

## 1. Quest 101:

- ❖ Quests contain 5 things:
  - A person who goes on a quest (AKA a “quester”)
  - A place to go
  - A stated reason to go there: typically in the form of someone telling the quester to go somewhere to do something
  - Challenges and trials along the way
  - A real reason to go there AKA what the quester does after failing the original task because they lack self-knowledge (think about Oedipus screwing up which leads him to fulfilling the prophecy)
- ❖ **Remember:** the terms “always” and “never” never have much meaning because the quester is bound to mess up due to lack of self-knowledge. Also, **be sure** to start paying attention once the quester hits the road.

## 2. Decoding Acts of Communion

- ❖ Communion: people eating together often as an act of peace
  - Because food is so personal, we only eat when we feel comfortable so by eating together, conveys: “I’m with you. I like you. We form a community together.”
- ❖ Due to difficulty of writing meal scenes (*there’s not many different ways to describe the consumption of pancakes without going into 50 shades territory*), authors only use them if there’s a reason behind it.
  - Loud eating that includes sucking, slurping, and moaning may indicate sex.
- ❖ If a post-meal blunt is smoked, characters may be inclined to feel even more relaxed or sexual.
- ❖ **The more detail the author writes about for these scenes, the more he’s trying to get your attention and draw you in.**

## 3. Vampire 101:

- ❖ Vampires typically occur in Victorian writing because they conceal the (at the time) taboo themes of sex and sexuality

- ❖ Just because a character doesn't have fangs, a cape, and/or glittery skin, doesn't mean they're not vampires. Characteristics include:
  - Older figures representing corrupt, outworn values
  - A young (preferably virginal) female who's stripping away her youth, energy, and virtue
  - Continuance of the life force of an old male
  - Death or destruction of the young woman
    - \*\*\*Typically; using what others for personal wants, denying someone else's right to live in the face of our overwhelming demands, and placing our desires (particularly our uglier ones) above the needs of others demonstrate the vampire effect\*\*\*

## 4. Decoding Sonnets

- ❖ Basic units of sonnets are sentences because they show a complete thought
- ❖ Shorter poems take more time to write, so when you see one in literature, read it extremely carefully
- ❖ Sonnets typically have 10 syllables per line. Types of sonnets:
  - Petrarchan/Italian: contains an octave (first 8 lines) with a rhyme scheme similar to "abbaabba" preceded by a sestet (last 6 lines) with a rhyme scheme a variance of "cdcdcd" or "cdecde"
  - Shakespearean/English: contains 3 sets of quatrains (4 lines) alternating rhyme and a couplet at the end.

## 5. Allusions

- ❖ More experienced readers will pick up on references to outside works of literature because nothing is 100% original
- ❖ Once you note allusion, reconsider characters, situations, and events in novel.
  - Then note characters as generic types to see greater context
- ❖ Aha! Factor: enables the connection between stories and changes perspective on current plot
- ❖ Intertextuality: ongoing interaction between poems or stories that enriches meaning and raises awareness to similarities to other texts

- ❖ If a story is well written, there wouldn't be any loss from overlooking allusions

## 6. Shakespeare references

- ❖ Quoting Shakespeare gives authority and provides a source of text that writers can bounce ideas off of.
- ❖ Authors rework, explore changes or various era attitude continuities, recall parts of an earlier work to highlight features of a newly created one, or draw associations the reader holds to fashion something new and ironically original

## 7. Bible references:

- ❖ Modern & postmodern texts use allusions to illustrate disparity or disruption
- ❖ Resonance test: if something in the text seems to be beyond the scope of the story's or poem's immediate dimensions or if resonates outside of self, probably a biblical allusion

## 8. Why Kitty Literature is often alluded to

- ❖ Drama in stories trigger previously created encounters of such tales thus, by borrowing previous ideas, irony is used to drive the story
- ❖ Literary canon: most representative or central works in a period or genre. Because authors can't assume a common body of knowledge from their readers, they often go to childhood literature because it often resonates with larger groups due to repetition.

## 9. Mythology

- ❖ Body of story that matters that can:
  - Overt subject matter for poems, paintings, operas, and novels
  - Have parallels flipped around for irony

## 10. Meaning of rain, fog, & snow:

- ❖ Rain prompts ancestral memories of the most profound sort while also:

- Worlds of atmosphere & mood
- Adds misery
- Plot device
- Democratic: falls on everyone
- Clean coming down, but makes mud
- have to be careful or could backfire for negative effects w/ after effects
  - restorative & principal element of spring
- ❖ Fog: confusion; mental, ethical & physical
- ❖ Snow: clean, stark, severe, warm(as a paradoxically insulating blanket), inviting, playful, inhospitable, suffocating, & filthy

