

UNIT- V

The Castle of Otranto Summary

Manfred, the ruler of Otranto, is impatiently waiting for the marriage between his son Conrad and the princess **Isabella**, the daughter of **Frederic** the Marquis of Vincenza. Rumors fly about Manfred's impatience for the wedding, and the people believe that the marriage is in some way related to an ancient prophecy: "that the **castle** and lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it." However, on the day of the wedding, Conrad is mysteriously crushed to death by a **giant helmet** falling from the sky. Realizing his only heir is dead and unable to produce more sons with his own wife, **Hippolita**, Manfred decides to continue his line by marrying his son's fiancé Isabella.

Intending to divorce or kill Hippolita, Manfred approaches Isabella alone, proclaiming his intention to produce several sons with her. Despite her horrified protests, he grabs her, intending to rape her, but Isabella escapes, as Manfred is distracted first by the swaying feathers of the giant helmet, then by the moving portrait of his grandfather, then by his servants' reports of the appearance of a **giant leg in armor**. With the help of **Theodore**, a peasant, Isabella escapes the castle through a secret underground passageway to seek sanctuary at the church of **St. Nicholas**, where she is under the protection of **Father Jerome**.

Matilda, Manfred's daughter, is talking with her servant Bianca about the disappearance of Isabella when a servant informs them that Isabella has taken sanctuary. Meanwhile, Father Jerome is telling Hippolita and Manfred the same thing, with Jerome insinuating but not fully disclosing Manfred's crimes. However, after Hippolita dismisses herself from the conversation, Father Jerome more frankly accuses Manfred of his crimes and urges him to repent and turn to the church. Manfred, however, repeatedly refuses, and tries to convince Jerome to grant him a divorce. Fearful of the consequences of saying no, Jerome plays along. However, much to Jerome's dismay, his granting of the divorce inadvertently results in Manfred declaring a death sentence on Theodore, whom Jerome recognizes in that moment is his long-lost son.

Manfred promises Jerome his son's life only in return for Isabella, and Jerome is caught in a moral quandary. However, before he can make a decision, they are interrupted by a host of knights who carry a **giant sword** and who seek in the name of Frederic (Isabella's father, and the closest known relative of Alonso, the former lord of Otranto before Manfred's grandfather took power), both Isabella and rulership of Otranto. Manfred ineptly attempts to win them over, but the knights discover that Isabella is missing and race against Manfred's men to find her.

Having recognized Theodore's resemblance to Otranto's past hero and ruler **Alfonso**, Matilda frees Theodore from her father's imprisonment, and they fall in love. In order to escape Manfred's wrath and to search for adventure, Theodore decides to protect Isabella and finds her in a cave, where he defends her from a knight. Yet the knight, whom Theodore wounds, turns out to be Isabella's father Frederic.

Theodore, Frederic, and Isabella return to the castle, where Frederic recovers and falls in love with Matilda. Frederic explains how he came to be in Otranto:

after being captured by infidels in the Crusades, he had a vision warning him that his daughter was in danger. The vision led him to a forest in Joppa, where he met a **hermit** who led him to a giant sword buried in the earth. Inscribed onto the sword is a prophecy stating that Isabella can be saved only by Alfonso's blood where the giant sabre's matching helmet is found.

After Frederic finishes his story, Manfred arrives and suddenly notices the remarkable resemblance between Theodore and Alfonso. After questioning Theodore's origins, Theodore reveals how he too came to be in Otranto: at a young age, he was kidnapped and enslaved by pirates, left only with a document from his mother proving that Jerome, the Count of Falconara, is his father. After being freed by Christians two years earlier, he searched unsuccessfully for his father and wandered into Otranto, where he worked as a farmhand.

The next day, Manfred tries to secure Isabella's hand in marriage by leveraging Frederic's attraction to Matilda. He proposes a double marriage, in which Frederic and Manfred will marry each other's daughters. Frederic is greatly tempted both by the possibility of having Matilda *and* Otranto, and the only obstacle is securing Hippolita's consent to divorce, which Manfred easily obtains. However, when the ghost of the hermit haunts Frederic for forgetting his mission and for choosing lust over heavenly will, Frederic, though still sorely tempted, decides not to go through with the double marriage.

