The Hallmarks of Horror (1st ed. - 06.12.18) - hallmarksofhorror7kf
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Cast of Characters

TIM

JANE

MOM

TAMMY

DAD

NARRATOR 1

NARRATOR 2

BUTCHER

ACTORS WITH GLOWING EYES

ACTOR WITH FLASHLIGHT

COBWEB ACTORS

ACTOR WITH BAT PUPPETS

ACTOR WITH SNAKE

ACTOR BEING CHASED

ACTOR WITH SLIME

GROUP OF MONSTERS

ACTOR WITH CHAINSAW

HAPLESS TEENAGE GIRL

INTIMIDATING FIGURE (DR. ZIMMERMAN)

ACTOR WITH CAULIFLOWER

HORDE OF ZOMBIES

APOCALYPTIC LOG SCIENTIST

ACTOR WITH OLD BOOK

JIMMY

CAROL

TWO TEENS

TWO MASK ACTORS

MAD SCIENTIST (DR. SINCLAIR)

MISS FREIDA

TWO VICTIMS (GARY & SUSAN)

KILLER/MONSTER

RELENTLESS STALKING PSYCHO KILLER

FEMALE VICTIM

INTIMIDATING-LOOKING MAN

MAN BEING FOLLOWED

WOMAN BEING FOLLOWED

CLOWN

KEY VICTIM

FEMALE VICTIM WITH CLUB

SAFETY ACTOR

COLD ACTOR

SPLIT-UP ACTOR

ARMY OF MONSTERS

Setting

A blank stage, but for a centrally-located door.
The door should be facing the audience and can be a simple free-standing door that operates within the opening of a stage curtain.
In the opening scene, there is also a kitchen table and chairs.

Production Notes

Cast size and script cutting:
This play is meant to be fun and relatively fast-paced. The play was originally produced with a cast of twelve actors (six men and six women) but with lots of creative doubling it certainly can be done with fewer actors, just as it can be done with more. Directors should feel free to cut portions of the play as needed to fit into time constraints if that is desired. Those wishing to add to the play should contact the publisher for permission, however simple ad-libbing for comic effect is certainly okay and even encouraged.

Narrator rotating:
The Hallmarks of Horror works extremely well by having two designated actors who stay in the narrator roles for the duration of the show. That said, this play was first produced with rotating narrators. In the original production, actors tagged in and out of the roles, allowing for various actors to be narrators at different times. If a director chooses to rotate different actors into the narrator roles, there are logical moments in the script between the "Hallmarks of Horror Categories" to do that. Feel free to create stage business in the swap. Make it fun. Helpful hint—however many narrators there are for a given production, keep them all dressed in the designated lab coat and black plastic glasses. Your audiences will be grateful.

Technical note:
The script indicates that actors will get hit by clubs. Of course this can be handled in any number of ways, but a simple solution is to have a prop club that is made out of a very light plastic or flexible foam, such as pipe insulation, that can be found at most hardware stores. It adds to the comedy to have a safe weapon like this that generates no legitimate concern for the safety of the actors. Such a club can make a fun "thwack" sound when striking somebody. That also can add to the comedy. Bottom line—safety first and make it funny!

Finally . . .

Keep the energy high. That doesn't mean chaotic, disjointed and random, but there should be a "high-voltage" current of energy emanating from each of the performers. This play has lots of running into place, running in place, fake deaths, loud talking, crazy impersonation, over-the-top acting, and of course . . . screams. EMBRACE THE ENERGY! OWN IT! BE IT!

Acknowledgments

The Hallmarks of Horror was first performed at Bethany Lutheran College on September 15, 2017. It was directed by Peter Bloedel. Technical direction was provided by John Merseth Jr. Lights were designed by Jake Yenish. Sound was designed by Benji Inniger. And costumes were designed by Emily Kimball.

The play was stage-managed by Kate Nusbaum, and the original cast members were as follows:

Emma Bloedel
Hailey Dick
Natalie Dworak
Abraham Faugstad
Mia Faugstad
Ezekiel Grabau
Karee Henrich
Jennifer Hopp
Ian Overn
Caleb Schilling
Gabriel Strawn
John Wagner

(The happy nuclear family.
Kitschy music.
Lights.
A boy and girl sit at a kitchen table for breakfast. MOM *is standing and pouring orange juice for each of the kids.)*

TIM. Thanks, Mom. Your orange juice is the best.

JANE. Yeah, it sure is. Fresh-squeezed. Not from concentrate like the Petersons' orange juice.

BOTH KIDS. Yuck!

MOM. Well, of course I want only the best for my family. No preservatives, lots of vitamins and . . .

ALL. Great taste!

(They laugh.)

JANE. Mom, you're terrific. When I grow up I hope I'm a cool mom, just like you.