## 11. Violence 101

- ❖ Used to represent literally & metaphorically w/ 2 different types:
  - Specific injury on a certain character(themselves or other)
    - Ex: shootings, stabbing, starvations, poisoning, etc.
  - Narrative violence that causes characters harm in general
    - Death & suffering authors introduce into their work for plot or thematic development. Author, not character is responsible for this.
- ❖ Character deaths occur b/c:
  - Make actions happen
  - Cause plot implications
  - End plot complication
  - Put characters under stress

\*\*\*In detective stories, deaths feel meaningless b/c lack density\*\*\*
- ❖ When questioning if there's violence, ask following questions:
  - "What does this type of misfortune represent thematically?"
  - "What famous or mythic death does this resemble?"
  - "Why this sort of violence & not some other?"
- ❖ B/c violence is one of the most personal & intimate acts b/n humans, can be cultural & societal in implications
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Symbolic</li> <li>➤ Shakespearean</li> <li>➤ Allegorical</li> <li>➤ Biblical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Romantic</li> <li>➤ Transcendent</li> <li>➤ Thematic</li> </ul>
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## 12. Symbolism

- ❖ Different images stand for different things to different people b/c of different emphasis, prior readings, and backgrounds
- ❖ **Allegory:** things that stand for other things on a one-for-one basis & convey a certain message
- ❖ Don't work as well as allegories b/c not reducible to a single statement & don't lay on novel surface to protect other parts of the novel
- ❖ To figure out meanings, brainstorm thoughts with notes and ask questions ranging from about the image to the movement & how it feels

## 13. Political Context

- ❖ Engages reality of the world(human problem; social & political, what addresses rights of people & wrong of those in power); can be compelling
- ❖ Everything is political @ some level
  - Radical individualism in conflict w/ established institutions
- ❖ Freedom & self determination are better than political oppression
- ❖ Almost/all work is part of social problem or part of solution b/c contains current political reality(power structures, relations among classes, issues of justice & rights, interactions b/w sexes & among various political & ethnic constituencies)
- ❖ To have a better understanding of a work, know about social & political situations of time it was written

## 14. Jesus Christ

- ❖ B/c we live in a Christian culture, current standards of living come from the bible
- ❖ Culture is so influenced by dominant religious systems that even if a writer adheres to the beliefs or not, such values & principles of those religions will inevitably inform the literary work

- May not be religious in nature but will show themselves in connection w/ individuals role w/n society, humankinds relation to nature, or involvement of women in public life
- ❖ Jesus Christ 101: crucified w/ wounds in hands, feet, side, & head; in agony, self sacrificing, good w/ kids, good w/ loaves, fish, water, & wine: was 33 & in company of thieves when last seen, employed as a carpenter, known to use humble modes of transportation w/ feet or donkeys preferred, believed to have walked on water, often portrayed w/ arms outstretched, known to have spent time alone in wilderness, believed to have a confrontation w/ the devil(possibly tempted), creator of many aphorisms & parables, buried but arose on 3<sup>rd</sup> day, originally had 12 disciples but not all equally devoted, very forgiving, came to redeem an unworthy world
- ❖ Remember to stay analytical & don't hold onto any religious beliefs too firmly
- ❖ Character might be a Christ figure if:
  - Any of above apply
  - Unmarried, preferably celibate
  - Sacrificing self in some way for others
  - In some sort of wilderness where tempted & accosted by devil

## 15. Flight

- ❖ If a human is suspended in the air:
  - Superhero
  - A ski jumper or crazy
  - Fictional
  - Suspended on wires
  - An angel
  - Heavily symbolic
- ❖ Flight: wonder & fascination or freedom where also refers to general burdens that tie us down
  - Temptation of Christ b/c Satan asks him to fly to prove divinity; reason why associated w/ witchcraft b/c shows misplaced desire for flight ahs turned to envy
- ❖ When flight is interrupted, bad things typically happen but may signal rebirth

- Raises questions like “What does it mean to survive certain death & how does survival alter ones relationship to the world?”, “Do the characters’ responsibilities to themselves or life itself change”, “Is the survivor even the same person any longer?”
- ❖ Often seen as freeing of the spirit

## 16. Sex

- ❖ Male parts: lances, swords, guns, & keys
- ❖ Lady bits: chalices, bowls, & grails

## 17. Meaning of Sex

- ❖ Writing about sex= porn
- ❖ @ One level, sex claims individual freedom from convention & for the writer, freedom from censorship
- ❖ When males write about sex, may symbolize: espionage, personal sacrifice, psychological headings, or desire for power over someone else
- ❖ When females write about sex, typically in a political or liberation setting

## 18. Meaning of water

- ❖ Typically means Baptism in the literal sense of rebirth(such as surviving a deadly situation), symbolic rebirth(such as born into a new identity of Christ), drowning, or restoration of life(think Noah’s Ark)
  - Drowning: death due to character isn’t strong enough to surface
- ❖ “Apothegms of change”: everything is changing @ every moment is inevitable
  - Most famous example: “*One cannot step into the same river twice*”
    - River suggests the constantly shifting nature of time & all river particles move independently; thus, in a different location and going at a different rate from one another.

