

The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street

Teleplay by Rod Serling

 Video link at thinkcentral.com

VIDEO TRAILER  KEYWORD: HML7-138

What turns a crowd into a **MOB**?

COMMON CORE

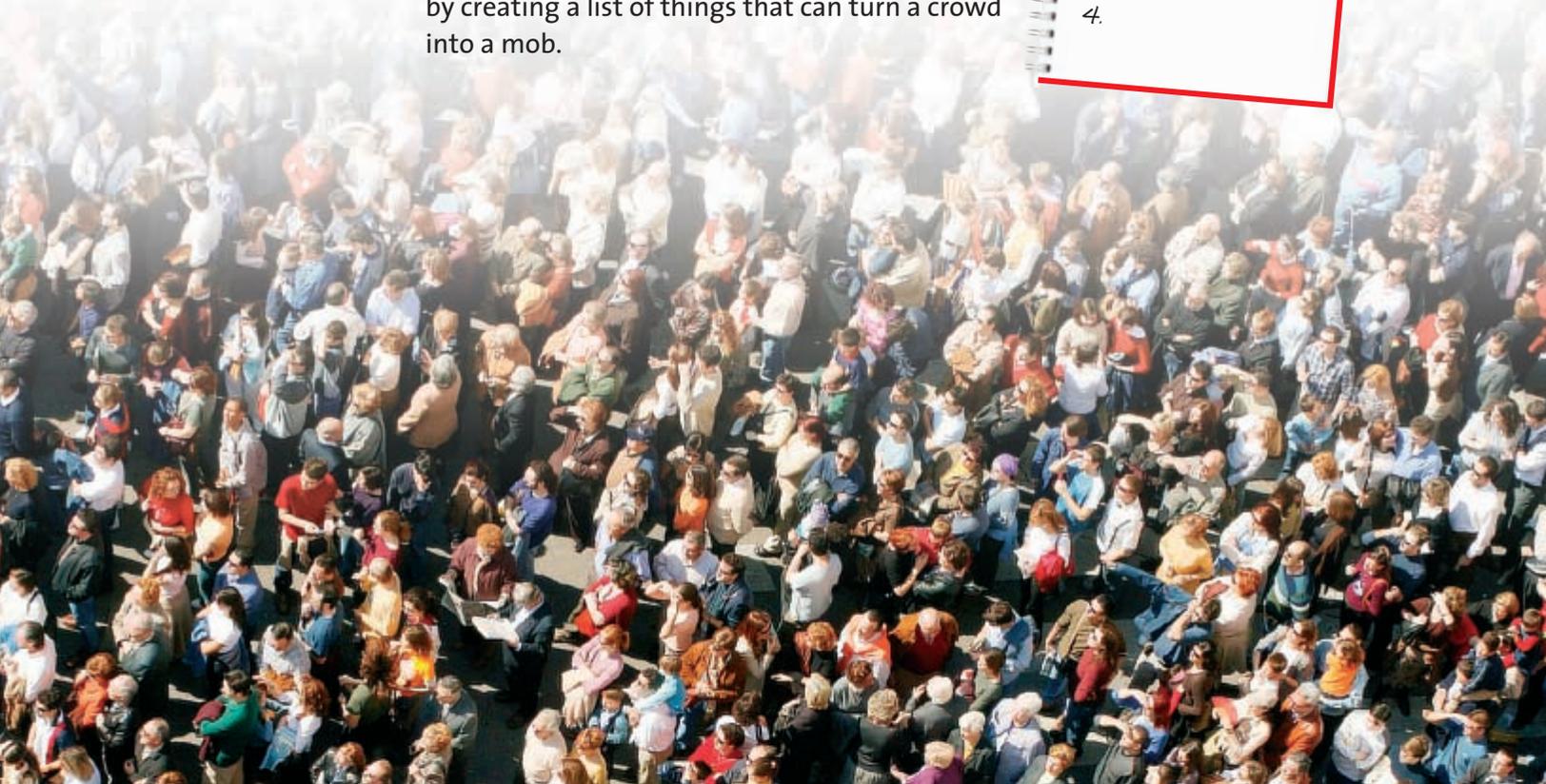
RL 3 Analyze how particular elements of a drama interact. **RL 5** Analyze how a drama's form contributes to its meaning.

People in a crowd often act differently than they do when they're alone. In a big group, people might laugh louder, feel braver, or get angrier. Sometimes a crowd can even become dangerous. When it does—as in the teleplay you're about to read—it becomes a mob.

DISCUSS With a small group, share stories you may have heard about crowds turning into mobs. Think about how some fans react after a favorite sports team wins a championship or about what can happen when frustrated people take the law into their own hands. Continue your discussion by creating a list of things that can turn a crowd into a mob.

What Can Turn a Crowd into a Mob?