MOM and TIM. Awww.

MOM. I'm sure you will be, Janie.

TIM. Speaking of just like you, Tammy will be here any minute.

MOM. Oh, how nice, Tim.

*(*JANE *tries to fit a book into her backpack.)*

JANE. I'm almost ready to go. This history textbook never fits in my backpack right. It sure is convenient that you're going steady with the girl next door, Tim.

TIM. Convenient for her, ya mean. I'm the one with the driver's license.

(They laugh.)

Naw. JK. She's totally nifty.

(We hear a doorbell, and in through the door enters TAMMY.*)*

TIM. Hi, Puddin' Pie.

TAMMY. Hi, Peachy Pumpernickel.

MOM. Now you kids be careful driving to school. Obey all of the traffic signs, Timmy.

TIM. You got it, Mom.

*(*DAD *enters, tightening his tie.)*

DAD. G'mornin', g'mornin', g'mornin'!

MOM, TIM, and JANE. Hi, Dad!

DAD. How's my favorite family?

MOM, TIM, and JANE. Swell!

DAD. *(Nudging* TAMMY:*)* And how's my favorite family-member-to-be?

TIM. Da-ad.

TAMMY. Ha ha. Hi, Mr. McGillicuddy.

DAD. Listen, gang. Before you all run off, I've got some important news. I just got a promotion at work, so this weekend we're all going to . . . Tahiti.

MOM, TIM, and JANE. Yay!

DAD. And, Tammy, that means you too.

TAMMY. Wow! Thanks, Mr. McGillicuddy.

MOM. My hero!

DAD. Well, of course I want only the best for my family. Bring it in, Snuggle Bugs.

ALL. Awww.

(The family embraces in a big snuggly group hug.
Lights shift.)

(Focus is now on two NARRATORS *dressed in lab coats. The* NARRATORS *are also each wearing black plastic-rimmed glasses, and are each holding clipboards. This is the designated attire for the* NARRATORS *for the duration of the play.*
The kitchen table and chairs are removed as the NARRATORS *speak.)*

NARRATOR 1. Nice family, huh?

NARRATOR 2. Everything is right in the world.

NARRATOR 1. A little slice of perfect.

NARRATOR 2. What could go wrong?

NARRATOR 1. *(Shrugging:)* Well

NARRATOR 2. *(Shrugging:)* Nothing . . .

NARRATOR 1. . . . BUT THIS!

(The NARRATORS *rattle off the following list with building intensity.)*

NARRATOR 1. Something shivery.

NARRATOR 2. Something shuddery.

NARRATOR 1. Something creepy.

NARRATOR 2. Something freaky.

NARRATOR 1. Disarming!

NARRATOR 2. Alarming!

NARRATOR 1. Terrible!

NARRATOR 2. Horrible!

BOTH NARRATORS. Something scary!

(The NARRATORS *share a glance.)*

We have the Scary List!

NARRATOR 1. Before we come back to our cute happy family, we thought a quick lesson in the *(Scary reverb:)* Hallmarks of Horror might be in order.

NARRATOR 2. You've probably been exposed to these Formulas of Fright in every scary movie you've ever seen.

NARRATOR 1. There are some basic principles . . .

NARRATOR 2. Rules, if you will . . .

NARRATOR 1. . . . that make common things scary . . .

NARRATOR 2. . . . And scary things worse.

NARRATOR 1. Where should we start?

NARRATOR 2. The basics!

NARRATOR 1. Hallmarks of Horror: Category #1.

BOTH NARRATORS. The Dark.

(The lights onstage all go out as the NARRATORS *continue to talk.)*

BOTH NARRATORS. Evil is not well-lit!

NARRATOR 2. When we can't see, our imagination goes bonkers.

NARRATOR 1. We think we see things.

NARRATOR 2. We think we hear things.

NARRATOR 1. Who knows what might be lurking just inches away from us?

NARRATOR 2. Think about it. Darkness makes lurking possible.

NARRATOR 1. Yeah. Who ever heard of anybody lurking in bright light?

(The lights come up at 100% intensity, suddenly revealing a large BUTCHER *with a bloodied apron and a giant cleaver raised in the front row of the audience.)*

BUTCHER. Aw, come on!

BOTH NARRATORS. Not scary!

BUTCHER. Dang it!

(The BUTCHER*, defeated, slinks offstage.*
The lights go dim but not totally black.
GLOWING EYES *appear, and eerily move closer to the* NARRATORS.*)*

NARRATOR 2. Glowing eyes in the darkness.

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary.

(The GLOWING-EYED ACTORS *exit.)*

NARRATOR 1. Ever notice how when people are freaked out in the movies they never turn on the lights?

