

The demon lover

[War](#), [World War 1](#)



The main character of this short story, Mrs. Drover, is traumatized after the Blitz, the catastrophic aerial bombardment which took place over London between 1940 and 1941. Because of her psychological instability, Mrs. Drover confuses World War II with World War I. Returning home to collect some personal belongings, she remembers her long-missing fiancé to the point where one does not know if this is a gothic story that has some supernatural happenings or simply a story of one character's neurotic mental state.[1] Critics like Daniel V. Fraustino are determined that this story is not about the trauma of World War I and World War II but a “murder mystery of high drama”[2]. It ought to be underlined that the essay you are reading is aiming to analyze “The Demon Lover” on a more psychological/psychoanalytical basis unlike what Fraustino did...

Nevertheless, he is very right in last paragraph of his essay saying that this psychological interpretation having “its own kind of special appeal,”[2]). Indeed, this approach is essential to analyze this story properly not alone being appealing because Mrs. Drover in the story is not only having some homecoming and witnessing some paranormal activity aftermath; but she is also channeling with her psyche in an abandoned house and seeing the cracks in her soul. “The Demon Lover” starts on a humid August day. It is due to rain; there is a certain stress in the air and as the main character enters the street covered with clouds, one can sense that she is having this very same tension, the suppression the weather has. Thus, Mrs. Drover, a “prosaic” woman goes back to her London house “to look for several things,”[3] but what “things”? These “things” are unknown to the reader, as it is indeed unknown to Mrs. Drover herself and this is why she has a suppressed

feeling around, a sense of waiting, the tension before the rain... She is indeed going there to confront the house that she had left since war has started; in some other sense she is going to face herself in the image of the house to understand what kind of damage has been done while experiencing the measure of this damage deep inside. This personification theme linked between Mrs. Drover and the house, is one of the most important elements of the story. She tries to open the door for this confrontation but the key lock is quite stiff. She has to force it and then "dead air" of this unvisited house, her unvisited portion of memories welcomes her just before setting her feet inside...[3] This door is indeed a portal of her very own past; she forces it since she hasn't been thinking of her past but only trying to forget it because all bad memories, all the suppressed traumas are there behind this door so are the "several things", which she returned to pick up. "Dead air" coming out to greet her shows that these memories are negative... These are especially, about the two world wars she witnessed and this house has suffered from the aerial bombardment that took over London during the war; situated on an abandoned street with its ruined neighbor houses. Mrs. Drover's soul is one of the victims who suffered, like this empty, broken, ruined houses. Inside this personification theme follows: The "bruise" on the wall is indeed the bruise in Mrs. Drover's psyche. The scratches on parquet which the legs of the piano left while they were moving symbolizes that the joy is taken from her harshly; since piano as an instrument is seen and used as an entertainment object in that era mostly. The windows of the house have blocked, so there is no way to have some fresh air; thus a fresh start is impossible, there is no way to let go of the past and bad memories... She

sees that marble mantelpiece has turned to yellow; losing its beautiful whiteness and brightness; it is matte now... Once it used to be white and its function was to warm up the house... Mantelpiece is not burning, only full of ashes... It is useless now. It is indeed like the piano taken away... It symbolizes joy, happiness but it also symbolizes peace, warmth and harmony that is lost; the tranquility which is erased from Mrs. Drover's psyche. Now " she is more perplexed than she knew" by everything she saw by these traces of her former life.[3] She goes upstairs, leaving her parcels down in order to look for the things that are in the bedroom chest... Her proceeding upstairs shows that she is jumping one step further for exploring her suppressed memories and bedroom chest again links with the feeling of suppression since it is a way to hide and protect personal belongings mostly. The things inside it are her emotional luggage that is left in the house which represents her soul... These things are newly remembered, forgotten before since she comes to look for them though the house is abandoned. Her search for abandoned identity and memories buried down there are these " things" she needs. " There were some cracks in the structure, left by the last bombing, on which she was anxious to keep an eye. Not that one could do anything-, "[3]. The cracks she is worried to see, are the cracks that the war created, are the ones, which disintegrated her soul. They are the results of her pain and she is utterly sure that nothing can be done about this situation. She gives away herself slowly to the hands of insanity while progressing one level up in her trauma... Thus, a " refracted light" suddenly shines on a letter on a table in the hall that is addressed to her.[3] This is one of the " things" which she came back for... This refracted spotlight is her

own torch she is projecting inside her... She takes the letter while trying to find a logical meaning for its presence in the hall and goes on her journey by following the stairs... She is indeed more like diving down to her unconsciousness; but this progress is symbolized by going up, which is rather showing Mrs. Drover is bringing out her suppressed feelings, the trauma on the surface with the help of this letter. This letter is the final strike, left there to show the peak point of her delirium because of all this damage that the war has done on the fragile walls of her soul. In the bedroom, she tries to let some light in while seeing that rain is coming... The tension in air reaches to a climax as the tension which is caused by the suppressed feelings of the main character reaches this very same point. Now the cracks are so deep that Mrs. Drover loses all her control when she reads this letter, thinking that this a letter which written by her ex-lover who died in the previous war. But the letter is signed with the very same initial, with the letter " K" of her name which is " Kathleen." The only person that knows her that well enough to call her " K" is her presumably dead fiance. Another point that scares her is that the letter was written with the same date as she read it. The letter had some comments about her past and how a someone is coming to meet her at the arranged hour when she read this. This greatly affected her psychology and she wanted to leave the house as soon as possible. She then calls a taxi, exactly at seven-o'clock, which pulls away quickly before she can say where she wants to go. She taps on the glass and her ex-lover's face stares back at her and she wails in extreme horror as the taxi zooms away

