



The Power of Darkness

Leo Tolstoy

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The Power of Darkness (Russian: ?????? Vlast' t'my) is a five-act drama by Leo Tolstoy. Written in 1886, the play's production was forbidden to be produced in Russia until 1902, mainly through the influence of Konstantin Pobedonostsev. In spite of the ban, the play was unofficially produced and read numerous times.

The Power of Darkness Details

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From Reader Review The Power of Darkness for online ebook

Ana says

"The Power of Darkness" was the first play Tolstoy ever wrote and in my opinion, the darkest. It deals with greed, lust, murder and redemption in a Russian village. Like a lot of his work this feels more like a warning to society than entertainment.

Perihan says

"Tatl? tatl? yemenin ac? ac? kusmas? vard?r!"

Gerçekten çok çarpıcı bir hikayeyi i?lemi? bu kitab?nda Tolstoy Baba.
Para kazanma h?rs?, her çiçekten bal alma arzusu bir insan? nas?l bir felakete ,nas?l bir ruh ölümüne sürüklüyor daha iyi anlat?lamazd?!!!

Joy says

An all-absorbing drama that begins like a soap opera and suddenly becomes as real as a Greek Tragedy. The pacing is almost frantic, hurling the reader into an abyss of degradation and Dante-esque results. The Power of Darkness belongs in the annals alongside the family and community tragedies of Ibsen, Miller, and O'Neill. A true classic.

Sophie says

The most unsettling aspect of this play was that Tolstoy was influenced by a real incident. In 1880, a muzhik publicly confessed, during his daughter's wedding, that he had a baby with her, but killed it as soon as it came into the world. In 1885, as reported by the author himself in his diary, he begins composing The Power of Darkness.

The story itself was the most disturbing thing I've encountered this year. The characters were selfish, relentless, that sacrificed everything in the name of opportunism, while the plot didn't leave them many options to be kind or caring. The ending was unexpected and overwhelming, in a way it provided catharsis, I felt completely satisfied other than melancholic.

Tolstoy is definitely a master of his art, I'd like to read more plays written by him.

❄Elsa Frost❄ says

Very interesting, most definitely! Intriguing, terrifying plot with a very Christian ending that echoes "repentance" towards both God and man for terrible sins that have been committed. I would have to say that I

enjoyed it! I refused to put it down until I finished it.

Debbie Zapata says

As usual, I did not know anything beforehand about this play when I picked it for a year-long challenge to read one short work per week. All I paid attention to was Tolstoy as the author, and knowing that I wanted to read more of his plays. I ended up with two in the same challenge, and what a difference there was between them!

The Fruits of Culture was a comedy, but this play was a tragic drama: just as realistic in character portrayal as the other one, but grim, gruesome, and extremely disturbing. I cannot say I actually liked it, although I do have to admire Tolstoy's unflinching ability to show human beings at their very worst. Greed, lust, murder, cowardice, incredible selfishness, horrific actions....they are all here, bursting off the page. I cannot imagine the reactions this play would have gotten in theaters, I really cannot. I do think Tolstoy was correct to write a variation for the latter section of Act 4. My edition at Gutenberg says the variation is the scene usually acted on stage, which is a good thing, because the original would surely have ladies fainting all over the theater. It was horrible enough to simply read.

So what actually happens in this play? And is the supposed redemption at the end really of any value at all? Well, in a nutshell: secret affairs, death, a marriage, another secret affair, another death in the most disgusting manner imaginable, pushy women, and guilt. Lots of guilt. Tons of guilt. A confession, and an old man saying God will show mercy.

The ending made me angry. The confession is supposed to clear the air, but the other guilty parties did not confess. So does this redeem the one who does? Am I supposed to think of him as a hero now instead of the spineless worm that he is? Maybe God will show mercy, but I won't. I am too old and cynical. If a character cannot be a real human being, whether in fiction or in real life, he deserves whatever he gets.

Well, anyway, the challenge is done (I cheated and have read more than one each week lately so I could finish early) and I have read more of Tolstoy. Now all I have to do is get that scene from Act 4 out of my head.

Elsie Doublé says

It's so powerful that the horror of it made me physically ill.

