Prepare to enter a bizarre, new, yet perhaps oddly familiar world.

Have your pens ready to record the highlights of your journey...
Gothic Context

- The gothic was first used as a Medieval, architectural term to describe a style of building that included gargoyles, scenes of Hell, and souls in torment.
The Gothic

- Thematic Elements/Plot
- Settings
- Characters
GOTHIC THEMATIC ELEMENTS/PLOT
Ancestral Curse

- The current generation suffers for evil deeds of ancestors.
- Poe’s “The Fall of the House of Usher”
Body-Snatching

- Grave-Robbing.
- Stealing corpses from graves, tombs, or morgues.
- Illicit trade in cadavers.
- Violation of religious space.
- Commercially motivated by science.
- King’s *Pet Semetary*. 
Dreaming/Nightmares

- Dredge up strong emotions, such as ecstasy, terror, joy.
- Reveal urges, impulses, desires, even truths about oneself one tries to hide.
- Reveal the future; premonitions.
- i.e. Freddy Krueger
Entrapment/Imprisonment

- Being confined or trapped, as shackled to a floor or hidden away in a dark cell.
- Heightens the psychology of feeling there’s “no way out.”
- *Saw* series
Gothic Gadgets

- Physical elements allowing supernatural powers to display uncanny presence and abilities.
- “Supernatural props”: vocal and mobile portraits; animated statues and skeletons; doors, gates, portals, hatchways which open and close independently; secret passageways; secret messages and manuscripts; forbidden chambers and sealed compartments; casket lids seen to rise, etc.
Gothic Counterfeit

- Playful fakery of authenticity.
- The text is presented as a discovery or recovery by the editor, sometimes of an ancient or forgotten text.
- Cloaks the real writer’s authorship.
- Complicates the point of view (making things more fun and intriguing).
The Grotesque

- Mutations, often deformities.
- A mix of two separate modes, such as comedy and tragedy, creating a disturbing fiction, in which comic circumstances often preclude horrific tragedy and vice-versa.
- i.e. The Hunchback of Notre Dame
Mystery

- An event or situation that appears to overwhelm understanding.

- i.e. Sherlock Holmes
Necromancy

- The dark art of communicating with the dead.
- i.e. Ouija Boards
- “Bloody Mary” myth
- Séances
Revenge

- The act of repaying someone for a harm caused.
- Revenge can be enacted upon a loved one, a family member, a friend, an object or area.
- Poe’s “Cask of Amontillado”.
- The Princess Bride (Inigo Montoya)
Somnambulism

- Sleepwalking
- Hidden sources of stress may be revealed or acts of guilt replayed.
Superstition

- Variously considered as a belief in the supernatural or the mystical, and as valuing rituals and miracles.
- i.e. Garlic/wooden stakes for vampires spreading salt for witches
The Supernatural

- Events or phenomena that defy the rules of natural law.
- More often, and more intriguingly, uncanny events that could be explained or dismissed (however ambiguously) by the laws of everyday reality.
Transformation/Metamorphosis

- A striking change in appearance; a change in the form or function of an organism by a natural or unnatural process.
- Stevenson’s *Mr. Hyde*, King’s *It*, Count Dracula
GOTHIC CHARACTERS
Devil

- A spirit of incarnate evil.
- Ranges from:
  - tragic villain-hero
  - punisher of sinners
  - tempter and deceiver
  - pure evil.
Doppelganger

- German: doublegoer.
- Ghostly counterpart of another person.
- Body double, alter ego, identical other person.
- Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. 
Ghosts, Werewolves, Vampires, Witches

- Assorted supernatural (usually malignant) beings, bogies, and baddies.
The Pursued Protagonist

- A force that relentlessly, terminally and unavoidably pursues, persecutes or chastises another for some real or imagined wrong.
- A crime and retribution cycle, but also...
- A hero-villain can be both the pursued and the pursuer
- i.e. Anne Rice's *Vampire* series
Unreliable Narrator

- The narrator’s ability to accurately relate events is suspect.
- The narrator makes incorrect assumptions or conclusions, or misunderstands situations or other characters.
- Poe’s *Tell-Tale Heart*
The villain poses as a hero at the beginning of the story, or...

The villain possesses enough heroic qualities to be seen as more than just a bad guy

i.e. *Dexter*
The Pursued Heroine

- A virtuous, idealistic, and usually poetic young woman is pursued by a wicked, older, potent aristocrat.
- The pursuit threatens the young lady’s morals and ideals (and often her virginity).
- She usually responds with passive courage.
- Modified: *Twilight* series
Revenant

- The return of the dead upon the living.
- A ghostly being who returns to life.
GOTHIC SETTINGS
Cemetery

- A place for the burial of the dead.
- Caves, temples, mounds, catacombs, churchyards, crypts.
- Crosses cultures and ages.
Haunted House, Castle, or Estate

- A dwelling inhabited or regularly visited by a ghost or supposedly supernatural being.
Presence of Mist/Fog

- A grouping of water particles due to a change in atmospheric conditions.
- Literary convention used to obscure objects, reduce visibility, or preclude the insertion of something terrifying.
Acknowledgement

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