The Demon Lover Summary | Detailed Summary On a dreary, drizzly afternoon, Mrs. Drover returns to her London Home. She has

come to gather some belongings that her family has left behind when they moved out to country to escape the bombs of World War II. At the moment there is no rain, but clouds are building up and another rain storm is on its way. Mrs. Drover has the feeling that somebody is watching her, although there is nobody around except a cat rubbing its back against the railings. She unlocks the warped door and pushes into the musty hall. The hall is dark, so she opens up a big window in the living room. As she looks about her, Mrs. Drover contemplates the life she previously lived in her Kensington home. The remaining furniture is all covered, and the piano has been removed. Everything is slightly dusty and smelling of the cold chimney. She puts down her parcels and heads upstairs to her bedroom. She notices some new cracks from the bombing, but otherwise, it appears the caretaker is doing his job. As she looks around her eyes fall on a letter on top of the hall table. She is puzzled over its appearance. The caretaker knows that she is not expected in town today; so it is unlikely he would have left the letter lying on the table. All of her friends and acquaintances know that she lives the country, and the post office has directions to send all her mail to the country house. If the letter had been dropped in the mail slot, it would still be there and not on the hall table. Extremely puzzled, Mrs. Drover chalks up the letter's appearance to the carelessness of the caretaker. Now Mrs. Drover turns her attention to the contents of the letter. It is a short note, and the words shock her. The writer reminds her that they are to meet at their appointed time that day. Mrs. Drover notices that the date of the letter is the current one. Feeling herself go white, Mrs. Drover stares in the mirror, perhaps to verify that she is truly herself. The mirror reveals a 44-year-old

woman, one who has lived a full life, but that is now faced with a ghost from her past. As the rain begins crashing down, she's in a state of confusion over the letter's threat. It's been 25 years. How could she possibly remember what time was appointed for a meeting. The clock strikes six and Mrs. Drover determines that she needs to leave the house before the next hour chimes. Suddenly Mrs. Drover is the 19-year-old, Kathleen back in her parents' garden, a young girl saying goodbye to her soldier fiancé. She doesn't remember much about the soldier; she cannot even really remember his face. However, what she does remember is that he was not gentle or kind. While they stood out in that garden saying goodbye to each other, the soldier pressed her hand to his uniform very tightly, a button cutting into her hand, leaving behind a welt. She pledged to wait for him to return from the war, and there must have been a meeting planned. She tells him that he's going such a long way off, and he replies, " Not so far as you think." He continues by saying he will always be with her. She need do nothing but wait for his return. She remembers feeling very lost and wishing she had not made such a promise. When a few months later her fiancé was reported missing, Kathleen was not as upset as she thought she would be at hearing of his presumed death. Her parents were relieved as well, never having felt comfortable with the young man who was to marry their daughter. They thought that in the few years, she would get over her loss and turn to new loves. However things did not work out that way. There did not seem to be many men interested in Kathleen. She had no suitors, no lovers, and no offers of marriage. When she was in her early thirties, and fearful of remaining a spinster, William Drover began courting her. They married,

moved to Kensington Gardens, and began their family. They lived pleasantly, if a little dully, until bombs forced them to relocate to the English countryside. As it continues to storm, Mrs. Drover puzzles over the appearance of the letter. Her own room, emptied of possessions and showing the effects of a long war, offers her no comfort. How did the letter come to be in the house? If the caretaker did not bring the letter inside, how did it get on the table? Mrs. Drover does not want to dwell on the supernatural implications of the letter's appearance. She considers the ways her home could be entered without a key. Maybe the deliverer of the letter is still there. Maybe she is not alone. What was the hour of their meeting to be? It could not be six o'clock as that hour has already chimed. Her first instincts are just to run away from the house. However, her family is depending on her to bring home certain items from London. She moves about tying parcels with fumbling fingers, the clock drawing nearer to the next hour. Mrs. Drover makes up her mind to call a taxi. The thought of a taxi driver, moving through the house with her to retrieve parcels, puts her at ease. She remembers that the phones have been disconnected, so she prepares to leave the house in search of a taxi. They will return, retrieve the packages, and head back to her family in the country. Continuing to pack, Mrs. Drover's mind returns once more to August of 1916. The intervening 25 years disappear, and she is again that young girl, remembering everything with the clarity of glass. She remembers totally submitting herself to her fiancé's will. She was not herself, as everyone told her. She remembers all the details of that week in the summer; however, she has no recollection of her fiancé's face. That thought scares her more than any of her others. If she cannot

remember her old lover's face, how will she know him to escape from him? Mrs. Drover stands at the top of the stairs, ready to descend, and imagines she feels a draft of air traveling up the stairs from a basement window or door that has been opened. Perhaps someone is leaving the house. She makes her way from her home to the busy square where ordinary life continues. There are people walking, pushing their babies in strollers, and riding their bicycles. She slows her footsteps and goes in search of a taxi. This evening, there is only one taxi at the taxi rank. It starts its engine as Mrs. Drover approaches. As she settles into the taxi, a clock strikes seven. The driver has turned around in the direction of Mrs. Drover's house before she realizes that she told him where to go. She knocks on the window that separates the front seat from the back. The driver, braking quickly, turns around and slides the panel open. The action flings Mrs. Drover forward so that her face is almost touching that of the driver's. It takes a few moments before Mrs. Drover is able to scream.