

. The "Uncanny" & Gothic Atmosphere

These words describe the setting and the feeling that something is *just slightly off*.

- **Archaic:** Very old or old-fashioned; belonging to an earlier period.
- **Corridor:** A long passage in a building from which doors lead into rooms.
- **Dilapidated:** In a state of disrepair or ruin as a result of age or neglect.
- **Mantlepiece:** A structure of wood, marble, or stone above and around a fireplace.
- **Phantasmagoria:** A sequence of real or imaginary images like those seen in a dream.
- **Quaint:** Attractively unusual or old-fashioned.
- **Sinister:** Giving the impression that something harmful or evil is happening or will happen.
- **Vermín:** Wild animals (like rats) that are believed to be harmful or carry disease.

2. Sensory & Physical Discomfort

Gaiman focuses heavily on how things feel, smell, and move to unnerve the reader.

- **Adhesive:** Able to stick fast to a surface or object; sticky.
- **Distorted:** Pulled or twisted out of shape; contorted.
- **Glisten:** To shine with a sparkling light (usually used for something wet or oily).
- **Musty:** Having a stale, moldy, or damp smell.
- **Obscure:** Not discovered or known about; uncertain.
- **Pungent:** Having a sharply strong taste or smell (often used for the Other Mother's cooking).
- **Scuttle:** To run with quick, hasty steps (evoking the movement of insects/rats).
- **Ululate:** To howl or wail as an expression of strong emotion.

3. Character Traits & Psychological States

These words describe Coraline's bravery or the Other Mother's manipulative nature.

- **Apparition:** A ghost or ghostlike image of a person.
- **Complacent:** Showing smug or uncritical satisfaction with oneself.
- **Condescending:** Acting in a way that betrays a feeling of patronizing superiority.
- **Disdain:** The feeling that someone or something is unworthy of one's consideration or respect.
- **Enthralled:** Captured by fascinated attention.
- **Impenetrable:** Impossible to pass through or enter.
- **Insolent:** Showing a rude and arrogant lack of respect.
- **Intrepid:** Fearless; adventurous (often used to describe Coraline's "explorer" persona).
- **Melancholy:** A feeling of pensive sadness, typically with no obvious cause.

- **Supercilious:** Behaving or looking as though one thinks one is superior to others.

4. The "Other Mother" & Her Magic

Specific terms that relate to the transformation and the "game" being played.

- **Coax:** To gently and persistently persuade someone to do something.
- **Effigy:** A sculpture or model of a person (used to describe the "other" versions of people).
- **Meticulous:** Showing great attention to detail; very careful and precise.
- **Monstrous:** Grievously jumping out of the natural order; hideous.
- **Reflection:** An image seen in a mirror or shiny surface (a major motif).
- **Talisman:** An object that is thought to have magic powers and to bring good luck (the stone with the hole).

Category	High-Frequency Word	Definition for Students
Gothic	<i>Sepulchral</i>	Relating to a tomb; gloomy or dismal.
Action	<i>Scavenge</i>	To search for and collect anything usable from discarded waste.
Emotion	<i>Apprehensive</i>	Anxious or fearful that something bad or unpleasant will happen.
The Other	<i>Simulacrum</i>	An image or representation of someone or something (a "fake").
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