

Abstract

"Man-made objects were to him either hives of evil, vibrant with a malignant activity... or gross comforts for which no use could be found in his abstract world."

Relating to general ideas or qualities rather than specific people, things, or actions.

Astrakhan

"And presently he staggered in, wearing over his nightgown the old overcoat with astrakhan collar which he much preferred to the nice blue bathrobe he had."

A type of curly black fur that comes from a young sheep.

Beau

"Bending with difficulty, she retrieved some playing cards and a photograph or two... knave of hearts, nine of spades, ace of spades, Elsa and her bestial beau."

A woman's male lover or friend.

Bestial

"Bending with difficulty, she retrieved some playing cards and a photograph or two... knave of hearts, nine of spades, ace of spades, Elsa and her bestial beau."

Resembling or suggesting an animal or beast : very cruel, violent, etc.

Cipher

"Everything is a cipher and of everything he is the theme."

A method of secret writing or the alphabet or letters and symbols used in such writing.

Conspicuous

"The vein on... his bald head where there was a large birthmark stood out conspicuously and, although he had shaved that morning, a silvery bristle showed on his chin"

Very easy to see or notice

Conspiracy

"He excludes real people from the conspiracy - because he considers himself to be so much more intelligent than other men."

A secret plan to do something that is harmful or illegal.

Convalescence

"And then came a time in his life, coinciding with a long convalescence after pneumonia, when those little phobias of his... hardened as it were into a dense tangle"

To become healthy and strong again slowly over time after illness, weakness, or injury.

Countenance

“Unlike other women of her age... she presented a naked white countenance to the fault-finding light of spring days.”

The appearance of a person's face: a person's expression.

Delusion

“The system of his delusions had been the subject of an elaborate paper in a scientific monthly, but... before that she and her husband had puzzled it out for themselves.”

A false idea or belief that is caused by mental illness.

Deprecation

“In silence he sat down on the steps and in silence rose when... she came, heavily trudging upstairs, wanly smiling, shaking her head in deprecation of her silliness.”

To criticize or express disapproval of (someone or something).

Derange

“For the fourth time in as many years they were confronted with the problem of what birthday present to bring a young man who was incurably deranged”

To make insane.

Distort

“Others again (running water, storms) are hysterical to the point of insanity, have a distorted opinion of him and grotesquely misinterpret his actions.”

To change (something) so that it is no longer true or accurate.

Eccentricity

“Those little phobias of his which his parents had stubbornly regarded as the eccentricities of a prodigiously gifted child hardened”

The quality of being strange or unusual in behavior.

Elapse

“At the time of his birth they had been married already for a long time; a score of years had elapsed, and now they were quite old.”

Of time: to pass by.

Envious

“He would have succeeded, had not an envious fellow patient thought he was learning to fly - and stopped him.”

Feeling or showing a desire to have what someone else has: feeling or showing envy.

Festive

“They sat down to their unexpected festive midnight tea.”

Cheerful and exciting: suited to a celebration or holiday.

Garrulous

“The bus they had to take next kept them waiting for ages; and when it did come, it was crammed with garrulous high-school children.”

Tending to talk a lot: very talkative.

Gesticulate

“His inmost thoughts are discussed at nightfall, in manual alphabet, by darkly gesticulating trees.”

Show, express or direct through movement (usually by moving arms and hands).

Grimace

“With a horrible masklike grimace, he removed his new hopelessly uncomfortable dental plate and severed the long tusks of saliva connecting him to it.”

A facial expression usually of disgust, disapproval, or pain.

Hysteria

“Others, such as coats in store windows, are prejudiced witnesses, lynchers at heart; others again (running water, storms) are hysterical to the point of insanity,”

A state in which your emotions are so strong that you behave in an uncontrolled way.

Idyllic

“He again, aged about eight... afraid of a certain picture in a book which merely showed an idyllic landscape with rocks on a hillside and an old cart wheel”

Very peaceful, happy, and enjoyable.

