"Amy?"

Two steps it is. I grab the door, swing around it, jump into the bathroom, and turn the lock.

Success! Triumph! Oh, happiness, oh, joy! I shake my own hand.

I slurp some cold water from the tap. My throat hurts a bit from that final scream. But it was worth it. It was one of the better screams of my career. There’s something to be said for really scaring yourself.

R. L. Tankard is sitting on the back of the toilet. I open him up. R. L. Tankard is such a good writer that he can make you forget all about what’s going on around you. He can make you forget, for example, a flipped-out twin brother using inappropriate language on the other side of the bathroom door. Listen. He’s already repeating himself. Really, his repertoire of invective is pathetically inadequate. He should do more reading to increase his word power.

I settle down on the bathmat and find my page. So—what was in that baby’s room?

**Activities**

1. With a partner, discuss the appeal of horror stories or films. Why do so many people enjoy being scared by these kinds of stories? After your discussion, compare your ideas with those of another pair of students.

2. Compare the characteristics of the twins, Lucas and Amy. Use evidence from the story to back up your analysis.

3. This story contains many examples of similes and metaphors. Find as many examples as you can of each. Select two of each type that you feel are particularly effective, and explain the reason for your choices.

4. a) With a partner, take turns reading the story out loud. Listen for places where the narrative slows down or speeds up, and explain what techniques the author uses to convey the change of pace.

   b) Choose a section of the story that contains a change in pace, and try reading it aloud as a monologue. Use voice, gesture, pauses, and facial expression as well as the tone of your voice to convey the shifts in mood.