

Title: *The Disguise Doesn't Last: Stevenson's Warning for Modern Leadership*

Submission:

In *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Robert Louis Stevenson explores what it means to be human—not just in our good moments, but in our worst. The story is about a man who tries to separate those two sides of himself, thinking he can live freely without consequences. But the experiment backfires. Dr. Jekyll creates Mr. Hyde, a version of himself without shame, kindness, or limits. At first, he thinks he's in control. But soon, he can't stop the transformation. Hyde takes over. What starts as a secret becomes something much darker—and much harder to hide. Stevenson's story might seem like a dramatic tale of science gone wrong, but it's really a warning. When people try to live double lives, when they think they can act without accountability, eventually something cracks.

Jekyll's private life begins to spill into the public. Hyde doesn't just make bad choices—he kills someone. And still, Jekyll tries to cover it up. But people around him start to notice. His butler, Poole, knows something is wrong. He brings in Utterson, the lawyer, and together they uncover the truth. The man they thought was Hyde is actually Jekyll. It's one of the most powerful scenes in the book—not because of the action, but because of what it means. The truth always finds its way out. Lies, no matter how carefully kept, don't hold up forever. And when they fall apart, they often hurt more than just the person who told them.

Reading this now, it's hard not to think about how this kind of split shows up in real life—especially in leadership. There are moments in history, even in our own country, where people in power believe they can do what they want, say what they want, and leave the cleanup to others. They create one version of themselves for the public, and another behind closed doors. And for a while, it might work. Supporters cheer, critics get drowned out, and the system keeps moving. But eventually, the weight of it all breaks through. We've seen it—denials, scandals, investigations, and the slow erosion of trust. It's not just about one person's actions. It becomes a reflection of something bigger: how easily a whole institution can slide into dysfunction when no one is willing to say, "This isn't right."

Stevenson might not have been writing about modern politics, but his message still hits hard. When ego replaces ethics, when people stop believing the rules apply to them, things fall apart. And the longer it goes on, the harder it is to come back from it. Jekyll thought he could stop anytime. But he waited too long. By the time he realized what he'd done, he was trapped.

Still, Stevenson doesn't leave us with total hopelessness. The story is grim, yes—but it's also a reminder. In real life, we aren't just doomed to repeat our worst mistakes. People can change. Leaders can take responsibility. Systems can be repaired. But it takes honesty, help from others, and a willingness to face what's uncomfortable. Whether it's one person or an entire administration, the truth is the same: you can't live both ways forever.