Insomnia

“Age six - that was when he drew wonderful birds with human hands and feet, and suffered from insomnia like a grown-up man.”

The condition of not being able to sleep.

Intercept

“Pebbles or stains or sun flecks form patterns representing in some awful way messages which he must intercept.”

To take, seize, or stop before reaching an intended destination.

Inventive

“The last time he had tried to do it, his method had been, in the doctor’s words, a masterpiece of inventiveness,”

Having or showing an ability to think of new ideas and methods: creative or imaginative.

Knave

“Bending with difficulty, she retrieved some playing cards and a photograph or two... knave of hearts, nine of spades, ace of spades, Elsa and her bestial beau.”

A playing card that ranks below a queen and above a 10: jack.

Luminous

“While she poured him another glass of tea, he put on his spectacles and re-examined with pleasure the luminous yellow, green, red little jars.”

Producing or seeming to produce light.

Lynch

“Others, such as coats in store windows, are prejudiced witnesses, lynchers at heart; others again (running water, storms) are hysterical to the point of insanity,”

To put to death (as by hanging) by mob action without legal sanction.

Malignant

“Man-made objects were to him either hives of evil, vibrant with a malignant activity... or gross comforts for which no use could be found in his abstract world.”

Likely to cause death.

Mangle

“Of beautiful weeds that cannot hide from the farmer and helplessly have to watch the shadow of his simian stoop leave mangled flowers in its wake,”

To injure with deep disfiguring wounds by cutting, tearing, or crushing.

Mislay

“The place was so miserably understaffed, and things got mislaid or mixed up so easily,”

To lose (something) for a short time by forgetting where you put it.

Monologue

“He smiled a quick smile and immediately resumed his excited monologue.”

A long speech given by a character in a story, movie, play, etc.

Phobia

“And then came a time in his life, coinciding with a long convalescence after pneumonia, when those little phobias of his... hardened as it were into a dense tangle”

An unreasonable, abnormal, and lasting fear of something.

Pneumonia

“And then came a time in his life, coinciding with a long convalescence after pneumonia, when those little phobias of his... hardened as it were into a dense tangle”

A serious disease that affects the lungs and makes it difficult to breathe.

Prodigious

“Those little phobias of his which his parents had stubbornly regarded as the eccentricities of a prodigiously gifted child hardened”

Amazing or wonderful: very impressive.

Sanitarium

“It was raining hard as they walked up the brown path leading to the sanitarium.”

A hospital for the treatment of chronic diseases or various nervous or mental disorders.

Score

“At the time of his birth they had been married already for a long time; a score of years had elapsed, and now they were quite old.”

Twenty.

Silhouette

“The silhouettes of his blood corpuscles, magnified a million times, flit over vast plains;”

The outline or general shape of something.

Simian

“Of beautiful weeds that cannot hide from the farmer and helplessly have to watch the shadow of his simian stoop leave mangled flowers in its wake,”

Of, relating to, or resembling monkeys or apes.

Supine

“Across the narrow yard... windows were blandly alight and in one of them a black-trousered man with his bare elbows raised could be seen lying supine on a untidy bed

Lying on your back with your face upward.

Taboo

“After eliminating a number of articles that might... frighten him (anything in the gadget line for instance was taboo), his parents chose a dainty and innocent trifle”

Something that is not acceptable to talk about or do.

Tremulous

“Aunt Rosa, a fussy, angular, wild-eyed old lady, who had lived in a tremulous world of bad news, bankruptcies, train accidents, cancerous growths”

Characterized by or affected with trembling or tremors.

Trousers

“Across the narrow yard... windows were blandly alight and in one of them a black-trousered man with his bare elbows raised could be seen lying supine on a untidy bed

Pants.

Undulation

“He must be always on his guard and devote every minute and module of life to the decoding of the undulation of things.”

Any wave or wavelike form.

Unfledged

“A few feet away, under a swaying and dripping tree, a tiny half-dead unfledged bird was helplessly twitching in a puddle.”

Not feathered: not ready for flight.