Manfred, enraged at Frederic's change of heart, becomes even angrier when one of his spies informs him that Theodore is meeting a lady in Alfonso's tomb. Believing that Isabella is having an affair with Theodore, Manfred sneaks into the tomb and stabs her, only to discover that it is Matilda, his daughter, whom he has fatally wounded. Despite her impending death, Matilda is deeply devoted to both her mother and father until the end.

Parts of the castle walls fall down behind Manfred, and a great image of Alfonso appears, declaring that Theodore is his true heir. Manfred, struck with sorrow and remorse, reveals that his grandfather had usurped the throne from Alfonso, and Jerome reveals that Theodore is Alfonso's grandson. After Manfred abdicates, he and Hippolita retire to become a monk and a nun in nearby convents. Frederic renounces his claim to Otranto and offers Isabella's hand in marriage to Theodore.

The Castle of Otranto Character List

Manfred

A lord? A familial dictator? Manfred is both. As *The Castle of Otranto's* antagonist, Manfred the tyrannical husband of Hippolita and the obsessive father of Matilda and Conrad. The tyranny he inflicts upon his family and those visiting his castle make him a prime example of a Gothic villain. His passion obscures his ability to reason, and he becomes so obsessed with the death of his son that he feels he must divorce his wife and marry his deceased son's intended bride. The terror that ensues following his chase of Isabella is grotesque and morally reprehensible, but it is also the driving force behind the novel's suspenseful plot

Isabella

Isabella, lovely, virtuous, and self-assured, is this novel's damsel in distress. Threatened by kidnapping, rape, and an overall unwanted marriage, she tries to escape from the castle after the death of her intended husband, Conrad. She narrowly escapes Manfred's grasp, preventing a nearly incestuous and non-consensual marriage from taking place. She is rescued by Theodore, the soon-to-be revealed legitimate heir of Otranto, and marries him during the novel's resolution.

Conrad

The teenage son of Manfred and Hippolita, Conrad is betrothed to Isabella, but on the way to his wedding he is crushed to death by a symbol of the curse of the Otranto castle: a supernaturally-charged falling helmet.

Matilda

Manfred's ultimate display of tyranny occurs when he mistakenly stabs his daughter Matilda to death. Matilda, a young woman of extreme sympathy, virtue, and sentimentalism, falls in love with Theodore; however, unable to get approval from her parents to be with him, she is instead betrothed to Frederic, Isabella's lustful father.

Hippolita

The wife of a villainous lord and the mother to soon-to-be deceased children: these are Hippolita's roles. Manfred desires to divorce his wife because she cannot provide another heir, but he tries to justify the divorce by saying that the couple is actually related. Submissive, excessively religious, and depressed, Hippolita remains under the influence of her husband, catering to his whims despite her own longings for happiness.

Theodore

Theodore, the son of Friar Jerome and savior of Isabella, is the true heir of the Castle of Otranto. His initial role in the novel is to illustrate the relationship between the fallen helmet and the prophecy of the true heir being revealed. He helps Isabella escape from the castle during Manfred's suspenseful pursuit, while also attracting the attention of both Matilda and Isabella. He marries Isabella after the death of Matilda.

Friar Jerome

Isabella escapes to a monastery located outside of the castle where she finds Friar Jerome, the long-lost father of Theodore. Manfred tries to bend the friar to his will by employing the friar to legitimize the divorce, but the plan does not come to fruition. Jerome stands his ground and criticizes Manfred's incestuous and evil desires, saying that heaven does not approve of them.

Bianca

Matilda's tart-tongued and opinionated maidservant who encourages Matilda to marry.

Diego and Jaquez

Two servants in the household who report mysterious sightings of the giant.

The hermit

Frederic discovers this dying hermit in the woods, who imparts a secret that St. Nicholas told him about the dissolution of Manfred's claim to the Otranto principality.

