MEET
ROD SERLING

Although Rod Serling became best known as the creator and host of *The Twilight Zone*, a popular fantasy and science-fiction television series, he was first and foremost a writer. Between 1951 and 1955, he wrote more than seventy TV dramas. Three of Serling’s six Emmy Awards were for pre-*Twilight Zone* plays. In the five seasons *The Twilight Zone* was on the air from 1959 to 1964, Serling wrote nearly two out of every three of the show’s 156 plays. The following selection was one of those plays.

Rod Serling was born in New York in 1924 and died in 1975.

READING FOCUS
Lights flicker on and off. Cars start and stop. Telephones ring and go dead. Imagine these things happening in your town.

Journal
Describe how you think your neighbors would react to a series of strange occurrences on your street.

Setting a Purpose
Read to find out what happens on Maple Street.

BUILDING BACKGROUND
Did You Know? “The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street” is a play written especially for television. The stage notes, written specifically for the television camera, include
- *pan* to turn the camera to follow a moving person or object
- *cut* to switch from one scene to another
- *close-up* to move the camera close to the subject, such as a person’s face
- *long shot* to film a subject from a long distance away

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

reflective (ri flek’ tiv) adj. showing serious and careful thinking; thoughtful; p. 507
intimidated (in tim’ ə də’ təd) adj. made timid or fearful; bullied; p. 510
instill (in still’) v. to put in gradually, little by little; p. 510
validity (va lid’ ə tē) n. state of being supported by facts; truth; p. 511
defiant (di fi’ ant) adj. showing bold resistance to authority or an opponent; p. 511
antagonism (an tag’ ə niz’ am) n. hostility; p. 511
incriminate (in krim’ ə nāt’) v. to show the guilt of; p. 515
legitimate (li jīt’ ə mit) adj. that which follows the rules; lawful; p. 517
explicit (ek plis’ it) adj. clearly expressed; p. 524
prejudice (prej’ ə dis) n. an unfavorable opinion or judgment formed unfairly; p. 524
THE MONSTERS ARE DUE ON MAPLE STREET

Rod Serling

CHARACTERS

NARRATOR
Residents of Maple Street:
STEVE BRAND
MRS. BRAND
DON MARTIN
PETE VAN HORN
CHARLIE

FIGURE ONE
CHARLIE'S WIFE
TOMMY
SALLY, TOMMY'S MOTHER
LES GOODMAN

FIGURE TWO
MRS. GOODMAN
WOMAN
MAN ONE
MAN TWO

ACT I

[Fade in on a shot of the night sky. The various nebulæ and planet bodies stand out in sharp, sparkling relief, and the camera begins a slow pan across the Heavens.]  

NARRATOR'S VOICE. There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space, and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow—between science and superstition. And it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area which we call The Twilight Zone.

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1. The word nebulæ (nēb'ya lé') refers to bright, cloudlike masses of dust and gases that are visible in the night sky.
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On Maple Street

[The camera has begun to pan down until it passes the horizon and is on
a sign which reads “Maple Street.” Pan down until we are shooting down
at an angle toward the street below. It's a tree-lined, quiet residential
American street, very typical of the small town. The houses have front
porches on which people sit and swing on gliders, conversing across from
house to house. STEVE BRAND polishes his car parked in front of his
house. His neighbor, DON MARTIN, leans against the fender watching
him. A Good Humor man rides a bicycle and 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 waters his lawn.]

NARRATOR'S VOICE. Maple Street, U.S.A., late summer. A tree-lined
little world of front porch gliders, hop scotch, 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 Good
Humor man and two small boys who are standing alongside, just buying
ice cream.]

NARRATOR'S VOICE. At the sound of the roar and the flash of light it
will be precisely 6:43 P.M. on Maple Street.

[At this moment one of the little boys, TOMMY, looks up to listen to a
sound of a tremendous screeching roar from overhead. A flash of light
plays on both their faces and then it moves down the street past lawns and
porches and rooftops and then disappears.
Various people leave their porches and stop what they're doing to stare up
at the sky. STEVE BRAND, the man who's been polishing his car, now
stands there transfixed, staring upwards. He looks at DON MARTIN, his
neighbor from across the street.]

