and large Victorian novelists tended to be loyal to their chosen genre. Once they found their niche they stuck to the same formula, so it was quite unusual for a writer to attempt to write in more than one genre, but Stevenson managed with consummate ease. Had he lived beyond his 44 years then he may have continued his ascent as an original thinker and become one of, if not *the*, greatest writer of all time. As it was, he managed to make his permanent mark on the register of classic novelists and claim his place in the story of English literature.

Stevenson ended his life on the island of Upolu, Samoa, in the South Pacific Ocean. He had sailed extensively among the Pacific Islands and made Upolu his own 'treasure island' in 1890. He bought an estate on the island with the proceeds of his book sales and lived there happily for four years until he was struck down by a seizure. It was probably a stroke (cerebral haemorrhage) caused by an embolism.

His health had been compromised in 1879 when Stevenson took a long journey by sea and rail from Europe to California. He chose to travel second class, which was 'roughing it' in those days. By the time he arrived at his destination he was at deaths door. It seems that he never fully recovered from these self-imposed hardships. Stevenson was, surprisingly, viewed as something of a failure by his family. He had been expected to become a successful engineer, but rejected convention and expectation in pursuit of his writing. Although he was successful as a writer in his own lifetime his natu-

rally Bohemian and unorthodox behaviour made him feel marginalized by Victorian society. This could explain why he felt more at home in far flung places, where he was free from the parameters of Victorian etiquette and expectation. Before he started to travel, he found his escape in visiting places of ill repute and iniquity where the underclass would not judge him and where he met more interesting people on the fringes of society.

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE

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CHAPTER 1

Story of the Door

Mr Utterson the lawyer was a man of a rugged countenance, that was never lighted by a smile; cold, scanty and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment; lean, long, dusty, dreary, and yet somehow lovable. At friendly meetings, and when the wine was to his taste, something eminently human beaconed from his eye; something indeed which never found its way into his talk, but which spoke not only in these silent symbols of the after-dinner face, but more often and loudly in the acts of his life. He was austere with himself; drank gin when he was alone, to mortify a taste for vintages; and though he enjoyed the theatre, had not crossed the doors of one for twenty years. But he had an approved tolerance for others; sometimes wondering, almost with envy, at the high pressure of spirits involved in their misdeeds; and in any extremity inclined to help rather than to reprove. 'I incline to Cain's heresy,' he used to say quaintly: 'I let my brother go to the devil in his own way.' In this character, it was frequently his fortune to be the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of down-going men. And to such as these, so

long as they came about his chambers, he never marked a shade of change in his demeanour.

No doubt the feat was easy to Mr Utterson; for he was undemonstrative at the best, and even his friendships seemed to be founded in a similar catholicity of good-nature. It is the mark of a modest man to accept his friendly circle ready made from the hands of opportunity; and that was the lawyer's way. His friends were those of his own blood, or those whom he had known the longest; his affections, like ivy, were the growth of time, they implied no aptness in the object. Hence, no doubt, the bond that united him to Mr Richard Enfield, his distant kinsman, the well-known man about town. It was a nut to crack for many, what these two could see in each other, or what subject they could find in common. It was reported by those who encountered them in their Sunday walks, that they said nothing, looked singularly dull, and would hail with obvious relief the appearance of a friend. For all that, the two men put the greatest store by these excursions, counted them the chief jewel of each week, and not only set aside occasions of pleasure, but even resisted the calls of business, that they might enjoy them uninterrupted.

It chanced on one of these rambles that their way led them down a by-street in a busy quarter of London. The street was small and what is called quiet, but it drove a thriving trade on the week-days. The inhabitants were all doing well, it seemed, and all emulously hoping to do better still, and laying out the surplus of their gains in coquetry; so that the shop fronts stood along that thoroughfare with an air of invitation, like rows of smiling saleswomen. Even on Sunday, when it veiled its more florid charms and lay comparatively empty of passage,

the street shone out in contrast to its dingy neighbourhood, like a fire in a forest; and with its freshly painted shutters, well-polished brasses, and general cleanliness and gaiety of note, instantly caught and pleased the eye of the passenger.

Two doors from one corner, on the left hand going east, the line was broken by the entry of a court; and just at that point, a certain sinister block of building thrust forward its gable on the street. It was two storeys high; showed no window, nothing but a door on the lower storey and a blind forehead of discoloured wall on the upper; and bore in every feature the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence. The door, which was equipped with neither bell nor knocker, was blistered and distained. Tramps slouched into the recess and struck matches on the panels; children kept shop upon the steps; the schoolboy had tried his knife on the mouldings; and for close on a generation, no one had appeared to drive away these random visitors or to repair their ravages.

