

BOOK STUFF

"Books are a uniquely portable magic" - Stephen King

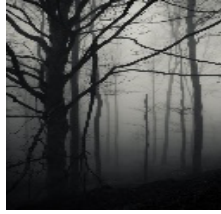
The Power of Gothic

Spellbound by Emily Brontë - 1818-48

The night is darkening round me,
The wild winds coldly blow;
But a tyrant spell has bound me
And I cannot, cannot go.

The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow.
And the storm is fast descending,
And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond clouds above me,
Wastes beyond wastes below;
But nothing drear can move me;
I will not, cannot go.



Consider when you last felt an irrational fear brought on by a book or film.

Why is the idea of the gothic so frightening?

What is Gothic?

The term 'Gothic' actually refers to:

- The extinct language of the Goths (East Germanic language)
- A style of architecture prevalent in western Europe in the 12th – 16th centuries.

Try your hand at this wordsearch

Gothic Words

K	A	E	R	C	D	I	S	M	A	L	C	L	I
D	E	D	U	L	C	E	S	D	I	A	R	M	N
I	Y	N	I	M	C	S	U	O	N	I	M	O	X
N	L	I	C	S	E	D	E	S	P	A	I	R	S
S	O	S	E	A	O	N	R	E	O	I	E	A	U
M	H	M	N	R	M	L	A	I	A	C	E	N	O
U	C	R	L	M	D	D	A	C	E	I	R	O	I
E	N	P	O	D	Y	E	L	T	I	E	I	T	R
X	A	A	C	U	M	R	B	O	E	N	E	N	E
P	L	L	I	E	D	B	M	T	O	D	G	E	T
O	E	L	R	S	K	A	I	D	C	M	R	I	S
S	M	I	A	R	C	C	S	A	E	E	I	C	Y
E	N	D	E	E	O	A	T	S	D	D	X	N	M
D	E	I	F	C	E	M	D	E	S	A	R	A	G

MIST
FEAR
OMINOUS
SHROUD
MACABRE
ISOLATED
LOOMING
SECLUDED
DISMAL
EXPOSED
MENACING
PALLID
ANCIENT
MYSTERIOUS
MELANCHOLY
DESPAIR
CREAK
EERIE

The following is an extract from *The Woman in Black* by Susan Hill.

'From wild & remote landscapes to vulnerable heroines; from violent and erotic fantasies to supernatural and uncanny happenings; Gothic fiction has intrigued & unsettled readers for more than two centuries.' *The British Library*

As I neared the ruins, I could see clearly that they were indeed of some ancient chapel, perhaps monastic in origin, and all broken-down and crumbling, with some of the stones and rubble fallen, probably in recent gales, and lying about in the grass. The ground sloped a little down to the estuary shore and, as I passed under one of the old arches, I startled a bird, which rose up and away over my head with loudly beating wings and a harsh croaking cry that echoed all around the old walls and was taken up by another, some distance away. It was an ugly, satanic-looking thing, like some species of sea-vulture – if such a thing existed – and I could not suppress a shudder as its shadow passed over me, and I watched its ungainly flight away towards the sea with relief. Then I saw that the ground at my feet and the fallen stones between were a foul mess of droppings, and guessed that these birds must nest and roost in the walls above.

.....(missing text)

So musing, I emerged into a small burial ground. It was enclosed by the remains of a wall, and I stopped in astonishment at the sight. There were perhaps fifty old gravestones, most of them leaning over or completely fallen, covered in patches of greenish-yellow lichen and moss, scoured pale by the salt wind, and stained by years of driven rain. The mounds were grassy, and weed-covered, or else they had disappeared altogether, sunken and slipped down. No names or dates were now decipherable, and the whole place had a decayed and abandoned air.

.....(missing text)

Suddenly conscious of the cold and the extreme bleakness and eeriness of the spot and of the gathering dusk of the November afternoon, and not wanting my spirits to become so depressed that I might begin to be affected by all sorts of morbid fancies, I was about to leave, and walk briskly back to the house, where I intended to switch on a good many lights and even light a small fire if it were possible, before beginning my preliminary work on Mrs Drablow's papers. But, as I turned away, I glanced once again round the burial ground and then I saw again the woman with the wasted face, who had been at Mrs Drablow's funeral. She was at the far end of the plot, close to one of the few upright headstones, and she wore the same clothing and bonnet, but it seemed to have slipped back so that I could make out her face a little more clearly.

In the greyness of the fading light, it had the sheen and pallor not of flesh so much as of bone itself. Earlier, when I had looked at her, although admittedly it had been scarcely more than a swift glance each time, I had not noticed any particular expression on her ravaged face, but then I had, after all, been entirely taken with the look of extreme illness. Now, however, as I stared at her, stared until my eyes ached in their sockets, stared in surprise and bewilderment at her presence, now I saw that her face did wear an expression. It was one of what I can only describe – and the words seem hopelessly inadequate to express what I saw – as a desperate, yearning malevolence; it was as though she were searching for something she wanted, needed – *must have*, more than life itself, and which had been taken from her. And, towards whoever had taken it she directed the purest evil and hatred and loathing, with all the force that was available to her. Her face, in its extreme pallor, her eyes, sunken but unnaturally bright, were burning with the concentration of passionate emotion which was within her and which streamed from her. Whether or not this hatred and malevolence was directed towards me I had no means of telling – I had no reason at all to suppose that it could possibly have been, but at that moment I was far from able to base my reactions upon reason and logic. For the combination of the peculiar, isolated place and the sudden appearance of the woman and the dreadfulness of her expression began to fill me with fear. Indeed, I had never in my life been so possessed by it, never known my knees to tremble and my flesh to creep, and then to turn cold as stone, never known my heart to give a great lurch, as if it would almost leap up into my dry mouth and then begin pounding in my chest like a hammer on an anvil, never known myself gripped and held fast by such dread and horror and apprehension of evil. It was as though I had become paralysed. I could not bear to stay there, for fear, but nor had I any strength left in my body to turn and run away, and I was as certain as I had ever been of anything that, at any second, I would drop dead on that wretched patch of ground.

Create your own gothic paragraphs based on the image below.



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