

## **Gothic Literature - Context**

Traditional Gothic literature emerged in the late 18th century, primarily in England, and was influenced by various cultural, social, and historical factors of the time. Traditional Gothic literature, with its emphasis on the mysterious, supernatural, and emotional, served as a reflection of the cultural anxieties and shifts of the late 18th century, providing an outlet for exploring the darker aspects of the human psyche and society.

Enlightenment and Reaction to Rationalism:

- Traditional Gothic literature emerged in the wake of the Enlightenment, a period characterized by a focus on reason, science, and rational thinking.
- The Gothic served as a reaction against the rationalism of the Enlightenment, exploring themes that were mysterious, irrational, and emotional.

Industrial Revolution and Urbanization:

- The Industrial Revolution brought about significant social and economic changes, leading to rapid urbanization and the growth of industrial cities.
- The Gothic often depicted the darker side of progress, with stories set in remote, decaying castles or mysterious landscapes, contrasting the bustling urban environments.

Political Instability and Social Unrest:

- The late 18th century was marked by political instability, including the American and French Revolutions. The Gothic literature of the time reflected anxieties about social and political upheavals.
- Themes of rebellion, tyranny, and social injustice were explored in Gothic narratives.

Romantic Movement:

- The Romantic movement, characterized by an emphasis on emotion, nature, and the sublime, influenced Gothic literature.
- Romantic poets and writers like William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge contributed to the Gothic's fascination with the mysterious and supernatural.

Cultural Fascination with the Exotic:

- There was a growing fascination with the exotic and the unknown, fuelled by discoveries in geography and anthropology.
- Gothic literature often incorporated elements of foreign and mysterious settings, adding to the sense of otherworldliness.

Gothic Architecture and Aesthetics:

- The term "Gothic" originally referred to a style of architecture prevalent in medieval Europe. The medieval aesthetic, with its pointed arches, gargoyles, and vaulted ceilings, influenced the visual aspects of Gothic literature.

## **Broad timeline highlighting key moments and phases in the evolution of Gothic literature:**

### 18th Century: Origins and Early Development:

1764: Horace Walpole's "The Castle of Otranto" is widely considered the first Gothic novel, featuring supernatural elements, mysterious settings, and a gloomy atmosphere.

In the Late 18th Century, the works of Ann Radcliffe, including "The Mysteries of Udolpho" (1794), contribute to the development of the Gothic novel with a focus on psychological terror and sublime landscapes.

#### 19th Century: Expansion and Diversification:

Early 19th Century: The Gothic tradition expands with the works of authors like Matthew Lewis ("The Monk," 1796) and Mary Shelley ("Frankenstein," 1818), introducing elements of horror and science fiction.

Mid-19th Century: Edgar Allan Poe's tales, such as "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), contribute to American Gothic literature, emphasizing psychological horror.

Late 19th Century: Victorian Gothic literature, with works like Robert Louis Stevenson's "Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" (1886), explores moral and psychological themes.

#### 20th Century: Revival and Modernization

Early 20th Century: Gothic influences persist in literature, influencing authors like Daphne du Maurier ("Rebecca," 1938) and H.P. Lovecraft in the realm of cosmic horror.

Mid-20th Century: Southern Gothic emerges with works like William Faulkner's novels, exploring the American South's cultural complexities.

Late 20th Century: Gothic elements appear in various genres, from Stephen King's horror novels to Anne Rice's vampire tales ("Interview with the Vampire," 1976).

#### Contemporary Era: Gothic in the 21st Century

2000s Onward: Gothic influences continue to thrive in literature and popular culture, with a resurgence of interest in traditional Gothic themes and motifs.

21st Century Literature: Contemporary authors such as Sarah Waters ("Fingersmith," 2002) and Helen Oyeyemi ("White is for Witching," 2009) incorporate Gothic elements into their works.

Film and Television: Gothic themes persist in contemporary film and TV, with adaptations and original works exploring the Gothic tradition in various genres.

#### Overall:

The genre has proven to be resilient, continually adapting to reflect societal anxieties and evolving literary tastes.

### **Gothic tradition and its influence on the contemporary**

Originating in the 18th century, Gothic literature, with its eerie atmospheres, supernatural elements, and haunted settings, has left an indelible mark on the artistic landscape. In contemporary literature, authors continue to draw inspiration from the Gothic tradition, infusing their works with the same sense of mystery, dread, and the macabre. The exploration of psychological depths, the uncanny, and the blurred boundaries between reality and the supernatural that characterized classic Gothic tales resonates in the narratives of modern storytellers.

The impact of traditional Gothic literature is palpable in the realm of film. Directors and screenwriters frequently pay homage to the Gothic tradition, employing its conventions to craft visually stunning and psychologically intense cinematic experiences. From haunted mansions to tortured protagonists, Gothic motifs find new life on the silver screen, captivating audiences with a potent blend of horror

and allure. Contemporary filmmakers often delve into the darker recesses of the human psyche, mirroring the Gothic fascination with the unknown and the unsettling.

In essence, the Gothic tradition serves as a rich tapestry from which contemporary creators draw threads of inspiration, weaving them seamlessly into the fabric of modern storytelling. The echoes of classic Gothic literature persist in the shadows of contemporary narratives, ensuring that its influence remains a haunting force in both literature and film.

**Additional Reading and Viewing List (including more contemporary texts)** – selected texts in this table represent films and novels richly influenced by gothic literary traditions.

**CAUTION:** Not all films and episodes are appropriate viewing for a high school audience in a school-based context. However, each contains scenes which could be viewed at the teacher’s discretion, to illustrate key stylistic features and devices, or points of gothic influence. One such example includes the scene Crimson Peak in which the newlyweds first arrive at the manor, which emphasizes themes of isolation, decay and threat.

<b>Films</b>	
<u>The Sixth Sense</u> (1999) Directed by M. Night Shyamalan Australian Rating M	A psychological thriller incorporating supernatural elements and an eerie atmosphere. Stars Bruce Willis.
<u>The Others</u> (2001) Directed by Alejandro Amenábar Australian Rating: M	A supernatural horror film featuring a haunted mansion, mysterious occurrences, and a pervasive sense of dread. Stars Nicole Kidman.
<u>Pan's Labyrinth</u> (2006) Directed by Guillermo del Toro. Australian Rating: MA15+	A dark fantasy film combining elements of the Gothic with fairy-tale elements which explores the impact of war on a young girl.
<u>Coraline</u> (2009) Directed by Harry Selick Australian Rating: PG	Adapted from Neil Gaiman’s novella of the same name, a dark fantasy stop-motion animated horror. A girl finds a fantastical world that mirrors her own and discovers its sinister secret.
<u>The Woman in Black</u> (2012) Directed by James Watkins Australian Rating PG	Based on Susan Hill's 1983 novel, this film follows a lawyer encountering a vengeful ghost in a secluded mansion. Stars Daniel Radcliff. <a href="https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1596365/?ref=fn_al_tt_1">https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1596365/?ref=fn_al_tt_1</a>
<u>Stoker</u> (2013) Directed by Park Chan-wook Australian Rating MA15+	A psychological thriller rich in Gothic atmosphere, exploring themes of family secrets and dark desires.
<u>Victor Frankenstein</u> (2015) Directed by Paul McGuigan Australian Rating M	Offers a twist on the classic tale, focusing on the relationship between Victor Frankenstein (James McAvoy) and Igor (Daniel Radcliffe).
<u>Crimson Peak</u> (2015) Directed by Guillermo del Toro Australian Rating MA15+	A haunting Gothic romance, featuring a young bride in a mysterious and ominous mansion. Features decay, unnatural desires and the supernatural. Stars Tom Hiddleston, Mia Wiakowski and Jessica Chastain. <a href="https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2554274/">https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2554274/</a>
<u>The Limehouse Golem</u> (2016) Directed by Juan Carlos Medina Australian Rating MA15+	In this gothic murder mystery set in Victorian London, a Scotland Yard inspector hunts down the sadistic killer behind a series of gory, Jack the Ripper-Like murders. <a href="https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4733640/?ref=tt_urv">https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4733640/?ref=tt_urv</a>

<b>Novels</b>	
<u>The Turn of the Screw</u> (1898) by Henry James	A psychological ghost story in which a governess becomes increasingly convinced that malevolent spirits are influencing her young charges at a remote English estate.
<u>Rebecca</u> (1938) by Daphne de Maurier	A haunting tale of a young bride who becomes consumed by the lingering presence of her husband's first wife, Rebecca, as she navigates the mysteries and secrets of Manderley, their grand estate.
<u>We Have Always Lived in the Castle</u> (1962) by Shirley Jackson	A mystery novel and Jackson's final work. A psychological thriller that follows the eccentric Blackwood sisters, Mary Katherine (Merricat) and Constance, as they live in isolation in their family estate, haunted by a mysterious past and the villagers' suspicions after a tragic event.
<u>The Thirteenth Tale</u> (2006) by Diane Setterfield	A modern Gothic novel that weaves together family secrets, ghosts, and a decaying mansion.
<u>Mexican Gothic</u> (2020) by Silvia Moreno-Garcia	Set in 1950s Mexico, this novel combines Gothic horror with social commentary, featuring a haunted house and mysterious family history.
<u>The Shadow of the Wind</u> (2001) by Carlos Ruiz Zafón	A labyrinthine tale set in post-war Barcelona, combining elements of mystery and Gothic ambiance.
<u>Rebecca's Tale</u> (2001) by Sally Beauman	A sequel to Daphne du Maurier's "Rebecca," continuing the Gothic narrative with a focus on the mysterious Manderley estate.
<u>Sharp Objects</u> (2006) by Gillian Flynn	A psychological thriller with Gothic undertones, delving into a journalist's investigation of a murder in her hometown.

### **Southern Gothic**

Southern Gothic is a subgenre of Gothic fiction that originated in the United States, particularly in the Southern states. It emerged in the 20th century and is characterized by its use of the Gothic elements – such as the macabre, grotesque, and mysterious – in the context of the American South. The Southern Gothic tradition often explores themes related to the cultural, social, and historical complexities of the Southern United States. The genre has had a significant impact on American literature and continues to influence contemporary storytelling.

Notable works in the Southern Gothic tradition:

- William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury
- Flannery O'Connor's Wise Blood
- Tennessee Williams' plays, especially A Streetcar Named Desire

Key features of the Southern Gothic tradition include:

**Atmosphere:** Similar to traditional Gothic literature, Southern Gothic relies heavily on atmosphere. It creates a sense of foreboding and unease, often using the Southern landscape as a backdrop, with its swamps, decaying mansions, and oppressive heat.

**Southern Setting:** The stories are typically set in the Southern United States, with an emphasis on the region's distinct culture, history, and social issues. Plantations, small towns, and rural landscapes are common settings.

**Southern Characters:** Characters in Southern Gothic literature often embody the complexities and contradictions of Southern culture. They may grapple with issues such as race, class, and the legacy of the Civil War. Characters can range from eccentric and grotesque to morally ambiguous.

**Family Secrets:** The theme of family secrets and hidden pasts is prevalent. Characters often confront dark family histories, buried truths, and the consequences of the past on the present.

**Social Commentary:** Southern Gothic frequently serves as a platform for social commentary. It addresses issues such as racial tension, poverty, and the changing dynamics of Southern society.

**Supernatural Elements:** While not always present, Southern Gothic stories may include supernatural or eerie elements. These elements contribute to the overall sense of mystery and often serve as metaphors for deeper societal issues.

**Religious Themes:** Religious symbolism and themes are common, often exploring the tension between religious beliefs and the characters' actions.

