

**The Nineteenth Century Novel**  
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**Lecture – 43**  
**The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Chapter 1**



Hello and welcome to week 10's lectures. Today we will be looking at The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, which was written by R. L. Stevenson who is a Scottish writer.

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R.L.Stevenson

- R.L. Stevenson (1850-1894)
- 1886
- "a fine bogey tale"

*Novella*



Now, this is R. L Stevenson. He lived between 1850 to 1894. This particular novella, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, was published in 1886. And this is the description of that novella by the writer, the author of it. Novella is a short fiction. It is not a novel, it is not a full length novel, it does not have the same depth or expanse, and it is not a short story either, but it is somewhere in between. It is a short novel, which is why we call it the novella.

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## R.L.Stevenson

- 'I had long been trying to write a story on this subject, to find a body, a vehicle for that strong sense of man's double being which must at times come in upon and overwhelm the mind of every thinking creature.'

Concept - problem

duality  
doubleness  
two wildly  
different  
perspectives

This is R. L. Stevenson's information about the context of this particular work of his. He says "I had long been trying to write a story on this subject, to find a body, a vehicle for that strong sense of man's double being which must at times come in upon and overwhelm the mind of every thinking creature." So he has a particular concept in mind, a particular problem that he wants to explore, and that is the idea of man's double being.

He thinks that man has twin, you know, perspectives, more than one pull on his mind, and he wants to explore that duality, that doubleness. Two wildly different perspectives could also be impelling the mind of every thinking creature, and it is this concept that R. L. Stevenson wanted to explore in a story.

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## Ch-1: Story of the Door

- Mr Utterson the lawyer was a man of 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.

Mr Utterson

rugged exterior



The first chapter of this novella is titled The Story of the Door. So very interesting title, The Story of the Door, it does not say the story of a house, but the story of a door. And we will see why R. L. Stevenson has given this very unique title to this particular chapter. “Mr. Utterson the lawyer was a man of 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.”

So, we are introduced to a character called Mr. Utterson through whose eyes we would see much of the novella. And what kind of a lawyer is this particular Victorian gentleman? He has a rugged countenance, a rough exterior. In other words, he is not of a soft disposition, and his face was never lighted by a smile. It is very interesting that as soon as we come to this particular description we are reminded of another character that we have seen in the previous novel, that is Mr. Lorry.

And if you remember the story very well, you would know that he is also a man who is not given to sentimentalizations, he also does not smile often. So he is also very, very business-like. So like Mr. Lorry, we have Mr Utterson the lawyer who is also very cold, scanty, embarrassed in discourse, backward in sentiment, lean, long, dusty, dreary and yet somehow lovable. So look at the list of adjectives that is offered to him.

He is lean, he is kind of lithe, thin, he is tall, he is dusty like the books that are dusty, so you know, he is a man who is used to a lot of documentation. And he is dreary, he is boring, just as Mr. Lorry is also boring according to his own assessment. And despite all this, he is lovable, and so is Mr. Lorry of A Tale of Two Cities. So we kind of see resemblances between the two characters here, and even though they are business-like, they are also endearing in certain respects.

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## Mr Utterson

- "...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."

Scanty  
of words

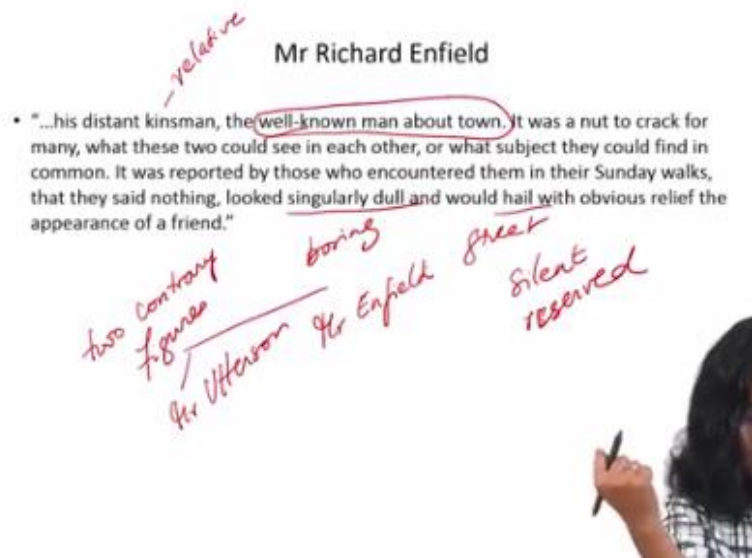
Does not  
judge

"Mr. Utterson 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." So Mr. Utterson is a character who does not talk much, that is why the previous excerpt says that he is scanty, scanty of words, and he does not like to discuss a lot with his fellow human beings which is why he is also very reserved, he does not converse quite a lot.

