

BEYOND REPAIR?

This house is an absolute mess. Clothes are hanging from the chandelier. A ripped-up shirt just fell on my head, and most of the furniture has crashed into pieces. I'm so done with this situation. I've been cleaning this shack every morning for the past three months, and every time I try to confront him about it, he gets mad and dismisses me rudely. I mean, I know he's going through a tough time, but at this point I can't excuse him anymore. I'm going to throw a fit, it's just a matter of seconds.

After taking a deep breath, I walk up the stairs and to this muppet's studio. This time, I don't even knock on the door, I just thrust it open. Jekyll is sitting on the edge of the bed, his hands tangled in his hair, his breathing is irregular, his foot tapping nervously on the floor.

"Bridget, I think I'm going insane." he says in a trembling voice. I stare at him in dead silence, my eyes widened in disbelief. In all these years, I've never seen him so upset. I step forward and sit beside him, a concerned expression on my face. "Henry, what's the deal? Is there something you want to tell me?"

He sighs, then looks at me straight in the eye. His expression does not bode well.

"Trust me, you don't wanna know." I nod, a determined look in my face.

"Oh yes I do. I'm fed up with your mysterious attitude." Then my expression softens a little. I let him rest his head on my shoulder, and my hand gently strokes his hair. "Seriously, I'm worried."

"You don't wanna see my dark side" he warns me.

"Yes, I do. You don't have to hide anything from me. I've known you since you were two — you can trust me".

"I don't know..."

"I'll be on your side whatever happens. I don't care. Trust me," I insist.

"Fine..." He slowly gets up. Now he's standing in front of me, his face pale as a ghost. After what feels like an eternity, he finally decides to speak.

"You know my friend Hyde, right?" I frown in confusion. What's the point of this question?

"I-I mean, yes. But what does that weird dude have to do with your secret?" Then I figure it out.

"Wait, is he responsible for what's happening to you? I knew he was a bad influence. Let me tell you, he's up to no good." He shakes his head, a somber expression on his face.

"You couldn't be further from the truth, Bridget. It's much worse than you think." Oh dear Lord, I don't even know if I want to know about this anymore. What was I thinking? I always have to get involved in things that don't concern me. But I certainly can't leave Jekyll alone; he seems devastated to say the least.

“W-what do you mean by that?” A few seconds of agonizing silence pass. Jekyll seems lost in thought, probably trying to decide whether he should reveal his secret to me or not. Finally, he shouts.

“I can’t do this anymore. I’m him — he’s me! He’s taking over me and I don’t know how to hinder him!”

“What are you talking about?” I’m so confused and concerned. Is he going crazy?

“I’m Hyde, I’m him. We are the same person. He is my shadow side” he’s yelling and flipping out. After an awkward silence, I try to ask him other questions. I can’t believe it.

“How?” I ask.

“I did an experiment to separate my dark side from the rest of my personality. It was so annoying: no matter how hard I tried to suppress them, my darkest thoughts always managed to haunt me. To prevent my reputation from being ruined, I wanted to divide them so that I could be a respectable man when I am Jekyll, and let the darkness take over when I am Hyde. I managed to create a potion that would allow me to do that”.

Then a beat of silence settled in the room.

“But, there is a problem. I can’t control my transformations anymore.” he explains gloomily. “I have to drink the potion constantly. Every time I fall asleep, even if only for a few minutes, I wake up as Hyde. I’m pretty sure he’s gonna take over me soon, until Henry Jekyll will cease to exist.” I stare at him in disbelief.

“Please say something Bridgette”

I clear my throat. “Do you need something, master?”

He takes a step back, his mouth wide open, his hand laid on his chest.

“What did you just call me? You never called me master before! Am I not your friend anymore? Do I creep you out?”

I’m too scared to reply, so he shakes his head in disappointment.

“I knew I shouldn’t have told you.”

He grabs a bottle of medicine and leaves the room. He shuts the door close so violently that the pictures on the wall fall on the ground and the glass shatters into pieces. I try to follow him, but instead of Henry, I see Mr.Hyde with the empty bottle in his hands. He looks at me with melancholy and my old heart shatters into pieces. Then he leaves rapidly, leaving me alone with a great sense of regret weighing on my chest.

THE NEXT MORNING...

I haven't slept all night long thinking about Henry. As a kid, he was always well behaved and looking after him has never been hard for me. I've never seen him mad. I've never heard him yelling. I'm worried that he'll never be the same as before.