#### **AI Generated Description of a Southern Gothic Scene:**

Amidst the sweltering heat of a **Louisiana bayou**, where the air hangs thick with humidity and secrets, stands an ancient **mansion**. Its once-grand facade now crumbles, revealing faded white columns and moss-covered walls. The **Spanish moss** drapes over the roof like a shroud, casting elongated shadows on the cracked veranda.

The mansion's windows are **shuttered**, their wooden slats warped by time and weather. Behind those shutters, **yellowed lace curtains** flutter, as if stirred by unseen hands. The glass panes hold reflections of **ghostly magnolias**, their petals bruised and wilting.

At the entrance, a **worn wooden door** creaks on rusted hinges. The threshold is crossed by **creeping vines**, their tendrils seeking entry. The doorknob, once polished brass, now tarnished, beckons with a promise of forgotten stories.

Inside, the air smells of **dampness** and decay. The **grand staircase**, its balustrade carved with intricate patterns, spirals upward into darkness. Each step groans under the weight of memories—of debutante balls, whispered confessions, and forbidden love affairs.

In the parlor, a **piano** sits silent, its ivory keys yellowed and chipped. Dust dances in the slanting rays of the **wan moon**, filtering through moth-eaten curtains. The **portrait** above the fireplace depicts a stern-faced matriarch, her eyes following visitors with suspicion.

But it's the **gargoyle** that commands attention. Perched on the mantelpiece, its stone wings unfurled, it glares at the room with **malice**. Its mouth, twisted into a grotesque snarl, seems to hold secrets—of lost heirs, buried treasure, and curses that cling to the land.

Outside, the **bayou** encroaches. The murky water laps at the mansion's foundation, threatening to swallow it whole. The **cicadas** sing their mournful tune, and somewhere in the distance, a **banjo** plucks out a haunting melody.

As the moon reaches its zenith, the mansion stirs. Shadows elongate, and the gargoyle's eyes seem to glow. Is it a guardian or a malevolent spirit? Perhaps both. For in the heart of the Southern Gothic, the line between protector and tormentor blurs—a reflection of the region's tangled history.

And so, "Bayou Whispers" stands—an embodiment of decay, desire, and the restless souls that haunt the moss-draped South.

### **Recommended academic texts for further reading:**

#### **Traditional Gothic Literature:**

**The Gothic Tradition by David Stevens:** This book provides a comprehensive overview of the Gothic tradition from its origins to the modern day, covering key themes, motifs, and historical contexts.

**Gothic: Origins and Innovations by Allan Lloyd Smith:** Focusing on the evolution of the Gothic genre, this book examines its origins and subsequent developments, offering insights into its cultural and literary significance.

**The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction edited by Jerrold E. Hogle:** This collection of essays explores various aspects of Gothic fiction, including its historical development, major works, and critical approaches.

**The Female Gothic: New Directions edited by Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith:** This collection of essays explores the representation of women in Gothic literature, providing a feminist perspective on the genre.

**Gothic Literature by Andrew Smith:** Part of the Edinburgh Critical Guides to Literature series, this book provides a concise yet thorough examination of Gothic literature, covering major themes and critical approaches.

#### **Southern Gothic Tradition:**

**Southern Gothic: New Perspectives on an American Tradition edited by Matthew Wynn Sivils:** This collection of essays explores different aspects of Southern Gothic literature, providing fresh perspectives and critical analyses.

**Southern Gothic Literature by Teresa Goddu:** Part of the University of Wales Press Gothic Literary Studies series, this book examines the Southern Gothic tradition, exploring its themes, settings, and cultural implications.

**Understanding Flannery O'Connor by Margaret Earley Whitt:** Focusing on one of the key figures in Southern Gothic literature, this book delves into the works of Flannery O'Connor, offering insights into her themes, style, and cultural context.



## The Gothic Imagination – A Reader

### Text Excerpts from:

*The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole

*The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson

*Dracula* by Bram Stoker

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelly

*Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte

### Poems:

“The Raven” by Edgar Allen Poe

“The Goblin Market” by Christina Rossetti

This selection of readings has been assembled from classic gothic literature accessed through Project Gutenberg. Full html versions of all novels and poems are available from <https://www.gutenberg.org/>.

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### Excerpt 1

**From:** The Castle of Otranto, “Chapter 1”, by Horace Walpole

Full text accessible from Project Gutenberg: <https://gutenberg.org/cache/epub/696/pg696-images.html>

**Context:** The Castle of Otranto is considered the first true gothic novel written in English and founded the horror genre as a legitimate literary form. It was published under a pseudonym by Walpole in 1764. The story is fictitiously presented as a translation of an earlier manuscript from the time of the Crusades, and presents the story of Manfred, Prince of Otranto, desperately trying to avoid the fulfillment of an ancient prophesy (which promises to end the family’s rule of Otranto) by marrying his son Conrad to the princess Isabella.

In this scene, which takes place early in the novel, Isabella attempts to flee from Manfred, who is determined to marry her in his son’s stead, after a helmet fell from the sky and unexpectedly killed Conrad.

The lady, whose resolution had given way to terror the moment she had quitted Manfred, continued her flight to the bottom of the principal staircase. There she stopped, not knowing whither to direct her steps, nor how to escape from the impetuosity of the Prince. The gates of the castle, she knew, were locked, and guards placed in the court. Should she, as her heart prompted her, go and prepare Hippolita

for the cruel destiny that awaited her, she did not doubt but Manfred would seek her there, and that his violence would incite him to double the injury he meditated, without leaving room for them to avoid the impetuosity of his passions. Delay might give him time to reflect on the horrid measures he had conceived, or produce some circumstance in her favour, if she could—for that night, at least—avoid his odious purpose. Yet where conceal herself? How avoid the pursuit he would infallibly make throughout the castle?

As these thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, she recollected a subterraneous passage which led from the vaults of the castle to the church of St. Nicholas. Could she reach the altar before she was overtaken, she knew even Manfred's violence would not dare to profane the sacredness of the place; and she determined, if no other means of deliverance offered, to shut herself up for ever among the holy virgins whose convent was contiguous to the cathedral. In this resolution, she seized a lamp that burned at the foot of the staircase, and hurried towards the secret passage.

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror; yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of Manfred urging his domestics to pursue her.

She trod as softly as impatience would give her leave, yet frequently stopped and listened to hear if she was followed. In one of those moments she thought she heard a sigh. She shuddered, and recoiled a few paces. In a moment she thought she heard the step of some person. Her blood curdled; she concluded it was Manfred. Every suggestion that horror could inspire rushed into her mind. She condemned her rash flight, which had thus exposed her to his rage in a place where her cries were not likely to draw anybody to her assistance. Yet the sound seemed not to come from behind. If Manfred knew where she was, he must have followed her. She was still in one of the cloisters, and the steps she had heard were too distinct to proceed from the way she had come. Cheered with this reflection, and hoping to find a friend in whoever was not the Prince, she was going to advance, when a door that stood ajar, at some distance to the left, was opened gently: but ere her lamp, which she held up, could discover who opened it, the person retreated precipitately on seeing the light.

Isabella, whom every incident was sufficient to dismay, hesitated whether she should proceed. Her dread of Manfred soon outweighed every other terror. The very circumstance of the person avoiding her gave her a sort of courage. It could only be, she thought, some domestic belonging to the castle. Her gentleness had never raised her an enemy, and conscious innocence made her hope that, unless sent by the Prince's order to seek her, his servants would rather assist than prevent her flight. Fortifying herself with these reflections, and believing by what she could observe that she was near the mouth of the subterraneous cavern, she approached the door that had been opened; but a sudden gust of wind that met her at the door extinguished her lamp, and left her in total darkness.

Words cannot paint the horror of the Princess's situation. Alone in so dismal a place, her mind imprinted with all the terrible events of the day, hopeless of escaping, expecting every moment the arrival of Manfred, and far from tranquil on knowing she was within reach of somebody, she knew not whom, who for some cause seemed concealed thereabouts; all these thoughts crowded on her distracted mind, and she was ready to sink under her apprehensions. She addressed herself to every saint in heaven, and inwardly implored their assistance. For a considerable time she remained in an agony of despair.

At last, as softly as was possible, she felt for the door, and having found it, entered trembling into the vault from whence she had heard the sigh and steps. It gave her a kind of momentary joy to perceive an imperfect ray of clouded moonshine gleam from the roof of the vault, which seemed to be fallen in, and from whence hung a fragment of earth or building, she could not distinguish which, that appeared to have been crushed inwards. She advanced eagerly towards this chasm, when she discerned a human form standing close against the wall.

She shrieked, believing it the ghost of her betrothed Conrad. The figure, advancing, said, in a submissive voice—

“Be not alarmed, Lady; I will not injure you.”

Isabella, a little encouraged by the words and tone of voice of the stranger, and recollecting that this must be the person who had opened the door, recovered her spirits enough to reply—

“Sir, whoever you are, take pity on a wretched Princess, standing on the brink of destruction. Assist me to escape from this fatal castle, or in a few moments I may be made miserable for ever.”

“Alas!” said the stranger, “what can I do to assist you? I will die in your defence; but I am unacquainted with the castle, and want—”

“Oh!” said Isabella, hastily interrupting him; “help me but to find a trap-door that must be hereabout, and it is the greatest service you can do me, for I have not a minute to lose.”

Saying these words, she felt about on the pavement, and directed the stranger to search likewise, for a smooth piece of brass enclosed in one of the stones.

“That,” said she, “is the lock, which opens with a spring, of which I know the secret. If we can find that, I may escape—if not, alas! courteous stranger, I fear I shall have involved you in my misfortunes: Manfred will suspect you for the accomplice of my flight, and you will fall a victim to his resentment.”

“I value not my life,” said the stranger, “and it will be some comfort to lose it in trying to deliver you from his tyranny.”

“Generous youth,” said Isabella, “how shall I ever requite—”

As she uttered those words, a ray of moonshine, streaming through a cranny of the ruin above, shone directly on the lock they sought.

“Oh! transport!” said Isabella; “here is the trap-door!” and, taking out the key, she touched the spring, which, starting aside, discovered an iron ring. “Lift up the door,” said the Princess.

The stranger obeyed, and beneath appeared some stone steps descending into a vault totally dark.

“We must go down here,” said Isabella. “Follow me; dark and dismal as it is, we cannot miss our way; it leads directly to the church of St. Nicholas. But, perhaps,” added the Princess modestly, “you have no reason to leave the castle, nor have I farther occasion for your service; in a few minutes I shall be safe from Manfred’s rage—only let me know to whom I am so much obliged.”

“I will never quit you,” said the stranger eagerly, “until I have placed you in safety—nor think me, Princess, more generous than I am; though you are my principal care—”

The stranger was interrupted by a sudden noise of voices that seemed approaching, and they soon distinguished these words—

“Talk not to me of necromancers; I tell you she must be in the castle; I will find her in spite of enchantment.”

“Oh, heavens!” cried Isabella; “it is the voice of Manfred! Make haste, or we are ruined! and shut the trap-door after you.”

Saying this, she descended the steps precipitately; and as the stranger hastened to follow her, he let the door slip out of his hands: it fell, and the spring closed over it. He tried in vain to open it, not having observed Isabella’s method of touching the spring; nor had he many moments to make an essay. The noise of the falling door had been heard by Manfred, who, directed by the sound, hastened thither, attended by his servants with torches.



## Excerpt 2

**From:** The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, “Henry Jekyll’s Full Statement of the Case” (Chapter 10) by Robert Louis Stevenson

Full text available from Project Gutenberg: <https://gutenberg.org/cache/epub/43/pg43-images.html>

**Context:** The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is a gothic novel which critiques the public social constraint placed upon people during the Victorian era. The conflict between emerging understanding and swift development of science and the strict social norms to which the upper classes had to adhere which forced some people to essentially lead double lives underpin the entire text.

