

The appearance of Mr Hyde

Read through the following from **Chapter 2: 'Search for Mr Hyde'**

The steps drew swiftly nearer, and swelled out suddenly louder as they turned the end of the street. The lawyer, looking forth from the entry, could soon see what manner of man he had to deal with. He was small and very plainly dressed, and the look of him, even at that distance, went somehow strongly against the watcher's inclination. But he made straight for the door, crossing the roadway to save time; and as he came, he drew a key from his pocket like one approaching home. Mr. Utterson stepped out and touched him on the shoulder as he passed. "Mr. Hyde, I think?"

Mr. Hyde shrank back with a hissing intake of the breath. But his fear was momentary; and though he did not look the lawyer in the face, he answered coolly enough. "That is my name. What do you want?"

"I see you are going in," returned the lawyer. "I am an old friend of Dr. Jekyll's--Mr. Utterson of Gaunt Street--you must have heard my name; and meeting you so conveniently, I thought you might admit me." "You will not find Dr. Jekyll; he is from home," replied Mr. Hyde, blowing in the key. And then suddenly, but still without looking up, "How did you know me?" he asked.

"On your side," said Mr. Utterson, "will you do me a favour?"

"With pleasure," replied the other. "What shall it be?"

"Will you let me see your face?" asked the lawyer.

Mr. Hyde appeared to hesitate, and then, as if upon some sudden reflection, fronted about with an air of defiance; and the pair stared at each other pretty fixedly for a few seconds.

"Now I shall know you again," said Mr. Utterson. "It may be useful." "Yes," returned Mr. Hyde, "it is as well we have, met; and apropos, you should have my address." And he gave a number of a street in Soho. "Good God!" thought Mr. Utterson, "can he, too, have been thinking of the will?" But he kept his feelings to himself, and only grunted in acknowledgment of the address.

"And now," said the other, "how did you know me?" "By description," was the reply.

"Whose description?"

"We have common friends," said Mr. Utterson.

"Common friends?" echoed Mr. Hyde a little hoarsely. "Who are they?"

"Jekyll, for instance," said the lawyer.

"He never told you," cried Mr. Hyde, with a flush of anger. "I did not think you would have lied."

"Come," said Mr. Utterson, "that is not fitting language."

The other snarled aloud into a savage laugh; and the next moment, with extraordinary quickness, he had unlocked the door and disappeared into the house. The lawyer stood awhile when Mr. Hyde had left him, the picture of disquietude. Then he began slowly to mount the street, pausing every step or two and putting his hand to his brow like a man in mental perplexity. The problem he was thus debating as he walked, was one of a class that is rarely solved. Mr. Hyde was pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice; all these were points against him, but not all of these together could explain the hitherto unknown disgust, loathing, and fear with which Mr. Utterson regarded him. "There must be some thing else," said the perplexed gentleman. "There is something more, if I could find a name for it. God bless me, the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic, shall we say? or can it be the old story of Dr. Fell? or is it the mere radiance of a foul soul that thus transpires through, and transfigures, its clay continent? The last I think for, O my poor old Harry Jekyll, if ever I read Satan's signature upon a face, it is on that of your new friend."

Now read through these pieces of information:

Across the nineteenth century broad shifts can be identified in the ways that 'criminals' were perceived. At the beginning of Victoria's reign key commentators like Edwin Chadwick tended to equate the criminal offender with individuals in the lower reaches of the working class who they considered were reluctant to do an honest day's work for an honest day's wage, and who preferred idleness, drink, 'luxury' and an easy life; in their eyes the problem was a moral one. There were also concerns about 'the dangerous classes' who were thought to lurk in the slums waiting for the opportunity for disorder and plunder.

By the middle of the century the term 'criminal classes' was more in vogue, and was used to suggest an incorrigible social group - a class - stuck at the bottom of society. Intrepid explorers of the slums and the 'rookeries' of the poor, like Henry Mayhew, wrote of this 'class' as if its members belonged to some distinctive, exotic tribe of Africa or the Americas.

