

The Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in all of us



Do you consider yourself a nice person? If you nod, I shall disagree. If your answer is no, I shall still disagree. Blame it on the duality of human nature; we all have the capacity for both good and evil. It is a strange case indeed, that two people are living inside you. One of them is good, and the other, evil.

This reminds us of Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 classic, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, where a kind and well-reputed doctor drinks a potion of his own making, to transform himself into a beastly evil of a man. The good old Henry Jekyll becomes the sinister Edward Hyde, and then back to his former usual self when he consumes the elixir again.

But people often take the potion and become Mr Hyde in the office as well. You know that colleague who plays dirty 'corporate politics' and makes the office environment toxic? Yes, that colleague.

You are the same too. You are not a Victorian-era doctor in London; maybe a professional living in Dhaka in 2023. But you too, quite like our humble doctor, switch between two personalities, that also several times a day.

Let's start in the morning. To begin on a positive note, let's say you wake up fresh as Dr Jekyll. Breakfast may be quick, with you getting ready for the day's work. Nevertheless, the apple of the eye, your child, brightens up your day.

For him, you can endure any trouble and pain in the world. His one smile makes up for everything. He is your strength. One may imagine, when you see your little child, your face has "every mark of capacity and kindnesses" just like Dr Jekyll's.

He makes you want to be the person you have always aspired to be.

But something in you changes soon after when you are on your way to work. After kissing your baby goodbye, when you are on the road, the real world (read: Dhaka) hits you hard. Traffic is frustrating; not just the never-ending gridlock, but the chaos, the useless honking, heat, and humidity, those unruly drivers, and the darned jaywalkers!

No matter how angelic a human being you are, Dhaka will bring out the Mr Hyde in you. One cannot escape road rage. Slurs are thrown at each other almost constantly. And an accident that put a small dent or scratch will inevitably be followed by heated arguments, to say the least, and

sometimes brawls break out.

Well, next time, look at those angry faces on the streets. To me, they remind of Mr Hyde, who, as penned down in the book, "gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile..." When I see such things on the street, I don't bat an eye though, for I know that most of these people will probably revert to Dr Jekyll as soon as they get into their offices.

Now in your office, you are a completely different person. You are

Our final chapter happens when we get home. Perhaps late at night, when your loving child is fast asleep, you enter the bedroom, only to discover that somehow you have ended up in a skirmish with your spouse.

You turn into Hyde again. It is turmoil for both of you. Bitter exchanges or even worse...

Eventually, the lights are out as you go to sleep. In that silence and darkness of the night, a man and his wife lie still, thinking of how much the other has changed.

and back. His concoction was the result of a laboratory experiment whilst ours have been a result of society and human nature.

So, on our way to work in the morning, the cruel Dhaka streets infused with impatience, arrogance, and anger make the potion. When we backbite or take part in petty politics at the office, it is because of envy, over-ambition, and greed. In the privacy of our home at night, when we become vicious to our loved ones, we have sipped the potion that has been made with frustration, misery, and



all smiles, helpful, and professional; essentially, Dr Jekyll.

But people often take the potion and become Mr Hyde in the office as well. You know that colleague who plays dirty 'corporate politics' and makes the office environment toxic? Yes, that colleague. That colleague, who backbites, steals your ideas or takes all the credit, one who pulls co-workers down.

And yet, that same colleague, when out in the evening with close friends, metamorphoses into a sweet, social butterfly. Even there, it could be that Mr Hyde makes another appearance, but overall, he is happy, merry, and jolly; like Dr Jekyll, "surrounded by friends and cherishing honest hopes."

Surely, they both know that they love each other and that they are one unit in the core, but still, into the abyss of the night, one can't help but think how they married a Dr Jekyll only to later discover the hidden Mr Hyde. At that moment, before sinking into sleep, sometimes a thought about the spouse comes, as noted in the novella too, that he, Mr Hyde "must have secrets of his own; black secrets, by the look of him; secrets compared to which poor Jekyll's worst would be like sunshine."

And the cycle continues the next day and the day after that and so on.

And much like Dr Jekyll, you and I often sip this deadly tonic that causes transformations from good to sinister

the stress of the whole day.

Moreover, much like Dr Jekyll, we are also aware of the duality of morality and malice. As he confessed, "My two natures had memory in common..."

The novella informs us that eventually, the evil Mr Hyde becomes more dominant of the two. Dr Jekyll loses control of his alter ego, and Mr Hyde takes over completely.

What is the guarantee that the same will not happen to you one day?

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