

# [Analyzing windows as metaphors in broken april](https://assignbuster.com/analyzing-windows-as-metaphors-in-broken-april/)

While windows are technically supposed to show a viewer the outer world, in Broken April they are used to give the reader a peek into the inner feelings of the main characters. When ‘ Bessian put(s) his head close to the glass’ and ‘ stay(s) a long while in that position’, (pg. 167) he is looking at the mysterious land of the Kanun; something which in his mind is wondrous. This ‘ tragically beautiful or wonderfully tragic’ (pg. 68) view represented his fascinated state of mind. But when Diana, ‘ her face pale, look(s) out at the road in silence, or very nearly’, (pg. 167) she is looking at the bleakness of the mountains which to her, represents the desolate state of her heart. Her surroundings are making her claustrophobic and causing an emotional turmoil within her. Such cases are representative of the novel’s approach, which extends the association between insight and windows to a variety of characters.

In one important instance, when Gjorg sees Diana ‘ framed’ in the window of the velvet carriage (pg. 109), he feels as if one glance of hers could ‘ take hold of him, carry him far away, beyond life, beyond the grave, to where he could look upon himself with serenity’. Looking at that ‘(beautiful) woman with auburn hair’, Gjorg ‘ breathed in with a sweetness and emotion that he had never felt in the presence of any other being in the world’ (pg. 163). He fell in love with her instantly. That view was like a picture from a fairy tale for him. But unfortunately for Gjorg, he is unable to do anything about these feelings of his. Forced to participate in an age old blood feud, he had killed a member of the Kyreqyqe family five days ago. And although currently safe under the protection of the thirty day long bessa; he had only a limited period of time before he would inevitably be hunted down and killed for revenge. Thus, the Kanun had left him in a helpless state of affairs. And in these hopeless circumstances, that window had become a small square of hope for Gjorg. With death looming before him, he ‘ felt that his heart had leaped from his chest , and, opened up in that way, he was vulnerable, sensitive to everything so that he might rejoice in anything, be cast down by anything’. In that state of mind, when he saw Diana, she struck him in a strange and beautiful way. Without him knowing it, Gjorg had associated all that was good and beautiful in his life with Diana and looking at those eyes, ‘ at once distant and close, understandable and enigmatic, unmoved and sympathetic’ (pg. 193) once again, had become his last wish. In that way, with Diana being the sign of beauty in his life, the view of her through that window had become a symbol of hope and Gjorg was unwilling to let it go. That feeling was so strong that even on the evening of April 17, the day his bessa ended, Gjorg continued to roam around the mountains hoping to ‘ see his fairy’ (pg. 214).

From the other side of that carriage window, Diana was exploring a world her husband wanted her to see. But she looked at it in a manner much different from the way he did. According to Bessian, the Kanun was ‘ one of the most monumental constitutions that have come into being in the world’ and ‘ the aspect of death conferred on the life of Gjaks was something of the eternal, because its very grandeur raised them above the paltry of things and petty meanness of life’ (pg. 71-72). On the other hand, Diana empathized with everything and everyone she saw outside the window. To her, several aspects of the Kanun were ‘ terrible, absurd and fatal’ (pg. 77) and the idea of people walking around with the black ribbons signifying ‘ that they were searching for death or that their death was searching for them’ (pg. 34), ‘ horrible’ (pg. 69). These people ‘ awakened sympathy’ within her. And therefore, contrary to Bessian’s dismissive view of Gjorg as a simple instance, proof of the Kanun he studies, Diana was actually intrigued and concerned by the sight of the pale young man close to death. To her, that window was an outlook on a captivating tragedy in which Gjorg was a larger than life hero.

Even though the window individually stands as a symbol of attraction for both Diana and Gjorg, it ultimately acts as the barrier between them. The blue tint in the glass and Diana’s breath clouding the window repeatedly (pg. 109-110) are both signals showing how Diana and Gjorg are never meant to be together. In spite of this fact, both of them try desperately to cling on to that small window of possibility. While Diana keeps wiping the mist off the glass (which was distorting her vision), Gjorg keeps staring at his square of hope, dumbstruck. But like almost everything in the book, he does nothing about it. The carriage rolls away and Gjorg is jolted back into his futile reality with only the memory of ‘ his fairy’.