TarasProkopyuk says

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Mandy says

Tolstoy is not usually thought of as a playwright, but he did in fact write some plays and this 5-act drama is one of his better known. It was banned for many years. Written in 1886 it had to wait until 1902 to be performed, although there were some unofficial productions before that and it was widely read. I have a sneaking sympathy for the censor because it's certainly a dark and shocking play. For all his avowed sympathy for the peasants and their place as the "true" representatives of Russia, here Tolstoy doesn't shrink from portraying the sordid aspects of depraved peasant life. Poverty, drunkenness, adultery, murder and infanticide. Not a redeeming feature in sight. Ignorance and superstition, greed and violence are the downfall of the family depicted in this short, powerful and disturbing play.

Emma says

ugh

Orcun says

Kötülüğün hiçbir romantik boyut katılmayan, en hesaplı ve banal halinin anlatıldığı, ismini de hak eden bir oyun. Buna rağmen, Tolstoy'un tamamen umutsuz olduğunu da söyleyemeyiz...

Des says

I received an Advanced Reader Copy (ARC) from NetGalley and the publisher in exchange for an honest review?

"One sin holds on to another and pulls you along. Nikita, you are stuck in sins. You are stuck, I see, in sins. You are stuck fast, so to speak. I have heard that nowadays they pull fathers' beards, so to speak -- but this leads only to ruin, to ruin, so to speak.... There is your money. I will go and beg, so to speak, but I will not, so to speak, take your money.... Let me go! I will not stay! I would rather sleep near the fence than in your nastiness."

-Akim to Nikita

Such a story eh and it evokes my emotion as the reader. I have to praise Tolstoy for being able and being so brilliant in portraying his characters. They seem so real and alive! As a conclusion remarks I just want to highlight that The Power of Darkness is a terrible picture of poverty, ignorance and superstition. It takes a great writer to write this kind of story because it requires a deeply sympathetic human soul. Tolstoy possessed both because he excelled in writing them and wrapped them in this story. He understood that the tragedy of the peasants' life is because an oppression or viciousness of such mechanism that he allegorised as the power of darkness. A book that ones should try to read...at least once in their life time.

Full Review: <https://literatureisliving.wordpress....>

Fran says

Russian village life in the 19th Century was fraught with poverty and deprivation. The village dwellers were peasants who felt the presence of a darkness clouding their very existence. Peter Ignatitch, a middle aged and well-to-do peasant, was in poor health. What might happen to his farm, his wife and children upon his death? Where did he stash his monetary funds?

Peter's wife Anisya was worried about her future. "A peasant woman, what is she? Just mud...So many millions of girls and women, and all like beasts in a forest!" Nikita, their farm laborer might be able to run the farm and control the purse strings. Why not plan Peter's immediate demise and make way for Anisya and Nikita to marry, after all, they are already in an adulterous relationship. Nikita, however, is a multiple philanderer. "If you know how to amuse yourself, you must know how to hide the consequences." Sins and lies multiply on Nikita's "road to ruin".

"The Power of Darkness" by Leo Tolstoy is a five act dramatic play. The story is character driven, the characters extremely well crafted. Anisya is riddled with anxiety, Nikita loves women and spending money, Nikita's mother is a schemer and his father is a God fearing peasant. A compliment of additional protagonists share their detailed stories. Tolstoy displays how greed and lust lead to layer upon layer of lies and deception. A highly recommended read.

Alfajri Putra says

Before i was knew this novel for a whole, I-literally- doesnt even interesting about this novel. My first introduction to this novel is when this novel was played in my drama class. We were adopt its story. The story is quite interesting, where as Tolstoy's stories before, very strong conflicts within the family, highlighting the life of Russian society at the time.

Nermine Tadross says

The Power of Darkness (1883) is the first play I read by Tolstoy. The play skillfully depicts the life in a poor Russian village; superstitions, ignorance and the deteriorating condition of women. So I think this what he means by "darkness." The disturbing thing, for me, is that Tolstoy depicts women as the root of evil in the play. While the protagonist (a young man) redeems himself at the end; women are totally incorrigible. One of the characters describes women in the play as "Just mud! There are many millions of the likes of you in Russia, and all as blind as moles—knowing nothing! All sorts of spells: how to stop the cattle-plague with a plough, and how to cure children by putting them under the perches in the hen-house! That's what they know!" I don't know what were his motives behind such disturbing portraits of women; but may be it was partly to emphasize the power of ignorance and poverty. I plan to read another play by Tolstoy to know him

better as a playwright.
