

The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street

Make the Connection

Quickwrite

People often make snap judgments in life. In your journal, write about a time you jumped to an incorrect conclusion about someone or someone jumped to an incorrect conclusion about you. What was the situation? What mistake was made? How was the mistake corrected?

Literary Focus

Plot Complications

Complications in stories make it hard for characters to get what they want. Complications usually begin to develop as soon as the characters take steps to resolve their problems or to get what they want so badly. Complications are events like a sudden storm breaking just

as the climbers are nearing the summit or another dragon appearing out of the cave just when the hero thinks he has finished his work. Complications usually add more conflict to the story. They also make the plot more complex. Complications are meant to increase our anxiety about how the story will finally end. In stories, as in life, it's never easy.

Reading Skills

Making Inferences

Good readers **make inferences** using clues the writer provides. It's a form of word arithmetic: The writer gives you *one* and *one* but expects you to figure out the answer—*two*.

As you read this teleplay, you'll see little open-book signs. At these points, stop and add up the important clues the writer has just given. Note your inferences in your notebook, or discuss them with your partner.



SKILLS FOCUS

Literary Skills
Understand plot complications.

Reading Skills
Make inferences.



INTERNET

Vocabulary Activity

• More About Serling

Keyword: LE7 7-1

Vocabulary Development

These words are important in the teleplay:

transfixed (trans·fikst') v. used as adj.: very still, as if nailed to the spot. *Up and down the street, people stood transfixed, staring at the sky.*

intelligible (in·tel'i·jə·bəl) adj.: understandable. *The residents muttered nothing intelligible; they just made an indistinct rumble.*

assent (ə·sent') n.: agreement. *At first, Steve's common sense gained the crowd's assent and goodwill.*

intimidated (in·tim'ə·dāt'id) v.: frightened with threats. *The angry crowd intimidated the Goodmans, who then began to defend themselves.*

defiant (dē·fī'ənt) adj.: boldly resisting authority. *Those who speak out against the opinions of an angry crowd must be both defiant and courageous.*

idiosyncrasy (id'e·ō·sɪŋ'krə·sē) n.: peculiarity. *All people have at least one idiosyncrasy that makes them a little different.*

menace (men'əs) n.: danger; threat. *The residents of Maple Street believed there was a real menace to their safety.*

converging (kən·vərj'ɪŋ) v. used as adj.: closing in. *The crowd began converging around Tommy in order to hear him speak.*

explicit (eks·plis'it) adj.: definite; clearly stated. *The danger on Maple Street was not explicit, or understandable, making it more frightening.*

variations (ver'e·ā'shənz) n.: differences. *Most of the residents of Maple Street reacted to fear in similar ways, with only small variations.*

Background

Literature and Media

From its 1959 debut through its more than 150 subsequent episodes, *The Twilight Zone* thrilled and captivated millions of television viewers. Rebroadcasts run even today—maybe you've seen some episodes. As Rod Serling, the show's creator, would eerily alert viewers at the beginning of every episode, things in the Twilight Zone are not always what they seem. Ordinary people face extraordinary situations in the Twilight Zone, where familiar rules no longer apply. As the bards and poets have warned for centuries, "Here be monsters. . . ."

Act One

Fade in on a shot of the night sky. The various nebulae and planets stand out in sharp, sparkling relief. As the camera begins a slow pan across the heavens, we hear the narrator offscreen.

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.

[The camera pans down past the horizon, stopping on a sign which reads "Maple Street." Then it moves on to the street below. It is daytime. We see a quiet, tree-lined street, typical of small-town America. People sit and swing on gliders on their front porches, chatting across from house to house. STEVE BRAND polishes his car, while his neighbor, DON MARTIN, leans against the fender watching him. A Good Humor man on a bicycle stops to sell some ice cream to a couple of kids. Two women gossip on a front lawn. Another man waters his lawn.]

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.

[The camera moves back to the Good Humor man and the two boys who are standing alongside him, buying ice cream.]

