

*The Monsters
Are Due
on
Maple Street*

Screenplay

by

Rod Serling

Rod Serling (1924- 1975)

- Became serious about writing in college
- Loved radio drama
 - 2nd place in a national script contest
- Began his career writing for radio drama.
 - Wrote 200+ television scripts
- Won 6 Emmy Awards

Screenplay/ Teleplay

- Play **written for television**. Written to be **filmed by a camera** and not acted on stage
- Deliver ideas through dialogue and stage directions.

Stage Directions

- Written for actors, directors, and crew members
 - Helps cast & crew understand what they need to know and do
 - Describes characters, setting, costumes, mood & atmosphere

Stage Direction Terms

- **Pan**- turn the camera to follow a person or object
- **Cut**- switch camera from one scene to another
- **Close-up** – camera moves in for a “zoomed in” shot
- **Long shot**- camera films from long distance

Twilight Zone

- Serling was creator of the *Twilight Zone* television series.
 - Science fiction
 - Ran from 1959 – 1964.
 - One of the most popular shows in television history.
 - Writing known for surprising twist endings & thought provoking social commentary

Social Commentary

- Serling wrote about important social issues.
- Television executives thought his topics were too controversial.
- In the 1950s & 1960s scripts that questioned American Society were banned

Twilight Zone Settings

- Science fiction & fantasy genres
 - Had more freedom because his teleplays were not realistic.
- *The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street* aired March 4th, 1960.

Background

- *Monsters* was written during the **Cold War** (1946 – 1989),
 - U.S. & Soviet Union were engaged in a nuclear arms race.
- Results
 - Fear
 - Suspicion
 - Anti-communist feelings

HUAC

- House Un-American Activities Committee
- Prominent Hollywood actors & directors (and other Americans) were interrogated about involvement with the Communist party.
 - Some were “blacklisted” for alleged involvement with the Communist Party

Fifth Columnists

- Ernest Hemingway
 - *The Fifth Column*
 - coined phrase *fifth columnists* to describe spies working against country from within
 - Based on his experiences around during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)

Setting = 1960s

- **No** cordless phones
- **No** cell phones
- “Regular” phones **do not** use electricity.
- Phone calls often still went through an operator.
- **No** Ipods or ear buds.
- “Portable” radios were battery operated.
- **No** remote starters for cars.

Terms to know:

A. **Stereotype** – An assumption made about a person that is based on preconceived ideas. To group a person based on certain qualities. Many stereotypes are rooted in prejudice and should be avoided.

(For example – all tall people are good basketball players.)

B. **Prejudice** – To judge someone unfairly before you even know them, like deciding you don't like a book just by looking at the cover.

C. **Scapegoat** - To blame someone/ something publicly for something bad that has happened, even though it was not his/her fault – often referred to as the “fall guy.”

D. **Idiosyncrasy** – A person's peculiar, or odd behaviors. Habits which can be said to be eccentric.

An example would be a person who has to have the lights on while sleeping.