

congregation felt that behind his awful veil, the Reverend could discover their secret sins. Hooper did not say anything violent or terrible, and yet the congregation shook with fear. Was this their Reverend or was there a stranger behind the black veil?

At the end of the sermon the people hurried out of the church; some started talking together quietly and others talked loudly. A few shook their heads saying that they could not understand the mystery.

At last Reverend Hooper came out of the church and greeted his congregation as he always did on Sundays. But no one walked by his side on that day. And for the first time old Mr Saunders did not invite him to Sunday dinner. Therefore, the Reverend returned to his home with a sad smile behind his black veil.

'Something is very wrong with Reverend Hooper,' said the doctor of the village. 'Although that black veil covers only our Reverend's face, he looks like a ghostly figure from head to foot.'

'Oh, I agree,' said his wife. 'I can't look at him!'

Later that morning the church bell rang for the funeral of a young woman. Her relatives and friends waited in her house for Reverend Hooper. He arrived and was still wearing the black veil. He walked into the room where the coffin with the body of the young woman was and stood next to it. Then he bent over the coffin and his veil hung straight down from his forehead.

An old woman who was sitting near the coffin said that the body of the young woman shook when the Reverend looked at her.

The Reverend left the room and went into the living room where friends and relatives were waiting for the funeral prayer.