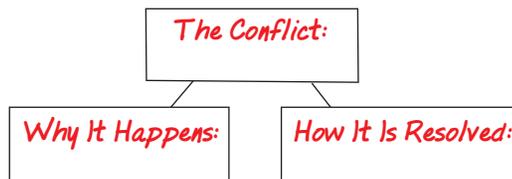
1. Feeling of victory
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



● TEXT ANALYSIS: CONFLICT IN DRAMA

Like any story, a drama has a setting, characters, and a plot that centers on a **conflict**. Since drama is meant to be performed by actors, most of the story unfolds through action and **dialogue**, the conversation between characters. Dialogue usually advances the plot and reveals the conflict.

As you read “The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street,” make notes about the story’s conflict in a conflict map like the one shown.



● READING STRATEGY: READING A TELEPLAY

One characteristic element of a drama is the stage directions. **Stage directions** are instructions for the actors, the director, and the reader. They often appear in italics within parentheses. In a **teleplay**, a drama written specifically for television, stage directions also include directions for the camera, such as the following:

The camera moves slowly across the various porches . . .

As you read this teleplay, use all of the stage directions to help you imagine the story as it might be presented on television.

▲ VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Rod Serling uses these words to help show the conflict unfolding. See how many of them you can match with their numbered definitions.

WORD LIST	assent	converging	optimistic
	antagonism	incriminate	revelation
	contorted		

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. hopeful; confident | 5. to cause to appear guilty |
| 2. hostility | 6. twisted or pulled out of shape |
| 3. something made known | 7. moving toward one point |
| 4. agreement | |

Rod Serling

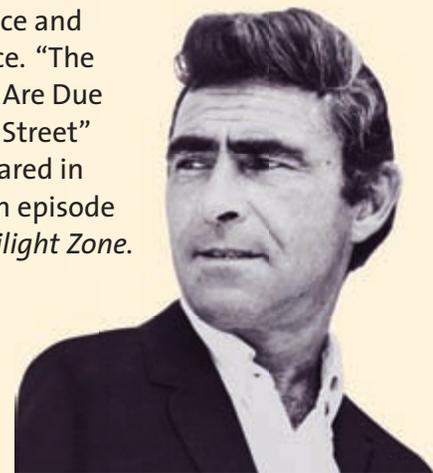
1924–1975

Social Issues

During his extraordinary career, Rod Serling won six Emmy awards, the highest honors given to those in the television industry. Known to the public as a creator of exciting television shows, Serling was sometimes referred to by his friends and business associates as “the angry young man of television.” Serling wanted to write teleplays about important social issues, but television executives often thought his topics were too controversial.

Science Fiction

Frustrated by this lack of support, Serling turned to writing science fiction and fantasy. He created an eerie series called *The Twilight Zone*, which became one of the most popular shows in television history during its 1959–1964 run. Because the teleplays for this series were not realistic, Serling had more freedom to deal with issues such as prejudice and intolerance. “The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street” first appeared in 1960 as an episode of *The Twilight Zone*.



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

Author Online



Go to thinkcentral.com. KEYWORD: HML7-139

THE MONSTERS *Are Due on Maple Street*

Rod Serling

CHARACTERS

Narrator

Tommy

Steve Brand

Don Martin

Myra Brand, Steve's wife

Woman

Voice One

Voice Two

Voice Three

Voice Four

Voice Five

Pete Van Horn

Charlie

Sally, Tommy's mother

Man One

Les Goodman

Ethel Goodman, Les's wife

Man Two

Figure One

Figure Two

Empire of Lights (1954), René Magritte. Oil on canvas, 146 cm × 114 cm.
Musée d'Art Moderne, Brussels. © 2008 C. Herscovici, Brussels/
Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



ACT

1

(Fade in¹ on a shot of the night sky. The various heavenly bodies stand out in sharp, sparkling relief. The camera moves slowly across the heavens until it passes the horizon and stops on a sign that reads "Maple Street." It is daytime. Then we see the street below. It is a quiet, tree-lined, small-town American street. The houses have front porches on which people sit and swing on gliders, talking across from house to house. Steve Brand is polishing his car, which is parked in front of his house. His neighbor, Don Martin, leans against the fender watching him. An ice-cream vendor riding a bicycle is just in the process of stopping to sell some ice cream to a couple of kids. Two women gossip on the front lawn. Another man is watering his lawn with a garden hose. As we see these various activities, we hear the Narrator's voice.)

Narrator. Maple Street, U.S.A., late summer. A tree-lined little world of front-porch gliders, hopscotch, the laughter of children, and the bell of an ice-cream vendor.

(There is a pause, and the camera moves over to a shot of the ice-cream vendor and two small boys who are standing alongside just buying ice cream.)

Narrator. At the sound of the roar and the flash of the light, it will be precisely six-forty-three P.M. on Maple Street.

(At this moment Tommy, one of the two boys buying ice cream from the vendor, looks up to listen to a tremendous screeching roar from overhead. A flash of light plays on the faces of both boys and then moves down the street and disappears. Various people leave their porches or stop what they are doing to stare up at the sky. Steve Brand, the man who has been polishing his car, stands there transfixed, staring upwards. He looks at Don Martin, his neighbor from across the street.)