In this scene, which appears at the end of the novel in the final chapter (which functions as an appendix), Dr Jekyll explains the physical and mental effects of his transformation into Mr Hyde.

I hesitated long before I put this theory to the test of practice. I knew well that I risked death; for any drug that so potently controlled and shook the very fortress of identity, might, by the least scruple of an overdose or at the least inopportunity in the moment of exhibition, utterly blot out that immaterial tabernacle which I looked to it to change. But the temptation of a discovery so singular and profound at last overcame the suggestions of alarm. I had long since prepared my tincture; I purchased at once, from a firm of wholesale chemists, a large quantity of a particular salt which I knew, from my experiments, to be the last ingredient required; and late one accursed night, I compounded the elements, watched them boil and smoke together in the glass, and when the ebullition had subsided, with a strong glow of courage, drank off the potion.

The most racking pangs succeeded: a grinding in the bones, deadly nausea, and a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death. Then these agonies began swiftly to subside, and I came to myself as if out of a great sickness. There was something strange in my sensations, something indescribably new and, from its very novelty, incredibly sweet. I felt younger, lighter, happier in body; within I was conscious of a heady recklessness, a current of disordered sensual images running like a millrace in my fancy, a solution of the bonds of obligation, an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul. I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine. I stretched out my hands, exulting in the freshness of these sensations; and in the act, I was suddenly aware that I had lost in stature.

There was no mirror, at that date, in my room; that which stands beside me as I write, was brought there later on and for the very purpose of these transformations. The night however, was far gone into the morning—the morning, black as it was, was nearly ripe for the conception of the day—the inmates of my house were locked in the most rigorous hours of slumber; and I determined, flushed as I was with hope and triumph, to venture in my new shape as far as to my bedroom. I crossed the yard, wherein the constellations looked down upon me, I could have thought, with wonder, the first creature of that sort that their unsleeping vigilance had yet disclosed to them; I stole through the corridors, a stranger in my own house; and coming to my room, I saw for the first time the appearance of Edward Hyde.

I must here speak by theory alone, saying not that which I know, but that which I suppose to be most probable. The evil side of my nature, to which I had now transferred the stamping efficacy, was less robust and less developed than the good which I had just deposed. Again, in the course of my life, which had been, after all, nine tenths a life of effort, virtue and control, it had been much less exercised and much less exhausted. And hence, as I think, it came about that Edward Hyde was so much smaller, slighter and younger than Henry Jekyll. Even as good shone upon the countenance of the one, evil was written broadly and plainly on the face of the other. Evil besides (which I must still believe to be the lethal side of man) had left on that body an imprint of deformity and decay. And yet when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather of a leap of welcome. This,

too, was myself. It seemed natural and human. In my eyes it bore a livelier image of the spirit, it seemed more express and single, than the imperfect and divided countenance I had been hitherto accustomed to call mine. And in so far I was doubtless right. I have observed that when I wore the semblance of Edward Hyde, none could come near to me at first without a visible misgiving of the flesh. This, as I take it, was because all human beings, as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil: and Edward Hyde, alone in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil.

I lingered but a moment at the mirror: the second and conclusive experiment had yet to be attempted; it yet remained to be seen if I had lost my identity beyond redemption and must flee before daylight from a house that was no longer mine; and hurrying back to my cabinet, I once more prepared and drank the cup, once more suffered the pangs of dissolution, and came to myself once more with the character, the stature and the face of Henry Jekyll.

That night I had come to the fatal cross-roads. Had I approached my discovery in a more noble spirit, had I risked the experiment while under the empire of generous or pious aspirations, all must have been otherwise, and from these agonies of death and birth, I had come forth an angel instead of a fiend. The drug had no discriminating action; it was neither diabolical nor divine; it but shook the doors of the prisonhouse of my disposition; and like the captives of Philippi, that which stood within ran forth. At that time my virtue slumbered; my evil, kept awake by ambition, was alert and swift to seize the occasion; and the thing that was projected was Edward Hyde. Hence, although I had now two characters as well as two appearances, one was wholly evil, and the other was still the old Henry Jekyll, that incongruous compound of whose reformation and improvement I had already learned to despair. The movement was thus wholly toward the worse.



### Excerpt 3

**From:** Dracula, “Chapter 3”, by Bram Stoker

Full text available at Project Gutenberg: <https://gutenberg.org/cache/epub/345/pg345-images.html>

**Context:** Dracula, published in 1897, established the vampire horror genre in literature and film. Although not the first vampire story (as some have historically claimed), it was the most popular of its time.

In this scene, Johnathon Harker (a young English lawyer) has travelled to the castle of Count Dracula in Transylvania, who is a client of their firm. After falling asleep in a part of the castle that the count has instructed him not to linger in, he is attacked by three women, and narrowly escapes. Following this scene, he becomes convinced that all is not as it should be with Dracula, and becomes trapped by the count in the castle.

When I had written in my diary and had fortunately replaced the book and pen in my pocket I felt sleepy. The Count's warning came into my mind, but I took a pleasure in disobeying it. The sense of sleep was upon me, and with it the obstinacy which sleep brings as outrider. The soft moonlight soothed, and the wide expanse without gave a sense of freedom which refreshed me. I determined not to return to-night to the gloom-haunted rooms, but to sleep here, where, of old, ladies had sat and sung and lived sweet lives whilst their gentle breasts were sad for their menfolk away in the midst of remorseless wars. I drew a great couch out of its place near the corner, so that as I lay, I could look at the lovely view to east and south, and unthinking of and uncaring for the dust, composed myself for sleep. I suppose I must have fallen asleep; I hope so, but I fear, for all that followed was startlingly real—so real that now sitting here in the broad, full sunlight of the morning, I cannot in the least believe that it was all sleep.

I was not alone. The room was the same, unchanged in any way since I came into it; I could see along the floor, in the brilliant moonlight, my own footsteps marked where I had disturbed the long accumulation of dust. In the moonlight opposite me were three young women, ladies by their dress and manner. I thought at the time that I must be dreaming when I saw them, for, though the moonlight was behind them, they threw no shadow on the floor. They came close to me, and looked at me for some time, and then whispered together. Two were dark, and had high aquiline noses, like the Count, and great dark, piercing eyes that seemed to be almost red when contrasted with the pale yellow moon. The other was fair, as fair as can be, with great wavy masses of golden hair and eyes like pale sapphires. I seemed somehow to know her face, and to know it in connection with some dreamy fear, but I could not recollect at the moment how or where. All three had brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down, lest some day it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain; but it is the truth. They whispered together, and then they all three laughed—such a silvery, musical laugh, but as hard as though the sound never could have come through the softness of human lips. It was like the intolerable, tingling sweetness of water-glasses when played on by a cunning hand. The fair girl shook her head coquettishly, and the other two urged her on. One said:—

“Go on! You are first, and we shall follow; yours is the right to begin.” The other added:—

“He is young and strong; there are kisses for us all.” I lay quiet, looking out under my eyelashes in an agony of delightful anticipation. The fair girl advanced and bent over me till I could feel the movement of her breath upon me. Sweet it was in one sense, honey-sweet, and sent the same tingling through the nerves as her voice, but with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness, as one smells in blood.

I was afraid to raise my eyelids, but looked out and saw perfectly under the lashes. The girl went on her knees, and bent over me, simply gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth. Lower and lower went her head as the lips went below the range of my mouth and chin and seemed about to fasten on my throat. Then she paused, and I could hear the churning sound of her tongue as it licked her teeth and lips, and could feel the hot breath on my neck. Then the skin of my throat began to tingle as one's flesh does when the hand that is to tickle it approaches nearer—nearer. I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the super-sensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in a languorous ecstasy and waited—waited with beating heart.

But at that instant, another sensation swept through me as quick as lightning. I was conscious of the presence of the Count, and of his being as if lapped in a storm of fury. As my eyes opened involuntarily I saw his strong hand grasp the slender neck of the fair woman and with giant's power draw it back, the blue eyes transformed with fury, the white teeth champing with rage, and the fair cheeks blazing red with passion. But the Count! Never did I imagine such wrath and fury, even to the demons of the pit. His eyes were positively blazing. The red light in them was lurid, as if the flames of hell-fire blazed behind them. His face was deathly pale, and the lines of it were hard like drawn wires; the thick eyebrows that met over the nose now seemed like a heaving bar of white-hot metal. With a fierce sweep of his arm, he hurled the woman from him, and then motioned to the others, as though he were beating them back; it was the same imperious gesture that I had seen used to the wolves. In a voice which, though low and almost in a whisper seemed to cut through the air and then ring round the room he said:—

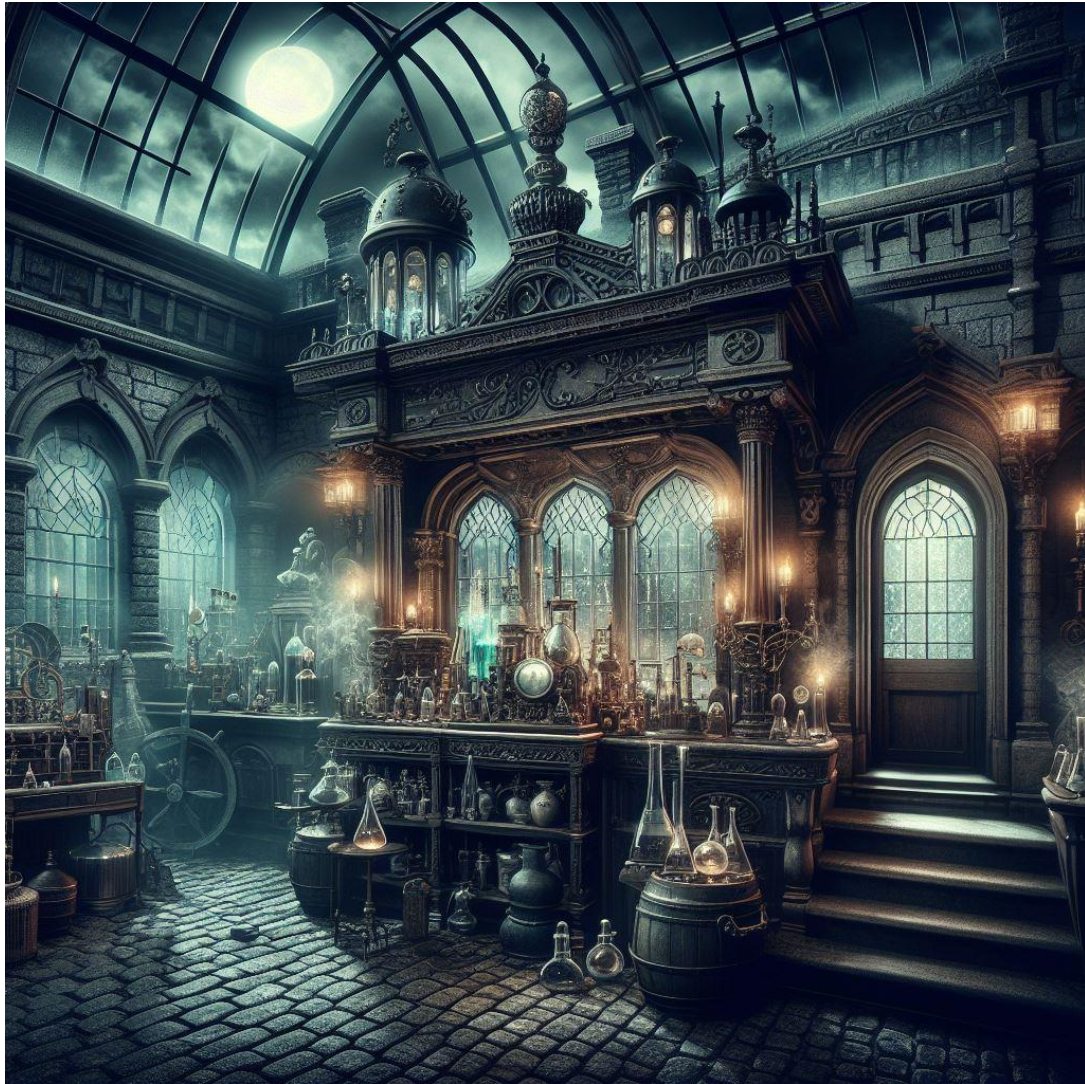
“How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me! Beware how you meddle with him, or you'll have to deal with me.” The fair girl, with a laugh of ribald coquetry, turned to answer him:—

“You yourself never loved; you never love!” On this the other women joined, and such a mirthless, hard, soulless laughter rang through the room that it almost made me faint to hear; it seemed like the pleasure of fiends. Then the Count turned, after looking at my face attentively, and said in a soft whisper:—

“Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past. Is it not so? Well, now I promise you that when I am done with him you shall kiss him at your will. Now go! go! I must awaken him, for there is work to be done.”

