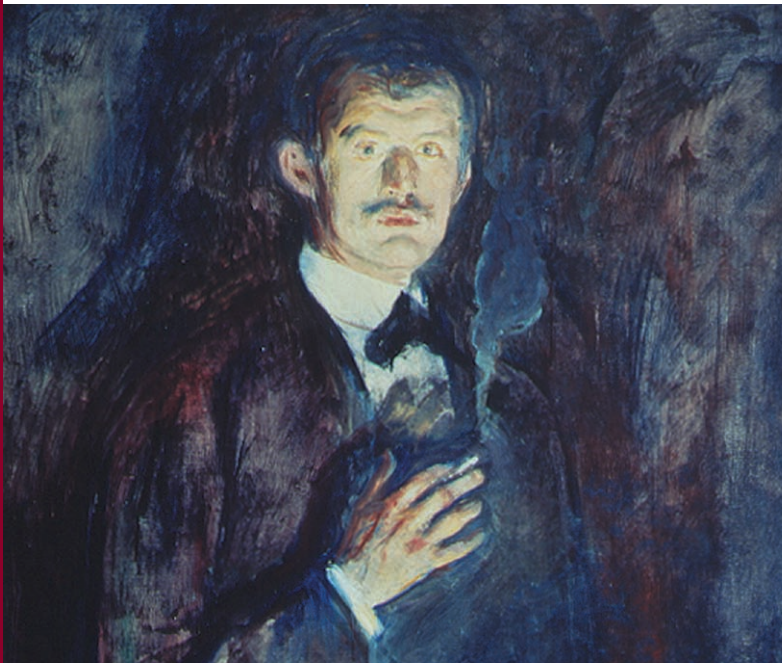


NAXOS
AudioBooks

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

Read by **John Sessions**

CLASSIC
FICTION



NA209012D

1	Story of the Door	16:27
2	The Search for Mr Hyde	7:56
3	Mr Utterson meets Mr Hyde	10:39
4	Dr Jekyll was quite at ease	4:10
5	The Carew Murder Case	9:52
6	Incident of the Letter	10:40
7	Remarkable Incident of Dr Lanyon	8:24
8	The Last Night	11:14
9	Poole reveals more	16:59
10	Dr Lanyon's Narrative	5:22
11	Dr Lanyon continues his story	10:30
12	Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case	8:57
13	The appearance of Mr Hyde	5:38
14	An unexpected transformation	8:30
15	The devil came out roaring	6:15
16	'There comes an end to all things'	15:07

Total time: 2:36:54

Robert Louis Stevenson

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in 1850 into a family of civil engineers. From an early age he fought with authority. As a young man he was expected to join the family business, but after many bitter battles, he was finally allowed to study law at Edinburgh University. There, he reacted strongly against the Calvinist tone of the city's middle classes, which he found restricting and hypocritical; this view helped to fuel even further the conflict with his family.

Stevenson suffered from ill health for most of his life, which forced him to spend long periods abroad and he finally settled in Samoa, where he died on December 3rd 1894.

The main details of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* came to Stevenson in a dream when he was living in Bournemouth. It took him just three days to complete the story's first draft. His wife, Fanny, complained that it seemed too much like a horror story and that something more profound might be expressed through such a strong idea. So the first draft went into the fire and Stevenson tried once more to

produce what was to become one of the most daring and enduring accounts of the human psyche.

Longmans, the original publisher of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, decided not to bring the book out in serial form as was the norm, but rather to issue it in two different editions, one at the price and in the format of a 'shilling shocker' and the other in a more traditional cloth binding. From the beginning, the dual nature of the novel itself, part sensational horror story, part complex literary masterpiece, was recognised and capitalised on. The work became a huge international best-seller and the issues raised in it became the subject of countless sermons and articles. The book was particularly successful in America where, by the turn of the century, it had sold over half a million copies.

(Interestingly, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was published in 1886: two years before the serial killings of Jack the Ripper. Jack the Ripper's apparent surgical skill in dissecting his victims' bodies suggests that he, too, was a doctor: a traditionally decent and reliable member of

society. The fictional Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde provided a way of comprehending these murders at a time when there were no real comparable precedents.)

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is set in the respectable quarters of late Victorian London. The main characters are all successful, professional, middle-aged men and into this solid context of bourgeois life and values, Stevenson introduces the concept of pure evil. The story, however, does not stop with the idea of one man's divided soul; it seems in fact to suggest a much wider circle of potential collapse. All the characters are suffering from a kind of airless imprisonment. They are all bachelors, all struggling to maintain respectability, but at the same time indulging themselves with copious quantities of fine wine. The constantly encroaching fog underlines the

pervading atmosphere of gloom which engulfs all the characters, not just Jekyll. No matter how hard these men try to preserve their virtue and self-control, they are in fact teetering on the brink of chaos, personified of course by Mr Hyde.

Given Stevenson's belief in passion and spontaneity and the stultifying Victorian context in which he lived, it is clear that this story is a warning of the dangers of repression: that it can drive the psyche into a moral vacuum and extremes of perversion and violence. This of course is a theme which has underpinned psychoanalytical thinking throughout the twentieth century, and may indeed be one of the many reasons for the enduring popularity of the story.

Notes by Heather Godwin

**The music on this recording is taken from
the MARCO POLO catalogue**

HOLBROOKE CHAMBER MUSIC

8.223736

Endre Hegedüs, piano; New Haydn Quartet

Music programmed by Nicolas Soames

Cover picture: Self-portrait with cigarette by Edvard Munch (1863-1944).
Courtesy of AKG Photo, London.

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

Read by **John Sessions**

Both a cracking tale of horror and a deeply audacious account of the human psyche, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* has continued to thrill and fascinate since it was first published in 1886. Dr Jekyll wants to rid his soul of evil, and in doing so creates the monstrous alter ego Mr Hyde. As time goes on he slides increasingly into this other side of his personality until it finally takes over, with disastrous consequences.

As the determined Mr Utterson races to uncover the secret of the good Dr Jekyll's sinister new companion, the cosy Victorian world of wealth and comfort is discovered to be under siege.



John Sessions, the highly versatile actor and comedian, is well known for his comic work in films such as *My Night with Reg*, *In the Bleak Midwinter* and *The Pope Must Die*, and the TV shows *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, *The New Statesman* and *Spitting Image*. He has also read *Kidnapped* for Naxos AudioBooks.

CD ISBN:

978-962-634-090-5

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Post-production: Simon Weir, The Classical Recording
Company
Engineer (speech): Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Cassettes

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Total time
2:36:54