Steve. What was that? A meteor?

Don. That's what it looked like. I didn't hear any crash though, did you?

Steve. Nope. I didn't hear anything except a roar.

Myra (*from her porch*). What was that?

Steve (*raising his voice and looking toward the porch*). Guess it was a meteor, honey. Came awful close, didn't it?

Myra. Too close for my money! Much too close. *(The camera moves slowly across the various porches to people who stand there watching and talking in low conversing tones.)*

Narrator. Maple Street. Six-forty-four P.M. on a late September evening. *(He pauses.)* Maple Street in the last calm and reflective moment *(pause)* before the monsters came!

(The camera takes us across the porches again. A man is replacing a light bulb on a front porch. He gets off his stool to flick the switch and finds that nothing happens. Another man is working on an electric power mower. He plugs in the plug, flicks the switch of the mower off and on, but nothing happens. Through a window we see a woman pushing her finger up and down on the dial hook of a telephone. Her voice sounds far away.)

Woman. Operator, operator, something's wrong on the phone, operator! *(Myra Brand comes out on the porch and calls to Steve.)*

Myra (*calling*). Steve, the power's off. I had the soup on the stove, and the stove just stopped working.

Woman. Same thing over here. I can't get anybody on the phone either. The phone seems to be dead.

(We look down again on the street. Small, mildly disturbed voices are heard coming from below.)

Voice One. Electricity's off.

Voice Two. Phone won't work.

1. **fade in:** cause the television image to appear gradually.



Voice Three. Can't get a thing on the radio.

Voice Four. My power mower won't move, won't work at all.

80 **Voice Five.** Radio's gone dead!

(Pete Van Horn, a tall, thin man, is seen standing in front of his house.)

Pete. I'll cut through the back yard to see if the power's still on, on Floral Street. I'll be right back!

(He walks past the side of his house and disappears into the back yard. The camera pans² down slowly until we are looking at ten or eleven people standing around the street and overflowing to the curb and sidewalk. In the background is Steve Brand's car.)

Steve. Doesn't make sense. Why should the power go off all of a sudden and the phone line?

Don. Maybe some kind of an electrical storm or something.

Charlie. That don't seem likely. Sky's just as blue as anything. Not a cloud. No lightning. No thunder. No nothing. How could it be a storm?

Woman. I can't get a thing on the radio. Not even the portable.

(The people again begin to murmur softly in wonderment.)

Charlie. Well, why don't you go downtown and check with the police, though they'll probably think we're crazy or something. A little power failure and right away we get all flustered and everything—

Steve. It isn't just the power failure, Charlie. If it was, we'd still be able to get a broadcast on the portable.

(There is a murmur of reaction to this. Steve looks from face to face and then at his car.)

Steve. I'll run downtown. We'll get this all straightened out.

(He gets in the car and turns the key. Looking through the open car door, we see the crowd watching Steve from the other side. He starts the engine. It turns over sluggishly and then stops dead. He tries it again, and this time he can't get it to turn over. Then very slowly he turns the key back to "off" and gets out of the car. The people stare at Steve. He stands for a moment by the car and then walks toward them.)

2. pans: turns.

Steve. I don't understand it. It was working fine before—

Don. Out of gas?

Steve (*shakes his head*). I just had it filled.

Woman. What's it mean?

Charlie. It's just as if (*pause*) as if everything had stopped. (*Then he turns toward Steve.*)
130 We'd better walk downtown.

(*Another murmur of assent to this.*)

Steve. The two of us can go, Charlie. (*He turns to look back at the car.*) It couldn't be the meteor. A meteor couldn't do this.

(*He and Charlie exchange a look. Then they start to walk away from the group. Tommy comes into view. He is a serious-faced young boy in spectacles. He stands halfway between the group and the two men, who start to walk down the sidewalk.*)
140

Tommy. Mr. Brand—you'd better not!

Steve. Why not?

Tommy. They don't want you to.

(*Steve and Charlie exchange a grin, and Steve looks back toward the boy.*)

Steve. *Who* doesn't want us to?

Tommy (*jerks his head in the general direction of the distant horizon*). Them!

Steve. Them?

150 **Charlie.** Who are them?

Tommy (*intently*). Whoever was in that thing that came by overhead.

(*Steve knits his brows for a moment, cocking his head questioningly. His voice is intense.*)

Steve. What?

Tommy. Whoever was in that thing that came over. I don't think they want us to leave here.

(*Steve leaves Charlie, walks over to the boy, and puts his hand on the boy's shoulder. He forces his voice to remain gentle.*)
160

Steve. What do you mean? What are you talking about?

Tommy. They don't want us to leave. That's why they shut everything off.

Steve. What makes you say that? Whatever gave you that idea?

Woman (*from the crowd*). Now isn't that the craziest thing you ever heard?



Tommy (*persistent but a little frightened*). It's
170 always that way, in every story I ever read about
a ship landing from outer space.

