

## STORY OF THE DOOR

**M**r. Utterson the lawyer was a man whose face was never lighted by a smile; cold, of few words, embarrassed in conversation; lean, long, dusty, dreary, and yet somehow lovable. At friendly meetings, something eminently human beaconed from his eye; something indeed which never found its way into his talk, but which spoke more often and loudly in the acts of his life. He was austere with himself, but he had a tolerance for others—sometimes wondering, almost with envy, at the high spirits involved in their misdeeds—and in any extremity ready to help rather than to reprove. Because of these characteristics, he was

**lean:** thin

**dreary:** gloomy; not cheerful

**eminently:** very; completely; greatly

**beaconed:** shone out

**austere:** strict; self-disciplined

**tolerance:** open and accepting attitude, especially toward beliefs or practices different from one's own

**envy:** the feeling of wanting what someone else has, or of wanting to be like someone else

**misdeeds:** actions that break the law or go against moral standards

**extremity:** extreme circumstance; occasion of great difficulty [slang: a scrape, a jam]

**reprove:** scold; criticize; express disapproval



MR. UTTERSON THE LAWYER WAS LEAN, LONG, DUSTY, DREARY,  
AND YET SOMEHOW LOVABLE.

often the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of downgoing men.

Mr. Utterson did not openly show his emotions. He was good-natured to all and, like many a modest man, accepted his friends ready-made as opportunity allowed. His friends were his relatives or those whom he had known the longest; his affections, like ivy, were the growth of time—they did not suggest anything special in the object.

Such was the bond that united him to Mr. Richard Enfield, his distant kinsman, the well-known man about town. It was a nut to crack for many, what these two could see in each other, or

### Who Is Mr. Utterson?

How does Robert Louis Stevenson describe Mr. Utterson? What qualities might make people like and trust him? How does he relate to other people?

**reputable:** widely respected and trusted

**acquaintance:** someone you know but who is not a close friend

**downgoing men:** men who are experiencing difficulties (such as punishment by the law) as a result of their poor choices, bad acts, or bad luck

**good-natured:** pleasant and kind

**modest:** not pretentious or boastful

**opportunity:** favorable times or conditions

**bond:** something that binds or holds together

**kinsman:** relative

**man about town:** a socially active man who might often be seen at parties, restaurants, theaters, etc.

**a nut to crack:** a difficult puzzle to figure out

what subject they could find in common. It was reported by those who encountered them in their Sunday walks, that they said nothing and looked very dull. Still, the two men greatly valued these excursions, and counted them the chief delight of each week.

It chanced on one of these rambles that their way led them down a side street in a busy quarter of London. The street was small and quiet, but the shops were busy on the weekdays. The shop fronts stood along that thoroughfare with an air of invitation, like rows of smiling saleswomen. Even on Sunday, when it lay comparatively empty, the street shone out in contrast to its dingy neighborhood, like a fire in a forest; and with its freshly painted shutters, well-polished brasses, and general cleanliness, instantly caught and pleased the eye.

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**in common:** shared (between them)

**excursions:** short trips

**rambles:** walks taken for pleasure, without a definite destination

**thoroughfare:** a street that, on either end, opens onto another street

**comparatively:** considered in comparison to (in this case, to the busy weekdays)

**dingy:** dirty; run-down; shabby

**brasses:** shiny hardware on houses and storefronts [Brass is made from two metals, copper and zinc.]

Two doors from one corner, a certain sinister block of building thrust forward on the street. It was two stories high; showed no window, nothing but a door on the lower story and a discolored wall on the upper; and bore in every feature the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence. The door, which had neither bell nor knocker, was blistered and stained. Tramps slouched by the door and struck matches on the panels; children played upon the steps; a schoolboy had tried his knife on the moldings; and for many years, no one had appeared to drive away these random visitors or to repair their ravages.

Mr. Enfield and the lawyer were on the other side of the street. When they came near the door, Mr. Enfield lifted up his cane and pointed.

