



The Carew murder case

The scene opens with a maid who, sitting at her window in the early hours of the morning, witnesses a murder take place in the street below.

Robert Louis Stevenson
*The Strange Case
of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*
(1886)

Chapter 4

Nearly a year later, in the month of October, 18 –, London was startled¹ by a crime of singular ferocity and rendered all the more notable by the high position of the victim. The details were few and startling. A maid servant living alone in a house not far from the river, had gone upstairs to bed about eleven. Although a fog rolled over the city in the small hours, the early part of the night was cloudless, and the lane², which the maid's window overlooked, was brilliantly lit by the full moon. It seems she was romantically given³, for she sat down upon her box, which stood immediately under the window, and fell into a dream of musing⁴. Never (she used to say, with streaming tears⁵, when she narrated that experience), never had she felt more at peace with all men or thought more kindly of the world. And as she so sat she became aware of an aged beautiful gentleman with white hair, drawing near along the lane; and advancing to meet him, another and very small gentleman, to whom at first she paid less attention. When they had come within speech⁶ (which was just under the maid's eyes) the older man bowed⁷ and accosted the other with a very pretty manner of politeness. It did not seem as if the subject of his address⁸ were of great importance; indeed, from his pointing⁹, it some times appeared as if he were only inquiring his way; but the moon shone on his face as he spoke, and the girl was pleased to watch it, it seemed to breathe such an innocent and old-world kindness of disposition, yet with something high too, as of a well-founded self-content¹⁰. Presently her eye wandered to the other, and she was surprised to recognise in him a certain Mr Hyde, who had once visited her master and for whom she had conceived a dislike¹¹. He had in his hand a heavy cane¹², with which he was trifling¹³; but he answered never a word, and seemed to listen with an ill-contained¹⁴ impatience. And then all of a sudden he broke out in a great flame of anger¹⁵, stamping¹⁶ with his foot, brandishing¹⁷ the cane, and carrying on¹⁸ (as the maid described it) like a madman. The old gentleman took a step back, with the air of one very much surprised and a trifle hurt¹⁹; and at that Mr Hyde broke out of all bounds²⁰ and clubbed him to the earth²¹. And next moment, with ape-like²² fury, he was trampling²³ his victim under foot and hailing down a storm of blows²⁴, under which the bones were audibly shattered²⁵ and the body jumped upon the roadway. At the horror of these sights and sounds, the maid fainted.

It was two o'clock when she came to herself and called for the police. The murderer was gone long ago; but there lay his victim in the middle of the lane, incredibly mangled²⁶. The stick with which the deed had been done, although it was of some rare and very tough and heavy wood, had broken in the middle under the stress²⁷ of this insensate cruelty; and one splintered half²⁸ had rolled in the neighbouring gutter²⁹ – the other, without doubt, had been carried away by the murderer. A purse and gold watch were found upon the victim: but no cards or papers, except a sealed and stamped³⁰ envelope, which he had been probably carrying to the post, and which bore the name and address of Mr Utterson.

This was brought to the lawyer the next morning, before he was out of bed; and he had no sooner seen it and been told the circumstances, then he shot out a solemn lip³¹. 'I shall say nothing till I have seen the body,' said he; 'this may be very serious. Have the kindness to wait while I dress.' And with the same grave countenance he hurried through his breakfast and drove to the police station, whither³² the body had been carried. As soon as he came into the cell, he nodded.

'Yes,' said he, 'I recognise him. I am sorry to say that this is Sir Danvers Carew.'

'Good God, sir,' exclaimed the officer, 'is it possible?' And the next moment his eye lighted up with professional ambition. 'This will make a deal of noise,' he said. 'And perhaps you can help us to the man.' And he briefly narrated what the maid had seen,

