



Dark
(USA, 2002, 95 Minutes)
Director: D.A. Bullock
Study Guide

Synopsis

Dark Freeman lives in two vastly opposed worlds: one of privilege and opportunity – the University of Chicago and one of violence and fear – Chicago’s ‘South Side.’ He is a student in the first and a resident in the latter, but belongs to neither. Dark’s uniqueness lies in its attempt to construct a personal but equally symbolic vision. It deals with the effects of poverty and violence on the young in Chicago, but focuses on the tragic results of internalizing the frustration arising from these conditions. Ultimately, Dark imagines a new type of redemption: the path a man can take to heal himself.

Themes In the Film

Depression, Alienation
Drug use
Family trauma
Transition to adulthood
Catcher In the Rye, Native Son

Study Questions

- What are some of the struggles faced by young African-American men trying to succeed in today’s society? What are some of the ways these struggles can be faced personally?
- Do you ever feel distanced from your own life, as though watching it unfold from afar? What do you think causes those feelings? What can be done to combat such feelings of powerlessness?

Classroom Exercise

Have the students write about someone they know who is “in trouble”. Then discuss their recommendations for recovery.

Discussion Questions

- Dark Freeman has been described as an “inaction hero”. What do you think was meant by that?
- Why do you think Dark attacked the pedestrian?
- Do you think Dark “hit bottom”? If so, do you think he had to fall before he could recover, or was there an earlier point in the story where you thought he would have gotten it together?

- What event, person, realization or moment caused him to finally bounce back from the abyss?