

The darkness out  
there – the red room



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

' The darkness out there which I will refer to as ' The darkness', and the Red Room are both short stories in which fear is used to engage the reader, but fear is used in different ways in both stories. The beginning of each story starts in a very different way.

The Darkness begins peacefully with a young girl ' skipping through a warm meadow, sitting down and a ladybird crawled across her toe. This is a warm opening, almost sensual. Whereas in the Red Room introduces fear from the very beginning. In the first line it starts with " it will take a very tangible ghost to frighten me". Straight away the story implies that it will involve fear. The Darkness is about a girl and a boy who volunteer to help an old lady out as part of their club ' the good neighbours club'.

They both soon realise that old Mrs Rutter who was described as a " dear old thing" has a Dark secret- She left a suffering man for 2 nights to die. The children soon realise there is a Darkness in everyone. The Red Room is about a mansion with an apparently haunted room. A young man comes to investigate this.

He is told that no customers will enter this room- Especially on ' tonight of all night'. We are not told what is significant about this night but it is used to make the story scarier and build up a climax- introducing more fear to the story. At the end of the story the man realises that there is no ghost but something far worse ' fear itself'. The use of fear is different in each story. In the Red Room fear is always there gradually building to a climax near the end when he realises that there is infact nothing tangible to fear and that fear is fear itself and is inside us and is a physiological fear in which there is

no defence. In the Darkness the writer starts with a warm comfortable beginning, and occasionally introduces facts that will introduce Fear, but mainly helps us to understand the story and suddenly inflict fear on the main characters towards the end of the story.

For example he introduces packers end in the girls thoughts near the beginning of the story and her memories of a rumour she heard about a German plane crashing-killing 2 men during the war, at the end we realise that this was true and that Mrs Rutter left one of those men to die in agony. In both stories neither of the characters are actually called by their names by the writer. In the darkness, written from a 3rd person point of view the girl who's name is Sandra is only called Sandra by Mrs Rutter and the boy who's name is Kerry is also only called Kerry by Mrs Rutter and Sandra. Other wise they are know as ' The boy' and ' The girl' and in the Red Room which is written from a 1st person point of view the man is not named throughout the story. I think the fact that the characters in the Darkness are rarely named and in the Red Room never named adds a little extra mystery to the story and provides a little more terror to the reader.

In the darkness Packers end is used to bring fear into the story. " You didn't go into packers end-not if you could help it" The girl describes packers end as a dark dismal place and as children they were told stories that witched and wolves lurked inside the woods. She also describes the stories of a girl being raped by gypsies then goes on to tell the reader an important story about a German plane crashing In the woods which is linked to the surprising ending. In the Red Room ' The room' is supposed to be haunted. It is this

room that brings fear into people; even the owners won't enter the room." Don't go into the room tonight of all nights- you go on your own choosing".

I enjoyed reading 'The Darkness' because it was unpredictable. The pace of the story began slowly but suddenly increases and the plot is not given away until the end. The writer describes that these are normal children (look up examples). However in the Red Room the story was fairly predictable, From the first line you can tell that something is going to scare the man, in the story by the phrase 'it will take a very tangible ghost to frighten me' It does indicate that he will see a ghost. I did not enjoy this story as much although I did like that fact that the moral of the story was unpredictable and original.

There are quite a few aspects that link the stories together. The main aspect is the connection between 'the Red Room' and Packers end. Both of these places are used to increase fear in the stories (wolves witches, rape, Crash) Packers End a dark weary place where most normal people don't dare to go. Both places are Dark and appear scary to people. There have been stories in the past about a girl being raped by gypsies and never seen again and a German plane, which crashed during the war.

These scare people away from the place and also shows more fear and better describes the area to the reader. And the Red Room a dark feared place where no customers will enter. Also the connection between the light in both places-both are Dark. Dark places bring more fear. In the Red Room the candles suddenly go out when the man is in the room 'Darkness closed upon me like the shutting on an eye. In the Darkness it is a sunny day 'the sun is shining brightly' and suddenly the girl reaches Packers End and the

light is completely shadowed ' The light suddenly shutting off the bare wide sky of the field-Packers End'.

This effects the characters because darkness is instinctively scary- we are defenceless if we cannot see. Something that heightens more fear in each story is the vulnerability of the main characters. In the Red Room a young man all alone in a house that is supposedly haunted completely powerless. He is supposedly looking for a ghost but become out of depth with his own fear " I stood rigid for a minute perhaps with my hand in the pocket that held my revolver.

He has his hand on his revolver although it is powerless against any ' ghost' although this may have made him feel safer. This shows how afraid and vulnerable he really is. This vulnerability is used in the story to build up fear and tension in the reader. In the darkness the little girl all alone near packers end where she has heard terrible stories of small girls being raped by gypsies. Then later on in the story the girl and boy all alone in a house with a woman who they had just found out had left a suffering man to die because ' it was raining outside' and ' her sister had a cold'.

In both of the stories the main characters realise something about the world and something about themselves and that things are never what they seem. In the darkness they boy and girl realise the world isn't like they thought and that it is a cruel world even the most unlikely circumstances. They find out that old Mrs rutter who when they met seemed a regular and very nice old woman who could have been either of their grannies, left a man to die many years ago and to that day was not ashamed and did not regret what she had

done. They both realise that if this happened what else could the world spring out on them. In the Red room the young man realises that his search for a ghost was really a wild goose chase and that the only danger he faced was fear itself- 'The only real fear is fear itself'. The girl in "the Darkness" is very quick to judge people; her thoughts about people are very shallow.

When she first meets Kerry Stevens she dislikes him because her friends didn't think much of him 'none of her lot reckoned much on him'. She also judges him by his looks- he look scruffy and mucky so she believes that he's a dirty impolite boy. She later gets close to him and begins to like him, from when they first meet he offers her some of his chocolate and realises that they have a lot in common and that he's really a generous and more sensitive person than she is. She also assumes that Mrs Rutter is a regular 'nice old biscuit' but later finds out what she is like inside. The man in 'the red rooms' thoughts are also very shallow at the beginning of the story. When the old man tells him not to go in the room, he judges him as foolish for believing that there is a ghost inside. Soon after he realises that he is not so brave and falls into the trap of wrapping himself in fear.