

Topic: A missing goat or an analysis of literary suspense

Level: B2/C1

Age group: teens, adults

Suitable for: one-to-one, pairs, groups

Estimated time: 60 min

Aims:

- to read a passage from a modern bestselling book,
- to infer character traits from narrative details,
- to explain how suspense may be built through various literary devices.

1. Ask your students what they know of the Puritans in America. After gathering some key information (the 17th century, religion at the centre of everyday life, strict rules, top values: community, morality, discipline) present it as the setting of the book *Slewfoot* by Brom.

2. Tell your students to go to [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) then find the kindle version of the book and click the “Read sample” button

(https://www.amazon.com/Slewfoot-Tale-Bewitchery-Brom-ebook/dp/B08SKX3TX9/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&dib_tag=se&dib=eyJ2IjojMSJ9.CEgeNFr4hhM52xciRdAwcLKALDSRSXfntNe16Ynalf7maa_4zZjzZGWAJANDAlaikN3VVD8pC-UBU5bckpH_1zzLZqWfV1qlwrcP00YK1LiCHq7JeBw9XgfVNsfqpMO1HVqQmo_vrYlpHWJDnf2dckZkm1uU-5L9hEp4Q3LnA4t7dBO-vUzZqZ3tOrwozee-MQ34fHAVuVrxZLOLSzjfnpN3YmqoWsUk5PAfsLxzn7Y.4_zbGmkYmS24_1-v5-N1Z_S-G2y62q-U97kpgiXgWCs&qid=1790624217&sr=8-1&asin=B08SKX3TX9&revisionId=eca0c546&format=3&depth=1).

3. While reading the first passage, the students will have to take notes on the main character, Abitha. Ask them to pay attention to what we learn about her family, her appearance and her personality.

4. Once your students know what to look/read for, ask them to use the search tool in the right top corner and type “Her father had heard”. Starting from there, ask the students to read until “A distant howl...”.

5. When they’re done, before discussing information on Abitha, you may ask a volunteer to sum up what they understood from the passage and then ask other students for clarification if there were any problems.

6. Ask volunteers or put students in pairs to discuss information gathered on Abitha:

- family: an alcoholic father who was a teacher, a mother who cursed a lot, two younger brothers,
- appearance: an “impish nose”, skin that gets red with anger and cold, “scrappy figure”
- personality: sometimes swore, stole and got into fights.

7. Next, the students will continue reading until they reach the paragraph “Abitha spun to see Edward holding a lantern...”

8. Ask a volunteer to sum up what they understood from the passage and then ask other students for clarification if there were any problems. Once the events are clear, put students in pairs and ask them to go back to the text and find three to five examples of how Brom creates suspense and a sense of danger in his prose.

E.g. a giant crumbling stump, unsettling darkness, a soft whisper after a shout, clutching the stick..., a minute crawled by, loose rocks ... seeming to fall forever, the whispering Abitha felt under her skin, all the dynamic verbs describing her efforts to climb up and run away

9. At the end, ask the students to write down and look up three interesting words they noticed in the passage.