“Are we to have nothing to-night?” said one of them, with a low laugh, as she pointed to the bag which he had thrown upon the floor, and which moved as though there were some living thing within it. For answer he nodded his head. One of the women jumped forward and opened it. If my ears did not deceive me there was a gasp and a low wail, as of a half-smothered child. The women closed round, whilst I was aghast with horror; but as I looked they disappeared, and with them the dreadful bag. There was no door near them, and they could not have passed me without my noticing. They simply seemed to fade into the rays of the moonlight and pass out through the window, for I could see outside the dim, shadowy forms for a moment before they entirely faded away.

Then the horror overcame me, and I sank down unconscious.



#### Excerpt 4

**From:** Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus, “Chapter IV”, by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. Original publication date: 1818  
Full text available at Project Gutenberg: <https://gutenberg.org/cache/epub/41445/pg41445-images.html>

**Context:** Published in 1818, when Shelley was only 19 years old, Frankenstein explores the cultural clash between Enlightenment period science/reason and Romantic age art. In the novel, a quintessential mad scientist attempts to create the perfect example of man by assembling the body parts of corpses and reanimating them (essentially challenging God) and is punished for his efforts with a terrible monster which ends up tormenting him and killing several people close to him. Shelley’s work essentially challenges the Enlightenment ideas about human beings as predictable, rational and controllable machines, making implied references to the violent outcome of the French Revolution.

In this scene, Dr Frankenstein animates his assembled corpse and is horrified by the outcome, fleeing from what he has achieved.

It was on a dreary night of November, that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!—Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room, and continued a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured; and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain: I slept indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window-shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped, and rushed down stairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited; where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! no mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then; but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly, that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment: dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space, were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

Morning, dismal and wet, at length dawned, and discovered to my sleepless and aching eyes the church of Ingolstadt, its white steeple and clock, which indicated the sixth hour. The porter opened the gates of the court, which had that night been my asylum, and I issued into the streets, pacing them with quick steps, as if I sought to avoid the wretch whom I feared every turning of the street would present to my view. I did not dare return to the apartment which I inhabited, but felt impelled to hurry on, although wetted by the rain, which poured from a black and comfortless sky.



### Excerpt 5

**From:** Wuthering Heights, “Chapter III”, by Emily Bronte.

Full text available at Project Gutenberg: <https://gutenberg.org/cache/epub/768/pg768-images.html>

**Context:** Wuthering Heights reflects on the society in which Bronte lived, especially ideas about those with and without wealth. The novel uses many aspects of the gothic in its critique, including the isolated setting, physical and moral decay, unnatural passions, ghosts and metonymy of gloom and horror. It is strongly influenced by the author’s own social isolation and the literature that she read, especially evident in the Byronic character of Heathcliff.

In this scene, the ghost of Cathrine Linton as a child haunts the manor, interrupting Lockwood’s sleep through a nightmare.

This time, I remembered I was lying in the oak closet, and I heard distinctly the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow; I heard, also, the fir bough repeat its teasing sound, and ascribed it to the right cause: but it annoyed me so much, that I resolved to silence it, if possible; and, I thought, I rose and endeavoured to unhasp the casement. The hook was soldered into the staple: a circumstance observed by me when awake, but forgotten. “I must stop it, nevertheless!” I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand!

The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed,

“Let me in—let me in!”

“Who are you?” I asked, struggling, meanwhile, to disengage myself.

“Catherine Linton,” it replied, shiveringly (why did I think of *Linton*? I had read *Earnshaw* twenty times for Linton)—“I’ve come home: I’d lost my way on the moor!”

As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child’s face looking through the window. Terror made me cruel; and, finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes: still it wailed, “Let me in!” and maintained its tenacious gripe, almost maddening me with fear.

“How can I!” I said at length. “Let *me* go, if you want me to let you in!”

The fingers relaxed, I snatched mine through the hole, hurriedly piled the books up in a pyramid against it, and stopped my ears to exclude the lamentable prayer.

I seemed to keep them closed above a quarter of an hour; yet, the instant I listened again, there was the doleful cry moaning on!

“Begone!” I shouted. “I’ll never let you in, not if you beg for twenty years.”

“It is twenty years,” mourned the voice: “twenty years. I’ve been a waif for twenty years!”

Thereat began a feeble scratching outside, and the pile of books moved as if thrust forward.

I tried to jump up; but could not stir a limb; and so yelled aloud, in a frenzy of fright.

To my confusion, I discovered the yell was not ideal: hasty footsteps approached my chamber door; somebody pushed it open, with a vigorous hand, and a light glimmered through the squares at the top of the bed. I sat shuddering, yet, and wiping the perspiration from my forehead: the intruder appeared to hesitate, and muttered to himself.

At last, he said, in a half-whisper, plainly not expecting an answer,

“Is any one here?”

I considered it best to confess my presence; for I knew Heathcliff’s accents, and feared he might search further, if I kept quiet.

With this intention, I turned and opened the panels. I shall not soon forget the effect my action produced.

Heathcliff stood near the entrance, in his shirt and trousers; with a candle dripping over his fingers, and his face as white as the wall behind him. The first creak of the oak startled him like an electric shock: the light leaped from his hold to a distance of some feet, and his agitation was so extreme, that he could hardly pick it up.

“It is only your guest, sir,” I called out, desirous to spare him the humiliation of exposing his cowardice further. “I had the misfortune to scream in my sleep, owing to a frightful nightmare. I’m sorry I disturbed you.”

“Oh, God confound you, Mr. Lockwood! I wish you were at the—” commenced my host, setting the candle on a chair, because he found it impossible to hold it steady. “And who showed you up into this room?” he continued, crushing his nails into his palms, and grinding his teeth to subdue the maxillary convulsions. “Who was it? I’ve a good mind to turn them out of the house this moment!”

“It was your servant Zillah,” I replied, flinging myself on to the floor, and rapidly resuming my garments. “I should not care if you did, Mr. Heathcliff; she richly deserves it. I suppose that she wanted to get another proof that the place was haunted, at my expense. Well, it is—swarming with ghosts and goblins! You have reason in shutting it up, I assure you. No one will thank you for a doze in such a den!”

“What do you mean?” asked Heathcliff, “and what are you doing? Lie down and finish out the night, since you *are* here; but, for Heaven’s sake! don’t repeat that horrid noise: nothing could excuse it, unless you were having your throat cut!”

“If the little fiend had got in at the window, she probably would have strangled me!” I returned. “I’m not going to endure the persecutions of your hospitable ancestors again. Was not the Reverend Jabez Branderham akin to you on the mother’s side? And that minx, Catherine Linton, or Earnshaw, or however she was called—she must have been a changeling—wicked little soul! She told me she had been walking the earth these twenty years: a just punishment for her mortal transgressions, I’ve no doubt!”

Scarcely were these words uttered when I recollected the association of Heathcliff’s with Catherine’s name in the book, which had completely slipped from my memory, till thus awakened. I blushed at my inconsideration: but, without showing further consciousness of the offence, I hastened to add—“The truth is, sir, I passed the first part of the night in—” Here I stopped afresh—I was about to say “perusing those old volumes,” then it would have revealed my knowledge of their written, as well as their printed, contents; so, correcting myself, I went on—“in spelling over the name scratched on that window-ledge. A monotonous occupation, calculated to set me asleep, like counting, or—”

“What *can* you mean by talking in this way to *me!*” thundered Heathcliff with savage vehemence. “How—how *dare* you, under my roof?—God! he’s mad to speak so!” And he struck his forehead with rage.

I did not know whether to resent this language or pursue my explanation; but he seemed so powerfully affected that I took pity and proceeded with my dreams; affirming I had never heard the appellation of “Catherine Linton” before, but reading it often over produced an impression which personified itself when I had no longer my imagination under control. Heathcliff gradually fell back into the shelter of the bed, as I spoke; finally sitting down almost concealed behind it. I guessed, however, by his irregular and intercepted breathing, that he struggled to vanquish an excess of violent emotion. Not liking to show him that I had heard the conflict, I continued my toilette rather noisily, looked at my watch, and soliloquised on the length of the night: “Not three o’clock yet! I could have taken oath it had been six. Time stagnates here: we must surely have retired to rest at eight!”

“Always at nine in winter, and rise at four,” said my host, suppressing a groan: and, as I fancied, by the motion of his arm’s shadow, dashing a tear from his eyes. “Mr. Lockwood,” he added, “you may go into my room: you’ll only be in the way, coming downstairs so early: and your childish outcry has sent sleep to the devil for me.”

“And for me, too,” I replied. “I’ll walk in the yard till daylight, and then I’ll be off; and you need not dread a repetition of my intrusion. I’m now quite cured of seeking pleasure in society, be it country or town. A sensible man ought to find sufficient company in himself.”

“Delightful company!” muttered Heathcliff. “Take the candle, and go where you please. I shall join you directly. Keep out of the yard, though, the dogs are unchained; and the house—Juno mounts sentinel there, and—nay, you can only ramble about the steps and passages. But, away with you! I’ll come in two minutes!”

I obeyed, so far as to quit the chamber; when, ignorant where the narrow lobbies led, I stood still, and was witness, involuntarily, to a piece of superstition on the part of my landlord which belied, oddly, his apparent sense. He got on to the bed, and wrenched open the lattice, bursting, as he pulled at it, into an uncontrollable passion of tears. “Come in! come in!” he sobbed. “Cathy, do come. Oh, do—*once* more! Oh! my heart’s darling! hear me *this* time, Catherine, at last!” The spectre showed a spectre’s ordinary caprice: it gave no sign of being; but the snow and wind whirled wildly through, even reaching my station, and blowing out the light.

There was such anguish in the gush of grief that accompanied this raving, that my compassion made me overlook its folly, and I drew off, half angry to have listened at all, and vexed at having related my ridiculous nightmare, since it produced that agony; though *why* was

beyond my comprehension. I descended cautiously to the lower regions, and landed in the back-kitchen, where a gleam of fire, raked compactly together, enabled me to rekindle my candle. Nothing was stirring except a brindled, grey cat, which crept from the ashes, and saluted me with a querulous mew.