Woman (*to the boy's mother, Sally, who stands
on the fringe of the crowd*). From outer space
yet! Sally, you better get that boy of yours up to
bed. He's been reading too many comic books
or seeing too many movies or something!

Sally. Tommy, come over here and stop that
kind of talk.

Steve. Go ahead, Tommy. We'll be right back.
180 And you'll see. That wasn't any ship or anything
like it. That was just a . . . a meteor or some-
thing. Likely as not— (*He turns to the group, now
trying very hard to sound more **optimistic** than he
feels.*) No doubt it did have something to do with
all this power failure and the rest of it. Meteors
can do some crazy things. Like sunspots.

Don (*picking up the cue*). Sure. That's the kind
of thing—like sunspots. They raise Cain³ with
radio reception all over the world. And this thing
190 being so close—why, there's no telling the sort
of stuff it can do. (*He wets his lips and smiles ner-
vously.*) Go ahead, Charlie. You and Steve go into
town and see if that isn't what's causing it all.
(*Steve and Charlie walk away from the group
down the sidewalk as the people watch silently.
Tommy stares at them, biting his lips, and finally
calls out again.*)

Tommy. Mr. Brand!

(*The two men stop. Tommy takes a step toward
200 them.*)

Tommy. Mr. Brand . . . please don't leave here.
(*Steve and Charlie stop once again and turn
toward the boy. In the crowd there is a murmur
of irritation and concern, as if the boy's words—
even though they didn't make sense—were*

*bringing up fears that shouldn't be brought up.
Tommy is both frightened and defiant.*)

Tommy. You might not even be able to get to
town. It was that way in the story. Nobody
210 could leave. Nobody except—

Steve. Except who?

Tommy. Except the people they sent down
ahead of them. They looked just like humans.
And it wasn't until the ship landed that—
(*The boy suddenly stops, conscious of the people
staring at him and his mother and of the sudden
bush of the crowd.*)

Sally (*in a whisper, sensing the **antagonism**
of the crowd*). Tommy, please son . . . honey,
220 don't talk that way—

Man One. That kid shouldn't talk that way . . .
and we shouldn't stand here listening to him.
Why this is the craziest thing I ever heard of.
The kid tells us a comic book plot, and here
we stand listening—

(*Steve walks toward the camera and stops beside
the boy.*)

Steve. Go ahead, Tommy. What kind of story
was this? What about the people they sent
230 out ahead?

Tommy. That was the way they prepared
things for the landing. They sent four people.
A mother and a father and two kids who
looked just like humans . . . but they weren't.
(*There is another silence as Steve looks toward
the crowd and then toward Tommy. He wears
a tight grin.*)

Steve. Well, I guess what we'd better do then
is to run a check on the neighborhood and see
240 which ones of us are really human.

(*There is laughter at this, but it's a laughter that
comes from a desperate attempt to lighten the*

3. **raise Cain**: cause trouble; create a disturbance. (In the Bible, Adam and Eve's son Cain becomes the first murderer when he kills his brother Abel.)

atmosphere. *The people look at one another in the middle of their laughter.*)

Charlie (*rubs his jaw nervously*). I wonder if Floral Street's got the same deal we got. (*He looks past the houses.*) Where is Pete Van Horn anyway? Isn't he back yet?

(*Suddenly there is the sound of a car's engine starting to turn over. We look across the street toward the driveway of Les Goodman's house. He is at the wheel trying to start the car.*)

Sally. Can you get started, Les?

(*Les Goodman gets out of the car, shaking his head.*)

Les. No dice.⁴

(*He walks toward the group. He stops suddenly as, behind him, the car engine starts up all by itself. Les whirls around to stare at the car. The car idles roughly, smoke coming from the exhaust, the frame shaking gently. Les's eyes go wide, and he runs over to his car. The people stare at the car.*)

Man One. He got the car started somehow. He got *his* car started!

(*The people continue to stare, caught up by this **revelation** and wildly frightened.*)

Woman. How come his car just up and started like that?

Sally. All by itself. He wasn't anywheres near it. It started all by itself.

(*Don Martin approaches the group and stops a few feet away to look toward Les's car.*)

Don. And he never did come out to look at that thing that flew overhead. He wasn't even interested. (*He turns to the group, his face taut and serious.*) Why? Why didn't he come out with the rest of us to look?

Charlie. He always was an oddball. Him and his whole family. Real oddball.

Don. What do you say we ask him?

(*The group starts toward the house. In this brief fraction of a moment, it takes the first step toward changing from a group into a mob. The group members begin to head purposefully across the street toward the house. Steve stands in front of them. For a moment their fear almost turns their walk into a wild stampede, but Steve's voice, loud, incisive, and commanding, makes them stop.*)

Steve. Wait a minute . . . wait a minute! Let's not be a mob!

(*The people stop, pause for a moment, and then, much more quietly and slowly, start to walk across the street. Les stands alone facing the people.*)

Les. I just don't understand it. I tried to start it, and it wouldn't start. You saw me. All of you saw me.