- Prompts feeling of rebirth

## 19. Geography's role

- ❖ Defined as physical land features, economics, politics, & history
  - May reveal other story elements
- ❖ Can develop or define character; as well as play a specific plot role
- ❖ Heading south: enables physical disturbance characterized by depression & proceeded by an urge to murder
- ❖ Low terrain: swamps, crowds, fog, darkness, fields, heat, unpleasantness, people, life, death (think hell)
- ❖ High terrain: snow, ice, purity, thin air, clear views, isolation, life, death (think heaven)

## 20. Season's role

- ❖ Spring: childhood & youth
- ❖ Summer: adulthood, romance, fulfillment, passion
- ❖ Fall: decline, middle age, tiredness, harvest, or personal endeavors
- ❖ Winter: old age, resentment, death
- ❖ Remember to consider archetypes!

## 21. Physical imperfections

- ❖ Physical imperfections= symbolic b/c speak of personal history
  - Draw attention & signifies some psychological or thematic point the author wants to make
- ❖ Millions of men dead in war take away tremendous intellectual, creative, & artistic resources
- ❖ Possible for characters to fake impurities & shows how it's impossible to get through life unmarked

## 22. Meaning of Blindness

- ❖ Once noted, hints there's more to the story than meets the eye b/c may hint prior repercussions or suggest divine powers



- ❖ Seeing & blindness= common literary issue even if not hinted
- ❖ **Indiana Jones Principle:** if you want the audience to know something important about your character/work at large, introduce it before it's needed

## 23. Meaning of Heart Ailments

- ❖ Heart= emotion
- ❖ Social metaphor; bad love, loneliness, cruelty, pederasty, disloyalty, cowardice, or lack of determination
  - Don't be surprised if emotional trouble becomes physical ailment & cardiac episode appears
    - Bad heart may mean heart is physically fine, but person isn't emotionally sound
  - May stand on larger scale for something seriously amiss @ heart of things
    - Heart disease= build problems/climax
    - Heart attack= speed up

## 24. Meaning of Illnesses

### Governing principals of disease in literature:

- ❖ Not all diseases are created equal
  - Cholera used to be more common & worse than TB but b/c of bad reputation, authors are aware there's nothing you can do to improve this so often don't write about it
  - Syphilis & gonorrhoea was @ near epidemic proportions yet wasn't written about much b/c of moral corruption (believed you could only get it from prostitutes) & taboo dense. Treatment carried own hazards b/c required mercury
- ❖ Should be picturesque: effects should be strong & disturbingly pretty
- ❖ Mysterious in origin: love & tenderness should be rewarded by lengthy fatal illness(ironic)
- ❖ Should have strong symbolic or metaphorical possibilities:

- Ex: TB was a wasting disease b/c deteriorated body while adding to death toll; common in lit also b/c authors or friends suffered from it
- ❖ May be a metaphor to draw in societal elements & cause the reader to note differences b/n works era and current time
  - Ex: AIDs: modern disease obsession b/c tends to lay dormant for so long & there's so much more to it than the transmission, incubation & duration
- ❖ Made up illnesses don't carry the same baggage as real ones

## 25. Reading beyond personal perspective

- ❖ Avoid a fixed position out of current time frame to enable sympathy w/ story's historical moment that understands the text in its own social, historical, cultural, & personal background
  - Step away from own perspectives and views b/c leads to difficulty in understanding
  - Try to see work in eyes of intended audience
- ❖ Deconstruction: pushes skepticism & doubt to extreme which then questions nearly everything in the story or poem @ hand
  - GOAL: demonstrate how work is controlled & changed by values & prejudices of its own time

## 26. Irony

- ❖ Trumps everything
- ❖ Doesn't work for everyone b/c multifocal simultaneousness may not register w/ readers inclined toward univocal utterances
- ❖ Ironic mode: watching characters who possess a lower degree of autonomy, self-determination, or free will than ourselves
  - Typically watch characters equal or superior to us, but watch characters struggle to overcome situations we're capable of
- ❖ If a scene where new life was occurring, rain in outside world would lead to a process of association you thought or  
rain=life=birth=promise=restoration= fertility= continuity
- ❖ Sign: signifies a message

- Thing going the signifying= signifier is stable while message is up for grabs
  - Doesn't have to be used in planned way; can be deflected from expected meaning