

**R417 Aspects of the Novel 9.30 – 11am**  
**OLLI Fall Session 2012 – Reston**  
**Kay Menchel**

**Class 7 - Tuesday 11/06/12**

**Gothic**

A singular notion dawned upon me. I doubted not – never doubted – that if Mr. Reed had been alive he would have treated me kindly; and now, as I sat looking at the white bed and overshadowed walls – occasionally also turning a fascinated eye towards the dimly gleaming mirror – I began to recall what I had heard of dead men, troubled in their graves by the violation of their last wishes, revisiting the earth to punish the perjured and avenge the oppressed; and I thought Mr. Reed’s spirit, harassed by the wrongs of his sister’s child, might quit its abode – whether in the church vault or in the unknown world of the departed – and rise before me in this chamber. I wiped my tears and hushed my sobs; fearful lest any sign of violent grief might waken a preternatural voice to comfort me, or elicit from the gloom some haloed face, bending over me with strange pity. This idea, consolatory in theory, I felt would be terrible if realised: with all my might I endeavoured to stifle it – I endeavoured to be firm. Shaking my hair from my eyes, I lifted my head and tried to look boldly round the dark room: at this moment a light gleamed on the wall. Was it, I asked myself, a ray from the moon penetrating some aperture in the blind? No; moonlight was still, and this stirred; while I gazed, it glided up to the ceiling and quivered over my head. I can now conjecture readily that this streak of light was, in all likelihood, a gleam from a lantern, carried by some one across the lawn: but then, prepared as my mind was for horror, shaken as my nerves were by agitation, I thought the swift-darting beam was a herald of some coming vision from another world. My heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears, which I deemed the rushing of wings: something seemed near me; I was oppressed, suffocated: endurance broke down – I uttered a wild, involuntary cry – I rushed to the door and shook the lock in desperate effort. Steps came running along the outer passage; the key turned, Bessie and Abbot entered.

**Charlotte Brontë *Jane Eyre***

“This is strange indeed! I did not expect such a sight as this! - An immense heavy chest! - What can it hold? - Why should it be placed here? – Pushed back too, as if it meant to be out of sight! – I will look into it – cost me what it may, I will look into it – and directly too - by daylight – If I stay till evening my candle may go out.” She advanced and examined it closely: it was of cedar, curiously inlaid with some darker wood, and raised about a foot from the ground, on a carved stand of the same. The lock was silver, though tarnished from age; at each end were the imperfect remains of handles also of silver, broken perhaps prematurely by some strange violence and on the centre of the lid, was a mysterious cypher, in the same metal. Catherine bent over it intently, but without being able to distinguish any thing with certainty. She could not, in whatever direction she took it, believe the last letter to be a T; and yet that it should be any thing else in that house was a circumstance to raise no common degree of astonishment. If not originally their’s, by what strange events could it have fallen into the Tilney family?

...

...the impatience of her curiosity might be safely indulged. One moment surely might be spared; and, so desperate should be the exertion of her strength, that, unless secured by supernatural means, the lid in one moment should be thrown back. With this spirit she sprang forward, and her confidence did not

deceive her. Her resolute effort threw back the lid, and gave to her astonished eyes the view of a white cotton counterpane, properly folded, reposing at one end of the chest in undisputed possession!

### **Jane Austen *Northanger Abbey***

We had not increased our pace. Jem knew as well as I that it was difficult to walk fast without stumping a toe, tripping on stones, and other inconveniences, and I was barefooted. Maybe it was the wind rustling the trees. But there wasn't any wind and there weren't any trees except the big oak.

Our company shuffled and dragged his feet, as if wearing heavy shoes. Whoever it was wore thick cotton pants; what I thought were trees rustling was the soft swish of cotton on cotton, wheek, wheek, with every step.

I felt the sand go cold under my feet and I knew we were near the big oak. Jem pressed my head. We stopped and listened.

Shuffle-foot had not stopped with us this time. His trousers swished softly and steadily. Then they stopped. He was running, running towards us with no child's steps.

"Run, Scout! Run! Run!" Jem screamed.

### **Harper Lee *To Kill A Mockingbird***

## **Suspense**

At first, when death appeared improbable because it had never visited him before, Knight could think of no future, nor of anything connected with his past. He could only look sternly at Nature's treacherous attempts to put an end to him, and strive to thwart her.

From the fact that the cliff formed the inner face of the segment of a huge cylinder, having the sky for a top and the sea for a bottom, which enclosed the bay to the extent of nearly a semicircle, he could see the vertical face curving round on each side of him. He looked far down the façade, and realised more thoroughly how it threatened him. Grimness was in every feature, and to its very bowels the inimical shape was desolation.

By one of those familiar conjunctions of things wherewith the inanimate world baits the mind of man when he pauses in moments of suspense, opposite Knight's eyes was an imbedded fossil, standing forth in low relief from the rock. It was a creature with eyes. The eyes, dead and turned to stone, were even now regarding him. It was one of the early crustaceans called Trilobites, separated by millions of years in their lives, Knight and this underling seemed to have met in their place of death. It was the single instance within reach of his vision of anything that had ever been alive and had a body to save, as he himself had now.

### **Thomas Hardy *A Pair Of Blue Eyes***

The basement. When Blomkvist was halfway down the steps, [his captor] turned a switch and the light went on. To the right of him was the boiler room. Ahead he could smell the scents of laundry. [His captor] guided him to the left, into a storage room with old furniture and boxes, at the back of which was a steel security door with a deadbolt lock.

"Here," [he] said, tossing a key to Blomkvist. "Open it."

He opened the door.

"The switch is on the left."

Blomkvist had opened the door to hell.

Around 9:00 Salander went to get some coffee and a plastic-wrapped sandwich from the vending machine in the corridor outside the archives. She kept on paging through old documents, looking for any trace of [her quarry] in Kalmar in 19\*\*. She found nothing.

She thought about calling Blomkvist, but decided to go through the staff newsletters before she called it a day.

**Stieg Larsson *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo***

**Mystery**

...in one moment, every drop of blood in my body was brought to a stop by the touch of a hand laid lightly and suddenly on my shoulder from behind me.

I turned on the instant, with my fingers tightening round the handle of my stick.

There, in the middle of the broad, bright high-road – there, as if it had that moment sprung out of the earth or dropped from the heaven – stood the figure of a solitary Woman, dressed from head to foot in white garments; her face bent in grave inquiry on mine, her hand pointing to the dark cloud over London, as I faced her.

**Wilkie Collins *The Woman In White***

“Your conclusions are, I think, justified,” he said. “Ulick Norman Owen! In Miss Brent’s letter, though the signature of the surname is a mere scrawl the Christian names are reasonably clear – Una Nancy – in either case you notice, the same initials. Ulick Norman Owen – Una Nancy Owen – each time, that is to say, U.N. Owen. Or by a slight stretch of fancy UNKNOWN!”

Vera cried:

“But this is fantastic – mad!”

The judge nodded gently.

He said:

“Oh, yes. I’ve no doubt in my mind that we have been invited here by a madman – probably a dangerous homicidal lunatic.”

**Agatha Christie *And Then There Were None***

It is cold at six-forty in the morning of a March day in Paris, and seems even colder when a man is about to be executed by firing squad. At that hour on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1963, in the main courtyard of the Fort d’Ivry, a French Air Force colonel stood before a stake driven into the chilly gravel as his hands were bound behind the post, and stared with slowly diminishing disbelief at the squad of soldiers facing him twenty metres away.

**Frederick Forsyth *The Day Of The Jackal***