(*And now, just as suddenly as the engine started, it stops, and there is a long silence that is gradually intruded upon by the frightened murmuring of the people.*)

Les. I don't understand. I swear . . . I don't understand. What's happening?

Don. Maybe you better tell us. Nothing's working on this street. Nothing. No lights, no power, no radio, (*then m eaningfully*) nothing except one car—yours!

(*The people's murmuring becomes a loud chant filling the air with accusations and demands for action. Two of the men pass Don and head toward Les, who backs away from them against his car. He is cornered.*)

Les. Wait a minute now. You keep your distance—all of you. So I've got a car that starts by itself—well, that's a freak thing—I admit it. But does that make me a criminal or something? I don't know why the car works—it just does!

(*This stops the crowd momentarily, and Les, still backing away, goes toward his front porch. He goes up the steps and then stops, facing the mob.*)

4. **no dice:** no success.



320 **Les.** What's it all about, Steve?

Steve (*quietly*). We're all on a monster kick, Les. Seems that the general impression holds that maybe one family isn't what we think they are. Monsters from outer space or something. Different from us. Aliens from the vast beyond. (*He chuckles.*) You know anybody that might fit that description around here on Maple Street?

Les. What is this, a gag? (*He looks around the group again.*) This a practical joke or something?

330 (*Suddenly the car engine starts all by itself, runs for a moment, and stops. One woman begins to cry. The eyes of the crowd are cold and accusing.*)

Les. Now that's supposed to **incriminate** me, huh? The car engine goes on and off, and that really does it, doesn't it? (*He looks around at the faces of the people.*) I just don't understand it . . . any more than any of you do! (*He wets his lips, looking from face to face.*) Look, you all know me. We've lived here five years. Right in this house. We're no different from any of the rest of you! We're no different at all. . . . Really . . . this whole thing is just . . . just weird—

340 **Woman.** Well, if that's the case, Les Goodman, explain why— (*She stops suddenly, clamping her mouth shut.*)

Les (*softly*). Explain what?

Steve (*interjecting*). Look, let's forget this—

Charlie (*overlapping him*). Go ahead, let her talk. What about it? Explain what?

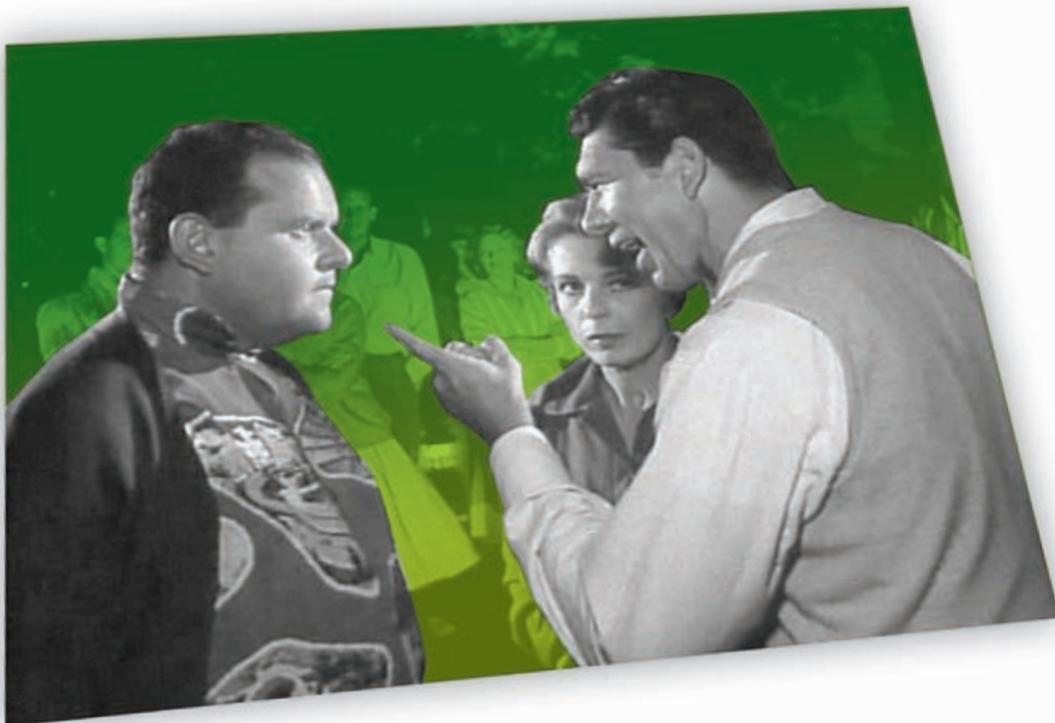
350 **Woman** (*a little reluctantly*). Well . . . sometimes I go to bed late at night. A couple of times . . . a couple of times I'd come out here on the porch, and I'd see Mr. Goodman here in the wee hours of the morning standing out in front of his house . . . looking up at the sky. (*She looks around the circle of faces.*) That's right, looking up at the sky as if . . . as if he were waiting for something, (*pauses*) as if he were looking for something.

