

Before Reading

The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street

Teleplay by Rod Serling

*What turns a crowd
into a mob?*

What Can Turn a Crowd into a Mob?

KEY IDEA 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.

Literary Analysis: Conflict in Drama

Like any story, a drama has a plot that centers on a **conflict**. Since drama is meant to be performed by actors, a drama's conflict usually unfolds through dialogue (conversation between characters) and action that you picture taking place on a stage or screen.

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.

The Conflict:
- Why It Happens:
- How It Is Resolved:

Reading Strategy: Reading a Teleplay

To best understand the dialogue and action in a drama, it's important to read 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 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 / antagonism / contorted / converging / defiant / incriminate
optimistic / revelation

1. hopeful about the future; confident
2. willing to stand up to opposition; bold
3. hostility
4. something made known
5. agreement
6. to cause to appear guilty
7. twisted or pulled out of shape
8. moving toward one point

Author Online



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*.