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| Allegory | A story in which persons, places, and things form a system of clearly labeled equivalents. In a simple ONE, characters and events often stand for definite meanings, often abstractions (e.g. Love, Faith, Perseverance). They are usually of a moral, religious, or political nature. |
| Allusion | A reference to a person, event, or literary work outside the story to evoke an atmosphere, a greater concept, a historical era, or an emotion. |
| Archetype | An image, character, or event recurrent in literature that suggests a mythological pattern of experience or universal meaning (i.e. a dark forest for confusion, the sun for illumination, the sea for change). |
| Connotation | Emotional or cultural associations surrounding words or phrases (not the dictionary definition). |
| Denotation | The explicit meaning of a word (the dictionary definition). |
| Epiphany | A moment of insight or revelation by which a character’s life is greatly altered, a realization or sudden understanding. |
| Euphemism |  Fine speech or nice words used to express something unpleasant. |
| Fable | A story that includes beasts or animals behaving like humans, usually to express a moral or teach a lesson. |
| Figurative language | The use of words and phrases in a way that gives new or unusual meanings to the language, used to add freshness and suggest associations and comparisons that create effective images. Major figures of speech include hyperbole, metaphor, personification, and simile. |
| Foreshadowing | When an author arranges events and information in such a way that later events are prepared for in advance, often unifying the work and heightening the reader’s anticipation. |
| Genre | An established literary form. A kind or type of literature (e.g. novel, epic poetry, sonnet, satire, fiction, drama, etc.). |
| Hyperbole | Extreme exaggeration used for either comic or dramatic effect (e.g. dying for love, or hungry as a horse). |
| Irony | From the Greek eiron, a stock comic character who misled his listeners. A verbal device that implies an attitude opposite from that which is literally expressed. What is said and what is meant are different, or what happens and what is expected to happen are different. Frequently used in satire. |
| Legend | Any old and popularly repeated story, usually false or exaggerated. |
| Myth | A narrative that attempts to explain human motivations and the nature of the world, usually through supernatural terms; they explain rituals, traditions, and cultural assumptions long forgotten, or are based on popular stories. |
| Narrator | The one who tells the story (not the author), whose point of view we see and interpret events through. They can be omniscient (all knowing), partial, biased, limited, or even unreliable |
| Oxymoron | A contradictory phrase, putting two words together that would normally contradict one another (e.g. darkness visible, pure sin, sweet pain, thunderous silence, controlled hysteria). |
| Parody | An amusing imitation of another piece of literature. A device of ridicule that mocks another work, genre, or style of writing. |
| Personification | Attributing human qualities or abilities to an inanimate object (e.g. the ground thirsts for rain, or the sunlight danced on the water. |
| Plot | he episodes in a narrative or dramatic work, both what happens and how the author chooses to present the events to the reader. |
| Protagonist | The leading character of a story, drama, or poem, often in conflict with the antagonist. These terms do not guarantee good or evil, in fact often one or both can be non-human (e.g. man vs. nature). |
| Satire | A literary method of diminishing a subject by making it laughable or contemptible, poking fun at a person or subject to effect reform. Used to criticize human misconduct and ridicule vice and stupidity. |
| Style |  The way language is used. How an author chooses words, arranges them in sentences and lines, and develops actions, ideas, and forms. |
| Symbol | When an image is used to represent a concept or idea that is abstract (e.g. a fish representing Christianity, a snake symbolizing evil). An object or action that suggests a meaning beyond the mere literal meaning. |
| Theme | The general issue(s) the work explores, recurring subjects, or ideas. |
| Tone | The implied attitude, the manner in which the writer communicates his or her attitude towards the subject matter, often via diction and style. |