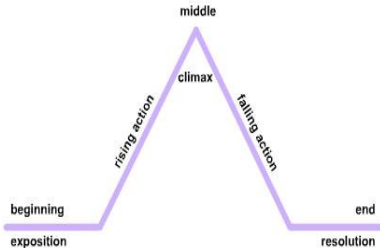


# Y7: Modern Gothic Novel - Darkside

## Why?

Studying this novel gives us the chance to develop our understanding of the writer’s craft, specifically how Tom Becker creates his characters and uses language and structure to build intrigue and tension. We will embed our knowledge of narratology (Freytag’s pyramid) and gothic conventions whilst exploring the writer’s choices in detail.



Recall and Embed

## Characters

**Jonathan Starling**—The protagonist. A troubled teen who has no real parental figures. He skips school, has few friends, and is almost invisible to the rest of the world. He is rebellious and **intrepid** in his daily adventures and his quest to solve the mystery of his father’s illness.

**Alain Starling**—Jonathan’s father. Suffers with a mysterious mental illness for which he is hospitalised. He loves his son (the feeling is mutual) but is heavily sedated by the weight of a dark and supernatural secret.

**Mrs Elwood**— Jonathan’s neighbour and Alain’s friend. She looks out for Jonathan and acts as a grandmother type figure in his life.

**Raquella**— A mysterious young girl who lives in Darkside. She comes from a life of poverty and helps Jonathan in his time of need.

**Carnegie**—A Wereman who lives in Darkside. He is an old friend of Alain who becomes Jonathan’s hostile companion on his quest to find out the truth and save his dad.

**Ricky**—A **vulnerable** boy, bullied by his peers, Ricky wanders off on a school trip and is kidnapped. He is very **naïve** and is easily manipulated by Marianne.

**Marianne** —An **ethereal** and supernatural woman who, despite appearing kind and beautiful, is the **contemptible** kidnapper of children.

**Vendetta**—A vampirical figure who will stop at nothing to feed. He has a calm yet menacing personality and is unfazed by extreme violence.

## Key Concepts:

### Narratology

The narratology of this text, for the most part, follows a traditional **narrative arc**. However, the writer creates intrigue by combining the narratives of Ricky and Jonathan.

### Language patterns

The range of **figurative language** in this text through **metaphor** and **vivid description** are what truly allows us to experience the journey with our protagonist.

### Structure

Structural choices such as **shift in time, place and perspective** build excitement and encourage the reader to solve the puzzle placed in front of them.

### Grammar

Becker uses **punctuation and sentence structure** to cleverly **reflect the emotions** of the characters **and control the pace of the plot**.

### Characterisation

Creating character is a very important part of the **writer’s craft**. Becker crafts interesting characters with specific backstories to **allow the target audience to infer things about them connect with them on range of levels**

## Plot:

The **protagonist, Jonathan Starling**, is an unusual teenage boy. His mother is not around, and his father suffers with waves of mental illness which often result in Jonathan having **no real father figure**. He rarely goes to school and wanders the streets of London alone but when he **discovers a dark and mysterious secret** his world changes forever. He bravely **travels to a ‘darker’ side of London town on a quest** to find out what has troubled his father for so many years.

## Setting:

The novel begins in London as we know it, but when Jonathan enters the ‘Darkside’ we are exposed to a different side of the city filled with supernatural dangers, hostility and squalor.

## Genre/Structure:

- **Modern Gothic novel**
- Elements of **high fantasy and low fantasy**
- Written in **3<sup>rd</sup> person narrative perspective** to show the genuine emotions of multiple characters
- **Two narratives** run alongside each other. The predominant one follows Jonathan, but we also follow Ricky’s journey – the two narratives eventually collide bringing the plot to its **climax**.

# Vocabulary

Motif	A repeated image with symbolic significance.
Inference	To make informed guesses about the text based on the information given.
Low Fantasy	A sub-genre of fantasy where the narrative is set in the <b>real world</b> with supernatural characters and events.
High Fantasy	A sub-genre of fantasy where the narrative is set in a <b>supernatural world</b> with supernatural characters and events.
Contemptible	Someone deserving of hate.
Vulnerable	Exposed to the possibility of harm (physical, mental or emotional)
Naïve	Showing a lack of experience, wisdom or judgement. An innocent person who is easily deceived.
Ethereal	Having a delicate beauty and light airiness which seems almost supernatural.
Foreshadowing	Hints or clues given by the writer which link to future events in the text.
Acrid	Unpleasantly bitter or pungent. (usually refers to taste or smell)
Moral	Knowing the difference between right and wrong and <b>choosing to uphold high standards</b> .
Immoral	Knowing the difference between right and wrong and <b>choosing to act against those expectations</b> .