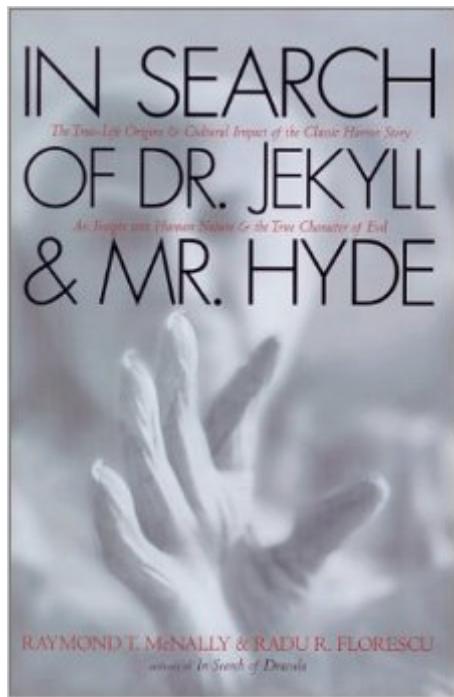


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In Search Of Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde



Synopsis

Thirty years ago, Professors Raymond McNally and Radu Florescu co-wrote *In Search of Dracula*, a successful popular study of Bram Stoker's novel and of the history, geography, and folklore of Prince Vlad Dracula, the model for count Dracula. This work was followed by Florescu's *In Search of Frankenstein*, a study of Mary Shelly's classic novel and its literary, historical, and scientific background. Now McNally and Florescu complete the trilogy of commentaries on horror classics with *In Search of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. In this fascinating, well-researched narrative, the authors outline the history of William Deacon Brodie, a successful Edinburgh tradesman who, by night, had a second life as a thief and carouser. Brodie, who ultimately hanged for his crimes—despite a near-successful escape and an ingenious scheme to cheat the gallows—fascinated Robert Louis Stevenson, who heard the story from his childhood nurse. Stevenson, only a modestly successful author, his output limited by chronic lung problems. But following a nightmare he wrote the "penny-dreadful" novella, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, in 1885. The work was immensely successful, making Stevenson an international literary celebrity, ultimately earning the author and his heirs a small fortune. Though Stevenson remains renowned for poetry and adventure yarns like *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*, he never lost his fascination with Brodie and wrote three versions of a stage play about his life. McNally and Florescu show how the power of the little book revealed Stevenson's own sense of darkness, related to other major works of its time, and touched on new discoveries about the unconscious, psychosis, and narcotics. *In Search of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* also details the profound effect the story has had on popular culture, discussing adaptations for stage and screen (recent versions of the Jekyll and Hyde theme appear in the Julia Roberts/John Malkovich film *Mary Reilly*, in a 1999 Broadway hit musical, and in Eddie Murphy's *Nutty Professor* character spin-offs.) McNally and Florescu also give detailed travel notes for visitors to Edinburgh, Amsterdam, and Bournemouth, England, who wish to see the original locales of the terrifying and profoundly moving story about the medical researcher, Dr. Jekyll, his evil alter ego, Mr. Hyde, and the real-life figure who was the model for both.

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Customer Reviews

This book begins with a historical account of the life and crimes of Deacon Brodie, a Scottish criminal from the 18th century who occupied the imagination of Robert Luis Stevenson and inspired the book The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. I found the details of this section to be a little boring, but that is only chapter 1. The book goes on to give a biography of Stevenson, who lead a very interesting life. The book examines Stevenson's family life and personal philosophies and reveals how they are reflected in his greatest story. Finally, the book is summed up with a history of how this story has been presented differently through the decades in plays and movies. It is a very interesting book, very factual. I really enjoyed it, but was surprised by it's content. I was expecting more of an examination of the elements of the story, and less biographical material.

Saw Dr. McNally on TV discussing society's fascination with the "evil within". Great book, well-paced yet in-depth enough to satisfy the thoughtful reader. The chapters tracing the common theme of the two sides of humanity through the movies and media were particularly eye-opening for me. Also, the exploration of Robert Louis Stevenson's evolution of the story was fascinating. Great writer- will have to pick up the Dracula books now!!

This book is a great companion piece to the author's earlier studies of the historical Dracula. For anyone who is a student of literature or of Stevenson in particlar, this is a great resource. I had the good fortune to take one of Prof. McNally's classes, and thus be exposed to his work. They provide a well-researched historical context and examination of the origins of these Victorian classics. If you haven't read any of McNally/Florescu's previous works on Dracula, do so now and pick this one up while you are at it. For anyone who is fan of Dracula or Jeckyll/Hyde, the two Dracula books and the Stevenson study are "must haves". Stop reading my review, and go buy the damn books!

I wished this book would have had a longer chapter analyzing the natures of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, and the impact this short book has had on culture and society. The lists of movies and theatre plays are good, but there are some faults. (Wrong production year of Fredric March movie, storylines of some of the movies are not entirely correct.) A few times, I wondered whether the authors really had seen the movie or not. When you publish a book like this, you must look up your facts closely! The Stevenson biography was interesting and exactly the right length, though the Deacon Brodie chapter could have been considerably shorter. All in all, a good lexicon for Jekyll & Hyde-fans.

This is a good novel. It is an in depth look into our fascinations with the darkside. I liked it because it was an interesting mystery. It also had some thrills to it. It isn't to long either. I also like the epistolary structure of the novel. This means you read a chapter that describes events and their consequences, and then, in a subsequent chapter, the person most closely concerned in those events tells his story by means of a letter read by us and several other characters. This book keeps you captivated it get overly boring at times and make you feel like you have to struggle to get through this book. I enjoyed reading this book even though I had to read it for school. I also I had to do this review. All in all I would recommend this book for anyone who likes a good mystery slash horror book, or to anyone who wants to get in touch with their darkside.

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