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

[One of the boys, TOMMY, looks up to listen to a tremendous screeching roar from overhead. A flash of light plays on the boys' faces. It moves down the street, past lawns and porches and rooftops, and disappears. People leave their porches or stop what they're doing to stare up at the sky. STEVE BRAND stops polishing his car and stands transfixed, staring upward. 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.

Vocabulary

transfixed (trans·fikst') v. used as *adj.*: very still, as if nailed to the spot.

[*People stand on their porches, watching and talking in low tones.*]

Narrator's Voice. Maple Street. 6:44 P.M., on a late September evening. (*A pause*) Maple Street in the last calm and reflective moments . . . before the monsters came!

[*The camera pans across the porches again. A man is screwing in a lightbulb on a front porch. He gets down off the stool and flicks the switch, only to find that nothing happens. Another man is working on an electric power mower. He plugs in the plug and flicks the switch of the power mower, off and on, but nothing happens. Through the window of a front porch we see a woman at a telephone, pushing her finger back and forth on the dial hook.*

Her voice is indistinct and distant, but intelligible and repetitive.] ① 

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

[*The camera looks down on the street. Small, mildly disturbed voices creep up from below.*]

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 standing in front of his house.*]

Van Horn. I'll cut through the backyard. . . . 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 backyard. We see the hammer on his hip as he walks. 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 One. 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.



MAKE INFERENCES

① What do the stage directions lead you to think about the roaring sound and flashing light?

Vocabulary

intelligible (in·tel'ĭ·jə·bəl) *adj.*: understandable.



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.*]

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

[*STEVE walks over to the car, gets in it, and turns the key. 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 even get it to turn over. Then, very slowly and reflectively, he turns the key back to "off" and slowly gets out of the car. Everyone stares at STEVE. He stands for a moment by the car, then walks toward the group.*]

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 One. 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, standing 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?

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 the thing that came over. I don't think they want us to leave here.

[*STEVE leaves CHARLIE and walks over to the*

Vocabulary

assent (ə·sent') *n.*: agreement.

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 One (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 One (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 optimism 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. ② 

Don (picking up the cue).

Sure. That's the kind of thing—like sunspots. They raise Cain with radio reception all over the

world. And this thing being so close—why, there's no telling the sort of stuff it can do. (He wets his lips and 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 walk away from the group again, down the sidewalk. The people watch silently. TOMMY stares at them, biting his lips, and finally calls 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 that carried with them a strange kind of validity that came without logic, but nonetheless registered and had meaning and effect. TOMMY is partly frightened and partly defiant.]

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 him and of the sudden hush of the crowd.]

Vocabulary

intimidated (in·tim'ə·dāt'id) v.: frightened with threats or violence.

defiant (dē·fī'ənt) adj.: boldly resisting authority.

MAKE INFERENCES

② Does Steve believe his own words? What can you infer from the stage directions?

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 and 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.

[*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. CHARLIE laughs nervously, slightly forced. 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?

[LES GOODMAN 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 caught up by this revelation and somehow, illogically, wildly, frightened.]

Woman One. 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. He 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?

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

Don. What do you say we ask him? 

 **MAKE INFERENCES**

③ What inference have the neighbors made about Les Goodman?

[The group suddenly starts toward the house. In this brief fraction of a moment they take the first step toward a metamorphosis 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 there 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. There's a long silence that is gradually intruded upon by the frightened murmuring of the people.]

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. 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. He is 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 criminal or something? I don't know why the car works—it just does!

[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. STEVE 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^o from the vast beyond. (*He chuckles.*) You know anybody that might fit that description around here on Maple Street? ④ 

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

[*The spotlight on his porch suddenly goes out. There's a murmur from the group.*]

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.*) Look, you all know me. We've lived here five years. Right in this house. We're no different than any of the rest of you! We're no different at all. Really . . . this whole thing is just . . . just weird—

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

^o **fifth columnists:** people who aid an enemy from within their own country.