NARRATOR 2. Most people would turn on every light in the house.

BOTH NARRATORS. But no-oo.

NARRATOR 1. They light a match or they hold up a lighter.

(An ACTOR *with a flashlight enters. The flashlight flickers as the actor panics.)*

NARRATOR 2. If they're lucky they find a flashlight.

FLASHLIGHT HOLDER. Come on. Come on! Work. Please work.

NARRATOR 1. . . . which of course has bad batteries and a flickering bulb.

(The FLASHLIGHT HOLDER *smacks the flashlight and finally, it works. She holds the flashlight under her chin, illuminating her face from below.)*

NARRATOR 1. Scary Flashlight Face.

NARRATOR 2. Perfect for retelling that ghost story at the campsite.

(The FLASHLIGHT HOLDER *puts the finishing touches on a scary story.)*

FLASHLIGHT HOLDER. When the moon is full, Hector can still be seen limping through these very camp grounds with his head tucked beneath his arm. Muuaaaa-ha-ha-ha-ha!

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary!

(The FLASHLIGHT HOLDER *exits.)*

NARRATOR 1. All thanks to darkness.

NARRATOR 2. Hallmarks of Horror: Category #2.

BOTH NARRATORS. The Mainstays of Horror.

NARRATOR 1. Cobwebs.

(An ACTOR *crosses the stage tangled in fibers resembling cobwebs. He exits.)*

NARRATOR 2. Fog.

(A blast of fog shoots across the stage [or a foghorn is heard].)

NARRATOR 1. Bats.

(An ACTOR *controlling bat puppets flitters across the stage. Then exits.)*

NARRATOR 2. Snakes, bugs, or anything crawly.

(An ACTOR *pursues another* ACTOR *with a snake. The pursuer laughs maniacally as the person being chased screams. They exit.)*

NARRATOR 1. Of course, a nuance here is slime.

(An ACTOR *dashes across the stage covered in, or playing with slime, then exits.)*

NARRATOR 2. Anything slimy.

BOTH NARRATORS. Always scary!

NARRATOR 1. Ghosts, vampires, werewolves, zombies, and monsters.

(A group of MONSTERS *creep, limp, bound, and crawl across the stage.)*

NARRATOR 2. It's also common for some evil villain to even have an army of monsters at his or her disposal.

NARRATOR 1. Scary?

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary!

(The MONSTERS *exit.)*

NARRATOR 2. And having been very recently added to the Hallmarks of Horror Mainstays list . . .

NARRATOR 1. . . . The hockey mask-chainsaw combo.

(The sound of a running chainsaw is heard.
Bursting through the door, an ACTOR *wearing an old hockey mask and waving a chainsaw enters, limps across the stage, and exits.)*

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary!

NARRATOR 2. In the Mainstays category, we also have . . . any abandoned place.

(The NARRATORS *comically blitz through the list, getting faster as they go.)*

NARRATOR 1. Abandoned amusement parks.

NARRATOR 2. Abandoned hospitals.

NARRATOR 1. Abandoned mental asylums.

NARRATOR 2. Sanatoriums.

NARRATOR 1. Sanitariums.

NARRATOR 2. Laboratories.

NARRATOR 1. Mines.

NARRATOR 2. Warehouses.

NARRATOR 1. Ships.

NARRATOR 2. Abandoned, sinister subways.

(They take a much-needed breath.)

NARRATOR 1. And, of course, the abandoned mansion at the end of Spook Hill Road.

BOTH NARRATORS. All scary!

NARRATOR 2. Apparently, when people move out, evil moves in.

NARRATOR 1. An honorable mention in this category . . .

NARRATOR 2. . . . though not necessarily an abandoned place.

BOTH NARRATORS. The tool shed out back.

NARRATOR 1. If you see a tool shed in a horror movie . . .

NARRATOR 2. . . . you know it's going to get messy in there.

NARRATOR 1. Yet in the middle of the night, when a psycho killer is known to be on the loose, female teen-aged characters are somehow compelled to explore the tool shed out back alone.

(A HAPLESS TEENAGE GIRL *enters.)*

HAPLESS TEENAGE GIRL. Hello? Hello? I heard a sound and I thought that I would leave my friends and come to investigate . . . all by myself.

(The GIRL *hears a noise stage right and moves in that direction to investigate further.)*

Is anybody in here?

(A masked FIGURE *carrying a shovel enters and approaches the* GIRL *while her back is to him.)*

Hello?

(Suddenly the GIRL *turns and sees the intimidating* FIGURE *and gasps.)*

Are you the psycho killer who is wanted for harming hapless teen-aged girls in backyard tool sheds throughout suburbia?

(The FIGURE *pauses, and then takes off the mask.)*

DR. ZIMMERMAN. Hello, Julie. No, it's me. Dr. Zimmerman.