STEVE. What was that? A meteor?

DON. [Nods.] That's what it looked like. I didn't hear any crash
though, did you?

STEVE. [Shakes his head.] Nope. I didn't hear anything except a roar.

MRS. BRAND. [From her porch.] Steve? What was that?

STEVE. [Raising his voice and looking toward porch.] Guess it was a
meteor, honey. Came awful close, didn't it?

MRS. BRAND. Too close for my money! Much too close.

[The camera pans across the various porches to people who stand there
watching and talking in low tones.]

2. To be transfixed is to be made motionless, as from wonder or fear.
NARRATOR’S VOICE. Maple Street. Six-forty-four P.M. on a late September evening. [A pause.] Maple Street in the last calm and reflective moment . . . before the monsters came!

[The camera slowly pans across the porches again. We see a man screwing a light bulb on a front porch, then getting down off the stool to flick the switch and finding that nothing happens. Another man is working on an electric power mower. He plugs in the plug, flicks on the switch of the power mower, off and on, with nothing happening. Through the window of a front porch, we see a woman pushing her finger back and forth on the dial hook. Her voice is indistinct and distant, but intelligible and repetitive.]

WOMAN. Operator, operator, something’s wrong on the phone. operator!

[MRS. BRAND comes out on the porch and calls to STEVE.]

MRS. BRAND. [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.

Vocabulary
reflective (ri flek’ tiv) adj. showing serious and careful thinking; thoughtful
The Monsters Are Due
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[We look down on the street as we hear the voices creep up from below, small, mildly disturbed voices highlighting these kinds of phrases:]

**voices.**
Electricity's off.
Phone won't work.
Can't get a thing on the radio.
My power mower won't move, won't work at all.
Radio's gone dead!

[**PETE VAN HORN, a tall, thin man, is seen standing in front of his house.**]

**VAN HORN.** I'll cut through the back yard... 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 pans down slowly until we're 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 sort 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 murmur softly in wonderment and question.]

**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.

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3. To be **flustered** is to be embarrassed, nervous, or confused.
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's a murmur of reaction to this. STEVE looks from face to face and then over to his car.]

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

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

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

DON. Out of gas?

STEVE. [Shakes his head.] I just had it filled up.

WOMAN. What's it mean?

CHARLIE. It's just as if . . . as if everything had stopped. [Then he turns toward STEVE.] We'd better walk downtown. [Another murmur of assent at 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.

We see TOMMY, a serious-faced fourteen-year-old in spectacles who stands a few feet away from the group. He is halfway between them and the two men, who start to walk down the sidewalk.]

TOMMY. Mr. Brand . . . you 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?

CHARLIE. Who are them?

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4. An expression of agreement is assent.
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TOMMY. [Very 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 and walks over to the boy. He kneels down in
front of him. He forces his voice to remain gentle. He reaches out and
holds the boy.]

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. [Persistently but a little intimidated by the crowd.] It’s 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. And you’ll see. That
wasn’t any ship or anything like it. That was just a . . . a meteor or
something. Likely as not—[He turns to the group, now trying to weight
his words with an optimism5 he obviously doesn’t feel but is desperately trying
to instill in himself as well as the others.] 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 Cain6 with radio reception all over the world.
And this thing being so close—why, there’s no telling the sort of stuff

5. Optimism means “a hopeful or cheerful view of things.”
6. [raise Cain] This expression means “cause trouble.”

Vocabulary
intimidated (in tim’ed adj) adj. made timid or fearful; bullied
instill (in stil’) v. to put in gradually, little by little
it can do. [He wets his lips, smiles nervously.] Go ahead, Charlie. You and Steve go into town and see if that isn’t what’s causing it all.

[STEVE and CHARLIE again walk away from the group down the sidewalk. The people watch silently.
TOMMY stares at them, biting his lips, and finally calling out again.]

TOMMY. Mr. Brand!

[The two men stop again. TOMMY takes a step toward them.]