In fact, he is embarrassed to talk you know, at length. So this figure however has a lot of tolerance for others, for the misdeeds of others especially, misdeeds mistakes. And he also wonders how it is, you know, possible for other people to commit quite a lot of mistakes and faults and follies. Perhaps high pressure of spirits are involved in such activities, and he does not have those high pressure of spirits, you know, quite the contrary.

And even though he does not behave like the rest of humanity which is usually full of faults and foibles, he is inclined to help rather than to reprove, so he does not judge. In fact, he is keen to help others as you will see in the novella, he is willing to go out of his way to assist his friends and kind of offer any kind of help that is possible within him.

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When the novella begins, we are not only introduced to Mr. Utterson, we are also introduced to Mr. Richard Enfield. And who is Mr. Enfield? He is Mr. Utterson's distant kinsman, kinsman means relative, "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 for friend."

So, we are introduced to another male character in Chapter 1, who is Mr. Enfield, Richard Enfield who is a relative of Mr. Utterson, and he is a man who is well known, he is a well-known man about town. There is an implication that he is of higher spirits than Mr. Utterson who is very reserved, who is very scanty of words, and people wonder how these two people go out and enjoy each other's company.

And even though they do not talk much, they are silent, they are reserved in each other's company, despite the fact that it is not a very cheerful company that they exhibit, they you know, regularly meet for their Sunday walks and walk in silence. And they also look singularly dull, especially particularly dullko and boring, the two of them; and they would greet, they would hail, they would greet with obvious relief the appearance of a friend.

So if they see someone in the streets, they would immediately welcome that person if they know that person, and they would willingly give up their company in order to invite another person and make that person a part of their group. So we have two contrary figures here,

contrary figures in terms of their attitudes, one is Mr. Utterson who is very reserved, and we have Mr. Enfield who is a well-known man about town.

So, we have you know, different attitudes being together, figures, persons with differing perspectives you know, joined together, enjoying their company together you know, without wanting to go their separate ways. So this is a kind of a theme that is explored quite a bit in this novella.

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### Mr Utterson and Mr Richard Enfield

- 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.

*different  
mental  
proclivities*



“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.” So even though they are different in terms of their mental proclivities, they are very, very careful not to interrupt their Sunday walks. In fact they consider that walk together to be the chief jewel of each week, they look forward to that meeting and walk.

And they would even keep aside, you know, give up occasions of pleasure, opportunities that would give them more pleasure in order to enjoy this company during their walks without any interruption.

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## The Street

- ...a by-street in a busy quarter of London
- 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.



So the novella begins with these two men, Mr. Utterson and Mr. Enfield, enjoying their Sunday walk and their walk takes them to a by-street in a busy quarter of London. And how did this street look like? Even on a 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; with its freshly painted shutters, well-polished brasses, and general cleanliness and gaiety of note, instantly caught and pleased the eye of the passenger.”

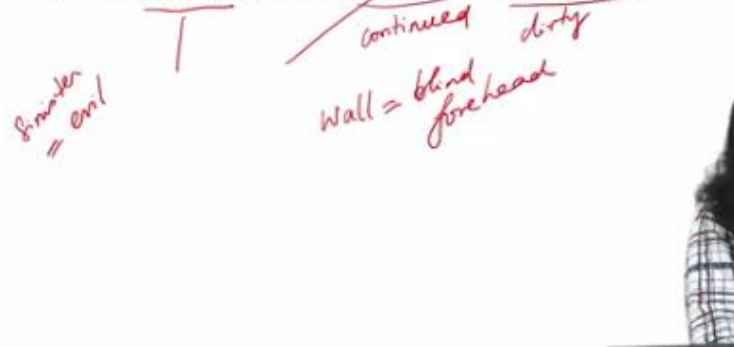
So, this is the physical description of this particular by-street, and this street is in contrast to the nature of the dingy neighbourhood, and it is like a fire in a forest. So look at the contrasts that are constantly brought up. Fire in a placid forest, forest is very quiet and then suddenly there is a blazing fire, look at the contrast of colour and mood there. And then we have, you know, other adjectives that are used here, well-polished, and then there is also a reference to a lot of gaiety and cleanliness.

So, all this kind of brings this particular street to the attention of the passenger, the person who is walking through it. So even though it is a dingy neighbourhood, we also have clean spots, pockets. So ugliness coexists with a lot of order and neatness, So two extremes, the idea that two extremes can coexist, is brought out here as well.