HAPLESS TEENAGE GIRL. My orthodontist! Thank goodness.

(They both exit, happily skipping.)

NARRATOR 1. Hallmarks of Horror: Category #3.

BOTH NARRATORS. Horrifying Objects.

NARRATOR 2. Brains?

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary!

NARRATOR 2. Particularly when found outside of someone's head.

(An ACTOR *appears with an object that resembles a brain [it's actually a cauliflower].)*

NARRATOR 1. For reasons unknown, a surprising number of monsters enjoy eating brains.

(The ACTOR *with the cauliflower screams as he is descended upon by a horde of* ZOMBIES, *who rip the cauliflower apart and ravenously shove pieces of it into their mouths and exit.*
The ACTOR *is left with a single piece of cauliflower and, dejected, hands it over to the* NARRATORS *and exits.*
NARRATOR 2 *pops the cauliflower into his/her mouth.)*

NARRATOR 2. Cauliflower?

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary!

NARRATOR 1. Based on a recent study, it has been determined that cauliflower makes an excellent brain substitute. Even zombies can't tell the difference.

(A stagehand or actor presents the NARRATORS *with a head of broccoli and a head of cauliflower.)*

NARRATOR 2. *(Presenting the broccoli:)* Broccoli?

BOTH NARRATORS. Not scary!

NARRATOR 1. Though despised throughout the universe, broccoli is not terrifying.

NARRATOR 2. Aside from excellent nutritional value, broccoli has, surprisingly, very little going for it.

NARRATOR 1. And it will never fool a zombie.

(Calling to the ZOMBIE HORDE*:)*

Come and get it, gang!

*(*NARRATOR 1 *throws the head of broccoli across the stage. Nothing happens.)*

NARRATOR 2. *(Calling to the* ZOMBIE HORDE*:)* Come and get it, gang?

*(*NARRATOR 2 *throws the head of cauliflower across the stage. The stage is again filled with ravenous* ZOMBIES *who quickly devour the cauliflower, and exit.)*

NARRATOR 1. Apocalyptic logs are scary.

NARRATOR 2. This could be a found diary, journal, or better yet a found video that documents the horrific demise of its author.

(A disheveled-looking SCIENTIST *appears in a frame representing a video screen. He is in a panic as he delivers his final video log.)*

APOCALYPTIC LOG SCIENTIST. I'm not sure what could have happened. My notes were perfect. I followed Dr. Scantron's formulas to the letter. The creature only breathed at first, but now it thinks. It eats. IT HUNTS. *(A noise.)* Wait. What was that? Who's in here? No. It can't be. No. NO! Tell my wife I love . . . AAAAHHHH!

(The SCIENTIST *throws his arms up as if protecting himself. We hear static and the "screen" goes dark.*
Focus moves back to the NARRATORS.*)*

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary!

NARRATOR 1. Really old-looking dusty books are scary.

(An ACTOR *enters with an enormous, old, dust-covered book. She blows the dust off of the cover. We hear eerie music. The actor freaks out and exits running.)*

NARRATOR 2. Ominous doors are scary.

(Lights come up on the door. Suspenseful music.
A "scare chord" is suddenly played and the lights abruptly go dark.)

NARRATOR 1. Dolls are scary.

(A doll comes into view as more eerie music is played.
Music and lights are coordinated to make the doll even more scary than the door.)

NARRATOR 2. Hallmarks of Horror: Category #4.

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary Music!

NARRATOR 1. You've probably noticed that scary music makes scary objects way scarier.

NARRATOR 2. Let's take a look at that doll again, without the scary music.

(Focus goes to the doll.
Silence.
Pause.
Then cricket sounds are heard.)

BOTH NARRATORS. Not scary!

NARRATOR 1. Scary music can be eerie.

(An example of eerie music is heard.
The NARRATORS *react to it.)*

NARRATOR 2. It can be weird.

(An example of weird creepy circus music is heard.
The NARRATORS *dance.)*

NARRATOR 1. It can be violent.

(An example of violent music is heard.
Again, the NARRATORS *enact it.)*

NARRATOR 2. Or just plain startling.

(A sudden scare chord is heard.
The NARRATORS *jump.)*

NARRATOR 1. That's a scare chord.

NARRATOR 2. A scare chord is meant to get the viewer to jump clean out of their chair.

NARRATOR 1. Or . . .

BOTH NARRATORS. . . . Wet their pants!

NARRATOR 1. Gruesome sound effects also fit into this category.

NARRATOR 2. Yeah. If a visual cue isn't enough to scare the pants off an audience, some kind of slimy, sticky, crunchy, sound effect will seal the deal.