Alfonso

The handsome and noble ancestor of the castle and principality of Otranto. Theodore resembles him quite strongly.

What are the supernatural elements in the novel The Castle of Otranto?

The **castle** is eerie and ominous, plagued by creaking hinges, trap doors clanging shut, the wailing of the wind, and the life-like quality of people in paintings. **Supernatural elements** like ghosts, visions, mysterious suits of armor, and prophecies run through the **novel**.

Considering this, what are the supernatural elements in the Castle of Otranto?

The **Castle of Otranto** was written in 1764 by Horace Walpole and is considered the first Gothic novel due to its **supernatural** occurrences, plot twists, framing, medieval (i.e., "Gothic") setting, and dramatic use of atmosphere.

Furthermore, what are the themes in the novel Castle of Otranto? **The Castle of Otranto Themes**

- The Gothic Villain. As a Gothic text, The Castle of Otranto provides various tropes through which terror and disgust are expounded upon.
- Incest as Sin.
- Mistaken Identity and Doubling.
- Language and Form.
- The Sins of the Father.
- The Right to Rule.
- Naturalism and Sensibility.

Also to know is, what makes the Castle of Otranto a gothic novel?

It focuses on terror and suspense. **Gothic fiction** is known for inspiring feelings of unease in its audience, even sometimes through the setting alone. Characters are thrust into uneasy situations: being trapped in a dark **castle**, being threatened with violent acts, and being frightened by supernatural elements.

What does the prophecy in The Castle of Otranto mean?

Plot. The **Castle of Otranto** tells the story of Manfred, lord of the **castle**, and his family. This inexplicable event is particularly ominous in light of an ancient **prophecy**, "that the **castle** and lordship of **Otranto** should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it".

18 Related Question Answers Found

What inspired Horace Walpole?

The Castle of Otranto was inspired by Walpole's fascination with medieval history and artefacts. In his novel, Walpole sought to blend together what was termed "new" and "old" romance. "Old" romance was identified by its fantastical nature, whilst the "new" variety (at the time of writing) was more grounded in reality.

Why is the Castle of Otranto important to the gothic genre?

These elements are important because they provide a blueprint for the layout of a gothic novel. Such element of gothic novel is that the setting takes place in a castle. The Castle of Otranto includes an old castle which is passed down through the ages from family member to family member.

What happens in the Castle of Otranto?

It tells the story of Manfred, the prince of Otranto, who is keen to secure the castle for his descendants in the face of a mysterious curse. The novel begins with the death of Manfred's son, Conrad, who is crushed to death by an enormous helmet on the morning of his wedding to the beautiful princess Isabella.

Why does Manfred marry Isabella?

Manfred wanted to marry Isabella to have another male heir, so he decided to divorce his own wife Hippolita. Manfred told Isabella that he wanted to marry her just a few hours after Conrad's death. The lady didn't want to, so she ran away from the room they were in.

Where was the Castle of Otranto set?

Generally regarded as the first Gothic novel, The Castle of Otranto was first published in 1764. Its author is Horace Walpole (1717–1797), but it purports to be a translation of a work printed in Naples in 1529 and newly discovered in the library of 'an ancient Catholic family in the north of England'.

Who is Theodore in the Castle of Otranto?

Theodore, the son of Friar Jerome and savior of Isabella, is the true heir of the Castle of Otranto. His initial role in the novel is to illustrate the relationship between the fallen helmet and the prophecy of the true heir being revealed.

What defines a gothic novel?

Definition of Gothic Fiction The term Gothic fiction refers to a style of writing that is characterized by elements of fear, horror, death, and gloom, as well as romantic elements, such as nature, individuality, and very high emotion. These emotions can include fear and suspense.

When did Gothic literature start?

The First Wave of Gothic Novels: 1765-1820 The English Gothic novel began with Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story (1765).

Where do many Gothic novels take place?

The novels take place in ancient places such as castles, abbeys, monasteries.

How long is the Castle of Otranto?

