



Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde – Extract taken from Dr Lanyon’s Narrative

“10th December, 18 —

“*Dear Lanyon*, You are one of my oldest friends; and although we may have differed at times on scientific questions, I cannot remember, at least on my side, any break in our affection. There was never a day when, if you had said to me, ‘Jekyll, my life, my honour, my reason, depend upon you,’ I would not have sacrificed my left hand to help you. Lanyon, my life, my honour my reason, are all at your mercy; if you fail me to-night I am lost. You might suppose, after this preface, that I am going to ask you for something dishonourable to grant. Judge for yourself.

“I want you to postpone all other engagements for to-night — ay, even if you were summoned to the bedside of an emperor; to take a cab, unless your carriage should be actually at the door; and with this letter in your hand for consultation, to drive straight to my house. Poole, my butler, has his orders; you will find, him waiting your arrival with a locksmith. The door of my cabinet is then to be forced: and you are to go in alone; to open the glazed press (letter E) on the left hand, breaking the lock if it be shut; and to draw out, with all its contents as they stand, the fourth drawer from the top or (which is the same thing) the third from the bottom. In my extreme distress of wind, I have a morbid fear of misdirecting you; but even if I am in error, you may know the right drawer by its contents: some powders, a phial and a paper book. This drawer I beg of you to carry back with you to Cavendish Square exactly as it stands.

“That is the first part of the service: now for the second. You should be back, if you set out at once on the receipt of this, long before midnight; but I will leave you that amount of margin, not only in the fear of one of those obstacles that can neither be prevented nor foreseen, but because an hour when your servants are in bed is to be preferred for what will then remain to do. At midnight, then, I have to ask you to be alone in your consulting-room, to admit with your own hand into the house a man who will present himself in my name, and to place in his hands the drawer that you will have brought with you from my cabinet. Then you will have played your part and earned my gratitude completely. Five minutes afterwards, if you insist upon an

explanation, you will have understood that these arrangements are of capital importance; and that by the neglect of one of them, fantastic as they must appear, you might have charged your conscience with my death or the shipwreck of my reason.

“Confident as I am that you will not trifle with this appeal, my heart sinks and my hand trembles at the bare thought of such a possibility. Think of me at this hour, in a strange place, labouring under a blackness of distress that no fancy can exaggerate, and yet well aware that, if you will but punctually serve me, my troubles will roll away like a story that is told. Serve me, my dear Lanyon, and save Your friend, *H. J.*”
“P. S. I had already sealed this up when a fresh terror struck upon my soul. It is possible that the post office may fail me, and this letter not come into your hands until to-morrow morning. In that case, dear Lanyon, do my errand when it shall be most convenient for you in the course of the day; and once more expect my messenger at midnight. It may then already be too late; and if that night passes without event, you will know that you have seen the last of Henry Jekyll.”

Context:

Preface – introduction to the subjects aims

Easy questions

1. Who wrote the letter to Dr Lanyon?
2. Why must Dr Lanyon take the letter with him and who will be waiting at the door?
3. What was Dr Lanyon asked to do in the first part of the letter?
4. If the author of the letter is in error, why will Dr Lanyon know why it is the right drawer?
5. What will happen if the post office fails to deliver the letter?

Harder questions

1. In the letter, it states 'if you fail me to-night I am lost'. Why would he be lost?
Explain your answer with a quote.
2. What does the letter reveal about Henry Jekyll? Explain your answer with a quote.
3. Why did Stevenson include the letter in this chapter? Explain your answer with a quote.
4. Why did Henry Jekyll include a 'P.S' as part of the letter? Explain your answer with a quote.
5. If Dr Lanyon does not do what is in the letter. What will happen? Explain your answer with a quote.

GCSE Type Questions

1. Why is Lanyon surprised to receive a letter from Jekyll? Explain your answer.
2. The letter Lanyon receives was written by Hyde. What does this tell you about the state of mind Hyde was in? Use quotes to back up your answer.
3. When the novella was first written, the readers would have been on the edge of their seat. Explain why the reader would have been in shock at this point of the book?
4. In the extract, what must Lanyon bring with him and why is this important? Use quotes to back up your answer.
5. What does Lanyon think of the letter after he has read it? Explain your answer with reference to the text.

Easy Answers.

1. Jekyll wrote the letter
2. He has to take the letter with him for guidance and his butler Poole will be waiting.
3. After the locksmith unlocks the cabinet. Lanyon is then to empty the contents.
4. Lanyon will know it is the right drawer because of the contents
5. If the post office fails to deliver the letter it could be the end of Henry Jekyll.

Hard answers

1. Jekyll would be lost because it would destroy his character. Quote: **my life, my honour my reason, are all at your mercy**
2. Jekyll is desperate and needs help from his friend Lanyon. Quote: **if you fail me to-night I am lost.**
3. Stevenson included the letter to show that Jekyll still had some goodness in him. Also, he was asking for help. Quote: **my life, my honour my reason, are all at your mercy.**
4. Jekyll included a P.S. to explain the importance of what he was asking from his friend. Quote: **terror struck upon my soul.**
5. If Lanyon doesn't do what is asked then he will lose his friend Jekyll. Quote: **you will know that you have seen the last of Henry Jekyll.**

Please note that other quotes are acceptable and that these are basic answers. Also for the GCSE questions, the answers are not supplied at the moment