TOMMY. Mr. Brand... please don’t leave here.

[STEVE and CHARLIE stop once again and turn toward the boy. There’s a murmur in the crowd, a murmur of irritation and concern as if the boy were bringing up fears that shouldn’t be brought up; words which carried with them a strange kind of validity that came without logic but nonetheless registered and had meaning and effect. Again we hear a murmur of reaction from the crowd.
TOMMY is partly frightened and partly defiant as well.]

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

STEVE. Except who?

TOMMY. Except the people they’d sent down ahead of them. They looked just like humans. And it wasn’t until the ship landed that—

[The boy suddenly stops again, conscious of the parents staring at them and of the sudden hush of the crowd.]

SALLY. [In a whisper, sensing the antagonism of the crowd.] Tommy, please son... honey, 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, stops by the boy.]

STEVE. Go ahead, Tommy. What kind of story was this? What about the people that they sent 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.

Vocabulary
validity (ve lid’a ti) n. state of being supported by facts; truth
defiant (di f’ant) adj. showing bold resistance to authority or an opponent
antagonism (an tag’a niz’ am) n. unfriendliness; hostility
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[There's 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 which ones of us are really human.

[There's laughter at this, but it's a laughter that comes from a desperate
attempt to lighten the atmosphere. It's a release kind of laugh. The people
look at one another in the middle of their laughter.]

CHARLIE. There must be somethin' better to do than stand around
makin' bum jokes about it. [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? Didn't he get back yet?

[Suddenly there's 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's at the wheel trying to start the car.]

SALLY. Can you get it started, Les?

[He gets out of the car, shaking his head.]

GOODMAN. No dice.

[He walks toward the group. He stops suddenly as behind him, inexplicably
and with a noise that inserts itself into the silence, the car engine starts up all
by itself. GOODMAN whirls around to stare toward it.
The car idles roughly, smoke coming from the exhaust, the frame shaking
gently.
GOODMAN's eyes go wide, and he runs over to his car.
The people stare toward the car.]

MAN ONE. He got the car started somehow. He got his car started!

[The camera pans along the faces of the people as they stare, somehow
captured by this revelation and somehow, illogically, 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 approaches the group, stops a few feet away to look toward
GOODMAN's car and then back toward the group.]

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

7. Something that happens inexplicably (in' iks plik' o bi) is impossible to understand
or explain.
CHARLIE. He always was an oddball. Him and his whole family. Real oddball.

DON. What do you say we ask him?

[The group suddenly starts toward the house. In this brief fraction of a moment they take the first step toward performing a metamorphosis that changes people from a group into a mob. They begin to head purposefully across the street toward the house at the end. 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 as a group, seem to pause for a moment, and then much more quietly and slowly start to walk across the street. GOODMAN stands alone facing the people.]

GOODMAN. 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's a long silence that is gradually intruded upon by the frightened murmuring of the people.]

GOODMAN. 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. [And then meaningfully]

Nothing except one car—yours!

[The people pick this up and now their murmuring becomes a loud chant filling the air with accusations and demands for action. Two of the men pass DON and head toward GOODMAN, who backs away, backing into his car and now at bay.]

GOODMAN. 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 some kind of a criminal or something? I don't know why the car works—it just does!

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8. Steve's incisive voice is sharp and forceful.
9. [at bay] This describes the position of a cornered animal that is forced to turn and face its pursuers.
[This stops the crowd momentarily and now GOODMAN, still backing away, goes toward his front porch. He goes up the steps and then stops to stand facing the mob. We see a long shot of STEVE as he comes through the crowd.]

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 than us. Fifth columnists from the vast beyond. [He chuckles.] You know anybody that might fit that description around here on Maple Street?

GOODMAN. What is this, a gag or something? This a practical joke or something?

[We see a close-up of the porch light as it suddenly goes out. There's a murmur from the group.]

GOODMAN. Now I suppose that's supposed to incriminate me! The light goes on and off. That really does it, doesn't it?

[He looks around the faces of the people.] I just don't understand this—[He wets his lips, looking from face to face.] Lock, 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—

WOMAN. Well, if that's the case, Les Goodman, explain why—[She stops suddenly, clamping her mouth shut.]