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**sinister:** threatening; menacing

**prolonged:** extended in time

**sordid:** unclean (morally or physically); filthy; nasty

**negligence:** complete lack of care

**blistered:** marked by cracking and peeling areas

**tramps:** poor homeless people

**slouched:** stood in a bent and lazy-looking way

**moldings:** decorated strips of wood around the edges of the door frame

**random:** without any plan or pattern

**ravages:** damaging and destructive actions

“Did you ever notice that door?” he asked. “It is connected in my mind,” he added, “with a very odd story.”

“Indeed?” said Mr. Utterson, with a slight change of voice, “and what was that?”

“Well,” returned Mr. Enfield, “I was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o’clock of a black winter morning, and my way lay through a part of town where there was nothing to be seen but lamps. Street after street and all the folks asleep—street after street, all lighted up and all empty—till at last I got into that state of mind when a man listens and listens and begins to long for the sight of a policeman.

“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 at the corner; and then came the horrible part of the thing; for the man trampled calmly over the

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**long:** have a strong desire

**stumping:** walking heavily

**trampled:** stepped heavily and roughly in a way to crush or injure

child's body and left her screaming on the ground.

“It was hellish to see. It wasn't like a man; it was like some juggernaut. I took to my heels, collared my gentleman, and brought him back to where there was already quite a group about the screaming child. He was perfectly cool and made no resistance, but he gave me one look so ugly that it brought out the sweat on me. The people who had turned out were the girl's own family; and pretty soon, the doctor, for whom she had earlier been sent, appeared. Well, the child was not much the worse, more frightened, according to the sawbones; and there you might have supposed would be an end to it.

“But there was one curious matter. I had taken a loathing to my gentleman at first sight. So had the child's family, which was only natural.

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**juggernaut:** an overpowering force or object that smashes or pushes aside everything in its path

**took to my heels:** ran quickly

**collared:** grabbed by the collar or neck

**cool:** calm; showing no excitement or emotion

**not much the worse:** not seriously hurt

**sawbones:** slang term for a doctor or surgeon

**loathing:** strong feeling of hatred and disgust



THE MAN TRAMPLED CALMLY OVER THE CHILD'S BODY  
AND LEFT HER SCREAMING ON THE GROUND.

But the doctor's case was what struck me. He was the usual cut and dried medical type, about as emotional as a brick. Well, sir, he was like the rest of us; every time he looked at my prisoner, I saw that sawbones turn sick and white with the desire to kill him.

“I knew what was in his mind, just as he knew what was in mine; and killing being out of the question, we did the next best. We told the man we would make such a scandal out of this that his name would stink from one end of London to the other. And all the time, we were keeping the women off him as best we could, for they were as wild as harpies. I never saw a circle of such hateful faces; and there was the man in the middle, with a kind of sneering coolness—frightened too, I could see that—but carrying it off, sir, really like Satan.

“‘Any gentleman would wish to avoid a scene,’ says he. ‘Name your figure.’ Well, we got him up

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**cut and dried:** an expression meaning, ordinary, commonplace, nothing special about

**scandal:** public disgrace and shaming for immoral actions

**harpies:** from mythology, vicious creatures who were part woman and part bird

**sneering:** making a facial expression that shows dislike and disrespect

**scene:** a loud public incident that draws attention

**‘Name your figure.’:** How much money do you want?

to a hundred pounds for the child's family. The next thing was to get the money; and where do you think he took us but to that place with the door? —whipped out a key, went in, and soon came back with ten pounds in gold and a check for the balance from Coutts, signed with a name that I can't mention, though it's one of the points of my story, but it was a very well known name at least.

“I pointed out to my gentleman that a man does not, in real life, walk into a cellar door at four in the morning and come out with another man's check for close upon a hundred pounds. But he was quite easy and sneering. ‘Set your mind at rest,’ says he, ‘I will stay with you till the banks open and cash the check myself.’ So we all set off, the doctor, and the child's father, and our friend and myself, and passed the rest of the night at my place, and later, we all went to the bank. I handed over the check myself, and said I had every reason to believe it was a fake. Not a bit of it. The check was genuine.”

