



Writers to Readers Weekly



Writers to Readers Weekly is a weekly newsletter for teachers of English, highlighting short works by contemporary writers for children and teens

January 27, 2020

Ed. 1, Issue #2

The Day of the Vampire

The light hurt her eyes. She gave silent thanks that the day was overcast, though she was curious about the sun. Then again, she was cold, an odd sensation, and one that drew a vague memory forward from the human part of her brain. Cold, yes, hunger, yes, real hunger, for real food not blood. And something else, something half remembered. Ah, yes, fear. The fear only a living thing can have. *The magic worked, she thought, I am alive.*

She opened her eyes and gazed, squinting in the light, at the man in black, standing as resolute as a statue. His expression was inscrutable as he tossed away the skull and it clattered on a tombstone.

"It is done," he said.

"For how long?"

"How long is a human life? Only God knows the answer to that. You will grow old, or you will get sick, or injured..."

"And then I will die?"

"And then you will die." He said this last almost sadly.

She looked down at her body. The tattered white dress seemed to hang on her like cobwebs. She felt her bony ribs beneath it.

"Am I beautiful?" she asked.

"You always were," he said.

They walked together back to the village, closing the cemetery gates behind them. Her eyes steadily adjusted to the light and soon she began to see details in the world of daylight that she had all but forgotten. The rich brown color of the earth, the red of rosebuds in the garden of a small cottage, the yellow eyes of a drowsy cat captivated her. She took it all in, relishing it.

At the baker's shop, he bought her a raisin cake, which she devoured in three bites. Then further along the road a penny bought a bowl of fresh milk from a milkmaid.

"It's still warm," she said, after she gulped it down.

"Is that not how you like your drink?" he asked.

She wiped her mouth and threw the bowl away. "Take me somewhere," she said, suddenly. "Somewhere the sun shines and the wind blows cold in the morning and warm in the afternoon. Somewhere with wine and sweet things to eat and..." She put her hands to her cheeks, feeling the heat rise in them. "Young men, beautiful young men." Impulsively, she twirled and the white dress twirled around her.

"I would take you anywhere," he said. "But first we must see someone."

They walked to the center of the village and stopped outside the church. She hesitated when he began to climb the stone stairs.

"It's all right," he said. "You're alive again, remember?"

She followed him to the heavy wooden door. He pushed on it, and it opened with a creak. He drew her inside.

The priest stood there in the nave, along with several guards, all holding swords in front of them.

"What is - ?" she began to ask.

"I have brought you the vampire," the man in black said. "She cannot harm you now. Do with her what you will. My debt is paid."

"So it is, wizard," said the priest. "You may go."

The man in black turned and left, closing the heavy door behind him.

She turned back to the priest, ready to argue the innocence of her new beginning, but saw only the flashing of steel, and soon, her own mortal, human blood on the cold stone floor.

By Gabrielle Prendergast © 2012

About this week's author: G.S. (Gabrielle) Prendergast

Gabrielle Prendergast is an award winning writer, teacher and designer living in Vancouver, Canada. She writes picture books and middle grade and YA contemporary and historical as Gabrielle Prendergast. Her science fiction and fantasy is published as G.S. Prendergast. She has won the Monte Miller Award, the Westchester Fiction Award and The BC Book Prize as well as being nominated or short-listed for numerous other honors. Gabrielle has an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia and has taught writing at Sydney University, San Francisco State University, UBC, Royal Canadian College and at numerous conferences. www.gsprendergast.com



Writers to Readers Weekly Study Guide



Comprehension Questions:

1. Who are the main characters in the story, *The Day of the Vampire*?
2. What time of day does the story take place? What historical time? How do you know?
3. What has happened just before the story begins?
4. Why do you think the vampire hesitates on the steps of the church?
5. Find two similes in the story.

Discussion/Essay Questions:

1. Three different senses are used in the story. Find examples. Why do you think the author did this?
2. Much of this story relies on “backstory”. Write a few paragraphs about what you can assume happened in the days and weeks before the story begins.
3. The vampire gave up immortality to be human again. Why do you think she did this?

Vocabulary – Use each word in a sentence

Resolute	Tattered	Impulsively
Inscrutable	Drowsy	Nave

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