GOODMAN. [Softly.] Explain what?

STEVE. [Interjecting.] Look, let's forget this—

CHARLIE. [Overlapping him.] Go ahead, let her talk. What about it? Explain what?

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 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

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10. Fifth columnists are traitors.

Vocabulary

incriminate (in' kriz' a nät') v. to show the guilt of
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"faces."
That's right, looking up at the sky as if... as if he were waiting for something. [A pause.] As if he were looking for something.

[There's a murmur of reaction from the crowd again.
We cut suddenly to a group shot. As GOODMAN starts toward them,
they back away frightened.]

GOODMAN. You know really... this is for laughs. You know what I'm
guilty of? [He laughs.] I'm guilty of insomnia. Now what's the penalty
for insomnia? [At this point the laugh, the humor, leaves his voice.] Did
you hear what I said? I said it was insomnia. [A pause as he looks
around, then shouts.] I said it was insomnia! You fools. You scared,
frightened rabbits, you. You're sick people, do you know that? You're
sick people—all of you! And you don't even know what you're start-
ing because let me tell you... let me tell you—this thing you're start-
ing—that should frighten you. As God is my witness... you're letting
something begin here that's a nightmare!

ACT II

[We see a medium shot of the Goodman entry hall at night. On the side
table rests an unlit candle. MRS. GOODMAN walks into the scene, a glass
of milk in hand. She sets the milk down on the table, lights the candle with
a match from a box on the table, picks up the glass of milk, and starts out
of scene.

MRS. GOODMAN comes through her porch door, glass of milk in hand. The
entry hall, with table and lit candle, can be seen behind her.
Outside, the camera slowly pans down the sidewalk, taking in little knots of
people who stand around talking in low voices. At the end of each conver-
sation they look toward LES GOODMAN's house. From the various houses we
can see candlelight but no electricity, and there's an all-pervading quiet that
blankets the whole area, disturbed only by the almost whispered voices of the
people as they stand around. The camera pans over to one group where
CHARLIE stands. He stares across at GOODMAN's house.
We see a long shot of the house. Two men stand across the street in almost
sentry-like poses. Then we see a medium shot of a group of people.]

SALLY. [A little timorously.] 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—

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11. Insomnia is restless sleep or the inability to fall asleep.
12. Timorously (tim'r ō s) means "lacking courage or self-confidence; timidly."
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 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 ages or somethin'.

[STEVE walks down the steps of his porch, walks down the street over to LES GOODMAN's house, and then stops at the foot of the steps. GOODMAN stands there, his wife behind him, very frightened.]

GOODMAN. 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—trouble!

STEVE. Look, Les—

GOODMAN. 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!

MRS. GOODMAN. That's exactly what he does. Why this 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 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 GOODMAN again.] One of 'em'll tip their hand. They got to.

STEVE. [Raising his voice.] There's something you can do, Charlie. You could go home and keep your mouth shut. You could quit struttin' around like a self-appointed hanging judge and just climb 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!

Vocabulary
legitimate (lē'ji-mit') adj. that which follows the rules; lawful
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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.] Go ahead, tell us what
she's said.

[We see a long shot of STEVE as he 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 idiosyncrasy of every single man, woman, and child on the
street. And then we might as well set up some kind of kangaroo
court.\textsuperscript{13} 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. 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 some-
thing. Well, none of us have ever seen that radio—

[By this time STEVE has reached the group. He stands there defiantly
close to them.]

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

STEVE. I'm surprised at you, Charlie. How come you're so dense all of
a sudden? [A pause.] 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.

[STEVE's wife steps down from the porch, bites her lip, calls out.]

MRS. BRAND. Steve! Steve, please. [Then looking around, frightened, she
walks toward the group.] It's just a ham radio\textsuperscript{14} 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 get a search warrant.

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

\textsuperscript{13} An idiosyncrasy (ld' \textendash a sing' kra si) is a personal way of acting; an odd manner-
ism. A kangaroo court is an unofficial, irregular trial in which the verdict is often
decided beforehand and fair legal procedures are ignored.