360 (*There's a murmur of reaction from the crowd again as Les backs away.*)

Les. She's crazy. Look, I can explain that. Please . . . I can really explain that. . . . She's making it up anyway. (*Then he shouts.*) I tell you she's making it up!

(*He takes a step toward the crowd, and they back away from him. He walks down the steps after them, and they continue to back away. Suddenly he is left completely alone, and he looks like a man caught in the middle of a menacing circle as the scene slowly fades to black.*)

370



ACT

2

Scene One

(Fade in on Maple Street at night. On the sidewalk, little knots of people stand around talking in low voices. At the end of each conversation they look toward Les Goodman's house. From the various houses, we can see candlelight but no electricity. The quiet that blankets the whole area is disturbed only by the almost whispered voices of the people standing around. In one group Charlie stands staring across at the Goodmans' house. Two men stand
10 *across the street from it in almost sentrylike⁵ poses.)*

Sally *(in a small, hesitant voice)*. It just doesn't seem right, though, keeping watch on them. Why . . . he was right when he said he was one of our neighbors. Why, I've known Ethel Goodman ever since they moved in. We've been good friends—

Charlie. That don't prove a thing. Any guy who'd spend his time lookin' up at the sky early

in the morning—well, there's something wrong
20 with that kind of person. There's something that ain't legitimate. Maybe under normal circumstances we could let it go by, but these aren't normal circumstances. Why, look at this street! Nothin' but candles. Why, it's like goin' back into the Dark Ages⁶ or somethin'!

(Steve walks down the steps of his porch, down the street to the Goodmans' house, and then stops at the foot of the steps. Les is standing there; Ethel Goodman behind him is very frightened.)

30 **Les**. Just stay right where you are, Steve. We don't want any trouble, but this time if anybody sets foot on my porch—that's what they're going to get—trouble!

Steve. Look, Les—

Les. I've already explained to you people. I don't sleep very well at night sometimes. I get up and I take a walk and I look up at the sky. I look at the stars!

5. **sentrylike**: resembling those of guards.

6. **Dark Ages**: a period from about A.D. 400 to 1000, when learning and culture in Western Europe were decreasing.

Ethel. That's exactly what he does. Why, this
40 whole thing, it's . . . it's some kind of madness
or something.

Steve (*nods grimly*). That's exactly what it is—
some kind of madness.

Charlie's Voice (*shrill, from across the street*).

You best watch who you're seen with, Steve!
Until we get this all straightened out, you ain't
exactly above suspicion yourself.

Steve (*whirling around toward him*). Or you,
Charlie. Or any of us, it seems. From age eight
50 on up!

Woman. What I'd like to know is—what are
we gonna do? Just stand around here all night?

Charlie. There's nothin' else we *can* do! (*He
turns back, looking toward Steve and Les again.*)
One of 'em'll tip their hand. They got to.

Steve (*raising his voice*). There's something
you can do, Charlie. You can go home and
keep your mouth shut. You can quit strutting
around like a self-appointed judge and climb
60 into bed and forget it.

Charlie. You sound real anxious to have that
happen, Steve. I think we better keep our eye
on you, too!

Don (*as if he were taking the bit in his teeth, takes
a hesitant step to the front*). I think everything
might as well come out now. (*He turns toward
Steve.*) Your wife's done plenty of talking,
Steve, about how odd you are!

Charlie (*picking this up, his eyes widening*).
70 Go ahead, tell us what she's said.

(*Steve walks toward them from across the street.*)

Steve. Go ahead, what's my wife said? Let's get it
all out. Let's pick out every idiosyncrasy⁷ of every
single man, woman, and child on the street. And

then we might as well set up some kind of citi-
zens' court. How about a firing squad at dawn,
Charlie, so we can get rid of all the suspects.
Narrow them down. Make it easier for you.

Don. There's no need gettin' so upset, Steve.
80 It's just that . . . well . . . Myra's talked about
how there's been plenty of nights you spent
hours down in your basement workin' on some
kind of radio or something. Well, none of us
have ever seen that radio—

(*By this time Steve has reached the group.
He stands there defiantly.*)

Charlie. Go ahead, Steve. What kind of "radio
set" you workin' on? I never seen it. Neither
has anyone else. Who do you talk to on that
90 radio set? And who talks to you?

Steve. I'm surprised at you, Charlie. How come
you're so dense all of a sudden? (*He pauses.*)
Who do I talk to? I talk to monsters from
outer space. I talk to three-headed green men
who fly over here in what look like meteors.
(*Myra Brand steps down from the porch, bites
her lip, calls out.*)

Myra. Steve! Steve, please. (*Then looking around,
frightened, she walks toward the group.*) It's just a
100 ham radio⁸ set, that's all. I bought him a book
on it myself. It's just a ham radio set. A lot of
people have them. I can show it to you. It's right
down in the basement.

Steve (*whirls around toward her*). Show them
nothing! If they want to look inside our
house—let them go and get a search warrant.