## Poems



### “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe

Full text available at Project Gutenberg: <https://gutenberg.org/cache/epub/17192/pg17192-images.html>

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door."  
'T is some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—  
    Only this, and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,  
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow:—vainly I had sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
    Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating"  
'T is some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door  
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—  
    This it is, and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,

"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,  
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;—  
Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;  
But the silence was unbroken, and the darkness gave no token,  
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore!"  
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"  
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
Soon again I heard a tapping, somewhat louder than before.  
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;  
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—  
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—  
'T is the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,  
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.  
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;  
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—  
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—  
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,  
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,  
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore,—  
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,  
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;  
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being  
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—  
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,  
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only  
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.  
Nothing further then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—  
Till I scarcely more than muttered, "Other friends have flown before—  
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."  
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,  
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,  
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster  
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—  
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore

Of 'Never—nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,  
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;  
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking  
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—  
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore  
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing  
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;  
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining  
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,  
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er  
*She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer  
Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.  
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee  
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!  
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!"  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—  
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,  
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—  
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—  
Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!"  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil!  
By that Heaven that bends above, us—by that God we both adore—  
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,  
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting—  
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!  
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!  
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!  
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting  
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,  
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;  
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor  
Shall be lifted—nevermore!



**“The Goblin Market” by Christina Rossetti**

Full text available at Project Gutenberg: <https://gutenberg.org/cache/epub/16950/pg16950-images.html>

Morning and evening  
Maids heard the goblins cry:  
'Come buy our orchard fruits,  
Come buy, come buy:  
Apples and quinces,  
Lemons and oranges,  
Plump unpecked cherries,  
Melons and raspberries,  
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,  
Swart-headed mulberries,

Wild free-born cranberries,  
Crab-apples, dewberries,  
Pine-apples, blackberries,  
Apricots, strawberries;—  
All ripe together  
In summer weather,—  
Morns that pass by,  
Fair eves that fly;  
Come buy, come buy:  
Our grapes fresh from the vine,

Pomegranates full and fine,  
Dates and sharp bullaces,  
Rare pears and greengages,  
Damsons and bilberries,  
Taste them and try:  
Currants and gooseberries,  
Bright-fire-like barberries,  
Figs to fill your mouth,  
Citrons from the South,  
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;  
Come buy, come buy.'

Evening by evening  
Among the brookside rushes,  
Laura bowed her head to hear,  
Lizzie veiled her blushes:  
Crouching close together  
In the cooling weather,  
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,  
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.  
'Lie close,' Laura said,  
Pricking up her golden head:  
'We must not look at goblin men,  
We must not buy their fruits:  
Who knows upon what soil they fed  
Their hungry thirsty roots?'  
'Come buy,' call the goblins  
Hobbling down the glen.  
'Oh,' cried Lizzie, 'Laura, Laura,  
You should not peep at goblin men.'  
Lizzie covered up her eyes,  
Covered close lest they should look;  
Laura reared her glossy head,  
And whispered like the restless brook:  
'Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,  
Down the glen tramp little men.  
One hauls a basket,  
One bears a plate,  
One lugs a golden dish  
Of many pounds weight.  
How fair the vine must grow  
Whose grapes are so luscious;  
How warm the wind must blow  
Through those fruit bushes.'  
'No,' said Lizzie, 'No, no, no;  
Their offers should not charm us,  
Their evil gifts would harm us.'  
She thrust a dimpled finger  
In each ear, shut eyes and ran:  
Curious Laura chose to linger  
Wondering at each merchant man.  
One had a cat's face,  
One whisked a tail,

One tramped at a rat's pace,  
One crawled like a snail,  
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,  
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.  
She heard a voice like voice of doves  
Cooing all together:  
They sounded kind and full of loves  
In the pleasant weather.

Laura stretched her gleaming neck  
Like a rush-imbedded swan,  
Like a lily from the beck,  
Like a moonlit poplar branch,  
Like a vessel at the launch  
When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen  
Turned and trooped the goblin men,  
With their shrill repeated cry,  
'Come buy, come buy.'  
When they reached where Laura was  
They stood stock still upon the moss,  
Leering at each other,  
Brother with queer brother;  
Signalling each other,  
Brother with sly brother.  
One set his basket down,  
One reared his plate;  
One began to weave a crown  
Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown  
(Men sell not such in any town);  
One heaved the golden weight  
Of dish and fruit to offer her:  
'Come buy, come buy,' was still their cry.  
Laura stared but did not stir,  
Longed but had no money:  
The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste  
In tones as smooth as honey,  
The cat-faced purr'd,  
The rat-faced spoke a word  
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was  
heard;  
One parrot-voiced and jolly  
Cried 'Pretty Goblin' still for 'Pretty Polly;—  
One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:  
'Good folk, I have no coin;  
To take were to purloin:  
I have no copper in my purse,  
I have no silver either,  
And all my gold is on the furze  
That shakes in windy weather  
Above the rusty heather.'

'You have much gold upon your head,'  
 They answered all together:  
 'Buy from us with a golden curl.'  
 She clipped a precious golden lock,  
 She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,  
 Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red:  
 Sweeter than honey from the rock,  
 Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,  
 Clearer than water flowed that juice;  
 She never tasted such before,  
 How should it cloy with length of use?  
 She sucked and sucked and sucked the more  
 Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;  
 She sucked until her lips were sore;  
 Then flung the emptied rinds away  
 But gathered up one kernel stone,  
 And knew not was it night or day  
 As she turned home alone.

Lizzie met her at the gate  
 Full of wise upbraidings:  
 'Dear, you should not stay so late,  
 Twilight is not good for maidens;  
 Should not loiter in the glen  
 In the haunts of goblin men.  
 Do you not remember Jeanie,  
 How she met them in the moonlight,  
 Took their gifts both choice and many,  
 Ate their fruits and wore their flowers  
 Plucked from bowers  
 Where summer ripens at all hours?  
 But ever in the noonlight  
 She pined and pined away;  
 Sought them by night and day,  
 Found them no more, but dwindled and grew  
 grey;  
 Then fell with the first snow,  
 While to this day no grass will grow  
 Where she lies low:  
 I planted daisies there a year ago  
 That never blow.  
 You should not loiter so.'  
 'Nay, hush,' said Laura:  
 'Nay, hush, my sister:  
 I ate and ate my fill,  
 Yet my mouth waters still;  
 To-morrow night I will  
 Buy more:' and kissed her:  
 'Have done with sorrow;  
 I'll bring you plums to-morrow  
 Fresh on their mother twigs,  
 Cherries worth getting;  
 You cannot think what figs

My teeth have met in,  
 What melons icy-cold  
 Piled on a dish of gold  
 Too huge for me to hold,  
 What peaches with a velvet nap,  
 Pellucid grapes without one seed:  
 Odorous indeed must be the mead  
 Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they  
 drink  
 With lilies at the brink,  
 And sugar-sweet their sap.'

Golden head by golden head,  
 Like two pigeons in one nest  
 Folded in each other's wings,  
 They lay down in their curtained bed:  
 Like two blossoms on one stem,  
 Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,  
 Like two wands of ivory  
 Tipped with gold for awful kings.  
 Moon and stars gazed in at them,  
 Wind sang to them lullaby,  
 Lumbering owls forbore to fly,  
 Not a bat flapped to and fro  
 Round their rest:  
 Cheek to cheek and breast to breast  
 Locked together in one nest.

Early in the morning  
 When the first cock crowed his warning,  
 Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,  
 Laura rose with Lizzie:  
 Fetched in honey, milked the cows,  
 Aired and set to rights the house,  
 Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,  
 Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,  
 Next churned butter, whipped up cream,  
 Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;  
 Talked as modest maidens should:  
 Lizzie with an open heart,  
 Laura in an absent dream,  
 One content, one sick in part;  
 One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,  
 One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came:  
 They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;  
 Lizzie most placid in her look,  
 Laura most like a leaping flame.  
 They drew the gurgling water from its deep;  
 Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags,  
 Then turning homeward said: 'The sunset  
 flushes  
 Those furthest loftiest crags;

Come, Laura, not another maiden lags,  
No wilful squirrel wags,  
The beasts and birds are fast asleep.'  
But Laura loitered still among the rushes  
And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still  
The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill:  
Listening ever, but not catching  
The customary cry,  
'Come buy, come buy,'  
With its iterated jingle  
Of sugar-baited words:  
Not for all her watching  
Once discerning even one goblin  
Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;  
Let alone the herds  
That used to tramp along the glen,  
In groups or single,  
Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, 'O Laura, come;  
I hear the fruit-call but I dare not look:  
You should not loiter longer at this brook:  
Come with me home.  
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,  
Each glowworm winks her spark,  
Let us get home before the night grows dark:  
For clouds may gather  
Though this is summer weather,  
Put out the lights and drench us through;  
Then if we lost our way what should we do?'

Laura turned cold as stone  
To find her sister heard that cry alone,  
That goblin cry,  
'Come buy our fruits, come buy.'  
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?  
Must she no more such succous pasture find,  
Gone deaf and blind?  
Her tree of life drooped from the root:  
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;  
But peering thro' the dimness, nought  
discerning,  
Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way;  
So crept to bed, and lay  
Silent till Lizzie slept;  
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,  
And gnashed her teeth for balked desire, and  
wept  
As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,  
Laura kept watch in vain

In sullen silence of exceeding pain.  
She never caught again the goblin cry:  
'Come buy, come buy;'—  
She never spied the goblin men  
Hawking their fruits along the glen:  
But when the noon waxed bright  
Her hair grew thin and grey;  
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn  
To swift decay and burn  
Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone  
She set it by a wall that faced the south;  
Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,  
Watched for a waxing shoot,  
But there came none;  
It never saw the sun,  
It never felt the trickling moisture run:  
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth  
She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees  
False waves in desert drouth  
With shade of leaf-crowned trees,  
And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,  
Tended the fowls or cows,  
Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,  
Brought water from the brook:  
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook  
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear  
To watch her sister's cankerous care  
Yet not to share.  
She night and morning  
Caught the goblins' cry:  
'Come buy our orchard fruits,  
Come buy, come buy:'—  
Beside the brook, along the glen,  
She heard the tramp of goblin men,  
The voice and stir  
Poor Laura could not hear;  
Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,  
But feared to pay too dear.  
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,  
Who should have been a bride;  
But who for joys brides hope to have  
Fell sick and died  
In her gay prime,  
In earliest Winter time  
With the first glazing rime,  
With the first snow-fall of crisp Winter time.

Till Laura dwindling  
Seemed knocking at Death's door:  
Then Lizzie weighed no more  
Better and worse;  
But put a silver penny in her purse,  
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of  
furze  
At twilight, halted by the brook:  
And for the first time in her life  
Began to listen and look.