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## The Door

- 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 stories high; showed no window, nothing but a door on the lower story and a blind forehead of discoloured wall on the upper and bore in every feature, the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence.



So when they walk together they come to a particular door. So this brings us back to the title of this particular chapter which is the Story of the Door. So there is a story behind this particular door. “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 stories high; showed no window, nothing but a door on the lower story and a blind forehead of discoloured wall on the upper and bore in every feature the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence.”

So what kind of a place this is? It is not well kept up, it kind of exhibits prolonged, continued and sordid, it is dirty, it is messy, it has been neglected, this place has been neglected, it has not been well-maintained. So that is the aura you get of this particular spot in this particular street, and this is a building which was two stories high, it had no window, nothing but a door.

There is just a door on the lower story. And look at word “blind forehead.” There is a metaphor of a human being, blind forehead, eyes are blind, forehead blinds. Very, you know, striking metaphor that is used to describe that discoloured wall. Look at the way the wall is described, blind forehead. So the structure is compared to a human being, a kind of a physically challenged human being, and blind forehead of discoloured wall of the upper and bore in every feature, in every feature perhaps that metaphor of the human being is carried out.

So, in every feature of the face, it bore marks of disuse and neglect. And the other word that is very, very interesting here is sinister. What is the meaning of sinister? Sinister, evil, aspects of the evil are indicated in the way the building is set up.



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**That door**

- 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."

*houses* → *stories* → *human beings*

*striking distinctive story*

“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.” So they are, this house is on the opposite side to the side that the two men are walking, but then when they come abreast of this particular door, Mr. Enfield lifts up his cane and points at the door and he asks, “Did you ever remark that door?’ he asked; and when his companion had replied in the affirmative. 'It is connected in my mind,' he added, 'with a very odd story.'” So that door is linked to a very striking distinctive story. So houses have stories just as human beings have stories to tell.

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**The Story**

- 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.

*machine*

*crime against a little female child.*

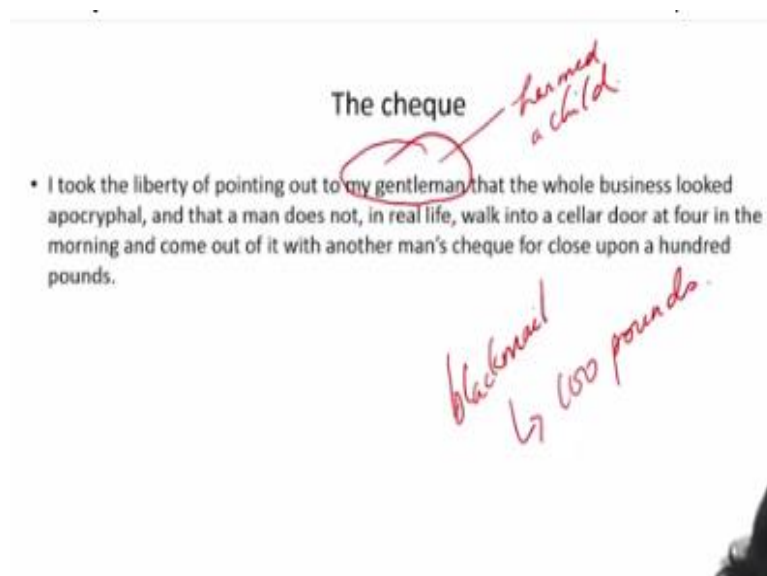
So, what is the story that Mr. Enfield is going to narrate? He says that during one of his walks at night, late at night, “I saw two figures: one a little man who was stumping along eastward at a good walk, and the other a girl of maybe eight or ten who was running as hard as she was able

to, as she was able down a cross street.” So we have one man coming from a particular direction, and we have a little girl of eight or ten years old who is also coming from the opposite direction. While the man is stumping along, the girl is running. Again, contrary physical movements.

“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 was not like a man, it was like some damned Juggernaut.” So when they come from opposite directions, the man stumping along on the little girl running, they bump into one another. And the most horrible part of that accident is that the man very consciously tramples over the child's body, he kind of crushes, walks over the child's body, and he leaves her screaming on the ground.

And Mr. Enfield says that it is not much to you know, in terms of hearing, this does not sound like bad, but it was horrible to see. It was hellish, look at the word hellish to see, and it does not feel as if he was a human being but it was like some damned, you know, juggernaut. Juggernaut some machines, some massive machine, that just rolled over this particular girl. So this is the first crime that the readers get to know about in this particular novella, a crime against a little girl. Female child, little female child, that is very, very important to note, and she is very young, eight or ten years old at the most, and there is no pity on the part of the man. He just, you know, calmly, look at the word calmly, he just calmly does this cruelty to this little child and walks off.