Towards the end of the century, developments in psychiatry and the popularity of Social Darwinism had led, in turn, to the criminal being identified as an individual suffering from some form of behavioural abnormality that had been either inherited or nurtured by dissolute and feckless parents. All such perceptions informed the way that criminals were treated by the criminal justice system.

Information available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorian_crime_03.shtml

Victorians also thought they could tell a criminal by their appearance and features that were supposed to 'give away' a criminal included:

A low forehead
Bumps on head
Heavy dark eyebrows
Boils
A dirty face
Warts
Pointed chin

(Source: *The Vile Victorians* by Terry Deary, published by Scholastic Hippo, 15 April 1994)

1. In pairs go back through the extract which Mr Utterson meets Mr Hyde and highlight or underline any words or phrases which you think make Hyde seem sinister or suspicious.
2. Bearing in mind the information you have read above, consider why Stevenson might have depicted Hyde as he does.
3. Now read through the description of Dr Jekyll on the next page, taken from chapter 3, and pick out words and phrases which describe his appearance.
4. Look through the words and phrases you have found for both men and compare and contrast the way that Stevenson has written about them. You might want to do this in a table or on a separate piece of paper.
5. Discuss the overall impressions you gain of both men from Stevenson's writing. Be prepared to share your ideas with the class.

From: Chapter 3 – Dr Jekyll was quite at ease

A FORTNIGHT later, by excellent good fortune, the doctor gave one of his pleasant dinners to some five or six old cronies, all intelligent, reputable men and all judges of good wine. Mr. Utterson so contrived that he remained behind after the others had departed. There was no new arrangement, but a thing that had befallen many scores of times. Where Utterson was liked, he was liked well. Hosts loved to detain the dry lawyer, when the light-hearted and the loose-tongued had already their foot on the threshold; they liked to sit a while in his unobtrusive company, practising for solitude, sobering their minds in the man's rigid silence after the expense and strain of gaiety. To this rule, Dr. Jekyll was no exception; and as he now sat on the opposite side of the fire--a large, well-made, smooth-faced man of fifty, with something of a slyish cast perhaps, but every mark of capacity and kindness--you could see by his looks that he cherished for Mr. Utterson a sincere and warm affection.

"I have been wanting to speak to you, Jekyll," began the latter.

"You know that will of yours?"

A close observer might have gathered that the topic was distasteful; but the doctor carried it off gaily. "My poor Utterson," said he, "you are unfortunate in such a client. I never saw a man so distressed as you were by my will; unless it were that wretched bound pedant, Lanyon, at what he called my scientific heresies. Oh, I know he's a good fellow--you needn't frown--an excellent fellow, and I always mean to see more of him; but a wretched bound pedant for all that; an ignorant, blatant pedant. I was never more disappointed in any man than Lanyon."

"You know I never approved of it," pursued Utterson, ruthlessly disregarding the fresh topic.

"My will? Yes, certainly, I know that," said the doctor, a little sharply. "You have told me so."

"Well, I tell you so again," continued the lawyer. "I have been learning something of young Hyde."

The large handsome face of Dr. Jekyll grew pale to the very lips, and there came a blackness about his eyes. "I do not care to hear more," said he. "This is a matter I thought we had agreed to drop."

"What I heard was abominable," said Utterson.

"It can make no change. You do not understand my position," returned the doctor, with a certain incoherency of manner. "I am painfully situated, Utterson; my position is a very strange--a very strange one. It is one of those affairs that cannot be mended by talking."

"Jekyll," said Utterson, "you know me; and I mean to be trusted. Make a clean breast of this in confidence; and I make no doubt but I can get you out of it."

"My good Utterson," said the doctor, "it is very good of you, this is downright good of you, and I cannot find words to thank you. I believe you fully; I would trust you before any man alive, ay, before myself, if I could make the choice; but indeed it isn't what you fancy; it is not so bad as that; and just to put your good heart at rest, I will tell you one thing: the moment I choose, I can be rid of Mr. Hyde. I give you my hand upon that; and I thank you again and again; and I will just add one little word, Utterson, that I'm sure you'll take in good part: this is a private matter, and I beg of you to let it sleep."