 **MAKE INFERENCES**

④ Is Steve serious here? On what do you base your inference?

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 One** (*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 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. ⑤ 

[*There's a murmur of reaction from the crowd again. 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 starting because let me tell you . . . let me tell you—this thing you're starting—that should frighten you. As God is my witness . . . you're letting something begin here that's a nightmare!

[*Fade to black.*]

 **MAKE INFERENCES**

⑤ What fact about Goodman has the woman observed? What inference has she made? Is this reasonable?

Act Two

Fade in on the entry hall of the Goodman house 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 the scene. Cut to an outside shot. MRS. GOODMAN comes through her porch door, glass of milk in hand. The entry hall, with the table and lit candle, can be seen behind her. 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 conversation they look toward LES GOODMAN's house. From the various houses we can see candlelight but no electricity. An all-pervading quiet blankets the 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. Two men stand across the street from it, in almost sentrylike poses. We return to the group.

Sally (a little timorously¹). 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 with that kind of a

1. **timorously** (tim'ər·əs·lē) *adv.*: timidly; fearfully.



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. He walks down the street, over to LES GOODMAN's house, and stops at the foot of the steps. GOODMAN stands behind the screen door, 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 get—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. 6 

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

Woman One. 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 strutting around like a self-appointed hanging judge² 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!

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.

2. **hanging judge:** judge who sentences people to death without sufficient evidence.



MAKE INFERENCES

6 What is Charlie suggesting about the fact that Steve is talking to Les Goodman? What can you suppose about the characters from this?

(*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.

[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 idiosyncrasy of every single man, woman, and child on the street. And then we might as well set up some kind of a kangaroo court.³ 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 spend 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 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.

3. **kangaroo court:** unauthorized court, usually one that pays no attention to legal procedures. Kangaroo courts were often set up in frontier areas.

Vocabulary

idiosyncrasy (id'ē·ō·sin'krə·sē) *n.*: peculiarity.

[STEVE'S wife steps down from their 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 radio⁴ 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—**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 clickety-clack of slow, measured footsteps on concrete as the figure walks slowly toward them. One of the women lets out a stifled cry.⁵ The young mother grabs her boy, as do a couple of others.*]

4. **ham radio:** two-way radio used by an amateur operator. Ham radio operators used to talk to one another all over the world via their radios.

5. **stifled** (sti'fald) **cry:** cry that is checked or stopped.

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. As 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.*) 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 yuh? 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 clutch children, men stand 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. The figure suddenly lets out a small cry, stumbles forward onto his knees, and then falls forward on his face. DON, CHARLIE, and STEVE race 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.

Vocabulary

menace (men'əs) *n.*: danger; threat.



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 One. 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 the living room window of CHARLIE's house. The window is not lit, but suddenly the house lights come on behind it.*]

Woman One (*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.

[*There is a pause as they all stare toward CHARLIE.*]

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 there 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— 7 

[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!

[A man breaks away from the crowd to chase CHARLIE. The man tackles him and lands on top of him. The other people start to run toward them. CHARLIE is up on his feet. He 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 to once again break free. He 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 his 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.]

MAKE INFERENCES

7 What are the residents implying about Charlie? based on what evidence?

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 monster 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 One (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 the mother holding her boy. The boy at first doesn't understand. Then, realizing the eyes are all on him, he buries his face against his mother, SALLY.]

Sally (backs away). That's crazy. That's crazy. He's a little boy.

Woman One. But he knew! He was the only

Vocabulary
converging (kən·vurj'ɪŋ) v. used as adj.: closing in.

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 questions aloud.]

Voices.

How could he know?

Who told him?

Make the kid answer.



Man One. What about Goodman's car?

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

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

[STEVE shouts at his hysterical neighbors.]

Steve. Are you all gone crazy? (Pause as he looks about) Stop.

[A fist crashes at STEVE's face, staggering him back out of view. Several close camera shots suggest the coming of violence: A hand fires a rifle. A fist clenches. A hand grabs the hammer from VAN HORN's body, etc.]

