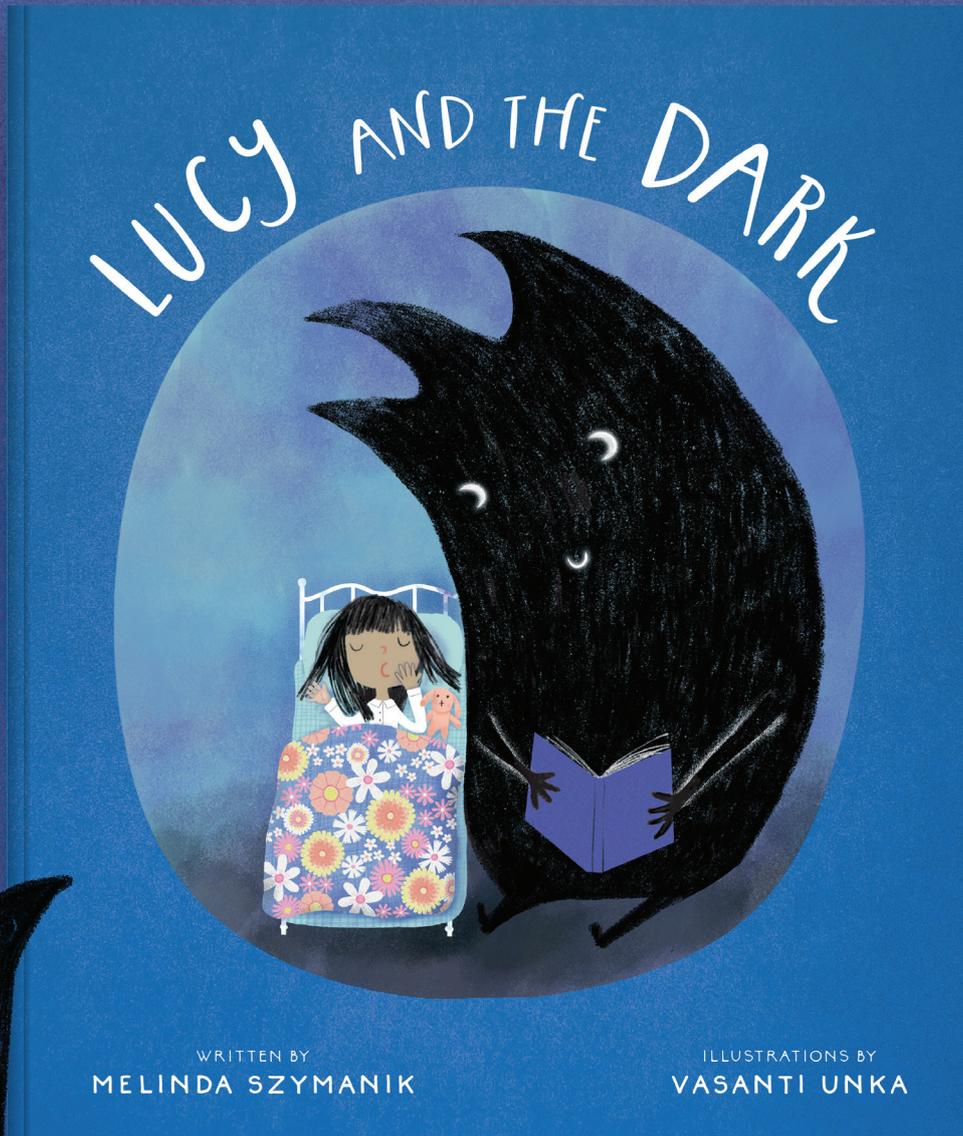




TEACHER NOTES



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SYNOPSIS

Lucy is afraid of the dark and has a night light by her bed every night. One night the lightbulb blows, and Lucy discovers she is not alone in her bedroom – Dark is there too. Dark is sure that Lucy will reject them just like everyone else does but the pair quickly become friends.

Before long Lucy and the Dark have run away together so Dark can show her all the wonderful things that happen in darkness. But no one can sleep in the constant daylight, and nocturnal animals are frustrated and hungry. When Lucy gets a letter from her mother telling her she misses her Lucy persuades Dark to return, much to everyone's relief.



PHOTO CREDIT: © PHOTOGRAPH NIKI HIL

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Melinda Szymanik is an award winning author of picture books, short stories and novels for children. Her books include *The Were-Nana* (illustrated by Sarah Anderson), winner of Children's Choice at the 2009 NZ Post Children's Book Awards and shortlisted for the Sakura Medal, and the junior novel, *A Winter's Day in 1939*, shortlisted for best Junior Fiction at the 2014 NZ Post Children's Book Awards and winner of Librarian's Choice at the 2014 LIANZA Awards.

Her picture book *Fuzzy Doodle* (illustrated by Donovan Bixley), was shortlisted for the 2017 NZCYA Awards for best picture book and for the Russell Clark Award, and was selected by the International Youth Library in Munich, for a 2017 White Raven Award.

Melinda lives in Auckland, New Zealand.



PHOTO CREDIT: © AHNAND UNKA

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Vasanti Unka is an award winning writer, designer and illustrator noted for the originality of her storytelling, her riotously colourful and inventive illustrations and the gorgeous design and production of her picture books.

Vasanti illustrated *Hill & Hole* (written by Kyle Mewburn), which was shortlisted for the Best Picture Book Award at the 2011 New Zealand Post Book Awards for Children and Young Adults. It won the LIANZA Russell Clark Award the same year and was also the first children's book to win the Gerard Reid Award for Best Book at the PANZ Book Design Awards.

Ask the children/students what they think about night-time and darkness? Show your child/students the cover and ask what they think the story is about. Why do they think that?

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What happens that forces Lucy to meet the Dark? (Answer: the light bulb fails).
2. Why does Lucy change her mind about the Dark? (Answer: because the Dark is sad and lonely and isn't that scary when she gets to know them).
3. Why are all the people so upset and angry when Lucy and the Dark run away? (Answer: they can't sleep because we sleep best in darkness).
4. Name five places that Lucy visits with the Dark? (Answer: Caves, graveyards, the night sky, tunnels, channels, underground mines).
5. How does Dark describe themselves? (Answer: 'I am just an absence of light').
6. How does Lucy persuade the Dark to return home? (Answer: she says people can't live without the dark, and she will be there and will always be Dark's friend).

SHARED LEARNING AND DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The author chose the name Lucy for her main character on purpose. Find out what the name means. What other names might also have been good for the main character in this story?
2. Why is sleep so important? Can we survive without sleep?
3. Some countries have days where there is no darkness at night-time. Which countries? When and why does it happen? Note: these countries also have days without daylight in them.
4. Some animals prefer to be awake when it is dark. What name is given to these creatures? Name five nocturnal animals. Why do you think they prefer to come out at night?
5. What are some important things that happen in the dark that we would miss if we did not have it? (Some interesting answers can be found here - <https://www.myhelsinki.fi/en/see-and-do/activities/6-reasons-to-appreciate-the-darkness>)

ACTIVITIES

1. Where would you most like to go with the Dark? (Answer: there is no wrong answer). Write a poem about what you might see when you run away with the Dark to the place you have chosen.
2. The illustrator has done a wonderful job of illustrating Dark. What do you think Dark looks like? Draw your own picture of Dark and colour it in. What techniques can you use to make Dark stand out from the night?
3. Place the book near a good light source (natural or electric), for around ten to twenty minutes. Then find a large cupboard, step inside and shut the door, or if at night, turn all the lights out. Enjoy!