While this window first introduces the crack developing in Diana and Bessian’s relationship, the author uses another metaphorical window to show that crack widening into a rift. After a long day of traveling through the mountains, when the Vorpsis finally reach their room in the Kulla of Orosh, they find a dimly lit chamber with a ‘ heavy oak bed’ covered by a ‘ red woollen coverlet with a deep nap’ (pg. 122). But unlike most other newlywed husbands, this cosy environment does not excite Bessian. Instead, the first thing he does is to ‘(go) to one of the windows’ (pg. 122). And through that window, he sees an area of vast darkness. But the part of it which attracts him is a ‘ glimmer’ of light right near the bottom of his view (pg. 124). He is curious about it (beckoning to the servant asking ‘ What is that, down there?’) (pg. 122) and even fascinated by it (describing it as a ‘ glimmer in the darkness, like a candle shining on death’) (pg. 124).

But when Bessian calls Diana to look at the view he has been admiring, all she sees is ‘ darkness’ ‘ hover(ing) over an abyss’ (pg. 123). Bessian wants to show her the light that he is fascinated by. ‘ There’ he says, ‘ down there, don’t you see the light?’ (pg. 123). But Diana sees nothing, ‘ she is penetrated by the vastness of the night and shivers’. Upon trying repeatedly, due to her own will to find that light her husband keeps talking about, she finally sees a ‘ feeble reddish glow on the rim of the abyss’ (pg. 123). But that light isn’t warm or lively, it is ‘ flickering wanly, about to be swallowed up by the night’ (pg. 126) and ironically it originates from the darkest of places, the famous Gjaks gallery where all the murderers from the Rrafsh wait to pay the blood tax.

This window and the view outside of it is a metaphor of the Kanun and the Vorpsis’ experiences with it. In fact it tells their complete story. Unsatisfied by his comfortable life in Tirana (and here, in his room in the Kulla of the prince of Rrafsh), Bessian is fascinated by something far away from him with which he has no actual link, the Kanun. And ignoring its ‘ darkness’ and tragedy, he sees a glimmer of light (its sinister beauty and ‘ grandeur’) (pg. 124) instead. Due to this obsession of his, he takes his new wife to go honeymooning in the land of his dreams, ‘ The Accursed Mountains’ (pg. 62). During their journey, Bessian tries to point out all the things he is fascinated about in the Kanun (his precious ‘ light’) to his wife, but she is unable to see it. Instead, she is overwhelmed by all the gloominess and death surrounding her. The ‘ icy coldness’ of the region ‘ passes right through her’ like the coldness of the glass of that window did (pg. 123). Even so, due to Bessian’s persistent tries, Diana is finally able to find that ‘ lost glimmer of light in the chaos of darkness’ (pg. 126). But it is not the ‘ grandeur’ of the Kanun that she sees in it. She is instead fascinated by a person, a man who is able to ‘ face that darkness and primal chaos of creation’ and ‘ wanders forbidden roads, bearing omens of death in his hands’ (pg. 126). Her glimmer of light in that abyss of darkness is Gjorg, ‘ her black prince’. She sees him in the ‘ redness of (that) primeval fire’ originating from the Gjaks’ gallery where he had been just three days ago (pg. 126).

Thus, this metaphorical window clearly establishes Diana and Bessian’s contrasting views about the Kanun and the distance it is causing between them. Bessian’s obsession with the Kanun is unmistakably wrecking his marriage but he is unwilling to acknowledge it. This failing chemistry between him and Diana is juxtaposed with the one blossoming between her and Gjorg, who being a victim of the Kanun, has become of ‘ enormous size’ in her eyes (pg. 126). Both Diana and Bessian want each other to understand their own respective feelings but they are unable to do so. This creates distance between them. At the same time, it was through a window only that Diana and Gjorg had seen each other for the first time and fallen in love. This shows the other significance of the windows, to show the making and breaking of relationships.