Laughed every goblin  
When they spied her peeping:  
Came towards her hobbling,  
Flying, running, leaping,  
Puffing and blowing,  
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,  
Clucking and gobbling,  
Mopping and mowing,  
Full of airs and graces,  
Pulling wry faces,  
Demure grimaces,  
Cat-like and rat-like,  
Ratel- and wombat-like,  
Snail-paced in a hurry,  
Parrot-voiced and whistler,  
Helter skelter, hurry skurry,  
Chattering like magpies,  
Fluttering like pigeons,  
Gliding like fishes,—  
Hugged her and kissed her:  
Squeezed and caressed her:  
Stretched up their dishes,  
Panniers, and plates:  
'Look at our apples  
Russet and dun,  
Bob at our cherries,  
Bite at our peaches,  
Citrons and dates,  
Grapes for the asking,  
Pears red with basking  
Out in the sun,  
Plums on their twigs;  
Pluck them and suck them,  
Pomegranates, figs.'—

'Good folk,' said Lizzie,  
Mindful of Jeanie:  
'Give me much and many:'—  
Held out her apron,  
Tossed them her penny.  
'Nay, take a seat with us,  
Honour and eat with us,'

They answered grinning:  
'Our feast is but beginning.  
Night yet is early,  
Warm and dew-pearly,  
Wakeful and starry:  
Such fruits as these  
No man can carry;  
Half their bloom would fly,  
Half their dew would dry,  
Half their flavour would pass by.  
Sit down and feast with us,  
Be welcome guest with us,  
Cheer you and rest with us.'—  
'Thank you,' said Lizzie: 'But one waits  
At home alone for me:  
So without further parleying,  
If you will not sell me any  
Of your fruits though much and many,  
Give me back my silver penny  
I tossed you for a fee.'—  
They began to scratch their pates,  
No longer wagging, purring,  
But visibly demurring,  
Grunting and snarling.  
One called her proud,  
Cross-grained, uncivil;  
Their tones waxed loud,  
Their looks were evil.  
Lashing their tails  
They trod and hustled her,  
Elbowed and jostled her,  
Clawed with their nails,  
Barking, mewling, hissing, mocking,  
Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,  
Twitched her hair out by the roots,  
Stamped upon her tender feet,  
Held her hands and squeezed their fruits  
Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,  
Like a lily in a flood,—  
Like a rock of blue-veined stone  
Lashed by tides obstreperously,—  
Like a beacon left alone  
In a hoary roaring sea,  
Sending up a golden fire,—  
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree  
White with blossoms honey-sweet  
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—  
Like a royal virgin town  
Topped with gilded dome and spire  
Close beleaguered by a fleet  
Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,  
Twenty cannot make him drink.  
Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,  
Coaxed and fought her,  
Bullied and besought her,  
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,  
Kicked and knocked her,  
Mauled and mocked her,  
Lizzie uttered not a word;  
Would not open lip from lip  
Lest they should cram a mouthful in:  
But laughed in heart to feel the drip  
Of juice that syrugged all her face,  
And lodged in dimples of her chin,  
And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.  
At last the evil people,  
Worn out by her resistance,  
Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit  
Along whichever road they took,  
Not leaving root or stone or shoot;  
Some writhed into the ground,  
Some dived into the brook  
With ring and ripple,  
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,  
Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle,  
Lizzie went her way;  
Knew not was it night or day;  
Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze,  
Threaded copse and dingle,  
And heard her penny jingle  
Bouncing in her purse,—  
Its bounce was music to her ear.  
She ran and ran  
As if she feared some goblin man  
Dogged her with gibe or curse  
Or something worse:  
But not one goblin skurried after,  
Nor was she pricked by fear;  
The kind heart made her windy-paced  
That urged her home quite out of breath with  
haste  
And inward laughter.

She cried 'Laura,' up the garden,  
'Did you miss me?  
Come and kiss me.  
Never mind my bruises,  
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices  
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,  
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.  
Eat me, drink me, love me;

Laura, make much of me:  
For your sake I have braved the glen  
And had to do with goblin merchant men.'

Laura started from her chair,  
Flung her arms up in the air,  
Clutched her hair:  
'Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted  
For my sake the fruit forbidden?  
Must your light like mine be hidden,  
Your young life like mine be wasted,  
Undone in mine undoing,  
And ruined in my ruin,  
Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?'—  
She clung about her sister,  
Kissed and kissed and kissed her:  
Tears once again  
Refreshed her shrunken eyes,  
Dropping like rain  
After long sultry drouth;  
Shaking with aguish fear, and pain,  
She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,  
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,  
She loathed the feast:  
Writhing as one possessed she leaped and  
sung,  
Rent all her robe, and wrung  
Her hands in lamentable haste,  
And beat her breast.  
Her locks streamed like the torch  
Borne by a racer at full speed,  
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,  
Or like an eagle when she stems the light  
Straight toward the sun,  
Or like a caged thing freed,  
Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at  
her heart,  
Met the fire smouldering there  
And overbore its lesser flame;  
She gorged on bitterness without a name:  
Ah! fool, to choose such part  
Of soul-consuming care!  
Sense failed in the mortal strife:  
Like the watch-tower of a town  
Which an earthquake shatters down,  
Like a lightning-stricken mast,  
Like a wind-uprooted tree  
Spun about,  
Like a foam-topped waterspout  
Cast down headlong in the sea,

She fell at last;  
Pleasure past and anguish past,  
Is it death or is it life?

Life out of death.  
That night long Lizzie watched by her,  
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,  
Felt for her breath,  
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face  
With tears and fanning leaves:  
But when the first birds chirped about their  
eaves,  
And early reapers plodded to the place  
Of golden sheaves,  
And dew-wet grass  
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,  
And new buds with new day  
Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,  
Laura awoke as from a dream,  
Laughed in the innocent old way,  
Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice;  
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of  
grey,  
Her breath was sweet as May  
And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years  
Afterwards, when both were wives  
With children of their own;  
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,  
Their lives bound up in tender lives;  
Laura would call the little ones  
And tell them of her early prime,  
Those pleasant days long gone  
Of not-returning time:  
Would talk about the haunted glen,  
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,  
Their fruits like honey to the throat  
But poison in the blood;  
(Men sell not such in any town:)  
Would tell them how her sister stood  
In deadly peril to do her good,  
And win the fiery antidote:  
Then joining hands to little hands  
Would bid them cling together,  
'For there is no friend like a sister  
In calm or stormy weather;  
To cheer one on the tedious way,  
To fetch one if one goes astray,  
To lift one if one totters down,  
To strengthen whilst one stands.'



# The Gothic Imagination

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A UNIT OF WORK FOR STAGE 1 AND 2 SACE ENGLISH

# In Today's Workshop

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- Why teach Gothic literature?
- Key Genre Features
- Stage 1 and 2 Alignment
- Responding to Texts options
- Creating Texts options
- Vocabulary of the Gothic
- Unit of Work: links and resources





# Why Teach Gothic Literature?

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Rich in highly specific features, many of which students are already familiar with

Originates in a very specific but rich cultural context

Deeply connected to contemporary film and literature

A versatile genre that has adapted over time to changing tastes and cultural contexts.

An excellent introduction to classic literature

Offers extension into subgenres such as Southern Gothic and contemporary horror

# Cultural Context

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Gothic literature truly begins in the late 18<sup>TH</sup> century, at a time of political and social reckoning. Emerging in the wake of the Enlightenment period, it reacts against much of the rationalised focus of that scientific and philosophical movement, as well as the progress of the industrial revolution, revealing darker sides of humanity and challenging the newly pervading ideas of human beings as rational and knowable machines through its focus on passions and unnatural desires.

Extending into the Victorian Era, it deals with social and cultural fears in the face of changing social norms and traditions, and directly comments on the oppression of lower classes and the darker sides of progress.

Gothic literature, at times, delves into fears of social upheaval and the atrocities witnessed in the French and American revolutions that preceded it. It also strongly reflects the 19<sup>th</sup> century adherence to concepts such as physiognomy in its representation of character.

As it evolves into the contemporary, many of its features continue to be vehicles for social and cultural commentary in literature, particularly themes of decay, madness and evolving monsters and supernatural elements.

# Gothic Stylistic Features and Literary Devices

## Decay – physical, mental and moral

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- Settings may be in ruins, crumbling or overgrown – think rusty gates, overgrown graveyards, mansions or castles in decline etc.
- Characters may be, or become, mentally unstable
- Characters may participate in activities considered immoral (especially for the period) such as illicit relationships and extramarital affairs, attempts to raise or contact the dead (necromancy, or corpse reanimation), substance abuse etc.

## Darkness and gloom

- Poorly lit rooms, especially corridors
- A predominance of candlelight or moonlight
- Events occurring at night
- Foggy or misty settings

## Isolation – physical and mental

- Settings are frequently far from civilisation, such as secluded castles and mansions, subterranean locations such as caverns and dungeons, moors, foreign countries and hidden rooms (such as secret laboratories – which may be elevated rather than subterranean)
- Central characters may be cut off from society in some way, orphaned, widowed, or displaced from their country/culture

Dark and mysterious setting - particularly a castle, old house or mansion with mysterious qualities and hidden sections or additions, caves and other dark places.

# Gothic Stylistic Features and Literary Devices

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Metonymy of gloom and horror - suggesting something supernatural, or adding mystery or danger, through metaphor (e.g. wind - especially howling or sudden gusts, clanking chains, footsteps, manic laughter, rain, thunder, fog or mist, dogs or wolves howling, sighs, moans, howls, creaky doors and floors).

Atmosphere of mystery and suspense – pervading feeling of threat or unease, the unknown and glimpses of things

The supernatural:

- Supernatural or otherwise inexplicable events (including divine intervention)
- Supernatural beings and terrifying creatures – ghosts, demons, vampires, werewolves, zombies, monsters etc.
- Omens, portents and visions

The inescapable power of the past, especially ancient prophecies

# Gothic Stylistic Features and Literary Devices

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High or overwrought emotions in characters, including anger, fear, surprise, terror, sadness, nervousness, panic and emotional speeches or pleas

Violence – murder, rage etc.

Lengthy and adjective rich descriptions

Character tropes – damsel in distress, tyrannical males

Power imbalances

Prominent verticality – settings such as buildings, woodlands or mountains that are very tall and vertical, or positioning of the character in the frame so that they are surrounded by vertical features, to reduce the power of the character and create a sense of isolation

The sublime – extreme or unparalleled events, locations and emotions



Gothic vs Not Gothic

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Gothic vs Not Gothic

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# Stage 1 English

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## Responding to Texts

*"In responding to texts, students consider ways in which the authors, readers, and viewers of texts use language and stylistic features to make meaning and influence opinions.*

*Students also develop an understanding of ways in which texts are composed for a range of purposes and audiences.*

*In responding to texts, students develop skills in supporting conclusions with direct reference to evidence taken from their reading, viewing, or listening to the text(s)."*

## Relevant Assessment Design Criteria

### Knowledge and understanding

**KU2** - Knowledge and understanding of language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.

**KU3** - Knowledge and understanding of ways in which texts are created for a range of purposes and audiences.

### Analysis

**An1**- Analysis of the relationship between purpose, audience, and context, and how they shape meaning.

**An2** - Analysis of how language features, stylistic features, and conventions are interpreted by readers.

### Application

**Ap1** - Precision, fluency, and coherence of writing and speaking.

**Ap3** - Use of evidence from texts to support conclusions, with textual references incorporated in responses.

# Stage 2 English

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## Responding to Texts

*“Students demonstrate a critical understanding of the language features, stylistic features, and conventions of particular text types and identify the ideas and perspectives conveyed by texts. This includes how language conventions influence interpretations of texts, and how omissions and emphases influence the reading and meaning of a text. Students reflect on the purpose of the text and the audience for whom it was produced.*

*The evaluation of the different ideas, perspectives, and/or aspects of culture represented in texts is achieved through the analysis of purpose, context, and language features through, for example, comparing a feature article or the reporting of current events from different newspapers in diverse cultural communities. Students may also evaluate the use of language features to create meaning, and consider how their own perspectives might influence their responses.*

*When responding to texts, students compare and contrast the distinctive features of text types from the same or different contexts. This may be done by analysing and evaluating how different authors employ the language features, stylistic features, and conventions of texts when exploring similar themes, ideas, concepts, or aspects of culture. Students compare the contexts in which texts are created and experienced. They also consider how the conventions of text types can be challenged or manipulated.*

*Students focus primarily on a shared reading of a variety of texts, but may also include an independently chosen text. Texts may be treated separately or linked.”*



A silhouette of a person standing on a rocky cliff, looking out over a vast, hazy landscape. The scene is dramatically lit from the left, with bright light rays streaming down from the top left corner, creating a strong contrast and highlighting the person's form against the dark background. The overall mood is contemplative and inspiring.

