**Unreliable Narrators**

Narrator is defined as:

* + A person who tells a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
  + The voice that an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ takes on to tell a story.
  + This voice can have a quite different \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ than the author.
  + The narrator is your source of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in a story.

Unreliable Narrators

* An unreliable narrator is a narrator whose \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has been seriously compromised.
* The term was first coined in 1961 by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* They are usually \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ narrators, but sometimes there have been examples in second or third person, especially in television and film.
* Sometimes it becomes immediately clear that the narrator is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by a delusional statement or admittance to being mentally ill.
* Sometimes it is only revealed at the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Sometimes it is never revealed but only \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at.
* There are several \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Types of Narrators

* The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a narrator who exaggerates and brags.
  + Example: Moll Flanders, Simplicius Simplicissmus, or Felix Krull.
* The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a narrator who is either only experiencing mental defense mechanisms, such as post traumatic dissociation and self-alienation, or experiencing a severe mental disorder such as schizophrenia or paranoia.
  + Examples: Patrick Bateman (*American Psycho*), Barbara Covett (*Notes on a Scandal*)
* The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a narrator who does not take narrations seriously, and consciously plays with conventions of truth and reader expectation.
  + Examples: Tristram Shandy and Bras Cubas.
* The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a narrator whose perception is immature, or limited through their point of view.
  + Examples: Huckleberry Finn, Holden Caulfield (*Catcher in the Rye*), Forrest Gump.
* The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a narrator of sound cognition, who deliberately misrepresents himself, often to obscure his unseemly or discreditable past conduct.
  + Examples: John Dowell in *The Good Soldier*.

How do you find one?

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ signs: The narrator contradicting themselves, gaps in their memory, or lying to other characters.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ signs: Reader’s general world knowledge or impossibilities.
* Reader’s literary competence.

Other Examples:

* Ken Kesey’s *One Flew Over a Cuckoo’s Nest*: Chief Bromden (schizophrenic)
* Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita*: Humbert Humbert (to justify himself)
* Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi:* Pi Patel (hallucinates)
* Forrest Gump (doesn’t understand mentally)
* Fight Club (dissociative personality disorder)
* A Beautiful Mind (paranoid schizophrenic)
* Canterbury Tales, Wuthering Heights, Gone Girl, Great Gatsby

Edgar Allan Poe

* Born January 19, 1809; died October 7th, 1849
* American \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, editor, and literary critic.
* Wrote \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and short stories 🡪 tales of mystery and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Inventor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ fiction genre.
* One of the first author’s trying to make a living on writing alone 🡪 very poor
* Orphaned at a young \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; lived with John and Frances Allan but was never formally adopted.
* Went to the University of Virginia but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ out after a semester because he didn’t have enough money.
* Published \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at first.
* Enlisted in the army under a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but failed as a cadet.
* Lived in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Philadelphia and NYC.
* 1835: married \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (13 year old cousin) in Baltimore.
* January 1843: “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” published, considered a classic in Gothic fiction.
* 1845: published “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” which was very successful.
* 1847: wife died of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* 1849: died in Baltimore of either alcohol, brain congestion, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, drugs, heart disease, rabies, suicide, or tuberculosis.