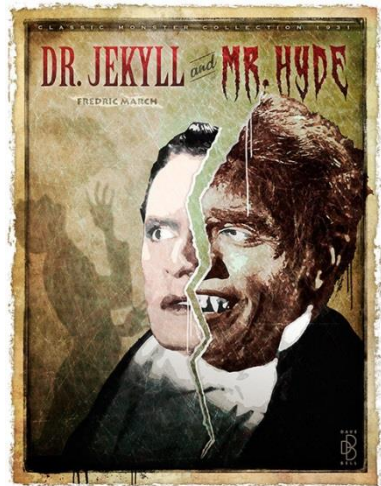


# Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

*Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, published in 1886 by Robert Louis Stevenson, is about a man who transforms between two personae: Dr. Henry Jekyll and Mr. Edward Hyde. It is an example of the Gothic genre. Gothic stories typically blend elements from horror stories with elements from Romantic stories. The persona-changing potions, murders, and eventual suicide in the novel are all examples of the horror elements at work in the text. The Romantic element in the novel



comes across in the theme of Science Versus Nature, since Romantic works often are seen as a rebellion against science's rationalization of nature. Gothic novels often explore the human psyche and supernatural phenomena, too.

## Book Summary

*Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* focuses on John Utterson, a lawyer, a friend of Dr. Jekyll. The novel begins with John Utterson talking with a friend of his who has just witnessed an odd situation: a man identified as Edward Hyde ran over a girl only to pay off her family later with a check from Dr. Jekyll. The situation is made even odder because Jekyll's will has recently been changed. Mr. Hyde now stands to inherit everything. John thinks that the cruel Mr. Hyde is somehow blackmailing Dr. Jekyll and questions him about Hyde, but Jekyll tells him to mind his own business.

A year later, Mr. Hyde attacks someone else: he beats a man to death with a cane. John takes them to Mr. Hyde's apartment, where they find the murder weapon, which is a gift that John himself gave to Dr. Jekyll. John questions Dr. Jekyll about Mr. Hyde again, but

Jekyll insists that Mr. Hyde has run away. He shows John a goodbye note from Mr. Hyde, the handwriting of which is suspiciously similar to Dr. Jekyll's.

For a while, things seem to improve. Mr. Hyde does not reappear, and Dr. Jekyll seems happier. But then one of John's friends dies suddenly. Before he dies, he gives John a letter only to be opened if Dr. Jekyll either dies or disappears.

Dr. Jekyll starts acting even weirder and shuts himself up inside his laboratory. Eventually his butler and John break into the laboratory to find Mr. Hyde dressed in Dr. Jekyll's clothes and dead. He has committed suicide. Next to his body is a letter.

Back home, John reads both letters now in his possession. The letter written by his friend who died explains that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are the same person and that they transform back and forth via potions. In the second letter, Dr. Jekyll explains he wanted to separate his good side and his bad side. He thought he could control it with the potions, but eventually the transformations got out of control and he would transform involuntarily without the aid of the potions.

Dr. Jekyll tried several things to stop the transformations, but nothing worked. He knew he would turn into Hyde permanently. The letter was his last conscious act as Dr. Jekyll. Since Mr. Hyde is dead, it can be assumed that, unwilling to face the consequences of his violent actions, Mr. Hyde decided to kill himself first.

Adapted from <http://education-portal.com>

# **The myth of Narcissus**

The myth of Narcissus is one of the most known Greek Myths, due to its uniqueness and moral tale; Narcissus, was the son of River God Cephissus and nymph Lyriope. He was known for his beauty and he was loved by God Apollo due to his extraordinary physique.

## **The Greek Version of the myth of Narcissus**

According to Conon, Aminias, a young man fell in love with Narcissus, who had already spurned his male suitors. Aminias was also spurned by Narcissus who gave the unfortunate young man a sword. Aminias killed himself at Narcissus' doorstep praying to the Gods to give Narcissus a lesson for all the pain he had provoked.