# Stage 2 English

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## Relevant Assessment Design Criteria

### Knowledge and understanding

**KU1** - Knowledge and understanding of ideas and perspectives in texts.

**KU2** - Knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.

**KU3** - Knowledge and understanding of ways in which texts are created for different purposes, audiences, and contexts.

### Analysis

**An1** - Analysis of ideas, perspectives, and/or aspects of culture represented in texts.

**An2** - Analysis of language features, stylistic features, and conventions, and evaluation of how they influence audiences.

**An3** - Analysis of similarities and differences when comparing texts.

### Application

**Ap2** - Use of evidence from texts to develop and support a response.

**Ap3** - Use of clear, accurate, and fluent expression.

# Responding to Texts Options

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## Analysis of an excerpt from classic gothic literature

Gothic Imagination – A Reader (provided as part of this unit) provides excerpts from:

The Castle of Otranto, Dracula, Frankenstein, The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Wuthering Heights

## Analysis of a film trailer for a gothic film - recommendations include:

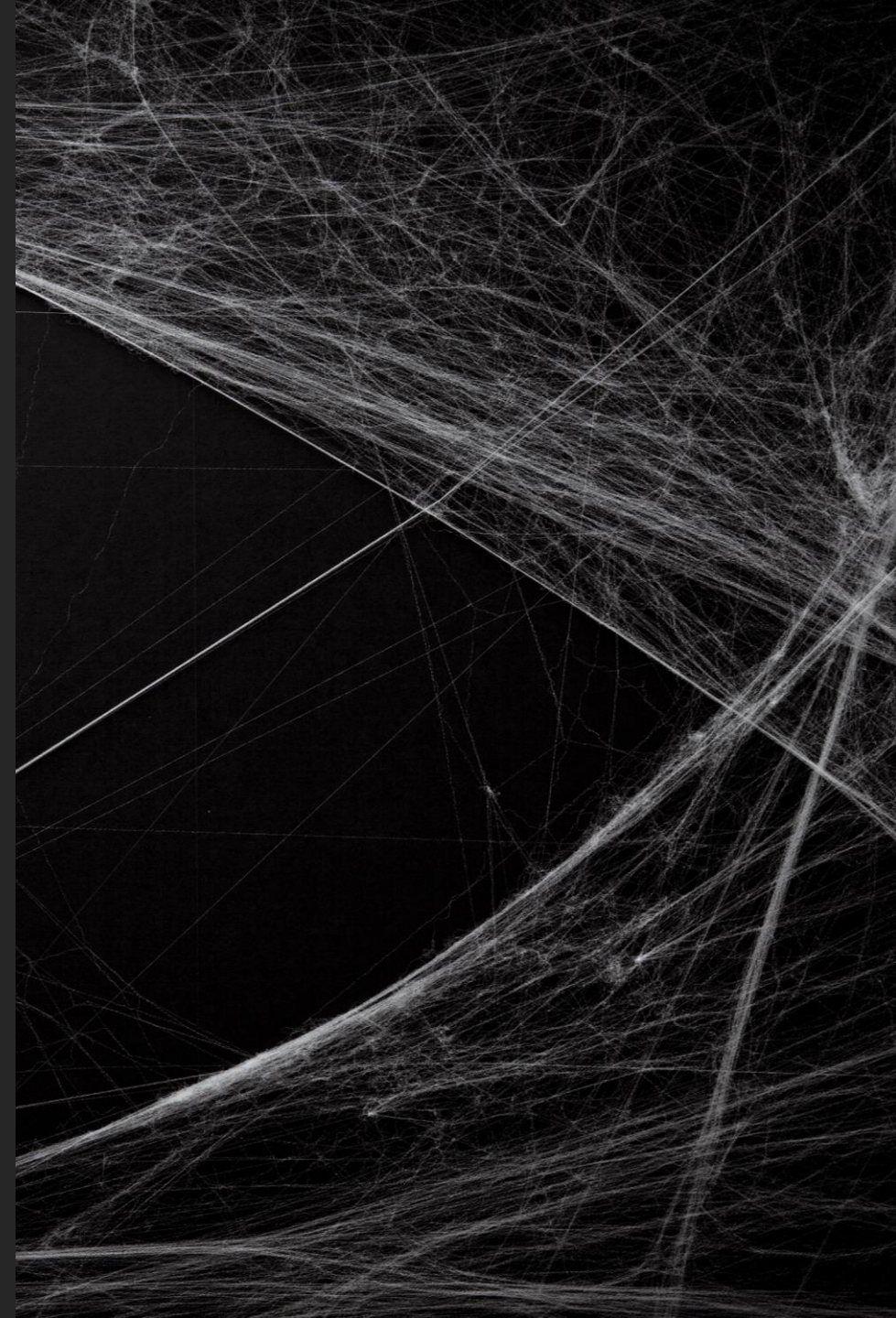
- The Woman in Black (2012) - adapted from the novel of the same name by Susan Hill (Australian Rating M)
- Crimson Peak (2015) directed by Guillermo del Toro (Australian Rating – MA15+)
- The Others (2001) directed by Alejandro Amenábar (Australian Rating M)

**Novel Study** – many classic gothic novels are freely available to download from Project Gutenberg

**Film Study** – recommended films include The Woman in Black and Coraline

## Poetry Study – recommended:

- “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe
- “The Goblin Market” by Christina Rossetti
- “Christabel” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” by John Keats



# Stage 1 English

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## Creating Texts

*“Students create imaginative, interpretive, and/or persuasive texts for different purposes, audiences, and contexts, in written, oral, and/or multimodal forms. The text type and mode chosen for creating a text should be appropriate for the intended purpose, context, and audience, either real or implied.”*

## Relevant Assessment Design Criteria

### Knowledge and understanding

**KU1** - Knowledge and understanding of ideas and perspectives explored in texts.

**KU2** - Knowledge and understanding of language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.

**KU3** - Knowledge and understanding of ways in which texts are created for a range of purposes and audiences.

### Application

**Ap1** - Precision, fluency, and coherence of writing and speaking.

**Ap2** - Use of appropriate language features, stylistic features, and conventions for a range of audiences and purposes.

# Stage 2 English

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## Creating Texts

*“Students create a range of texts for a variety of purposes. By experimenting with innovative and imaginative language features, stylistic features, and text conventions, students develop their personal voice and perspectives. They demonstrate their ability to synthesise ideas and opinions, and develop complex arguments.*

*Accurate spelling, punctuation, syntax, and use of conventions should be evident across the range of created texts. Students benefit from modelling their own texts on examples of good practice in the same text type. In creating texts students extend their skills in self-editing and drafting.”*





# Stage 2 English

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## Relevant Assessment Design Criteria

### Knowledge and understanding

**KU1** - Knowledge and understanding of ideas and perspectives in texts.

**KU2** - Knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.

**KU3** - Knowledge and understanding of ways in which texts are created for different purposes, audiences, and contexts.

### Application

**Ap1** - Use of language and stylistic features to create texts that address the purpose, audience, and context.

**Ap2** - Use of evidence from texts to develop and support a response.

**Ap3** - Use of clear, accurate, and fluent expression.

# Creating Texts Options

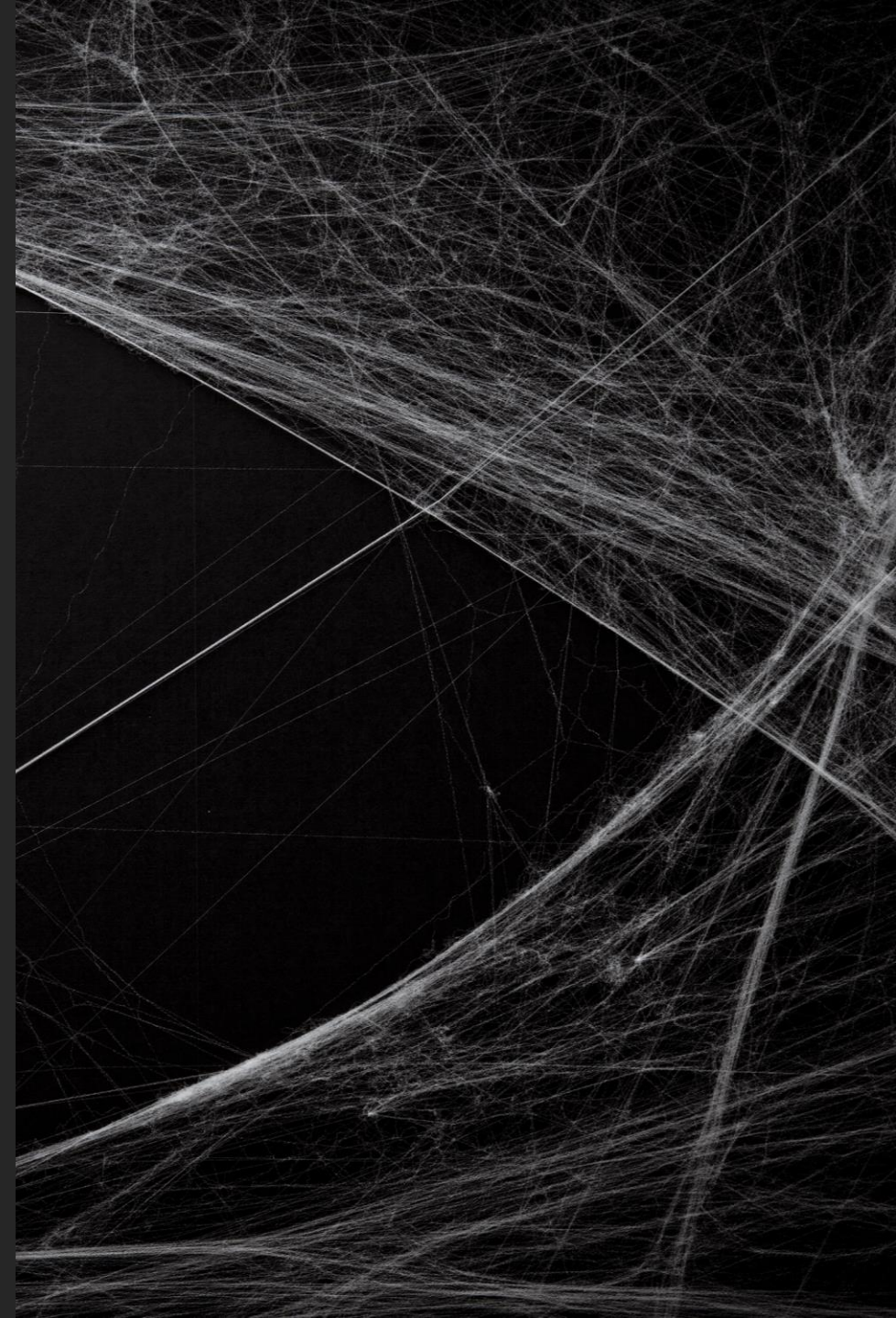
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## **Written:**

- Short Story
- Opening chapter or prologue to a gothic novel
- Fictional online submission in the style of Jezebel's annual Scary Story Competition
- Gothic Poem
- Character monologue
- Retelling a scene from classic gothic literature from the perspective of another character

## **Multimedia/Oral:**

- TikTok Story Time
- Book trailer
- Narrated Photo-story
- Podcast episode
- Gothic escape-room challenge
- Character monologue
- Character interview





# The Gothic Imagination – A Reader

This resource has been prepared to streamline your teaching of gothic features.

# Teaching Sequence



Explore the features of gothic literature – develop understanding through viewing of selected YouTube videos and vocabulary exercises.

