

Using quotations from 'The Signalman' to answer the question:  
How does Dickens create an atmosphere of suspense?

Link up the quotations with the categories of ways that Dickens creates suspense. You might want to link one quotation to more than one category. Remember that in your essay you still need to explore each quotation.

The environment

The structure and language of the story

The Signalman

The narrator

The time of day

angry sunset

... there was something in the man that daunted me.

Just then there came a vague vibration in the earth and air, quickly changing into a violent pulsation, and an oncoming rush that caused me to start back, as though it had force to draw me down.

So little sunlight ever found its way to this spot, that it had an earthy, deadly smell; and so much cold wind rushed through it, that it struck chill to me, as if I had left the natural world.

His post was in as solitary and dismal a place as ever I saw. On either side, a dripping-wet wall of jagged stone, excluding all view but a strip of sky; the perspective one way only a crooked prolongation of this great dungeon; the shorter perspective in the other direction terminating in a gloomy red light, and the gloomier entrance to a black tunnel, in whose massive architecture there was a barbarous, depressing and forbidding air.

... saw that he was a dark sallow man, with a dark beard and rather heavy eyebrows.

I detected in his eyes some latent fear of me.

The monstrous thought came into my mind, as I perused the fixed eyes and the saturnine face, that this was a spirit, not a man.

Intently watchful of me, he replied ...

All that I have condensed he said in a quiet manner, with his grave regards divided between me and the fire.

"I'll show my white light, sir," he said, in his peculiar low voice, "till you have found the way up. When you have found it, don't call out! And when you are at the top, don't call out!"

His manner seemed to make the place strike colder to me.

I walked by the side of the down line of rails (with a very disagreeable sensation of a train coming behind me) until I found the path.

I placed my foot on the first notch of the zigzag next night, as the distant clocks were striking eleven.

Resisting the slow touch of a frozen finger tracing out my spine ...

"I ran on into the tunnel, five hundred yards. I stopped, and held my lamp above my head, and saw the figures of the measured distance, and saw the wet stains stealing down the walls and trickling through the arch. I ran out again faster than I had run in (for I had a mortal abhorrence of the place upon me), and I looked all round the red light with my own red light, and I went up the iron ladder to the gallery atop of it, and I came down again, and ran back here."

A disagreeable shudder crept over me, but I did my best against it.

I asked his pardon, and he slowly added these words, touching my arm ... I again begged his pardon for being betrayed into interruptions. "This," he said, again laying his hand upon my arm, and glancing over his shoulder with hollow eyes.

He touched me on the arm with his forefinger twice or thrice, giving a ghastly nod each time.

The wind and the wires took up the story with a long lamenting wail.

He repeated, if possible with increased passion and vehemence, that former gesticulation of, "For God's sake, clear the way!"

There was the danger-light. There was the dismal mouth of the tunnel. There were the high, wet stone walls of the cutting. There were the stars above them.

His pain of mind was most pitiable to see. It was the mental torture of a conscientious man, oppressed beyond endurance by an unintelligible responsibility involving life.

... he went on, putting his dark hair back from his head, and drawing his hands outward across and across his temples in an extremity of feverish distress.

That I more than once looked back at the red light as I ascended the pathway, that I did not like the red light, and that I should have slept but poorly if my bed had been under it, I see no reason to conceal. Nor did I like the two sequences of the accident and the dead girl. I see no reason to conceal that either.

Next evening was a lovely evening, and I walked out early to enjoy it.

The nameless horror that oppressed me passed in a moment, for in a moment I saw that this appearance of a man was a man indeed.

With an irresistible sense that something was wrong, with a flashing self-reproachful fear that fatal mischief had come of my leaving the man there ...