Narcissus was once walking by a lake or river and decided to drink some water; he saw his reflection in the water and was surprised by the beauty he saw; he became entranced by the reflection of himself. He could not obtain the object of his desire though, and he died at the banks of the river or lake from his sorrow.

According to the myth Narcissus is still admiring himself in the Underworld, looking at the waters of the Styx.

## **The Roman Version of the Myth – Ovid**

The myth presented by Ovid the poet is slightly altered. According to this myth, Narcissus' parents were worried because of the extraordinary beauty of the child and asked prophet Teiresias what to do, regarding their son's future.

Teiresias told them that the boy would grow old only if "he didn't get to know himself". When Narcissus was sixteen he was walking in the woods and Nymph Echo saw him and felt madly in love with him. She started following him and Narcissus asked "who's there", feeling someone after him.

Echo responded “who’s there” and that went on for some time until Echo decided to show herself. She tried to embrace the boy who stepped away from Echo, telling her to leave him alone. Echo was left heartbroken and spent the rest of her life in glens; until nothing but an echo sound remained of her.

Nemesis, though, the Goddess of Revenge, heard the story and decided to punish Narcissus. From this point the stories are similar; Narcissus sees himself in the pond and he is amazed by the beauty of the reflection. Once he figured out that his love could not be addressed, he killed himself.



***Narcissus and Echo* - John William Waterhouse - 1903**

The Myth of Narcissus has inspired several artists as well; the most known is Caravaggio who painted a young man admiring his reflection in the water.

The painters Turner and Dali were also inspired by the myth, while poets, such as Keats and Housman, used his example in many of their works.

# FAUST

Faust is the protagonist of a classic German legend; a highly successful scholar, but also dissatisfied with his life, and so makes a deal with the devil, exchanging his soul for unlimited knowledge and worldly pleasures. Faust's tale is the basis for many literary, artistic, cinematic, and musical works.



The meaning of the word and name has been reinterpreted through the ages. Faust, and the adjective faustian, are often used to describe an arrangement in which an ambitious person surrenders moral integrity in order to achieve power and success: the proverbial "deal with the devil".

The Faust of early books—as well as the ballads, dramas, movies and puppet-plays which grew out of them—is irrevocably damned because he prefers human to divine knowledge; "he laid the Holy Scriptures behind the door and under the bench, refused to be called doctor of Theology, but preferred to be styled doctor of Medicine".

Plays and comic puppet theatre loosely based on this legend were popular throughout Germany in the 16th century, often reducing Faust and Mephistopheles to figures of vulgar fun. The story was popularised in England by Christopher Marlowe, who gave it a classic treatment in his play, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*. In Goethe's reworking of the story 200 years later, Faust becomes a dissatisfied intellectual who yearns for "more than earthly meat and drink".

## Summary of the story

Despite his scholarly eminence, Faust is bored and disappointed. He decides to call on the Devil for further knowledge and magic powers with which to indulge all the pleasure and knowledge of the world. In response, the Devil's representative, Mephistopheles, appears. He makes a bargain with Faust: Mephistopheles will serve Faust with his magic powers for a term of years, but at the end of the term, the devil will claim Faust's soul and Faust will be eternally damned. The term usually stipulated in the early tales is 24 years.

During the term of the bargain, Faust makes use of Mephistopheles in various ways. In many versions of the story, particularly Goethe's drama, Mephistopheles helps him to seduce a beautiful and innocent girl, usually named Gretchen, whose life is ultimately destroyed. However, Gretchen's innocence saves her in the end, and she enters Heaven. In Goethe's rendition, Faust is saved by God's grace via his constant striving—in combination with Gretchen's pleadings with God in the form of the Eternal Feminine. However, in the early tales, Faust is irrevocably corrupted and believes his sins cannot be forgiven; when the term ends, the devil carries him off to Hell.

Adapted from [www.mythencyclopedia.com](http://www.mythencyclopedia.com)