Guided viewing of selected scenes from The Woman in Black (the causeway and approaching the mansion) and Crimson Peak (when the newlyweds first arrive at Allendale Hall) – alternative: film trailers.

Guided reading of The Castle of Otranto in The Gothic Imagination – A Reader

Responding to Texts Task

Creating Texts Task

# Example Annotations - The Castle of Otranto

re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror; - yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of Manfred urging his domestics to pursue her. She trod as softly as impatience would give her leave, - yet frequently stopped and listened to hear if she was followed. In one of those moments she thought she heard a sigh. She shuddered, and recoiled a few paces. In a moment she thought she heard the step of some person. Her blood curdled; she concluded it was Manfred. Every suggestion that horror could inspire rushed into her mind. She condemned her rash flight, which had thus exposed her to his rage in a place where her cries were not likely to draw any body to her assistance. Yet the sound seemed not to come from behind; - if Manfred knew where she was, he must have followed her: she was still in one of the cloisters, and the steps she had heard were too distinct to proceed from the way she had come. Cheered with this reflection, and hoping to find a friend in whoever was not the prince; she was going to advance, when a door that stood ajar, at some distance to the left, was opened gently; but ere her lamp, which she held up, could discover who opened it, the person

Isabella, whom every incident was sufficient to dismay, hesitated whether she should proceed. Her terror outweighed every other consideration. The very circumstance of the person avoiding her, gave her a sort of courage. It could only be, she thought, some domestic belonging to the castle. Her gentleness had never raised her an enemy, and her conscious innocence made her hope that, unless sent by the prince's order to seek her, his servants would rather assist than prevent her flight. Fortifying herself with these reflections, and believing, by what she could observe, that she was near the mouth of the subterraneous cavern, she approached the door that had been opened; but a sudden gust of wind that met her at the door extinguished her lamp, and left her in total darkness.

Words cannot paint the horror of the princess's situation. Alone in so dismal a place

- Silence  
isolation

Manfred must have previously harmed Isabella or

she's physically exposed  
of the cavern

Important Male Character

Damsel in distress!

This is the every horror movie ever.

Damsel in distress

This reminds me also of horror and how they end up. Who is killing

beneath the castle? Are they a prisoner of Manfred?

distress

terror = high emotion

Metonymy of

Supernatural elements / darkness / isolation

# Vocabulary of Gothic

Key words and terms for students exploring gothic literature

(Additional vocabulary glossary provided in unit of work to support shared reading of [The Castle of Otranto](#))

## A to E

**Abyss (noun):** A deep, immeasurable space; often used metaphorically to represent the unknown or the supernatural in Gothic literature.

**Atmosphere (noun):** The overall mood or feeling created by a literary work, often crucial in Gothic literature to evoke a sense of unease or terror.

**Catacomb (noun):** An underground burial place, often associated with death and the macabre in Gothic literature.

**Cryptic (adjective):** Mysterious and obscure; often used to describe language or symbols with hidden meanings.

**Decay (noun):** The process of rotting or decomposition; a common motif in Gothic literature symbolizing the passage of time and the inevitability of death.

**Doppelgänger (noun):** A ghostly double or counterpart of a living person; a common motif in Gothic literature.

**Eerie (adjective):** Inspiring fear or unease; spooky or unsettling.

**Enigmatic (adjective):** Difficult to interpret or understand; mysterious.

# Vocabulary of Gothic

Key words and terms for students exploring gothic literature

## G to M

**Ghastly (adjective):** Causing great horror or fear; extremely frightening.

**Gothic (adjective):** Pertaining to a style of literature characterized by elements of fear, horror, death, and gloom, often involving mysterious settings and supernatural events.

**Haunting (adjective):** Persistent and disturbing, often used to describe the lingering presence of something supernatural.

**Isolation (noun):** The state of being separated from others; a common theme in Gothic literature where characters are often cut off from society or trapped in remote locations.

**Macabre (adjective):** Disturbing and horrifying due to involvement with death or injury; often associated with Gothic themes.

**Melancholy (noun):** A feeling of deep sadness or sorrow; a common emotional tone in Gothic literature.

**Metonymy (noun):** A figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted with another that is closely associated with it, often used for rhetorical effect or to convey a specific meaning.

**Mystery (noun):** Something that is difficult or impossible to understand or explain; a key element in Gothic literature to create suspense and tension.

# Vocabulary of Gothic

Key words and terms for students exploring gothic literature

## N-Z

**Ominous (adjective):** Giving the impression that something bad or unpleasant is going to happen; foreboding.

**Pervasive (adjective):** Spreading widely throughout an area or group; in Gothic literature, pervasive elements might include darkness, decay, and fear.

**Prophecy (noun):** A prediction or foretelling of future events, often believed to be divinely inspired or influenced by supernatural forces.

**Sublime (adjective):** A quality in literature that inspires awe and terror, often associated with the vastness of nature or powerful, overwhelming experiences.

**Supernatural (adjective):** Beyond the laws of nature; attributed to a force or being beyond human understanding.

**Tyrant (noun):** A ruler who exercises oppressive and cruel power, often with arbitrary and harsh control over a nation, group, or individual.

**Uncanny (adjective):** Strange or mysterious, especially in an unsettling way; often used to describe supernatural occurrences.



# Links to Resources

# YouTube Videos



“Gothic at a Glance” – Features of Gothic Literature by Rosalind Scourti (11min 34sec)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUNuFLHvVng>

The Gothic by British Library (8min 51sec)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNohDegnaOQ>

What makes a novel gothic? by Willow Talks Books (14min 8 sec)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOLdMm38fg0>

A History of Gothic Literature by Literary Lemon (20min 13 sec)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYq2brqC\\_Kc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYq2brqC_Kc)

“The Raven” from The Simpsons: Treehouse of Horrors (4min 57 sec)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PS9XA6Dh2Vc>

# Film Trailers



The Woman in Black (2012) - adapted from the novel of the same name by Susan Hill (Australian Rating M)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnY0fEV30Wk>

Crimson Peak (2015) directed by Guillermo del Toro (Australian Rating – MA15+)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yAbFYbi8XU>

The Others (2001) directed by Alejandro Amenábar (Australian Rating M)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7pKqaPtMiA>

The Limehouse Golem (2016) directed by Juan Carlos Medina (Australian Rating MA15+)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCJp8-MebGY>

# Other Resources

Project Gutenberg

<https://gutenberg.org/>

Alan Rickman reads “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guEuZMwdhY4>



## Year 11 English Gothic Literature

### Student Support Sheet

# Vocabulary of Gothic

<b>Abyss, the</b>	Hell
<b>Accomplice</b>	a person who helps another to commit a crime
<b>Acquainted</b>	known, aware of, familiar with
<b>Adjoining</b>	immediately next to
<b>Affinity</b>	liking for or kinship, or likeness
<b>Aghast</b>	overcome with fear, terrified
<b>Agony</b>	terrible pain
<b>Ajar</b>	slightly open
<b>Ambulating</b>	walking slowly
<b>Annihilate</b>	destroy completely
<b>Apprehension</b>	fear that something bad will happen
<b>Ascending</b>	going up
<b>Athwart</b>	across transversely, in opposition to
<b>Baleful</b>	threatening harm; harmful effect
<b>Catacomb</b>	Subterranean burial galleries normally linked by passages or tunnels
<b>Cavern</b>	high ceilinged cave
<b>Censer</b>	religious container for burning incense
<b>Circumvent</b>	avoid, get around by clever moves
<b>Cloister</b>	A covered walkway open on one side
<b>Compel</b>	force/oblige someone to do something
<b>Concealed</b>	hidden
<b>Condemned</b>	sentenced to death
<b>Contemptible</b>	worthless or beneath consideration
<b>Crypt</b>	An underground room or vault beneath a church, used as a chapel or burial place.
<b>Coquettish</b>	flirtatious
<b>Curdle</b>	separate and form into lumps
<b>Dank</b>	unpleasantly damp; moist and chilly
<b>Deficiency</b>	a lack of
<b>Denominate</b>	to call or name
<b>Descending</b>	going down
<b>Despair</b>	complete absence of hope
<b>Destruction</b>	damage to the point of not existing
<b>Diffident</b>	modest/shy because of low confidence
<b>Digression</b>	depart from main subject/topic/path
<b>Dismal</b>	mood of gloom or depression
<b>Dismay</b>	concern or distress
<b>Distinguished</b>	successful, commanding respect, dignified in appearance
<b>Divulge</b>	make known something private
<b>Domestics</b>	household servants
<b>Drapery</b>	curtains
<b>Edict</b>	order put out by person in authority
<b>Emaciated</b>	excessively thin, wasted
<b>Eminence</b>	fame or acknowledged superiority
<b>Enchantment</b>	feeling of great pleasure/delight, under a spell.
<b>Encroach</b>	to intrude, to advance beyond original limits
<b>Endowed</b>	provided with an ability, quality or asset
<b>Extinguish</b>	put out a flame, put an end to

<b>Gratify</b>	to please or satisfy
<b>Hasten</b>	to be quick to do something
<b>Hesitate</b>	pause because of reluctance to do something
<b>Immeasurable</b>	too large/extensive to measure
<b>Implore</b>	Beg someone desperately to do something
<b>Imprinted</b>	impressed or stamped onto surface
<b>Incessantly</b>	constantly without interruption
<b>Influence</b>	to have an effect on
<b>Insatiable</b>	Impossible to satisfy
<b>Inspid</b>	weak or lacking in flavour, bland
<b>Inter</b>	bury
<b>Interment</b>	burial
<b>Intricate</b>	highly detailed
<b>Labyrinth</b>	a maze
<b>Livid</b>	furiously angry
<b>Lofty</b>	very high, imposingly high
<b>Malignant</b>	evil in nature or effect
<b>Melancholy</b>	feeling of pensive sadness with no obvious cause
<b>Murmur</b>	low, indistinct voice, almost inaudible
<b>Necromancer</b>	evil wizard or magician,
<b>Prostrate</b>	stretched out face down on the ground
<b>Recoil</b>	spring back or flinch with fear/disgust
<b>Recreated</b>	Made again
<b>Resentment</b>	bitter annoyance/anger at having been treated unfairly
<b>Reverie</b>	pleasantly lost in thought
<b>Sabre</b>	A type of oriental sword
<b>Seraphim</b>	a type of angel
<b>Solemnity</b>	serious or dignified
<b>Spacious</b>	having a lot of space
<b>Spectre</b>	ghost
<b>Stupendous</b>	extremely impressive
<b>Subterranean</b>	underground
<b>Tabernacle</b>	in biblical use – a fixed or mobile dwelling of light construction
<b>Talisman</b>	an object thought to have magic powers
<b>Tarnished</b>	lost its shine or value
<b>Tedious</b>	boring because of dullness
<b>Temerity</b>	foolish boldness
<b>Terminated</b>	ended/stopped
<b>Terrestrial</b>	of the earth, on the ground, earthly
<b>Thwart</b>	to block or hinder, prevent from happening
<b>Tranquil</b>	calm, free from disturbance
<b>Tyranny</b>	cruel or oppressive rule (tyrant – rule or oppressive ruler)
<b>Urge</b>	Try earnestly to persuade; a strong impulse
<b>Vapour</b>	like clouds or smoke suspended in the air
<b>Vault</b>	roof in the form of an arch or a large chamber used for storage, especially underground
<b>Vicious</b>	deliberately cruel or violent
<b>Virulent</b>	extremely harmful or poisonous
<b>Vivacious</b>	full of energy, lively
<b>Wrathful</b>	full of intense anger
<b>Wretched</b>	a very unhappy or unfortunate state
<b>Zion</b>	in Christian thought, the heavenly city or kingdom of heaven