Fitzgerald

Key Aspects of Suspense

as observed by Mrs. Fitzgerald’s 5th hour language arts class

* a perceived danger
* foreshadowing – a hint of the bad thing bad that will happen
* uncertainty  - don’t know when, where, how the bad thing will happen
* hypervigilance – very intense waiting, watching, listening for the arrival of the bad thing
  + Causes time to pass slowly
  + Tension can increase of something interferes with vigilance
* near-misses – times when you think the bad thing has arrived, but find you were mistaken
* character puts himself or herself in danger
* character is vulnerable
* has a weakness that makes it difficult for him or her to protect himself/herself
  + - this can include the character being alone
* the reader wants to help the character but can’t
* the reader has information about the danger that the character does not have
  + the reader wants to tell the character but can’t
* time begins to run out – time begins to move very quickly as danger arrives and character is trying to save himself and/or others