Charlie. Look, buddy, you can't afford to—

Steve (*interrupting him*). Charlie, don't start
telling me who's dangerous and who isn't and
110 who's safe and who's a menace. (*He turns to
the group and shouts.*) And you're with him,
too—all of you! You're standing here all set

7. **idiosyncrasy** (īd'ē-ō-sīng'krā-sē): personal way of acting; odd mannerism.

8. **ham radio**: a two-way radio with which an amateur broadcaster communicates with other amateurs.

to crucify—all set to find a scapegoat⁹—all desperate to point some kind of a finger at a neighbor! Well now, look, friends, the only thing that's gonna happen is that we'll eat each other up alive—

(He stops abruptly as Charlie suddenly grabs his arm.)

120 **Charlie** *(in a hushed voice)*. That's not the only thing that can happen to us.

(Down the street, a figure has suddenly materialized in the gloom. In the silence we hear the clickety-clack of slow, measured footsteps on concrete as the figure walks slowly toward them. One of the women lets out a stifled cry. Sally grabs her boy, as do a couple of other mothers.)

Tommy *(shouting, frightened)*. It's the monster! It's the monster!

130 *(Another woman lets out a wail, and the people fall back in a group staring toward the darkness and the approaching figure. The people stand in the shadows watching. Don Martin joins them, carrying a shotgun. He holds it up.)*

Don. We may need this.

Steve. A shotgun? *(He pulls it out of Don's hand.)* No! Will anybody think a thought around here! Will you people wise up. What good would a shotgun do against—

140 *(The dark figure continues to walk toward them as the people stand there, fearful, mothers clutching children, men standing in front of their wives.)*

Charlie *(pulling the gun from Steve's hands)*. No more talk, Steve. You're going to talk us into a grave! You'd let whatever's out there walk right over us, wouldn't yuh? Well, some of us won't!

(Charlie swings around, raises the gun, and suddenly pulls the trigger. The sound of the shot explodes in the stillness. The figure suddenly lets
150 *out a small cry, stumbles forward onto his knees,*

and then falls forward on his face. Don, Charlie, and Steve race forward to him. Steve is there first and turns the man over. The crowd gathers around them.)

Steve *(slowly looks up)*. It's Pete Van Horn.

Don *(in a hushed voice)*. Pete Van Horn! He was just gonna go over to the next block to see if the power was on—

Woman. You killed him, Charlie. You shot
160 him dead!

Charlie *(looks around at the circle of faces, his eyes frightened, his face **contorted**)*. But . . . but I didn't know who he was. I certainly didn't know who he was. He comes walkin' out of the darkness—how am I supposed to know who he was? *(He grabs Steve.)* Steve—you know why I shot! How was I supposed to know he wasn't a monster or something? *(He grabs Don.)* We're all scared of the same thing. I was just tryin'
170 to . . . tryin' to protect my home, that's all!

Look, all of you, that's all I was tryin' to do. *(He looks down wildly at the body.)* I didn't know it was somebody we knew! I didn't know—
(There's a sudden hush and then an intake of breath in the group. Across the street all the lights go on in one of the houses.)

Woman *(in a hushed voice)*. Charlie . . . Charlie . . . the lights just went on in your house. Why did the lights just go on?

180 **Don**. What about it, Charlie? How come you're the only one with lights now?

Les. That's what I'd like to know.

(Pausing, they all stare toward Charlie.)

Les. You were so quick to kill, Charlie, and you were so quick to tell us who we had to be careful of. Well, maybe you had to kill. Maybe Pete there was trying to tell us something. Maybe he'd found out something and came

9. **scapegoat**: a person or thing made to bear the blame for the mistakes of others.

back to tell us who there was amongst us we
190 should watch out for—

(Charlie backs away from the group, his eyes wide with fright.)

Charlie. No . . . no . . . it's nothing of the sort! I don't know why the lights are on. I swear I don't. Somebody's pulling a gag or something.
(He bumps against Steve, who grabs him and whirls him around.)

Steve. A gag? A gag? Charlie, there's a dead man on the sidewalk, and you killed him!
200 Does this thing look like a gag to you?

(Charlie breaks away and screams as he runs toward his house.)

Charlie. No! No! Please!

(A man breaks away from the crowd to chase Charlie. As the man tackles him and lands on top of him, the other people start to run toward them. Charlie gets up, breaks away from the other man's grasp, and lands a couple of desperate punches that push the man aside. Then he forces his way, fighting, through the crowd and jumps up on his front porch. Charlie is on his porch as a rock thrown from the group smashes a window beside him, the broken glass flying past him. A couple of pieces cut him. He stands there perspiring, ruffled, blood running down from a cut on the cheek. His wife breaks away from the group to throw herself into his arms. He buries his face against her. We can see the crowd
210 *converging on the porch.)*
220

Voice One. It must have been him.

Voice Two. He's the one.

Voice Three. We got to get Charlie.
(Another rock lands on the porch. Charlie pushes his wife behind him, facing the group.)