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There is no hesitation or no guilt, nothing whatsoever. What happens after this accident? There is a big crowd, you know, the cries of the child brings a crowd to that particular scene. Mr. Enfield is also there, there is a good number of people, and they are all terribly angry at the man who walked over that little child, who kind of harmed the little child. And they, instead of getting the police to arrest him, they blackmail the man who harmed the girl into paying the girl about 100 pounds, so they demand 100 pounds from the man who harmed the child.

And initially, the man refuses, the man who committed this crime you know, is not very obliging, but then when the crowd presses him to offer money, he goes into that particular door. He opens the door, he has a key, he opens the door, he goes into the cellar and comes back with a cheque. And on the cheque is the signature of a very respectable man of town, and Mr. Enfield “took the liberty of pointing out to my gentleman”, it is very ironically used here.

He is of course not a gentleman because he has harmed a child, “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.” So he says that look, this cheque does not belong to you because we have the signature for another man on it, and Mr. Enfield thinks that it is forged or it could have been got only with some kind of blackmail.

So what they do is a set of people wait until it is morning and they accompany this man, this gentleman who injured this girl, they go into a bank, and then lo and behold the cheque is not forged, the cheque is genuine, and they are able to draw money for that cheque.

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## Blackmail

- 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. Black-mail, I suppose, an honest man paying through the nose for some of the capers of his youth.

*two wildly differing characters*  
a) "Gentleman" who injures a girl  
b) Gentleman who is very respectable  
charitable



So the assumption is that the cheque has been, you know, received by this man, this evil gentleman, purely out of blackmail. So that is the assumption Mr. Enfield comes to. "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."

So again we have two wildly differing characters here: a, we have the man who committed the crime, the gentleman who injures an innocent girl, and we have a man who is very respectable, the name of the man on the cheque is the figure who is referred to here, who is very respectable. And look at the way it is put here, he is in the very pink of the proprieties, he is the perfect gentleman, very, very you know, well respected, and he is full of proprieties.

He follows the etiquette, the sophisticated etiquette and he is celebrated too, well-known. And he is a man who also does good, which means he is very charitable, perhaps he is involved in a lot of charities. So how does this man offer his chequebook to this particular gentleman, a horrible gentleman who does not hesitate to injure an innocent girl. So he says that blackmail I think, an honest man, this honest man is paying through the nose for some of the capers of his youth. So he must have committed a lot of mistakes in his youth, and this has been found out by this particular man, and therefore he is paying him money to keep quiet.

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## Mr Hyde

- There is something wrong with his appearance, something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary-looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory; for I declare I can see him this moment.

hateful face

mystery about his physique

contrary manner of description why?

26

Now, who is this gentleman who has committed this crime against a little girl? He is called Mr. Hyde. “There is something wrong with his appearance” says Mr. Enfield, “Something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere, he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I could not specify the point. He is an extraordinary looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No sir, I can make no hand of it; I cannot describe him. And it is not want of memory, for I declare I can see him this moment.”

This is a fantastic description of Mr. Hyde. It is a complex description as well, and we will look at how he looks like. He says there is something wrong with his appearance, what could be wrong? We do not know specifically. But if you look back at the earlier excerpt, he was stumping along, this is Mr. Hyde, he is stumping along. Why is he stumping; is he physically challenged? Does he walk with a stick? We do not know. But is it a heavy tread, why is it a heavy tread, is he overweight, we do not know. There is something physically odd about him and Mr. Enfield says that it he is displeasing, it is not good to look at him.

And when you look at his face, you feel utterly revolted, his face is detestable, you will hate his face, it is a hateful face, and he says that I never saw a man I so disliked and I do not know why I dislike him, I only know that I hate his face and I cannot put a finger on as to why I dislike it. And he lays it out, there is a strong feeling of deformity, but we cannot kind of describe this deformity about Hyde, Mr. Enfield is not able to describe that deformity.

And he says I could not specify the point. So it is a kind of mystery about his physique. And he is extraordinary looking as well, that is a very striking face, but there is nothing out of the way either. Look at the contrary way in which Mr. Hyde is described, and he kind of openly states that I cannot describe him. The big question is why cannot he describe him, and he says that it is not because I forgot about his face, I remember his face very well, in fact I can see his face in my mind at this moment, but I cannot describe him.

And the big question is why. So there is a lot of suggestions, you know, about physical deformity some kind of, you know, otherliness about his face, but it is not plainly stated in the

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