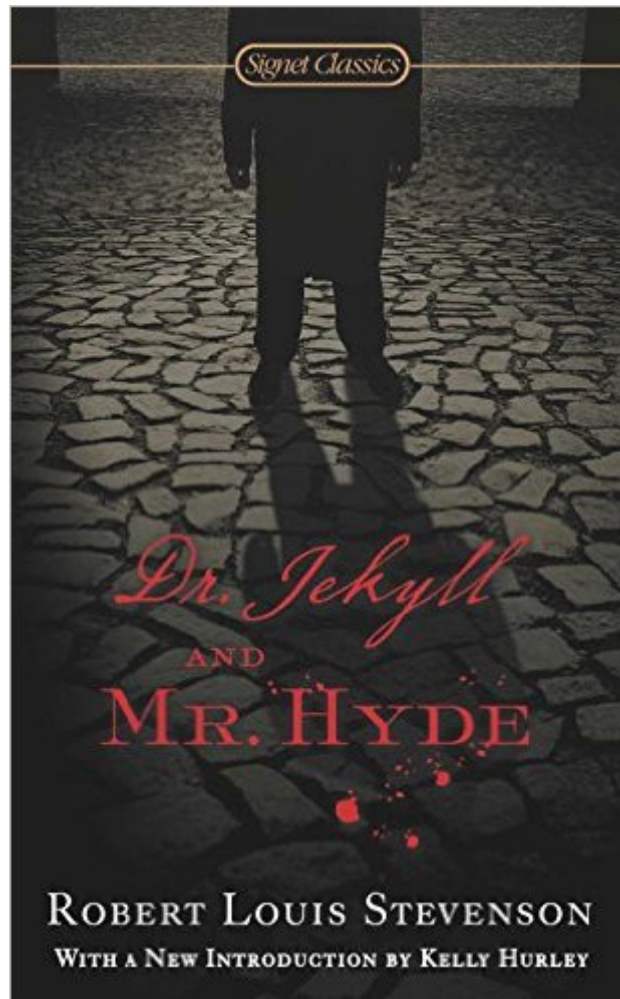


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# Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde (Signet Classics)



## Synopsis

Robert Louis Stevenson explores the very nature of man in this classic horror novel. "Why did you wake me? I was dreaming a fine bogey tale." •Robert Louis Stevenson's masterpiece of the duality of good and evil in man's nature sprang from the darkest recesses of his own unconscious "during a nightmare from which his wife awakened him, alerted by his screams. More than a hundred years later, this tale of the mild-mannered Dr. Jekyll and the drug that unleashes his evil, inner persona "the loathsome, twisted Mr. Hyde" has lost none of its ability to shock. Its realistic police-style narrative chillingly relates Jekyll's desperation as Hyde gains control of his soul "and gives voice to our own fears of the violence and evil within us. Written before Freud's naming of the ego and the id, Stevenson's enduring classic demonstrates a remarkable understanding of the personality's inner conflicts "and remains the irresistibly terrifying stuff of our worst nightmares. Includes the Famous Cornell Lecture on "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Vladimir Nabokov With a New Introduction by Kelly Hurley and an Afterword by Dan Chaon

## Book Information

Series: Signet Classics

Mass Market Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: Signet; Reissue edition (December 4, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0451532252

ISBN-13: 978-0451532251

Product Dimensions: 4.2 x 0.4 x 6.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars " See all reviews" (952 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #131,450 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #51 in " Books > Literature & Fiction > British & Irish > Horror #355 in " Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Gothic #3606 in " Books > Literature & Fiction > Classics

## Customer Reviews

+++++I have seen many movie versions of this classic. So, I made the assumption that I knew the true story. Then I read this book. Was my assumption ever wrong!!!This particular book (published by Signet Classics in Sept. 2003) of less than 150 pages has five parts:(1) Opening Pages. They include a brief biography of Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 to 1894). (Takes up 4% of the book.)(2) Introductory Essay. This was written by the late, famous Russian author Vladimir Nabokov. (Takes

up 20%).(3) The Actual Story. Its original title is "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1886). (Takes up 65%).(4) Afterword to the Story. It is written by a modern writer. (Takes up 8%).(5) Selected Bibliography. Outlines great works by and about R.L. Stevenson. (Takes up 3%).

