

# "The Nothing"

Whatever you do, don't look behind you.

## About the Story

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

### Learning Objective:

to identify the mood in a work of fiction and explore how the author creates that mood, then write a sequel staying true to the mood of the story

**Key Skills:** author's craft, mood, imagery, dialogue, setting, plot, vocabulary, narrative writing

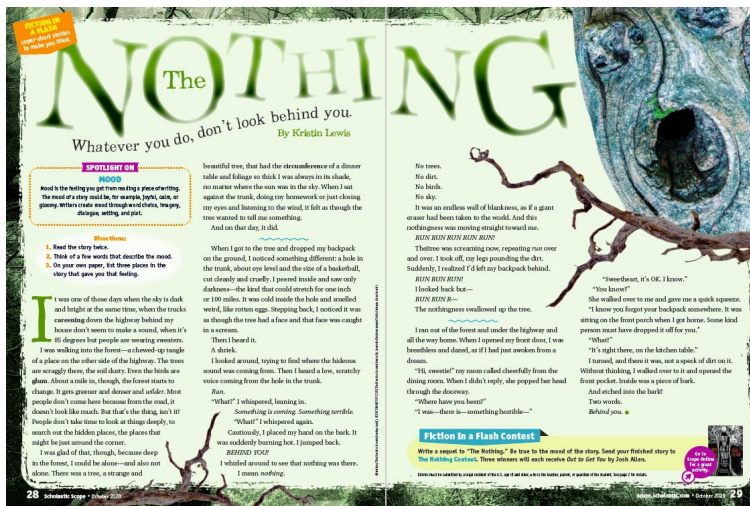
### Essential Questions:

- Why do we like scary stories?
- How do authors create suspense?

### Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, W.3, L.4, L.5, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



## Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of support materials at [scope.scholastic.com](https://scope.scholastic.com).

### Audio:

- Podcast-Scope It Out!: Why Do We Like Scary Stories?
- Vocabulary
- Story
- Text to Speech

### Video:

- "Author Read-Aloud: 'The Nothing'"
- "What's the Mood?"

### Recommended pairings from the Scope archives:

- Special Collection: Stories for Halloween

### Skill Building Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary Practice
- Core Skills Workout: Mood
- Exploring Plot
- Story Planner
- Choice Board
- Contest Entry Form

# Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

## 1. Preparing to Read

15 minutes

### Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Project the **Vocabulary: Words and Definitions** on your board or, if you're remote, share it on your computer screen. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. Optionally, share the Vocabulary Words and Definitions link with students in your LMS and have them preview the words and complete the activity independently for homework. Highlighted words: *careening*, *circumference*, *glum*

### Listen to a Podcast (8 minutes)

- Play this issue's episode of **Scope It Out!: Why Do We Like Scary Stories?** Hosts discuss "The Nothing," other terrifying tales from ancient mythology to *Stranger Things*, and why exactly we enjoy being frightened. You can play it for your class from your Resources tab or share the podcast link directly with students in your LMS.

### Set a Purpose for Reading (2 minutes)

- Have a volunteer read the "Spotlight On: Mood" box and the directions at the top of the story.

## 2. Reading and Discussing

30 minutes

- Read the story once through as a class. Optionally, have students listen to the audio read-aloud of the story while they follow along. (The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.) Then have students read the story once more independently.

- Share the print or interactive version of **Core Skills Workout: Exploring Mood**, a graphic organizer that helps students complete numbers 2 and 3 from the directions box. Share out responses as a class.

*(Alternatively, use the **Author Read-Aloud Video**, in which author Kristin Lewis reads her story, talks about how writers create mood, and challenges students to write a sequel to her story.)*

### 3. Skill Building and Writing

30 minutes

- Share the **Story Planner** with students. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 29 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page.

*(TIP: You may want to project our **Exploring Plot** activity and map the plot points in “The Nothing” together before having students plan their own stories. This slideshow resource contains information about the elements of plot and a plot pyramid diagram that can be used to create a map for understanding the plot of any story you are reading—or to help students map out the plot for a story of their own.)*

- Alternatively, have students choose a culminating task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of differentiated activities.

**Recommended pairings from the Scope archives:**

[Special Collection: Stories for Halloween](#)