I don't know what he was babbling about yesterday, but I'm determined to find out and help him. I've cleaned the mess he made yesterday and right now I'm standing in the kitchen, all the delicacies I prepared for him carefully arranged on the table. I just hope he'll show up. Otherwise, it will all have been vain. I want to confront him about this situation.

Shortly afterwards, the kitchen door swings open and Jekyll enters the kitchen as if nothing had happened. But looking at him more closely, it is clear that the spark that was there before has completely vanished from his face. Poor thing, just thinking about what he must have gone through last night breaks my heart. How on earth did I not realize this before? I wait for him to sit at the table, then I drop my ladle on the kitchen counter and walk up to him, looking mortified.

"Listen, I'm sorry for last night, I should have helped you, but instead I let you leave. I'll be honest with you, I was very scared. But I'm not going to leave you alone to deal with this. I know it's not much consolation, but know that I'm here for you no matter what. We'll find a solution together."

He slowly looks up from his plate, clearly taken aback by my words. A glimmer of hope flashes across his face as he nods.

"Thank you Bridget, that's very kind of you. I would've been shocked as well."

I smile at him and start to say something, but then I realise that he's not really in the mood to chat and that the best thing I can do for him is just keep him company. I sit down next to him and we both start eating. But after a few seconds, he turns to me and says:

"I know I probably sound so pathetic right now, but I really need your help if I want to survive this. I don't know what to do, and I'm starting to think it can't get any worse than this."

I sigh and look him straight in the eye. I want to help so badly, but first he needs to clarify a few things.

"Okay, first of all tell me everything that happened from the beginning. Take your time."

...A FEW 'WHAT?!'s AND 'HOW?!'s LATER...

"HOW?!" I ask again. I'm confused, but at least my thoughts are more organised than yesterday.

"For the sixth time, I don't know. I just wanted to preserve my respectability, but I ended up like this. I should've been more careful, but it's too late to regret anything now."

I go silent and stare at the wall, trying to process this information. If he hasn't been able to fix the problem in all this time, how am I supposed to?

"Thank you for explaining better, but it's not quite enough to get a clear picture of the situation. I know it's kind of a weird request, but would you mind if... I witnessed one of your transformations?"

For a moment, I can see the shame in his eyes. It's clear that he doesn't want to do it, but he also knows that it's the only option right now. After a moment's hesitation, he finally replies.

"W-well, it's not like I have any other choice, so..."

"I'm not here for judgment. I just want to help."

He nods and gets up, finally convinced, and motions for me to follow him.

"Don't worry, I know, that's not what I meant. Now let's go upstairs so I can show you." I follow him up the stairs and into his studio. He grabs the same potion I saw yesterday and then looks at me with a gloomy expression.

"Are you sure you really wanna see that? It's not a pretty sight." I shrug my shoulders, sitting down on a chair opposite his desk, while I examine the various potions displayed in the open drawer. "At this point, I don't think I can be any more upset than I already am, so... just do it, before I change my mind." I reply.

He grabs his potion and shoves the whole thing in his mouth, choking on the dark, bitter liquid. He coughs and falls to the ground, screeching and struggling while hair grows on his arms and he gets tinier and tinier. Finally, his body relaxes and he closes his eyes. He's not Henry anymore. He's Hyde. He's not moving, so I grab and swing his arm hoping he wakes up. Is he dead? He gets up and sits down, looking at the floor.

"You happy now?" he slowly rotates his head towards my direction, he stares at me and hisses, creepier than ever. I gasp. It's still Henry inside that frightening body. Let's not let him down.

I take a breath in and say: "Yes I am. Thank you for the effort. Now, how can you go back to your normal form?" I try not to look in his eyes.

"You mean, how do I get back to my Jekyll body?" He suggests, rudely, his voice deep and scary.

"Yes, exactly". It's still Henry inside that frightening body. Let's not let him down. I repeat to myself. I keep forgetting that Hyde is just part of the old Henry, and I want to support him and help him.

In the end, he grabs yet another potion, this one a transparent, light liquid, and consumes it possibly even more brutally than how his other personality did. Finally, he's not Hyde anymore.

“Well, that looked painful.” I phew trying to not be loud - he trusted me enough to show me a private, intimate moment, his transformation; I don’t want to ruin it or make him run away again.

“Trust me, you have no idea. So, what do we do now?”

“Trust me, you have no idea. So, what do we do now?” At the moment I’m too overwhelmed to think clearly, but he definitely shouldn’t know about this. He trusts me, I have to stay by his side. I need to stay strong.

“So, at this point, we need to figure out how to control your transformations. Do you have any theories on how this could be done?” He sighs and shakes his head, running a hand through his hair while he starts.

