



CHAPTER 1

Story of the Door

While out walking, London lawyer Gabriel Utterson and his cousin Richard Enfield pass a house occupied by a strange, evil man named Edward Hyde.

Gabriel J. Utterson, a London lawyer, had a rugged face that never was lit by a smile. An unemotional bachelor, he was reserved and brief in his speech. He was tall, slender, dusty, and dreary, yet somehow lovable. At a gathering of friends, and when the wine suited his taste, something highly human shone from his eyes—something that never found its way into his talk but showed in his after-dinner face and, more often and clearly, in his actions. He was austere with himself. When he was alone, he drank gin rather than wine, which he preferred. Although he enjoyed theater, he hadn't gone to a theater for twenty years.

Nevertheless, Utterson's attitude toward others was tolerant, even approving. Sometimes he marveled, almost with envy, at the high spirits with which others indulged themselves. When others were in trouble, he was inclined to help rather than scold. "I let others go to the devil in their own way," he would say. Because he was so tolerant of others' faults, he frequently was the last respectable acquaintance of men of deteriorating character and condition, and the last good influence on them. As long as such men came to his home, his manner toward them remained the same. No doubt, this unchanged manner was easy for Utterson because he rarely showed emotion.

Utterson's friendship was largely a product of his good nature. Usually, modest people accept as friends those with whom they simply become acquainted, and that was Utterson's way. His friends were his relatives and other people whom he had known the longest. Like ivy, his affections grew over time. They didn't indicate any merit in those he befriended.

Utterson had a bond with his distant cousin Richard Enfield, a younger, well-known man about town. Many people couldn't understand what Utterson and Enfield saw in each other or what interests they shared. People who saw Utterson and Enfield on their Sunday walks

together reported that the two said nothing, looked bored, and would greet the appearance of a friend with obvious relief. Nevertheless, Utterson and Enfield greatly valued their walks together; to enjoy those walks uninterrupted, they would forego opportunities for business or pleasure.

On one of their walks, Utterson and Enfield happened to stroll down a small side street that was busy with trade on weekdays but quiet on Sundays. The street's residents were successful and ambitious. The shops, their goods displayed in the front window, had an inviting air, like rows of smiling salespeople. Even on Sundays, when it was largely empty of pedestrians, the street shone out in contrast to its dingy neighborhood. With its freshly painted shutters, well-polished brass fixtures, and general cleanliness and gaiety, the street caught and pleased a pedestrian's eyes.

Two doors from one corner was a sinister, block-shaped building two stories high. Windowless, it showed nothing but a door on the lower story and a blank, discolored wall on the upper. In every feature, it bore the marks of prolonged neglect. The door, which had neither a bell nor a knocker, was blistered and stained. Tramps slouched in the recess and struck matches on the panels; children kept shop on the

steps; someone had carelessly jabbed at the moldings with a knife. For a generation, no one had appeared to drive away these random visitors or repair their vandalism.

When Utterson and Enfield were across from the house's door, Enfield lifted his cane and pointed. "Did you ever notice that door?"

"Yes," Utterson said.

"It calls to mind a very odd story."

"Indeed?" Utterson said, with a slight change of tone. "What story?"

"Well, it was this way," Enfield said. "About three o'clock one black winter morning, I was returning home from distant travels. My way took me through a part of town where nothing but street lamps were visible. Street after empty street, all the residents were asleep. I started to feel tense, started listening intently and longing for the sight of a police officer. Suddenly I saw two people. One was a small man hurrying along. The other was a girl about nine years old who was running down a cross street. The two ran into each other at the corner.

"Then came the horrible part. The man calmly trampled the child and left her screaming on the ground. He seemed inhuman, like some force that crushes everything in its path. I gave a few shouts, ran after him, collared him, and brought him back to where a group of people

had gathered around the screaming child. The man was perfectly cool and didn't resist. But he gave me such a hateful look that it made me sweat.

"The people who had gathered were the girl's family. Pretty soon, the doctor who had been summoned arrived at the scene. He said that the child was fine except badly frightened.

"You might think that the incident would have ended there. However, I had taken an instant, intense dislike to the man who had trampled the girl. So had her family, as was natural. But it was the doctor's reaction that especially struck me. He was a typical physician, of nondescript age and complexion, with a strong Scottish accent and unemotional manner. Yet, every time he looked at my prisoner, his face whitened and showed a desire to kill him. I felt the same desire.

"Because killing was out of the question, the doctor and I told the man that we would make such a scandal out of this that his name would stink from one end of London to the other. If he had any respectable friends or positive reputation, we would see that he lost them.

"As we spoke in red-hot anger, we did our best to keep the women off him. They were wild with anger and circled the man.

"Although he was visibly frightened, he dis-

played a devilish sneering coolness. 'If you choose to make much of this accident,' he said, 'I'm helpless to stop you. Like any other gentleman, I wish to avoid a scene. Name your price.'

"We got him to agree to give the child's family a hundred pounds. He led us to the very door you see across the street. He whipped out a key, went in, and quickly returned with ten pounds in gold and a check for ninety more. The check bore the signature of a highly respected, well-known man.

"'I doubt that the check is genuine,' I said to the man. 'A man doesn't walk into a house at 4 a.m. and come out with another man's check for nearly a hundred pounds.'

"But he sneered, 'Set your mind at rest. I'll stay with you until the bank opens and cash the check myself.'

"The man, the doctor, the child's father, and I spent the rest of the night at my house. The next morning, after we had eaten breakfast, we all went to the bank. I handed over the check and said that I believed it to be a forgery. To my great surprise, the check was genuine."

"Oh my!" Utterson said.

"I see you feel as I do," Enfield said. "Yes, it's a bad story. The man was someone whom respected people should shun. He really was damnable. Yet, the person who had signed the

check was regarded as honorable and kind. I assume he wrote the check because he was being blackmailed. He must have been an honest man who was paying heavily for some misdeed committed when he was young.”

“Do you know if the provider of the check lives here?” Utterson asked.

“I don’t know,” Enfield said.

“You never asked?”

“No. I didn’t want to intrude or damage his reputation. But I’ve looked around the place. There isn’t any other door. No one goes in or out except, on rare occasion, the man who trampled the child. The first floor has no windows. Three second-floor windows face the courtyard. They’re clean but always shut. The chimney usually is smoking, so someone must live there.”

For a time, the pair walked on in silence. Then Utterson said, “What’s the name of the man who trampled the child?”

“Well, I guess it wouldn’t do any harm to say. His name is Edward Hyde.”

“What does he look like?”

“He isn’t easy to describe. There’s something wrong with his appearance, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, yet I scarcely know why. He must be deformed, although I can’t say in what way.”

After walking some way in silence, Utterson asked, "You're sure that he used a key? I ask because . . . well, I know the name of the man who must have signed the check."

"You should have told me that you knew," Enfield said, annoyed. "Hyde had a key. What's more, he still has it. I saw him use it less than a week ago."