Charlie. Look, look, I swear to you . . . it isn't me . . . but I do know who

it is . . . I swear to you, I do know who it is.

230 I know who the monster is here. I know who it is that doesn't belong. I swear to you I know.

Don *(pushing his way to the front of the crowd).* All right, Charlie, let's hear it!

(Charlie's eyes dart around wildly.)

Charlie. It's . . . it's . . .

Man Two *(screaming).* Go ahead, Charlie.

Charlie. It's . . . it's the kid. It's Tommy. He's the one!

(There's a gasp from the crowd as we see Sally holding the boy. Tommy at first doesn't understand and then, realizing the eyes are all on him, buries his face against his mother.)
240

Sally *(backs away).* That's crazy! He's only a boy.

Woman. But he knew! He was the only one! He told us all about it. Well, how did he know? How could he have known?

(Various people take this up and repeat the question.)



Voice One. How could he know?

250 **Voice Two.** Who told him?

Voice Three. Make the kid answer.

(The crowd starts to converge around the mother, who grabs Tommy and starts to run with him. The crowd starts to follow, at first walking fast, and then running after him. Suddenly Charlie's lights go off and the lights in other houses go on, then off.)

Man One (*shouting*). It isn't the kid . . . it's Bob Weaver's house.

260 **Woman.** It isn't Bob Weaver's house, it's Don Martin's place.

Charlie. I tell you it's the kid.

Don. It's Charlie. He's the one.

(People shout, accuse, and scream as the lights go on and off. Then, slowly, in the middle of this nightmarish confusion of sight and sound, the camera starts to pull away until, once again, we have reached the opening shot looking at the Maple Street sign from high above.)

Scene Two

270 *(The camera continues to move away while gradually bringing into focus a field. We see the metal side of a spacecraft that sits shrouded in darkness. An open door throws out a beam of light from the illuminated interior. Two figures appear, silhouetted against the bright lights. We get only a vague feeling of form.)*

Figure One. Understand the procedure now? Just stop a few of their machines and radios and telephones and lawn mowers. . . . Throw them into darkness for a few hours, and then
280 just sit back and watch the pattern.

Figure Two. And this pattern is always the same?

Figure One. With few variations. They pick the most dangerous enemy they can find . . . and it's themselves. And all we need do is sit back . . . and watch.

Figure Two. Then I take it this place . . . this Maple Street . . . is not unique.

Figure One (*shaking his head*). By no means. Their world is full of Maple Streets. And we'll
290 go from one to the other and let them destroy themselves. One to the other . . . one to the other . . . one to the other—

Scene Three

(The camera slowly moves up for a shot of the starry sky, and over this we hear the Narrator's voice.)

Narrator. The tools of conquest do not necessarily come with bombs and explosions and fallout. There are weapons that are simply thoughts, attitudes, prejudices—to be found only in the minds of men. For the record,
300 prejudices can kill and suspicion can destroy. A thoughtless, frightened search for a scapegoat has a fallout all its own for the children . . . and the children yet unborn, (*a pause*) and the pity of it is . . . that these things cannot be confined to . . . The Twilight Zone!

(Fade to black.)

Comprehension

1. **Recall** When do the neighbors first sense something is wrong?
2. **Clarify** How is Pete Van Horn killed?
3. **Clarify** Why do the neighbors become suspicious of Tommy?



RL 3 Analyze how particular elements of a drama interact.
RL 5 Analyze how a drama's form contributes to its meaning.

Text Analysis

4. **Identify Conflict** Review the conflict map you created as you read. Then explain the main conflict in the story. What do the characters' reactions to the conflict and their dialogue reveal about them?

5. **Analyze the Teleplay** How did the stage directions help you understand the teleplay? Record your answers on a chart like the one shown.

<i>Stage Direction</i>	<i>Its Effect</i>
<i>Fade in on a shot of the night sky.</i>	<i>It makes you focus on outer space.</i>

6. **Analyze Foreshadowing** Foreshadowing is a technique a writer uses to hint at something that will occur later in a story. Reread lines 51–54 of Act 1. What is the purpose of the narrator's role here?
7. **Draw Conclusions** At various points in the teleplay, the **mob** thinks different people are the monsters in their midst. Make a list of these people, and consider the moments when the mob turns on them. What conclusions can you draw about how the mob picks its victims?
8. **Make Judgments** In your opinion, who are the monsters referred to in the title? Give reasons for your answer.

Extension and Challenge

9. **Creative Project: Drama** With a small group, review the information about Rod Serling on page 139. Then act out a part of the teleplay that your group thinks communicates a message about prejudice and fear. Remember to follow stage directions as you act out your scene. After your performance, explain why your group chose that particular scene.

What turns a crowd into a MOB?

Not all of the characters in this teleplay are equally quick to go along with the crowd. Identify a character who urges people to think calmly and reasonably, and write three paragraphs describing his or her efforts. Include a sentence that tells why the character isn't successful in preventing the crowd from becoming a mob.