

The Gothic novel was invented almost single-handedly by Horace Walpole. The Castle of Otranto (1764) contains essentially all the elements that constitute the genre. Today, gothic elements have been used so often in films that some have become predictable clichés.

Gothic elements include the following:

1. **Setting in a castle or old mansion.**
2. **An atmosphere of mystery and suspense.** A fear enhanced by the unknown.
3. **An ancient prophecy** is connected with the castle or its inhabitants (either former or present).
4. **Omens, portents, visions.** A character may have a disturbing dream vision, or some phenomenon may be seen as a portent of coming events.
5. **Supernatural or otherwise inexplicable events.**
6. **High, even overwrought emotion.** The characters are often overcome by anger, sorrow, surprise, fear, and especially, terror. Crying and emotional speeches are frequent. Breathlessness and panic are common.
7. **Women in distress.** The female characters often face events that leave them fainting, terrified, screaming, and / or sobbing.
8. **Women threatened by a powerful, impulsive, tyrannical male.** One or more male characters has the power, as king, lord of the manor, father, or guardian, to demand that one or more of the female characters do something intolerable.
9. **The metonymy of gloom and horror.** A sort of metaphor, in which something (like rain) is used to stand for something else (like sorrow).
10. **Gothic vocabulary.** Using the right words maintains the dark-and-stimulated feeling that defines the Gothic; for example: mystery, fear, terror, sorrow, surprise, haste, anger...
11. **The Onomatopoeia.** Onomatopoeic words resemble the sound they name; as for instance: groan, shriek, howl, crash, hiss, moan...

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Get ready! The following statements are true. Justify them with a brief quote from the text.

- 1) This document aims at explaining what the Gothic is.
- 2) The journalist thinks that the elements of the Gothic genre have become too obvious.

Explain these gothic elements in your own words.

- 1) "Omens, portents, visions":
- 2) "High, even overwrought emotion":
- 3) "The melonymy of gloom and horror":
- 4) "The Onomatopoeia":