(An example of a gross slimy, sticky, crunchy sound effect is heard. The NARRATORS *are grossed out.)*

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary.

NARRATOR 1. And of course, this category also includes . . . the scream.

(An ACTOR *enters and lets loose with an impressive bloodcurdling scream.)*

NARRATOR 2. Scary.

NARRATOR 1. And probably bad for your ear health.

NARRATOR 2. Much like scary music, a good bloodcurdling scream immediately cues the scare center of your brain to stand at attention and salute.

NARRATOR 1. Hallmarks of Horror: Category #5.

BOTH NARRATORS. The Supernatural Item of Doom.

NARRATOR 2. The Supernatural Item of Doom is a crazy enemy because it seems like an ordinary inanimate object.

NARRATOR 1. But on the inside, it's pure evil. And it would just love to control you.

NARRATOR 2. And it doesn't have your best interest in mind.

(A actor brings out a beach ball, sets it on the stage, and exits.)

NARRATOR 1. One subset of the Supernatural Item of Doom is the Beckoning Item.

(Two ACTORS *enter. One of them is mystically drawn to the beach ball.)*

CAROL. Hey, Jimmy. I'm ready. Should we go?

(Otherworldly music. JIMMY *is entranced by the ball and walks toward it.)*

JIMMY. It's so beautiful.

CAROL. We're going to be late.

JIMMY. Don't you hear it calling?

CAROL. Hear what calling?

JIMMY. I can't resist it. It would be foolish to resist.

CAROL. Um, Iris and Phil are waiting for us. Jimmy. Jimmy!

*(*JIMMY *picks up the beach ball and cradles it.)*

JIMMY. *(To the beach ball, entranced:)* What do you wish of me? I only care to do your bidding.

NARRATOR 2. Another subset of the Supernatural Item of Doom is the Supernatural Item . . .

BOTH NARRATORS. Of Death!

CAROL. Jimmy. We have to go! Why are you holding that beach ball so weird? Are you talking to it?

JIMMY. *(Snapping at* CAROL*:)* Silence! *(To the beach ball:)* She doesn't understand. She'll never understand. But I will always be your humble servant.

*(*JIMMY *begins to cough and choke.)*

JIMMY. What? Wait! No, master! Noooooo.

*(*JIMMY *falls over dead.* CAROL *looks concerned.*
Awkward pause.
CAROL *slinks away and exits.*
Other ACTORS *enter to remove* JIMMY *and the beach ball.*
Focus moves back to the NARRATORS*.)*

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary!

NARRATOR 1. Hallmarks of Horror: Category #6.

BOTH NARRATORS. Common Horror Concepts.

NARRATOR 2. Teenagers making out.

(Two TEENS *dash onstage, then share a quick kiss.)*

NARRATOR 1. In a horror flick, if you see a set of teens making out . . .

NARRATOR 2. They will probably be dead within ten minutes.

(The TEENS *look horrified, then promptly fall over dead.*
Their bodies are removed.)

NARRATOR 1. The horror hero is much more likely to be a loner kid or the innocent girl who somehow overcomes her coy introversion and summons the strength of ten men to defeat the face of evil.

NARRATOR 2. Transformations.

NARRATOR 1. Transformations can vary from a good person slowly succumbing to the evil, to an all-out physical change.

NARRATOR 2. Whatever it is, it's not an improvement.

(An ACTOR *enters and pleasantly smiles at the audience. Another* ACTOR *runs on stage and throws some kind of grotesque mask over the head of the first* ACTOR. *The first* ACTOR *immediately turns hostile and chases the second* ACTOR *offstage.)*

NARRATOR 2. Vaulting Hubris Versus Information That is Too Much for the Human Mind to Handle.

(A MAD SCIENTIST *and an* ASSISTANT *enter. The* SCIENTIST *is wearing an odd helmet apparatus with wires that lead from the helmet to a control button in his hand.)*

MISS FREIDA. Dr. Sinclair, call off the experiment! You mustn't go through with it. We know precious little about those ancient alien geometry manuscripts. You have no idea of the outcome. If you press that button and download them into your brain, who knows what will happen?

DR. SINCLAIR. Nonsense, Miss Freida. This is my opportunity to be the most brilliant mind the planet Earth has ever seen. Who will be able to rise up against us? Against ME! I will be invincible. I will rule the world! Ha ha ha!

MISS FREIDA. Doctor! No!

*(*DR. SINCLAIR *presses the button.*
Lights flash and crazy science sound effects are heard.
At the end of the experiment the DOCTOR *takes his helmet off to reveal that he is certifiably insane.* MISS FREIDA *changes demeanor and throws her head back to laugh.)*

MISS FREIDA. Mwuuuaaaa ha ha ha ha! Excellent! Everything is going according to my plan.

