



Dr. Campbell

ENGL 2240

11 November 2019

Dark Man

Darkness.
Only darkness surrounds
A dark ride
Through a dark forest
To a dark man.
Blackness.
And who knows what's hiding behind
The howling trees
And the fiery eyes
That call Jonathan a traitor,
"An outrage
upon friendship."
Darkness lives.

Beautiful, fair Lucy sees her life
And the men ahead of her.
Beautiful and white,
Oh so white.
A beacon and a lighthouse upon
All worldly wrongs,
Lucy is the light.

But like cholera
Darkness spreads.
A white Lucy,
A white England
Could not see
The destruction.

Great, black, looming clouds
Gather overhead,
And darkness arrives.
Darkness reaches its grimy hands
And touches white England,
Leaving it soiled
And tarnished.
Darkness kills like cholera.
And the light
Could not see
The destruction.

And darkness destroys.
It arrives and ruins light,
Sinking its teeth into the soft flesh
Of the beautiful, white, light.
Even the shining moonlight,
So promising and white,
Could not stop the looming, black clouds
And the dark man.
Light can only show poor Mina,
Poor, nearly widowed Mina
To the destruction.

All the precious light,
The beautiful Lucy,
Is ruined.
The white that rises in her skin,
The paleness,
Is no longer the light.
Light is ruined,
And once it has fully vanished,
Rage covers Lucy
Like a shadow.

But the “ghastly white”
And fearful men
Must overcome the darkness.
The once-white Lucy

Covered by a shadow,
Yearning to be released.
The “sharp white teeth”
And “white flesh”
Are the darkest kind of light
That men must extinguish.

And when the deed is done,
The shadow vanquished,
The false light no longer
ruining our beacon,
A “strange white light”
Strikes Arthur’s face
And the darkness is defeated
For the first time.

Beautiful, fair, Mina,
Poor, nearly widowed Mina,
Sees her past before her.
Arthur’s dark past
In that dark place
With that dark man
Returns.
Innocent and fair,
Poor, helpless Mina
Finds the pale light that ruined
Fair Lucy.
“White-clad” Mina
Finds the corrupted light
As that “Tall,
Thin man dressed in black”
Returns.
And once again,
Great, black, looming clouds
Gather overhead,
And darkness prevails.

Darkness prevails,
But darkness never wins.

Darkness never triumphs;
Cholera never annihilates.
“Before the sun should set,”
Light almost leaving,
White begins to triumph
Over the ruthless darkness
And the men’s shadows
Fall long upon the snow.

And finally,
The dark man
Grows pale.

Light flashes before darkness.
Jonathan’s “great knife”
Pierces the dark man.
And all is right.
One white man
And one black
Fall.

And all is right.

The dark man
Stands tall,
Yet less firm,
Illuminated
From behind.
And poor Mina
No longer bears the scar
Of her husband’s past
And the dark man.

Light overcomes
The dark past
With the dark man
From the dark place

And all is right.

My poem, "Dark Man," follows the white and black imagery in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* while personifying the opposing forces. The poem works to lay out the struggle between the opposing forces of light and darkness in the novel. Until Dracula arrives in England, white imagery is used to describe the 'good' characters and events, while Dracula himself and all that is meant to be feared are pictured as starkly black. However, when Dracula arrives, evil characters, like vampire-Lucy are described as white and pale. I make the argument that when Dracula becomes involved in light, he corrupts it, blurring the lines of white representing goodness and black representing evilness. It is not until some sort of order is restored in those scenes when white and light once again represent goodness.

My high school English teacher describes poetry as "a novel stripped to its bones" and that description has always stuck with me. A poem contains all that is important to a story, yet still leaves one feeling as affected, or even more affected, as one would be by a compelling short story or novel. I thought that stripping *Dracula* "to its bones" would be an interesting interpretation of the novel, especially considering how detailed Stoker's writing is. Also, dark poetry has always given me an unsettling feeling that most short stories cannot. Therefore, I thought that a dark poem would be the perfect way to convey the unsettling feeling that Stoker's writing often left me with. However, instead of the gore, I used negatively charged, powerful words and enjambment, which can tend to have the same effect.

"Dark Man" responds through the text by following the black and white imagery throughout the novel and personifying the two forces as good and evil, or white and black. All of the major scenes are lined out, demonstrating how light and darkness both played roles in the scenes and what that meant for Dracula and the vampire hunters. The poem also follows the

mood of the novel, beginning eerie, changing gears to almost cheerful when discussing Lucy, and returning to unsettling until the end of the poem. By following the mood in the novel, I aimed to emulate the feelings that the novel evoked in me, including both joy and dread for Lucy and the vampire hunters.

I also wanted to demonstrate how all Victorian novels sided with the ‘good’ side, so I included the part where “darkness never wins.” Of course, this is not true for modern literature, but it is more than true for Victorian pieces. In this way I tried to incorporate the Victorian aspects of the plot without letting go of my unsettling mood. Overall, my poem connected to the novel through following the mood, lining up the Victorian plot, and commenting on the struggle between light and dark forces in the novel and how they changed and affected the plot. I chose a poem format because I felt it was the best way to demonstrate the unsettling feeling that the novel left me with, and also following the idea that my high school English teacher had of “stripping a poem to its bones” matching the gruesomeness of the novel.