\textsuperscript{14} Ham radio is a hobby in which a person operates his or her own radio station,
sending messages by voice or Morse code.
STEVE. [Interrupting.] Charlie, don’t tell me what I can afford! And stop telling me who’s dangerous and who isn’t and 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 to crucify—all set to find a scapegoat— 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.]

CHARLIE. [In a hushed voice.] That’s not the only thing that can happen to us.

[Cut to a long shot looking down the street. A figure has suddenly materialized in the gloom and in the silence we can hear the creaky-clack of slow, measured footsteps on concrete as the figure walks slowly toward them. One of the women lets out a stifled cry. The young mother grabs her boy as do a couple of others.]

TOMMY. [Shouting, frightened.] It’s the monster! It’s the monster!

[Another woman lets out a wail and the people fall back in a group, staring toward the darkness and the approaching figure. We see a medium shot of the people as they 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.] Good Lord—will anybody think a thought around here? Will you people wise up? What good would a shotgun do against—

[Now CHARLIE pulls the gun from STEVE’s hand.]

CHARLIE. 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 you? Well, some of us won’t!

He swings the gun around to point it toward the sidewalk.

The dark figure continues to walk toward them.

The group stands there, fearful, apprehensive, mothers clutching children, men standing in front of wives. CHARLIE slowly raises the gun. As the figure gets closer and closer he suddenly pulls the trigger. The sound of it explodes in the stillness. There is a long angle shot looking down at the figure, who suddenly lets out a small cry, stumbles forward onto his knees and then falls forward on his face. DON, CHARLIE, and STEVE race

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15. A scapegoat is someone who is made to take the blame and suffer for the mistakes or misfortunes of another person or a group.

Viewing the painting: If you were to add people to this scene, what would they be doing? Why? How does the mood of the painting compare with the mood of the play?
forward over to him. STEVE is there first and turns the man over. Now 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 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 now.] We're all scared of the same thing, I was just tryin' 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. We see a medium shot of the living room window of CHARLIE's house. The window is not lit, but suddenly the house lights come on behind it.]

WOMAN. [In a very hushed voice.] Charlie ... Charlie ... the lights just went on in your house. Why did the lights just go on?

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

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

[A pause as they all stare toward CHARLIE.]

GOODMAN. 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 Peter was trying to tell us something. Maybe he'd found out something and came back to tell us who there was amongst us we 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. Does this thing look like a gag to you?

[CHARLIE breaks away and screams as he runs toward his house.]

CHARLIE. No! No! Please!
The Monsters Are Due
On Maple Street

[A man breaks away from the crowd to chase CHARLIE.
We see a long angle shot looking down as the man tackles CHARLIE and
lands on top of him. The other people start to run toward them. CHARLIE
is up on his feet, breaks away from the other man’s grasp, lands a couple
of desperate punches that push the man aside. Then he forces his way,
fighting, through the crowd to once again break free, jumps up on his
front porch. A rock thrown from the group smashes a window alongside
of him, the broken glass flying past him. A couple of pieces cut him. He
stands there perspiring, rumpled, 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 converging on
the porch now.]

VOICES.
It must have been him.
He’s the one.
We got to get Charlie.

[Another rock lands on the porch. Now 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. I know who the mon-
ster is here. I know who it is that doesn’t belong. I swear to you I know.

GOODMAN. [Shouting.] What are you waiting for?

WOMAN. [Shouting.] Come on, Charlie, come on.

MAN ONE. [Shouting.] Who is it, Charlie, tell us!

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, tell us.

CHARLIE. It’s . . . it’s the kid. It’s Tommy. He’s the one.

[There’s a gasp from the crowd as we cut to a shot of SALLY holding her
son TOMMY. The boy at first doesn’t understand and then, realizing the
eyes are all on him, buries his face against his mother.]

SALLY. [Backs away.] That’s crazy! That’s crazy! He’s a little boy.

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

[The various people take this up and repeat the question aloud.]