“Of course not, otherwise I would have already tried.” I nod, starting to look around the room desperately searching for divine inspiration. Being a rather unusual situation, the solution does not come easily.

“Right... I’ll give you some more time then.” Hours pass. He’s thinking and thinking but nothing seems to come to his mind. I try to be calm and patient, but in reality, I’m worried for him. He’s never this silent, and I wish I could do something for him but he’s the doctor after all. And I’m just a stupid, useless maid that knows nothing about science. I make him lunch and dinner, since that’s all I can do for him, even though he’s not hungry, and spend the rest of the time just sitting next to him. At 10 p.m., he slams his fist on the table, and I realise that science cannot solve the problem. It is something much deeper. Jekyll probably needs someone to guide him back to the light. And as luck would have it, that someone has to be me. But, again, how?

“Hush! It’s okay. You’re tired now. Go to sleep, rest, and tomorrow morning we’ll think of something else fresh-minded.” He nods, with an exhausted look on his face. I don’t think I’ll ever recover from seeing it. Right now, I feel like I’d rather have an angry, scary Hyde than *this* Jekyll, probably because that’s not his old self anymore. He wishes me a good night and goes upstairs. I walk to the sink and wash the dishes I made for him that he didn’t even try. I try to hold it all together, but I can’t do this anymore. I break down on the floor and cry and cry and cry for at least half an hour. Finally, I get up, I sigh, I finish washing the dishes and try to fix my appearance, then get upstairs. I try to sleep, but once again, my thoughts keep me awake.

Months pass. Jekyll’s dead inside. He continued his social life for a while, until he couldn’t leave his room anymore, he doesn’t talk anymore. He barely eats and he barely sleeps.

One day, I see that his bedroom's door is slightly open and that the door, just to see Hyde with a dagger in his hands, pointing to his chest.

“STOP!” I yell, running towards him. I grab the weapon by the blade, cutting myself. “What are you doing?”

He turns his head to the side. He can’t look at me. “There’s nothing I can do about this situation anymore. I found out that the reason I can’t control my transformations anymore is that my drug seller gave me impure salts essential for my potions. They completely altered my personality. Days ago, I, or better, Jekyll, was going on a walk at the park, he sat on a bench and next thing he knew, he was me. I ran straight home. I tried tens of different potions but nothing seems to work. What if I become Hyde while with my friends? What If Jekyll will cease to exist? Will I kill you? No, I can’t let any of this happen. The world is better off without me.” I hug him, his white nightshirt becomes red from the blood on my hands.

“That’ll never happen. Look at you! If you really were beyond repair, then why would you be so sympathetic? There’s some Jekyll in Hyde and Hyde in Jekyll. Who could truly and honestly say to just have a single unique personality, to not feel inside the daily fight of opposite forces? Is there anyone in this world who can sincerely admit to be able to fully control his most remote instincts?

“You know, I also have a double personality. Since I was a kid, I’ve been suffering from mood swings. My parents threatened to send me to a madhouse, so I had to repress my feelings and instincts, until I found out about storytelling. I never had a proper education, so I used to just tell my stories to myself in my mind. When you started studying with your private instructor, I was secretly listening the whole time. I’d find any excuses to enter your room during your lessons: putting clean laundry in your wardrobe, dusting your bookshelf... that’s when I learned how to write. I started stealing some of your empty diaries, since you had a ton -sorry about that...”

“It’s fine.” He says

”Well, I started filling all those empty pages every night, and I loved it. My dream was to post my novels under a male pseudonym like many other maids do, but knowing how you felt about female authors, I knew that would be impossible.”

”I’m so sorry about that. I now fully support your ambitions.” he looks at the floor.

”Thank you. Anyway, my point is that I’m going to help you to control your instincts. Again, you’re not a lost cause. You’ll still be Hyde, at least around me, but I’ll help you to turn your rage into something positive, instead of something negative.” he finally looks at me.

“And I’ll let you post your stories under my name.” I smile.

“We’re going to do this together. When we’re with each other, none of our dark sides will be considered so.”

Years later, Jekyll has almost completely ceased to exist. He created his other body with the purpose of not ruining his image. Now, he can be Jekyll and Hyde at the same time in his Hyde body without feeling judged, and he's happier than ever. He doesn't see his friends, but they often write him letters to praise his novels. Little do they know, these aren't Jekyll's stories. They're Bridgette's. Hyde/Jekyll gave her a decent education, and she finally fulfilled her dream of becoming a famous novelist and posting her stories. Her most recent piece, "The strange case of Dr. Williams and Mr.Smith", has been her most successful one by far.