

Mrs Frisby and the Rats of NIMH
The Marketplace

How does the author create tension in this extract?

Reading AF 5 - Explain and comment on writer's use of language including grammatical and literary features at word and sentence level.

Think about:

- use of senses
- verbs
- how he contrasts events
- what the rats see
- how the extract is put together
- anything else you can think of

It was growing dark when we reached the market, but through the dusk we could see that there was an unusually large supply of food – a great mound of it – near the centre of the square away from the roofed-over portion. I suppose that should have served as a warning but it didn't. I remember Jenner's saying, "They must have had a really busy day," and we ran joyfully towards the pile with several dozen other rats.

Just as we reached the food it happened. All around us suddenly there was shouting. Bright, blinding searchlights flashed on, aimed at us and at the mound of food, so that when we tried to run away from it, we could not see where we were going. Between and behind the lights there were shadows moving swiftly, and as they came towards us I could see that they were men – men in white uniforms carrying nets, round nets with long handles.

"Look out!" cried Jenner. "They're trying to catch us." He darted in one direction, I in another and I lost sight of him.

We all ran – straight towards the men with the nets. There was no other way to run; they had us encircled. The nets flailed down, scooped, flailed again. I suppose some rats got through, slipping between the men and past the lights. I felt a swish – a net just missed me. I turned and ran back towards the mound, thinking I might hide myself in it. But then came another swish, and that time I felt the enveloping fibres fall over me.

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Choose the phrase or sentence that you think is most important in creating tension in this extract. Be prepared to explain why!