Don. Charlie has to be the one— Where's my rifle—

Woman One. 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

MAKE INFERENCES

8 What inference have the residents made about Tommy?

mother, who grabs her son 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 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 One. 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.

[The people shout, accuse, scream. The camera tilts back and forth. We see panic-stricken faces in close-up and tilting shots of houses as the lights go on and off. Slowly, in the middle of this nightmarish morass⁶ of sight and sound, the camera starts to pull away, until once again we've 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 of the metal side of a spacecraft, which sits shrouded⁷ 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

6. **morass** (mə·ras') *n.*: confusing situation. Strictly speaking, a morass is a kind of swamp.

7. **shrouded** (shroud'id) *v.* used as *adj.*: hidden; covered.

Vocabulary

explicit (eks·plis'it) *adj.*: definite.



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— 9 

 **MAKE INFERENCES**

9 What can you infer about the aliens' view of the human race?

[Now the camera pans up for a shot of the starry sky.]

Narrator's Voice. 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, prejudices can kill and suspicion can destroy, and a thoughtless, frightened search for a scapegoat has a fallout all of its own for the children . . . 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.*]

Vocabulary

variations (ver'ē·ā'ʃənz) *n.*: differences.

Meet the Writer

Rod Serling

Man from Another Dimension

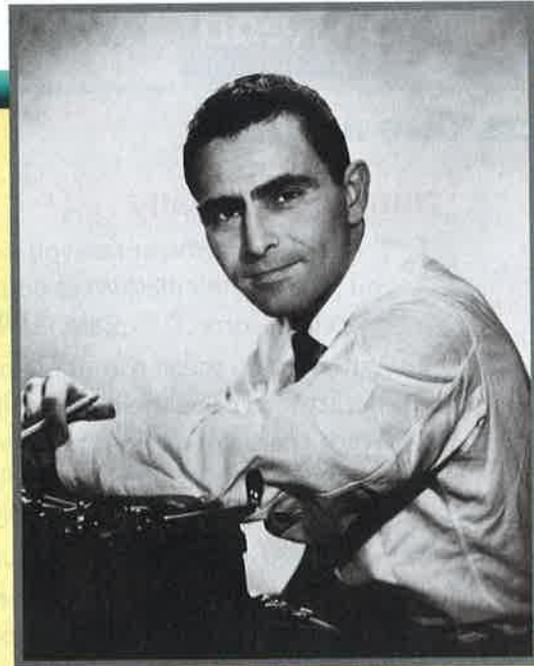
Rod Serling (1924–1975) was a man of great energy. He had the vitality of one who seems to be running even as he is standing still.

How does a fledgling writer caught in a dreamless job get from Cincinnati, Ohio, to New York City and then to Hollywood? If you're Rod Serling, you one day look at your wife, and together you decide that the hour has come to sink or swim—the hour has come to go for it.

In the early 1950s, Rod Serling eagerly arrived in New York and found himself a job writing for television when it was new and young. He first wrote for a live half-hour drama called *Lux Video Theatre*. From there he went on to create and produce the hit television show *The Twilight Zone*.

In the fifth-dimensional world of the *Twilight Zone*, Serling made his concerns and beliefs visible. He sought to show his audiences that "there is nothing in the dark that isn't there when the lights are on." In his widely known teleplay *The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street*, he dramatized what was perhaps his most enduring and urgent theme.

The teleplay was written at a time when Americans were concerned about the spread of communism to the United



States. Thousands of lives were destroyed by suspicion and suggestion. People lost their jobs, homes, and friends when they were accused of being members of the Communist party, even though membership in the party was legal. During this time some people made up stories about others in order to appear innocent themselves, and many people were afraid to continue friendships with those who had been accused or were suspected of being members of the Communist party. Rod Serling could not write about these events directly for television; the show would not have made it on the air. Yet in *The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street*, he does voice his opinion.

For Independent Reading

Enter the fifth dimension by checking out Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone: Complete Stories*.