(They both exit.
Focus goes back to the NARRATORS.*)*

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary!

NARRATOR 2. Completely useless barricades.

NARRATOR 1. Example #1.

(Two VICTIMS *hurriedly enter through the door, presumably being chased by a killer or a monster. They find boxes to pile in front of the door. When they have finished, they hold each other in horrific anticipation.*
The barricade is useless because it is only waist high, and the door opens upstage instead of downstage. The KILLER/MONSTER *opens the door without any trouble, busts through the barricade and resumes chasing the screaming* VICTIMS.
They exit.)

NARRATOR 2. Completely useless barricades.

NARRATOR 1. Example #2.

(Again, two VICTIMS *hurriedly enter though the door. They immediately begin building their barricade in front of it, when it is realized [only by the audience] that the* KILLER/MONSTER *is in the room with the two victims. When the barricade is finished, they again hold each other in horrific anticipation.*
When the KILLER/MONSTER *is noticed by the two* VICTIMS. *They scream and panic. They tear down their own barricade, fumble with the door until it opens, and exit through it, with the* KILLER *in tow.)*

NARRATOR 2. Absurdly effective barricades.

(The same scenario. The VICTIMS *hurriedly enter through the door and simply lean a single chair up against it very loosely. Again, they hold each other. The door jiggles and shakes as the* KILLER/MONSTER *roars from behind it. That the door is held shut by the chair should not make logical sense, but regardless the assailant is not able to open the door and becomes angrier.)*

KILLER/MONSTER. Aw, come on! . . . What's going on here? . . . Is that a chair? . . . I thought we said no chairs! . . . Not cool, you guys! . . . Ugh.

(The VICTIMS *blithely exit.*
Focus returns to the NARRATORS.*)*

NARRATOR 1. Weird.

NARRATOR 2. And not scary.

NARRATOR 1. But still sometimes happens.

NARRATOR 2. In horror, phones are dead and cell phones never have reception in emergency situations.

NARRATOR 1. The common exception here is when the victim is hiding.

NARRATOR 2. Nobody ever remembers to turn off their cell phone when they're hiding.

(Again, the two VICTIMS *hurriedly enter through the door, swing themselves into the room and wait with their backs to the door. They begin to breathe easier as they think that the danger has passed. Suddenly, we hear the sound of a cell phone ringing.)*

SUSAN. *(Panicked whisper:)* What's that?

GARY. *(Also panicking:)* Oh, crap!

(They both look down at GARY's *pocket . . .* GARY *fumbles to pull his phone from his pocket and silence it.)*

SUSAN. Turn it off. Turn it off!

GARY. I'm trying!

(Finally, he does. The two look at each other . . . then they look at the audience. They seem relieved and together give an audible sigh. The door suddenly opens and a big hairy monster arm pulls GARY *back through the door and out of sight.* SUSAN *freaks out and runs offstage screaming.*
Focus moves back to the NARRATORS.*)*

NARRATOR 1. Attack of the Monster Appendage.

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary.

NARRATOR 1. Attack of the Killer . . .

BOTH NARRATORS. . . . Whatevers!

(Violent music.
The cast is attacked by hordes of killer anything [be creative: stuffed animals, ping-pong balls, pancakes, trousers], and are seen trying to fight off the menacing objects as they cross the stage and exit.)

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary!

NARRATOR 2. Attack of the The Relentless Stalking Psycho Killer.

(A man with a horrifying mask comes onto the stage [could be a hockey mask again].)

NARRATOR 1. He's not a snazzy dresser.

NARRATOR 2. A long-sleeved shirt, jeans or overalls, a jacket, work boots, and a cheap mask will do just fine.

NARRATOR 1. Nothing seems to stop this guy.

NARRATOR 2. He's a nightmare having a really bad day.

NARRATOR 1. Bullets might knock him down.

NARRATOR 2. But give him a minute or two and he'll stand right back up again.

NARRATOR 1. Stabbing and hacking just seem to annoy him.

NARRATOR 2. Perhaps the best trait of the RSPK is that he never runs.

NARRATOR 1. He never drives.

NARRATOR 2. He's just kind of a brisk walker.

(The RSPK *begins to walk in place. A female* VICTIM *[or a male dressed as a female victim] enters and begins running in place right in front of the* RSPK.*)*

NARRATOR 1. But no matter how slowly he seems to be walking . . .

NARRATOR 2. Or how fast you run.

NARRATOR 1. . . . He's always just one step behind.

(The running female VICTIM *looks over her shoulder and lets out a scream.)*

BOTH NARRATORS. Totally scary!

NARRATOR 2. And he's never tired.

NARRATOR 1. And he will catch you.

