

# The element of suspense in the giver

Literature, American Literature



Suspense is an element of plot that creates a state of tension or uncertainty. One type of suspense is when the action is “ slowed to a crawl. ” Another type is when the writer continues to add complications to an event or situation. Both of these types of suspense are displayed in Lois Lowry’s, “ The Giver. ” “ Jonas felt more and more certain that the destination lay ahead of him, very near now in the night that was approaching. None of his senses confirmed it. He saw nothing ahead except the endless ribbon of road unfolding in twisting narrow curves. He heard no sound ahead. Yet he felt it: felt that the Elsewhere was not far away. But he had little hope left that he would be able to reach it. His hope diminished further when the sharp, cold air began to blur and thicken with swirling white. Gabriel, wrapped in his inadequate blanket, was hunched, shivering, and silent in his little seat. Jonas stopped the bike wearily, lifted the child down, and realized with heartbreak how cold and weak Gabe had become. ”(Lowry, 174) This passage illustrates the type of suspense where the author adds more and more complications to the story. I know this because when the ride starts, Jonas and Gabriel are just a little bit tired from leaving their schedule and riding away in the night. Soon though, Jonas becomes tired from the ride, Gabriel is cold from the piercing wind, and neither of them have any food. Jonas has no idea where he’s going and the road seems to be endless. Only adding more the complications is the snow. This makes you wonder, “ Will they make it alive? ” This adds a quality that makes the story better by making you care for the characters and in turn, creating suspense. “‘ We’re almost there Gabriel,’ he whispered, feeling quite certain without knowing why. ‘ I remember this place, Gabe.’ And it was true. But it was not a

grasping of a thin and burdensome recollection; this was different. This was something that he could keep. It was a memory of his own. He hugged Gabe and rubbed him briskly, warming him, to keep him alive. The wind was bitterly cold. The snow swirled, blurring his vision. But somewhere ahead, through the blinding storm, he knew there was warmth and light. Using his final strength, and a special knowledge that was deep inside him, Jonas found the sled that was waiting for him at the top of the hill. "(Lowry, 177-78) This passage illustrates the type of suspense where the author slows all the action to a crawl. I know this because in all this time and all this writing, all Jonas did was rode his bike a little further up the hill and might have gone onto the sled, or died. While reading this book, this is the part where your mouth is watering and you're ready for the final outcome. No matter what happens you just want to hear the end. But the author knows this and makes each line feel like an eternity until you're dying to hear the end. That is why I know this is suspense. That is also what makes the book a really good book.