

MACMILLAN READERS

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

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Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Retold by Stephen Colbourn



MACMILLAN

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The Door

Mr Utterson was a lawyer. In the year 1885 he was fifty-five years old. He was a tall, thin man. His face was pale and the colour of his hair was silver. He always wore a white shirt and a black suit. These were the clothes of a lawyer. He lived alone in a large house near the centre of London.

Mr Utterson was a serious man who did not smile very often. But he was kind and intelligent and had many good friends. Most of his friends were doctors or lawyers. They liked Utterson because he listened carefully, but said very little. And Utterson always helped his friends.

Every Sunday, Utterson met his friend, Mr Enfield. The two men liked to go walking in London together. Enfield showed Utterson many new and interesting places.

One Sunday afternoon, Enfield took Utterson to the East End of London. This was a poor part of the city, but there were also many interesting markets and shops in the East End. People from different countries lived there. On weekdays it was a lively and busy place. However, on Sundays, the markets and shops were closed and the streets were empty.

Enfield took Utterson down a narrow street. Here the houses were old and dirty. Some of them were empty and some had broken windows. Utterson did not like this street.

‘Why did you want to come here?’ Utterson asked.

Enfield stopped. He pointed at an old door on the other side of the street.

‘Look at that door,’ said Enfield.

Utterson looked at the door. It was black and dirty. It was the door to an old house. Above the door there was one window. The house was next to a dark courtyard.

‘I want to tell you a strange story,’ said Enfield. ‘My story is about that door.’

Utterson looked at the door while Enfield told his story.

‘A few days ago,’ said Enfield, ‘I stayed overnight with friends, not far from here. Then, early the next morning, I started to walk home. But I did not know this part of London and I lost my way. I walked along this street. I wanted to find a cab so that I could ride home.’

‘And did you find a cab?’ asked Utterson.

‘No, I didn’t,’ Enfield replied. ‘But I saw a very strange man.’

‘A strange man? What was strange about him?’ asked Utterson.

‘It’s difficult to describe him,’ Enfield continued. ‘I saw him walking quickly along the street. He was coming towards me, on the other side of the street. He was a small man. His hat was pulled down so I could not see his face.’

‘And what was strange about that?’ asked Utterson.

‘There was nothing strange – at first,’ said Enfield. ‘But I also saw a young girl running along a side street. She was about ten years old. She was not looking where she was going. She was running very fast and she ran into the strange man.’

‘So, what happened?’ asked Utterson.

‘The man knocked her over,’ said Enfield. ‘Then he kicked her. She was lying in the street and crying loudly. He walked away.’

‘And what did you do?’ asked Utterson.

‘I shouted at him,’ said Enfield. ‘I ran across the road – over there.’ He pointed towards the old door. ‘I stopped the man. I took hold of his arm and pulled him back. I wanted him to help the girl.’

‘And did he help her?’ asked Utterson.

‘No. He said nothing and did nothing. He didn’t understand what he had done,’ Enfield continued. ‘People came out of their houses when they heard the child crying. Her father came out of his house and took her indoors. One of the neighbours went to get a doctor.’



‘Was the girl injured?’ asked Utterson.

‘No, she wasn’t injured,’ said Enfield, ‘but she was very frightened.’

‘And did this strange man speak to the girl or her father?’ asked Utterson. ‘Did he say he was sorry?’

‘No, he didn’t,’ said Enfield. ‘He was very quiet. He did not care about the child. The people around us were very angry, but he said nothing.’

‘How strange!’ said Utterson. ‘Tell me, what did this man look like?’

‘That was the strangest thing about him,’ said Enfield. ‘His face was ... ordinary. I can’t describe it easily. Perhaps his face was rough or ugly. There was nothing unusual about it. But there was something evil in that face. When I looked at that man, I thought of a wild animal!’

‘Evil? A wild animal?’ said Mr Utterson. ‘Surely your description can’t be true?’

‘I am telling you the facts,’ said Enfield. ‘The man had hurt someone and he did not care. The man was very quiet. But the girl’s father was very angry and shouted to his neighbours, “Get the police!”’

‘Then the man became worried.’

‘Did anyone get the police?’ asked Utterson.

‘No,’ Enfield continued, ‘the strange man looked at the girl’s father.

‘He said, “Don’t call the police. I’ll pay you money. How much do you want?”’

‘What did the girl’s father say then?’ asked Utterson.

‘I spoke first. The girl’s family was poor,’ said Enfield, so I said, “A hundred pounds!”’

‘A hundred pounds!’ said Utterson in surprise. ‘That’s more money than the father could earn in a year. Did the strange man pay?’

‘Yes, he did, and he got the money from over there.’ Enfield pointed at the old door on the other side of the street.

‘The man went to that door,’ he said. ‘I followed him. The man opened the door with a key.’

‘What did you see inside the house?’ asked Utterson.

‘I saw a pleasant room,’ said Enfield. ‘There was an expensive red carpet on the floor. In the middle of the

room there was a long table and only one chair. The man went to the table and took a cheque book from a drawer. He sat down and wrote a cheque for one hundred pounds.

‘He said, “Take this cheque to Coutts Bank. The bank will pay one hundred pounds in cash.”’

‘And is that the end of the story?’ asked Utterson.

‘No. Not quite,’ said Enfield. ‘I looked at the cheque. There was a name printed on it. But the name on the cheque and the man’s signature were different.’

‘Had he stolen the cheque book?’

‘No, he hadn’t. The man saw that I was looking at the cheque.’

‘He said, “The bank will pay the money. Come with me to the bank. I will show you.”’

‘And so I went to the bank with the man and the girl’s father. I gave the cheque to the bank cashier. He looked at the signature on the cheque carefully. He looked at the bank records. He read some information about the bank’s customers. Then he paid the money in cash. And now the girl’s family is a hundred pounds richer than before.’

‘That’s strange,’ said Utterson. ‘What was the name printed on the cheque and what was the signature?’

‘The name printed on the cheque was Dr Henry Jekyll,’ said Enfield. ‘But the signature was – Mr Edward Hyde. The bank has special instructions. Mr Hyde can sign Dr Jekyll’s cheques.’

‘Really? That is most unusual,’ said Utterson. ‘So, the strange man’s name is Mr Hyde.’

‘You seem very surprised. Do you know the names?’ asked Enfield.

‘I know Henry Jekyll,’ said Utterson, ‘but I do not know Edward Hyde.’