VOICES.
How could he know?
Who told him?
Make the kid answer.

DON. It was Charlie who killed old man Van Horn.

WOMAN. But it was the kid here who knew what was going to happen all the time. He was the one who knew!

[We see a close-up of STEVE.]

STEVE. Are you all gone crazy? [Pause as he looks about.] Stop.

[A fist crashes at STEVE’s face, staggering him back out of the frame of the picture.
There are several close camera shots suggesting the coming of violence. A hand fires a rifle. A fist clenches. A hand grabs the hammer from VAN HORN’s body, etc. Meanwhile, we hear the following lines.]

DON. Charlie has to be the one—Where’s my rifle—

WOMAN. Les Goodman’s the one. His car started! Let’s wreck it.

MRS. GOODMAN. What about Steve’s radio—He’s the one that called them—

MR. GOODMAN. Smash the radio. Get me a hammer. Get me something.

STEVE. Stop—Stop—

CHARLIE. Where’s that kid—Let’s get him.

MAN ONE. Get Steve—Get Charlie—They’re working together.

[The crowd starts to converge around the mother, who grabs the child and starts to run with him. The crowd starts to follow, at first walking fast, and then running after him.

We see a full shot of the street as suddenly CHARLIE’s lights go off and the lights in another house go on. They stay on for a moment, then from across the street other lights go on and then off again.]

MAN ONE. [Shouting.] It isn’t the kid . . . it’s Bob Weaver’s house.

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.

[We move into a series of close-ups of various people as they shout, accuse, scream, interspersing these shots with shots of houses as the lights go on and off, and then slowly in the middle of this nightmarish morass of sight and sound the camera starts to pull away, until once again we’ve]

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16. *Interspersing* means “scattering or mixing in over brief periods.” A morass (ma ras’) is any difficult, confused, or entangling condition or situation.
The Monsters Are Due
On Maple Street

reached the opening shot looking at the Maple Street sign from high above. The camera continues to move away until we dissolve to a shot looking toward the metal side of a spacecraft, which sits shrouded in darkness. An open door throws out a beam of light from the illuminated interior. Two figures silhouetted against the bright lights appear. We get only a vague feeling of form, but nothing more explicit than that.

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 you 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 go from one to the other and let them destroy themselves. One to the other ... one to the other ... one to the other—

[Now the camera pans up for a shot of the starry sky and over this we hear the NARRATOR'S VOICE.]

NARRATOR'S VOICE. The tools of conquest do not necessarily come with bombs and explosions and fallout.¹⁷ There are weapons that are simply thoughts, attitudes, prejudices—to be found only in the minds of men. For the record, prejudices can kill and suspicion can destroy and 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!

¹⁷. Fallout is the radioactive dust particles that result from a nuclear explosion and fall to earth from the atmosphere.

Vocabulary

explicit (ek's plis't) adj. clearly expressed
prejudice (prij'dis) n. an unfavorable opinion or judgment formed unfairly
Responding to Literature

PERSONAL RESPONSE

1. What is your reaction to this play? Recall the Reading Focus on page 504. How do the reactions of the neighbors in the teleplay compare or contrast with how you imagined your own neighbors reacting to strange occurrences?

Active Reading Response
Review the strategies described in the Active Reading Model on pages 502-503. Choose one of the strategies and find three additional places in the teleplay where you could apply it.

Analyzing Literature

RECALL
1. What is the first sign of trouble on Maple Street?
2. Who is Tommy? Describe him and explain what he tells Steve.
3. Who is the first person the neighbors begin to suspect?
4. What events lead to the shooting?

INTERPRET
5. At the beginning of the play, what is the mood on Maple Street? What causes the mood to change?
6. What role do you think Tommy plays in this drama?
7. Why do the people on Maple Street begin to turn on each other?
8. At what point do the neighbors become a “mob”? Why does this happen? Use quotations from the play to support your ideas.

EVALUATE AND CONNECT
9. How do the aliens use their understanding of human nature to accomplish their goal? Explain.
10. The narrator says, “The tools of conquest do not necessarily come with bombs.” How does the play portray that idea?