

How does the writer use structure to interest the reader?

1-a-day practice

‘On a cold, fretful afternoon in early October, 1872, a hansom cab drew up outside the offices of Lockhart and Selby, Shipping Agents in the financial heart of London, and a young girl got out and paid the driver. She was a person of sixteen or so – alone, and uncommonly pretty. She was slender and pale, and dressed in mourning, with a black bonnet under which she tucked back a straying twist of blonde hair that the wind had teased loose. She had unusually dark brown eyes for one so fair. Her name was Sally Lockhart; and within fifteen minutes, she was going to kill a man.’

How does the writer use the beginning to interest the reader?

The walls and ceiling of the room were perfectly black with age and dirt. There was a deal table before the fire: upon which were a candle, stuck in a ginger-beer bottle, two or three pewter pots, a loaf and butter, and a plate. In a frying-pan, which was on the fire, and which was secured to the mantelshelf by a string, some sausages were cooking; and standing over them, with a toasting-fork in his hand, was a very old shrivelled Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair. He was dressed in a greasy flannel gown, with his throat bare; and seemed to be dividing his attention between the frying-pan and the clothes-horse, over which a great number of silk handkerchiefs were hanging. Several rough beds made of old sacks, were huddled side by side on the floor. Seated round the table were four or five boys, none older than the Dodger, smoking long clay pipes, and drinking spirits with the air of middle-aged men. These all crowded about their associate as he whispered a few words to the Jew; and then turned round and grinned at Oliver. So did the Jew himself, toasting-fork in hand.

How does the writer use shift of focus to interest the reader?

TRUE! -- nervous -- very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses -- not destroyed -- not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily --how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture --a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees --very gradually --I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

How does the writer use narrative perspective to interest the reader?

The streets became progressively quieter, though the air of poverty and decay never went away entirely. Packs of children in tatty clothes roamed the area, running alongside the carriage with their palms outstretched, pleading for money. Every so often Jonathan caught a glimpse of a house on fire, or a body lying prone in an alleyway. The carriage rattled on regardless.

Eventually the roads began to broaden out and tall trees lined the road, the first Jonathan had seen in Darkside. The wind had picked up, and their brown and brittle leaves rustled uneasily in the breeze. The tightly-packed rows of decrepit buildings had given way to luxurious mansions that hid behind high hedges and spiked railings. The road reeked of money.

Carnegie noticed Jonathan's inquiring gaze. "This is Savage Row. The richest people in Darkside live here. And Luther, of course."

Luther glared at him, and then reluctantly geed up the horses again. The carriage swung swiftly around the winding bends of Savage Row, and Jonathan noticed how the street was getting steeper and narrower. The mansions had disappeared from sight, and the trees had closed in on all sides, forming a sinister guard of honour. It was getting colder now, and Jonathan pulled a blanket over his legs. Carnegie gave him a grim smile, but said nothing. He was looking tense.

How does the writer use a journey to interest the reader?

There was a hand in the darkness, and it held a knife.

The knife had a handle of polished black bone, and a blade finer and sharper than any razor. If it sliced you, you might not even know you had been cut, not immediately.

The knife had done almost everything it was brought to that house to do, and both the blade and the handle were wet.

The street door was still open, just a little, where the knife and the man who held it had slipped in, and wisps of nighttime mist slithered and twined into the house through the open door.

The man Jack paused on the landing. With his left hand he pulled a large white handkerchief from the pocket of his black coat, and with it he wiped off the knife and his gloved right hand which had been holding it; then he put the handkerchief away. The hunt was almost over. He had left the woman in her bed, the man on the bedroom floor, the older child in her brightly colored bedroom, surrounded by toys and half-finished models. That only left the little one, a baby barely a toddler, to take care of. One more and his task would be done.

How does the writer use inside to outside to interest the reader?

1. Extract taken from *The Ruby in the Smoke* by Phillip Pullman (20th century)
2. Extract taken from *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens (19th century)
3. Extract taken from *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman (21st century)
4. Extract taken from *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe (19th Century)
5. Extract taken from *Darkside* by Tom Becker (21st century)