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**pounds:** also called pounds sterling, a unit of money used in the United Kingdom (which includes England)

**Coutts:** an exclusive British bank for very rich people

“Tut-tut!” said Mr. Utterson.

“I see you feel as I do,” said Mr. Enfield. “Yes, it’s a bad story. For my man was a fellow that nobody could stand, a really horrible man; and the person that wrote the check is the very peak of propriety, well-known too, and one of those 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, Black Mail House is what I call the place with the door. Though even that, you know, is far from explaining all,” he added.

Mr. Utterson asked rather suddenly: “And you don’t know if the drawer of the check lives there?”

“So you might think,” returned Mr. Enfield. “But I happen to have noticed his address on the check; he lives in some square or other.”

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**propriety:** good manners; accepted standards of polite behavior

**blackmail:** to force a person to pay money by threatening to reveal the person’s secrets or bad actions

**paying through the nose:** paying way too much; paying much more than something is worth

**capers:** pranks; mischievous acts

**drawer:** the person whose name is on the check, from whose account the money was drawn

**square:** an open area in a city formed where two or more streets meet

“And you never asked about the—place with the door?” said Mr. Utterson.

“No, sir,” was the reply. “I feel very strongly about putting questions; it’s too much of the style of the day of judgment. You start a question, and it’s like starting a stone. You sit quietly on the top of a hill; and away the stone goes, starting others; and presently some pleasant old fellow is knocked on the head in his own back garden. No sir, I make it a rule of mine: the stranger it looks, the less I ask.”

“A very good rule, too,” said the lawyer.

“But I have studied the place for myself,” continued Mr. Enfield. “It seems scarcely a house. There is no other door, and nobody goes in or out of that one but, once in a great while, the gentleman of my adventure. And then there is a chimney which is generally smoking, so somebody must live there. And yet it’s not so sure, for the buildings are so packed together about the court, that it’s hard to say where one ends and another begins.”

**day of judgment:** what will happen, some people believe, at the end of the world when the dead will rise and God will judge each individual on what they did in their earthly lives

**scarcely:** barely; hardly

**court:** a courtyard; an open space surrounded by walls or buildings

The pair walked on again for a while in silence; and then, "Enfield," said Mr. Utterson, "that's a good rule of yours."

"Yes, I think it is," returned Enfield.

"But," continued the lawyer, "there's one point I want to ask. I want to ask the name of that man who walked over the child."

"Well," said Mr. Enfield, "I can't see what harm it would do. It was a man of the name of Hyde."

"Hm," said Mr. Utterson. "What sort of a man is he to see?"

"He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I hardly know why. He gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify in what way. He's an extraordinary looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory; for I declare I can see him this moment."

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**detestable:** causing extreme dislike; hateful; disgusting

**want:** lack

Mr. Utterson again walked some way in silence and obviously under a weight of careful thought. “You are sure he used a key?” he inquired at last.

“My dear sir...” began Enfield, surprised.

“Yes, I know,” said Utterson; “I know it must seem strange. The fact is, if I do not ask you the name of the man whose name was on the check, it is because I know it already. Richard, if you have been inexact in any point you had better correct it.”

“I have been exact in every detail,” returned the other with a touch of irritation. “The fellow had a key; and, he has it still. I saw him use it not a week ago.”

Mr. Utterson sighed deeply but said nothing. The young man resumed. “Here is another lesson to say nothing,” said he. “Let us make a bargain never to refer to this again.”

“With all my heart,” said the lawyer. “I shake hands on that, Richard.”

### **Our First Look at Mr. Hyde**

We get our first look at Mr. Hyde through the story told by Mr. Enfield. How does Enfield describe Hyde? What effect does Hyde have on other people?

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**inquired:** asked