Mr Enfield and the lawyer were on the other side of the by-street; but when they came abreast of the entry, the former lifted up his cane and pointed.

'Did you ever remark that door?' he asked; and when his companion had replied in the affirmative, 'It is connected in my mind,' added he, 'with a very odd story.'

'Indeed!' said Mr Utterson, with a slight change of voice, 'and what was that?'

'Well, it was this way,' returned Mr Enfield: 'I was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o'clock of a black winter morning, and my way lay through a part of town where there was literally nothing to be seen but lamps. Street after street, and all the folks asleep – street after street, all lighted up as

if for a procession, and all as empty as a church – till at last I got into that state of mind when a man listens and listens and begins to long for the sight of a policeman. All at once, I saw two figures: one a little man who was stumping along eastward at a good walk, and the other a girl of maybe eight or ten who was running as hard as she was able down a cross street. Well, sir, the two ran into one another naturally enough at the corner; and then came the horrible part of the thing; for the man trampled calmly over the child's body and left her screaming on the ground. It sounds nothing to hear, but it was hellish to see. It wasn't like a man; it was like some damned Juggernaut. I gave a view halloa, took to my heels, collared my gentleman, and brought him back to where there was already quite a group about the screaming child. He was perfectly cool and made no resistance, but gave me one look, so ugly that it brought out the sweat on me like running. The people who had turned out were the girl's own family; and pretty soon the doctor, for whom she had been sent, put in his appearance. Well, the child was not much the worse, more frightened, according to the Sawbones; and there you might have supposed would be an end to it. But there was one curious circumstance. I had taken a loathing to my gentleman at first sight. So had the child's family, which was only natural. But the doctor's case was what struck me. He was the usual cut and dry apothecary, of no particular age and colour, with a strong Edinburgh accent, and about as emotional as a bagpipe. Well, sir, he was like the rest of us; every time he looked at my prisoner, I saw that Sawbones turned sick and white with the desire to kill him. I knew what was in his mind, just as he knew what was in mine; and killing being out of

the question, we did the next best. We told the man we could and would make such a scandal out of this, as should make his name stink from one end of London to the other. If he had any friends or any credit, we undertook that he should lose them. And all the time, as we were pitching it in red hot, we were keeping the women off him as best we could, for they were as wild as harpies. I never saw a circle of such hateful faces; and there was the man in the middle, with a kind of black, sneering coolness – frightened, too, I could see that – but carrying it off, sir, really like Satan. "If you choose to make capital out of this accident," said he, "I am naturally helpless. No gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene," says he. "Name your figure." Well, we screwed him up to a hundred pounds for the child's family; he would have clearly liked to stick out; but there was something about the lot of us that meant mischief, and at last he struck. The next thing was to get the money; and where do you think he carried us but to that place with the door? – whipped out a key, went in, and presently came back with the matter of ten pounds in gold and a cheque for the balance on Coutts's, drawn payable to bearer, and signed with a name that I can't mention, though it's one of the points of my story, but it was a name at least very well known and often printed. The figure was stiff; but the signature was good for more than that, if it was only genuine. I took the liberty of pointing out to my gentleman that the whole business looked apocryphal; and that a man does not, in real life, walk into a cellar door at four in the morning and come out of it with another man's cheque for close upon a hundred pounds. But he was quite easy and sneering. "Set your mind at rest," says he; "I will stay with you till the banks open, and

cash the cheque myself." So we all set off, the doctor, and the child's father, and our friend and myself, and passed the rest of the night in my chambers; and next day, when we had breakfasted, went in a body to the bank. I gave in the cheque myself, and said I had every reason to believe it was a forgery. Not a bit of it. The cheque was genuine.'

'Tut-tut!' said Mr Utterson.

'I see you feel as I do,' said Mr Enfield. 'Yes, it's a bad story. For my man was a fellow that nobody could have to do with, a really damnable man; and the person that drew the cheque is the very pink of the proprieties, celebrated, too, and (what makes it worse) one of your fellows who do what they call good. Blackmail, I suppose; an honest man paying through the nose for some of the capers of his youth. Blackmail House is what I call that place with the door, in consequence. Though even that, you know, is far from explaining all,' he added; and with the words fell into a vein of musing.

From this he was recalled by Mr Utterson asking rather suddenly: 'And you don't know if the drawer of the cheque lives there?'

'A likely place, isn't it?' returned Mr Enfield. 'But I happen to have noticed his address; he lives in some square or other.'

'And you never asked about – the place with the door?' said Mr Utterson.

'No, sir: I had a delicacy,' was the reply. 'I feel very strongly about putting questions; it partakes too much of the style of the day of judgment. You start a question, and it's like starting a stone. You sit quietly on the top of a hill; and away the stone goes, starting others; and presently some bland old bird (the last you would have