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Two Minds - Two Stories

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Abstract
This is a project about two separate writers from two different eras that have one main thing in common, the conflict. The two short stories show how each writer uses their literary elements to portray a stunning masterpiece. This gets the reader thinking about what type of connection can be made and the relations between them.

Theme
External conflict: The Jenkins are jealous of the Hodgsons for having a family while the Hodgsons are envious of the Jenkins’ for having money.
Internal Conflict: Mrs. Dover has a twenty-five year old forgotten promise that was abruptly remembered by a letter sent to her by a ghost of the past.

Christmas Storms and Sunshine by Elizabeth Gaskell (1848)
The Hodgsons and the Jenkins. The conflict starts from the very beginning because of the dispute between Mr. Hodgson’s and Mr. Jenkins place of business. Mr. Hodgson’s works for the Examiner while Mr. Jenkins works for the Flying post. There conflict is ongoing even though the Christmas holiday. The Jenkins’ have money, but no family. On the other hand the Hodgsons have family, but little money. Things turn for the worse when Mrs Hodgson finds her baby not breathing well due to croup. Frantically, she asks Mrs. Jenkins for a kettle. Initially the response is no, but the irony sets in when Mrs. Jenkins realizes even though she despises Mrs. Hodgsons, choosing a kettle over a baby’s life is just wrong. “what a brute I am, Lord forgive me! What’s my husband’s tea to a baby’s life?”... she was down stairs (Kettle in hand) before she had finished her self-upbraiding” (Gaskell 983).

The Demon Lover by Elizabeth Bowen (1945)
Mrs. Dover went back to her childhood home to retrieve some of her belongings that she and her family left behind when they were forced to leave during WWI. Upon arrival, Mrs. Dover discovered a single white envelope. The thought of no one being at the house for over a year put her off. Intrigued, she opens the letter. In that moment a twenty-five year old promise and a lifetime full of guilt comes back to haunt her. “She dropped the letter onto the bed spring, then picked it up to see the writing again - her lips, beneath the remains of lipstick, beginning to go white” (Bowen 1208). Shocked, but knowing it was from a man she made a promise to twenty-five years ago, she frantically leaves the house and calls a taxi only for it to arrive a minute before the prearranged time in the letter. Believing she is safe, she soon realizes what she was trying to get away from was right in front of her.

Conclusion
Gaskell and Bowen are two different writers from two different eras that have one thing in common, the conflict. Whether it be with the Jenkins and Hodgson bitter rivalry or Mrs. Dovers forgotten promise. The conflict brings an added suspense that both short stories portray in a beautiful way. It proves that literary elements are not bound by the age of time.

Future Research
Additional research could be done in the following places: public library, online, chat room and teacher assistance.

Works Cited