(The RSPK *grabs the shoulder of the female* VICTIM *and spins her around. The* VICTIM *screams again and somehow manages to knock the* RSPK *out. The killer collapses to the ground and remains motionless.)*

NARRATOR 2. Unless you're the lucky one who gets to survive past the end of the movie.

NARRATOR 1. Which means you're probably a single white female.

(The female VICTIM *brushes herself off, throws her [his] arms up in victory, and exits.*
The RSPK *remains motionless on the floor.)*

NARRATOR 2. It might seem like the RSPK is dead at the end of the show . . .

BOTH NARRATORS. . . . but not really.

NARRATOR 1. They're gonna need him back for the next seven sequels.

(The RSPK *sits up stiffly, turns to give a thumbs up to the audience, and exits.)*

NARRATOR 2. Finally, the last entry in the Common Horror Concepts category is . . .

BOTH NARRATORS. The car never starts.

NARRATOR 1. It could be an old clunker.

NARRATOR 2. It could be a new Mercedes.

NARRATOR 1. It could be the most reliable car in the world.

NARRATOR 2. If you're trying to get away from the bad guy . . .

BOTH NARRATORS. It ain't startin'.

NARRATOR 2. Hallmarks of Horror: Category #7.

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary Actions!

NARRATOR 1. Being followed.

(A MAN *crosses the stage looking panicked. We then see that he is being followed by an* INTIMIDATING-LOOKING MAN. *They exit.)*

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary.

NARRATOR 2. If you are a female being followed in a horror, you will trip and fall.

BOTH NARRATORS. A lot.

(This time a WOMAN *is being followed by the* INTIMIDATING-LOOKING MAN. *She cries as she trips several times before making it across the stage. They exit.)*

NARRATOR 1. Staring is scary.

(Suspenseful music.
A CLOWN *enters with a single red balloon on a string and stares at the audience.)*

NARRATOR 2. Staring even makes happy things scary.

NARRATOR 1. Staring while immobile is scary, but staring while moving slowly . . .

(The CLOWN *begins to walk across the stage very slowly while staring down the audience.)*

BOTH NARRATORS. Even scarier.

(The CLOWN *exits.)*

NARRATOR 2. The Scary Key Bobble and Drop.

(A VICTIM *runs to the door to find that it is locked. As he shakes the door, we see the* CLOWN *enter behind him. The* VICTIM

freaks out as the CLOWN *approaches. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a set of keys, bobbles them, and drops them. He does this comically as he tries different keys in the lock of the door. Just in time, he opens the door and escapes from the* CLOWN. *The* CLOWN *follows him through the door.)*

NARRATOR 1. The Scary Ankle Drag.

(We hear the same VICTIM *scream from behind a curtain. Not long after we see him attempting to crawl out from under the curtain, breathing heavily and whimpering. He is almost out from under the curtain, when suddenly he is dragged by his ankles back under the curtain. Screams. Then silence.)*

BOTH NARRATORS. Scary!

NARRATOR 2. The Scary Hit, Drop, and Run.

NARRATOR 1. In this scenario, the victim is being chased by an assailant but then comes across a weapon to fend the attacker off. The victim uses the weapon and stuns the attacker.

(A female VICTIM *enters and is being followed by the* RSPK. *She finds a club and clocks the* RSPK *over the head with it. He is stunned and falls to his knees.)*

NARRATOR 2. However, instead of hitting him again, the victim drops the weapon . . .

NARRATOR 1. . . . Right in front of the attacker . . .

BOTH NARRATORS. . . . and continues running.

(The female VICTIM *drops the club, gets up, and continues running.)*

NARRATOR 2. The killer quickly recovers,

(He does.)

NARRATOR 1. The victim trips.

(She does.)

NARRATOR 2. The attacker catches up to the victim again . . .

(He does.)

BOTH NARRATORS. And the whole thing starts all over.

(The VICTIM *finds another conveniently-placed club [probably placed by one of the* NARRATORS*] and repeats the same action as before. This can be repeated three times if desired.)*

NARRATOR 2. Scary.

NARRATOR 1. But, also highly ridiculous.

NARRATOR 2. Hallmarks of Horror: Category #8.

BOTH NARRATORS. Classic Horror Verbiage.

NARRATOR 1. These aren't famous quotes from horror movies.

NARRATOR 2. These are spoken lines that just always pop up in horror.

(An ACTOR *enters and dramatically speaks.)*

SAFETY ACTOR. *(Speaking:)* It's not safe.

NARRATOR 1. Or . . .

SAFETY ACTOR. *(Whispering:)* This isn't safe.

NARRATOR 2. Or . . .

SAFETY ACTOR. *(Screaming:)* It's not safe in here anymore.