The Castle of Otranto Horace Walpole. The average reader will spend 2 hours and 5 minutes reading The Castle of Otranto Horace Walpole at 250 WPM (words per minute). The Castle of Otranto is a 1764 novel by Horace Walpole.

When was the monk written?

Matthew Gregory Lewis's The Monk, written in ten weeks when the author was nineteen and published in 1796 when he was twenty, is the most lurid of the Gothic novels and, at the same time, one of the most vividly written (a combination guaranteed to produce a best-seller).

Who killed Conrad in The Castle of Otranto?

1 Manfred's son is killed, leaving Otranto no male heir. 2 Manfred accuses Theodore of killing Conrad by using magic.

What is the theme of Frankenstein?

The theme of creation is at the center of the novel, Frankenstein. The story shows how Victor creates a monster and instills life in it after gaining scientific knowledge of life at Ingolstadt. Victor plays God or pretends to become one to create life. His ambition of creating life and emulating his own creation fails.

What happens to the son in the Castle of Otranto?

It tells the story of Manfred, the prince of Otranto, who is keen to secure the castle for his descendants in the face of a mysterious curse. The novel begins with the death of Manfred's son, Conrad, who is crushed to death by an enormous helmet on the morning of his wedding to the beautiful princess Isabella.

The Castle of Otranto Objective questions

1. What year was the novel written?

- 1860
- 1864
- 1764
- 1760

2. The novel was the first in the _____ revival.

- romanticism
- neoclassical
- gothic
- victorian

3. In the first preface Walpole

- says he found the manuscript
- says he wrote the manuscript himself
- includes a poem
- says he burned the original manuscript

4. In the second preface Walpole

- disavows the manuscript altogether
- says he found the manuscript
- includes a poem
- admits he wrote the novel

5. Where is the novel set?

- italy
- england
- france
- norway

6. When is the novel set?

- 16th century
- 18th century
- 17th century`
- the middle ages

7. Conrad is described as

- sickly
- cruel
- dumb
- strong

8. Why do the servants think Manfred set up Conrad's wedding to Isabella?

- the prophecy
- conrad is old and needs to be married
- conrad demands it
- isabella brings a lot of money

9. How does Conrad die?

- falls off a tower
- strangled by a portrait
- crushed by a helmet
- stabbed by his father

10. Who does Manfred seem most concerned about after his son's death?

- hippolita
- bianca
- matilda
- isabella

11 The helmet looks like the one

- of jerome

- of manfred
- of alfonso
- of frederic

11. Who points out the similarity of the helmet to the one on the statue?

- matilda
- a peasant
- hippolita
- a servant

12. What is the best way to describe Manfred?

- intelligent
- thoughtful
- prideful
- strange

13. What is Manfred's plan?

- to take a second wife, isabella
- to divorce his wife
- to kill his wife and marry isabella
- to divorce his wife and marry isabella

14. Why does Manfred no longer like Hippolita?

- she has not given him more sons
- she is cruel and selfish
- she is too religious
- she is too old

15. What is imbued with a spiritual presence?

- a looking-glass belonging to manfred's father
- a map
- the portrait of manfred's grandfather
- an old book

16. Where does Isabella flee?

- to the tower
- to the library

- to an abandoned room
- under the castle

17. What scares Isabella in the passageway?

- a figure
- darkness
- not knowing how to get out
- all of these

18. Who is the figure under the castle?

- Manfred
- Matilda
- Conrad
- Theodore

19. How does Isabella get out from under the castle?

- a bridge
- a rope
- a trap-door
- a boat

20. Theodore can best be described as

- eccentric
- cruel
- dumb
- self-assured

21. Theodore claims that _____ helped him escape from the helmet.

- God
- fate
- Matilda
- providence

22. Manfred actually admires Theodore's

- presence of mind

- arrogance
- intellect
- physical prowess

23. Diego and Jaquez are

- townspeople
- relatives
- monks
- servants

24. What annoys Manfred about talking to Diego and Jaquez?

- they are too pompous
- they talk too slowly
- they talk too quietly
- they take forever to articulate what they saw

----All the Best-----

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