The introductory essay was an actual lecture Nabokov gave when he was associate professor at Cornell University from 1948 to 1959. It gives a thorough, detailed analysis of this "seldom read" classic. The afterword consists of a shorter analysis of this classic by the modern writer Dan Chaon. I felt that this afterword provided valuable insight regarding the story of Jekyll and Hyde. Chaon sums up the entire story: "The structure of ['Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde'] follows a path as indirect and elusive as its multiple narrative voices. With its obliquely recorded incidents, its eyewitness accounts and sealed confessions, it resembles...a [police detective's] casebook--a collection of gathered clues, fragments, through which the clever detective may be able to...project a complete narrative. Perhaps one of the most compelling aspects of this novel [of ten chapters] is that, in fact, there's so much left here for [the reader] to fill in, so many scenes that [the reader] can only imagine. Such a structure creates fertile ground for allegory [a story with symbolic meaning] hunters, and there are indeed many convincing interpretations of this novel...The puzzle-like structure of the novel [which only has eight major male characters] creates a kind of Rorschach test, open to various interpretations." (A Rorschach test is where a person interprets inkblot designs.) The inspiration of this short novel is said to have come from a dream (or, perhaps more accurately, a nightmare) Stevenson had. His actual writing is amazing and skillful in all chapters. The writing especially of the last two chapters, chapters nine and ten, stood out for me. Here, for example, is his actual description of what happened when somebody observed someone using Dr. Jekyll's concoction: "He put the glass to his lips and drank at one gulp. A cry followed; he reeled, staggered, clutched at the table and held on, staring with injected eyes, gasping with open mouth; as I looked there came, I thought, a change--he seemed to swell--his face became suddenly black and the features seemed to melt and alter--and the next moment, I had sprung to my feet and leaped back against the wall, my arm raised to shield me...[and] my mind submerged in terror." Finally, the cover of this particular book is interesting. It shows the shadow of a man in a top hat behind a window shade. This can be taken to represent Hyde who is a shadowy character. In conclusion, this particular book has it all: an introduction by a late, well-known author, an intriguing mystery/horror story by a late, famous nineteenth century author, and an afterword by a gifted, modern writer. Be sure to read this book to learn the true story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde!!!+++++

Since I am a contributor to this volume, I will not offer a "review" in a conventional sense, but I will

offer a list of contents, which this website otherwise does not offer. As there are a number of competing paperback editions of Stevenson's novella and the text of the story is essentially the same (allowing for minor editorial variants), readers should consider the issue of what else besides the main text they will be getting for their money, and this edition is unusually rich in supplementary features, so that the original story makes up only 55 of its 222 pages. In addition to the text of Stevenson's "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," with explanatory notes by the editor, this volume also contains: A preface by the editor, a "textual appendix" about textual variants in the manuscripts, a map of 19th century London marking places mentioned in the story, a timeline of the major events in the life of author Robert Louis Stevenson, and a bibliography. Plus... An excerpt from a biography about Stevenson by Graham Balfour about the circumstances of the story's authorship... A brief excerpt from Stevenson's "A Chapter on Dreams," which discusses the influence of his dreams on the story... 12 letters by Stevenson that discuss aspects of the "Dr. Jekyll" story... 10 contemporary reviews and comments about "Dr. Jekyll" that show how the story was originally received... Another horror-oriented short story by Stevenson entitled "Markheim"... A brief non-fiction piece by Stevenson, "How I Came to be such a student of our Penny Press," together with some examples of 19th century book advertising... Three essays about the literary context of "Dr. Jekyll": Karl Miller, "The Modern Double"; Jenni Calder, "Stevenson's Scottish Devil Tales"; and Judith Halberstam, "An Introduction to Gothic Monstrosity"... Four essays about the scientific context of Stevenson's story: Stephen Jay Gould, "Post-Darwinist Theories of the Ape Within"; Frederic W. H. Myers, "Multiple Personality"; Norman Kerr, "Abject Slaves to the Narcotic"; John Addington Symonds, "This Aberrant Inclination in Myself"... Two essays about the socio-historical context of Stevenson's story: Judith R. Walkowitz, "London in the 1880s"; and Walter Houghton, "Hypocrisy"... Three essays and a filmography about theatrical and film adaptations of "Dr. Jekyll": C. Alex Pinkston, Jr., "The Stage Premiere of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"; Charles King, "Themes and Variations" (about film); Scott Allen Nollen, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Paramount, 1931)"; and Katherine Linehan, "A Checklist of Major Performance Adaptations"... And five additional critical essays: G. K. Chesterton, "The Real Stab of the Story"; Vladimir Nabokov, "The Phenomenon of Style"; Peter K. Garrett, "Instabilities of Meaning, Morality, and Narration"; Patrick Brantlinger, "An Unconscious Allegory about the Masses and Mass Literacy"; and Katherine Linehan, "Sex, Secrecy and Self-Alienation in Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde". For sheer range of commentary, I do not think that you could point to a comparable volume.

This is an excellent bundle of RLS's novels, novellas, and short stories. In fact, according to the

blurb in the Kindle Store, "this collection comprises all the fiction Stevenson ever published." I cannot confirm the veracity of "all" and "ever," but this set contains the titles I had expected to find, plus a few pleasant surprises. It is handsomely formatted, and the content is easily accessible via a detailed, but particularly user-friendly, active TOC (though for some reason "The Dynamiter" is listed twice with two different publishing dates). And the price (at a mere \$.99) is certainly great for so much content. But that content is NOT as "complete" as both titles -- the one on the cover ("Complete R.L. Stevenson") and the one in the Kindle Store listing ("The Complete Collection of R.L. Stevenson") -- might lead you to believe. This set is NOT complete with regard to the totality of his creative output; it contains none of his poetry (such as his well-known "A Child's Garden of Verses") nor any of his travel writing, essays, etc. So while the explanatory note clearly states this is complete only insofar as his fiction is concerned, there is no good reason why the title(s) shouldn't be equally as forthright (as in simply and more truthfully: "The Complete Fiction of RLS"). FYI: A (virtually) truly complete set appears in the Kindle Store by Delphi for \$2.99, but like most Delphi collections, it provides much obscure material and various supplements that are of primary interest only to die-hard students of the author. That memory-usurping set is not for me at the present time. The misleading title(s) aside, this is a fine collection and is well worth the low price. It is everything I had hoped it would be, and I am VERY happy with it.

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