- 1 startled. Sconvolta.
- 2 lane. Vicolo.
- 3 she was romantically given. Che avesse un'inclinazione romantica.
- 4 musing. Fantasie.
- 5 streaming tears. Un fiume di lacrime.
- 6 within speech. Così vicini da potersi parlare.
- 7 bowed. Si inchinò.
- 8 address. Domanda.
- 9 pointing. Gesti.
- 10 well-founded self-content. Fondato appagamento.
- 11 had ... dislike. Aveva nutrito una certa avversione.
- 12 cane. Bastone.
- 13 trifling. Giocando.
- 14 ill-contained. Mal contenuta.
- 15 flame of anger. Scoppio d'ira.
- 16 stamping. Pestando.
- 17 brandishing. Brandendo.
- 18 carrying on. Scatenandosi.
- 19 a trifle hurt. Risentito.
- 20 broke ... bounds. Andò fuori di sé.
- 21 clubbed ... earth. Lo gettò a terra a bastonate.
- 22 ape-like. Scimmiesca.
- 23 trampling. Calpestando.
- 24 hailing ... blows. Sferrando una carica di colpi.
- 25 shattered. Rotte.
- 26 mangled. Straziato.
- 27 stress. Forza.
- 28 splintered half. Metà frantumata.
- 29 gutter. Canale di scolo.
- 30 sealed and stamped. Sigillata e affrancata.
- 31 shot ... lip. Se ne uscì con una dichiarazione solenne.
- 32 whither. Dove.



50 and showed the broken stick.

Mr Utterson had already quailed³³ at the name of Hyde; but when the stick was laid before him, he could doubt no longer; broken and battered as it was, he recognized it for one that he had himself presented many years before to Henry Jekyll.

‘Is this Mr Hyde a person of small stature?’ he inquired.

55 ‘Particularly small and particularly wicked-looking, is what the maid calls him,’ said the officer.

Mr Utterson reflected; and then, raising his head, ‘If you will come with me in my cab,’ he said, ‘I think I can take you to his house.’

It was by this time about nine in the morning, and the first fog of the season. A
60 great chocolate-coloured pall³⁴ lowered over heaven, but the wind was continually charging and routing these embattled vapours³⁵; so that as the cab crawled from street to street, Mr Utterson beheld a marvellous number of degrees and hues of twilight; for here it would be dark like the back-end of evening; and there would be a glow of a rich, lurid brown, like the light of some strange conflagration; and here, for a moment,
65 the fog would be quite broken up, and a haggard shaft³⁶ of daylight would glance in between the swirling wreaths³⁷. The dismal quarter of Soho seen under these changing glimpses³⁸, with its muddy ways, and slatternly passengers³⁹, and its lamps, which had never been extinguished or had been kindled afresh to combat this mournful reinvasion of darkness, seemed, in the lawyer’s eyes, like a district of some city in a
70 nightmare. The thoughts of his mind, besides, were of the gloomiest dye; and when he glanced at the companion of his drive, he was conscious of some touch of that terror of the law and the law’s officers, which may at times assail the most honest.

As the cab drew up before the address indicated, the fog lifted a little and showed him a dingy⁴⁰ street, a gin palace, a low French eating house, a shop for the retail of penny
75 numbers and two-penny salads, many ragged children huddled⁴¹ in the doorways, and many women of many different nationalities passing out, key in hand, to have a morning glass; and the next moment the fog settled down again upon that part, as brown as umber⁴², and cut him off from his blackguardly⁴³ surroundings. This was the home of Henry Jekyll’s favourite; of a man who was heir to a quarter of a million sterling.

80 [...]

In the whole extent of the house, which but for the old woman⁴⁴ remained otherwise empty, Mr Hyde had only used a couple of rooms; but these were furnished with luxury and good taste. A closet was filled with wine; the plate was of silver, the napery elegant; a good picture hung upon the walls, a gift (as Utterson supposed) from Henry Jekyll,
85 who was much of a connoisseur⁴⁵; and the carpets were of many plies and agreeable in colour. At this moment, however, the rooms bore every mark of having been recently and hurriedly ransacked⁴⁶; clothes lay about the floor, with their pockets inside out; lock-fast drawers stood open; and on the hearth there lay a pile of grey ashes, as though many papers had been burned. From these embers⁴⁷ the inspector disinterred the butt end⁴⁸ of a green cheque book, which had resisted the action of the fire; the other half of the stick was found behind the door; and as this clinched⁴⁹ his suspicions, the officer declared himself delighted. A visit to the bank, where several thousand pounds were found to be lying to the murderer’s credit, completed his gratification.