(The SAFETY ACTOR *exits.*
Another ACTOR *enters to speak.)*

COLD ACTOR. *(Acting slightly chilly:)* It's cold.

NARRATOR 1. Or . . .

COLD ACTOR. *(Shivering and acting despondent:)* I'm cold . . . so . . . so . . . cold.

NARRATOR 2. Or . . .

COLD ACTOR. *(To the* NARRATORS*:)* Did you feel that?

BOTH NARRATORS. Feel what?

COLD ACTOR. That ghostly chill?

(The COLD ACTOR *exits.*
Another ACTOR *enters to speak.)*

NARRATOR 1. And of course, no Killer on the Loose horror scenario would be complete if somebody didn't say:

SPLIT-UP ACTOR. Hey, gang! I think we should all split up.

*(*SPLIT-UP ACTOR *exits.)*

NARRATOR 2. Horror wouldn't exist if it weren't for a bunch of people continually displaying extremely bad judgement.

NARRATOR 1. That's right. So now that we've boned up on these Features of Fear, let's revisit that perfectly happy nuclear family that we met at the top of the show.

(The scene is set just like it was at the top of the play.

MOM, TIM, *and* JANE *enter. The kids sit at the table.* MOM *stands at the table with an orange juice pitcher in her hand.)*

NARRATOR 2. What better testing ground for the Hallmarks of Horror?

NARRATOR 1. Yes. In order to put these Precepts of Pain to the test, we are going to take the most pleasant . . .

NARRATOR 2. Harmonious . . .

NARRATOR 1. And idyllic family scenario imaginable and lob in . . .

NARRATOR 2. Like a gruesome grenade of ghastliness . . .

BOTH NARRATORS. The Hallmarks of Horror.

(Kitschy music.
MOM *is about to pour orange juice for* JANE. TIM's *"juice" has already been poured and is in his hand.)*

TIM. Thanks, Mom. Your orange juice is the best.

NARRATOR 1. Insert slime!

NARRATOR 2. Sound Effects!

(We hear squishy, slimy sound effects.
MOM *pours a visually disgusting slime substance from her pitcher into* JANE's *glass. Before* TIM *notices what is coming out of the pitcher, he takes a drink from his glass and is immediately repulsed. He pulls his mouth away and slime pours from his glass.)*

TIM. Ugh!!!

JANE. Yeah . . . Fresh squeezed. Wait is this from concentrate? This is worse than the Petersons' orange juice.

BOTH KIDS. Yuck!

NARRATOR 1. Intense Staring!

(Intense music. MOM *slowly moves her head and stares into the very soul of* JANE *silently.* JANE *wants to look at* MOM, *but she can hardly make eye contact with her.* MOM *continues to glare down at* JANE. TIM *tries to break the tension.)*

TIM. Mom?

*(*JANE *continues to feel the full weight of* MOM's *stare. The music grows more intense.)*

TIM. Mom?

*(*MOM *doesn't relent and continues staring at* JANE.*)*

TIM. Mom!

NARRATOR 2. Scare Chord!

(A scare chord is heard and both of the kids jump.)

BOTH KIDS. Aaahh!

(In sync with the scare chord, MOM *abruptly turns her head toward* TIM.*)*

MOM. Well, of course I only want the best for my family. No preservatives, lots of . . .

NARRATOR 1. Brains.

MOM. Brains.

*(*MOM *produces two pieces of brain [or cauliflower] and puts them in front of the kids [Or . . . even better . . . cauliflower is dropped from above. It precisely hits the table, startling the kids who are surprised, terrified, and grossed out].)*

MOM. And . . .

BOTH KIDS. *(Freaked out . . . not excited:)* Great taste.

JANE. *(Still freaking:)* Mom, you're . . . *(Gulp.)* terrific. When I grow up I hope I'm a . . . *(Pause, thinking it over:)* . . . cool mom just like you.

NARRATOR 1. The Dark!

(Sound effects of a giant light switch being thrown. Everything goes dark.)

NARRATOR 2. Scary Flashlight Face!

*(*MOM *holds a flashlight beneath her chin and illuminates her face with it.)*

MOM. *(Creepily:)* You will be, Janie. You'll be . . . just . . . like . . . me.

*(*MOM *gives a quiet sinister laugh and then points the flashlight at* TIM*, illuminating him.)*

TIM. *(Blinded:)* Speaking of . . . um . . . just like you . . . Tammy will be here any minute.

NARRATOR 1. Lurking In the Dark!

NARRATOR 2. Glowing Eyes!

(Glowing eyes appear around the room. The lights go bright with a scare chord, revealing a horde of MONSTERS *and* ZOMBIES *lurking around the periphery of the room.* TAMMY *is one of them. After a beat, they simultaneously pounce on the brains [cauliflower] left on the table. Each*

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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