95 ‘You may depend upon it⁵⁰, sir,’ he told Mr Utterson: ‘I have him in my hand. He must have lost his head, or he never would have left the stick or, above all, burned the cheque book. Why, money’s life to the man. We have nothing to do but wait for him at the bank, and get out the handbills⁵¹.’

This last, however, was not so easy of accomplishment; for Mr Hyde had numbered few familiars – even the master of the servant maid had only seen him twice; his family
100 could nowhere be traced; he had never been photographed; and the few who could describe him differed widely, as common observers will. Only on one point were they agreed; and that was the haunting sense of unexpressed deformity with which the fugitive impressed his beholders.

33 quailed. Impaurito.

34 pall. Coltre.

35 was ... vapours. Caricava e sbaragliava continuamente questi sudici vapori.

36 haggard shaft. Debole raggio.

37 swirling wreaths. Spire vorticose.

38 glimpses. Scorci.

39 slatternly passengers. Straccioni.

40 dingy. Squallida.

41 ragged ... huddled. Bambini cenciosi rintanati.

42 umber. Color terra d'ombra.

43 blackguardly. Pieni di furfanti.

44 but for the old woman. Se non per la vecchia (custode della casa di Mr Hyde).

45 connoisseur. Intenditore.

46 ransacked. Rovistate.

47 embers. Braci.

48 butt end. Matrice.

49 clinched. Confermava.

50 You ... it. Può stare tranquillo.

51 handbills. Mandato d'arresto.

**LITERARY COMPETENCE****> VOCABULARY****1 READ the text and match the highlighted words with their Italian translation.**

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 inquietante | 7 tovaglia di lino |
| 2 bagliore | 8 annui |
| 3 immediatamente | 9 malconcio |
| 4 armadio | 10 svenne |
| 5 espressione del viso | 11 tinta |
| 6 chiedendo la strada | 12 avanzava lentamente |

> COMPETENCE: READING AND UNDERSTANDING A TEXT**2 READ the first paragraph again and find out**

- who witnessed that murder;
- where and when the deed was committed;
- what the witness saw;
- what happened to her.

3 READ lines 31-58 again and answer the following questions.

- 1 What do the police find on the dead body?
- 2 Who identifies the corpse?
- 3 What does Mr Utterson decide to do?

4 READ the text up to the end again and decide whether the following statements are true or false. Correct the false ones.

- 1 Hyde's house is located in a rich, bright part of town.
- 2 Utterson reflects on how odd it is that a man who lives in such squalor is the heir to Henry Jekyll's fortune.
- 3 Hyde's landlady lets Mr Utterson and the inspector in.
- 4 The suspected murderer is at home.
- 5 The police find Hyde's rooms ransacked.
- 6 The murder weapon and the burned remains of Hyde's chequebook are found.
- 7 After a visit to the bank, the police inspector learns that Hyde does not have an account there.
- 8 Those who have seen him can give an accurate description of his physical features.
- 9 Everyone agrees only on the evil aspect of Hyde's appearance.

> COMPETENCE: ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING A TEXT**5 IDENTIFY the narrator. Whose point of view is adopted?****6 UNDERLINE all the expressions linked to Mr Hyde.**

- 1 How does he contrast with his victim?
- 2 What does he embody?
- 3 What feelings does this creature provoke in the others? Tick as appropriate.

<input type="checkbox"/> Anguish.	<input type="checkbox"/> Repulsion.
<input type="checkbox"/> Decay.	<input type="checkbox"/> Imminent danger.
<input type="checkbox"/> Fright.	<input type="checkbox"/> Evil.
<input type="checkbox"/> Curiosity.	



7 HIGHLIGHT the relationship between Hyde and the rooms where he lives.

8 STATE what Mr Utterson proves in this extract.

9 POINT out all the elements linked to a detective story.

10 IDENTIFY the dominant theme of the extract.

11 WRITE down at least two adjectives to define the language used in this passage.

➤ COMPETENCE: ESTABLISHING LINKS WITH THE CONTEXT OF THE AGE

12 REFER to 5.2 and 5.3; then, bearing in mind Hyde's features, define Stevenson's attitude to science and progress.

➤ COMPETENCE: LINKING LITERATURE TO PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

13 DISCUSS in pairs your personal opinions on the issue concerning the theme of the double. Then share your ideas with the rest of the class.