

Scary, Scarier, Scariest

Some things are just plain scary

and fill your head with trepidation. That's a 25¢ word for worry, dread, fear. There are many fears we can choose from: fear of failing; fear of falling; fear of flying; maybe, as weird as it sounds, fear of *winning* (as in, "You won! Now what?" How do you top that? Can you keep winning?) Besides, the pressure to be smart, smarter, smartest! can give you such a headache!

There is a name for every possible fear capable of mortifying the human psyche. For instance, *nephophobia*, or fear of clouds, *kathisophobia*, fear of sitting, *kyphophobia*, fear of stopping, and for the ultimate chicken: *alektorophobia*, which is fear of chickens.

We're not just talking kids. Adults have fears ranging from fear of bathing, itching, open spaces, closed spaces, peanut butter sticking to the roof of the mouth, garlic, opinions, spiders, numbers, fainting, flutes, Bolsheviks, body smells, toads, hair, thunder, dining, insanity, skin lesions, money, clocks, making decisions, mirrors, dawn or daylight, being oneself, work, marriage, laughter, growing old, mice, mushrooms, dental surgery, lawsuits, frogs, scabies, symbolism, symmetry, relatives, taking tests, otters, heights, basement flats, elevators, childbirth, the number 13, and... you get the picture. This better stop before you experience the symptoms of pounding heart, trembling, sweating, shortness of breath, weak knees, dry mouth, or feelings of unreality. One of the biggest fears we can have, and sometimes it's a healthy fear: people.

People can be scary.

More scary than any monster, vampire, creepy scientist, Tokyo-gobbling Godzilla. People can be more scary than a Hitchcock invented sicko; than anything ever sketched on a pad and animated in celluloid; than the monster in your closet, the noises in your house, or the dark thoughts in your head. People can be worse than your worst nightmare. However realistic the fright on the screen, it is, after all, fiction, a scripted, gargantuan production with every scene meticulously directed and controlled with frequent re-shoots and re-takes. It is the expensive figment of many creative imaginations. As real to life as movies are, movies aren't life. When it's over, everyone goes home, and often to their own private hells. Scary people are for real. It's not an act.

What scares lots of us is the nagging fear of being uncool, singled out, picked on, laughed at, rejected, left out, bullied, judged, and ridiculed, torn down, screamed at, forgotten. Life is abusive for far too many people, children, adolescents, and adults alike. What people do to people is bone-chilling scary.

We can be scary.

Ever read a story about a character who is so afraid of something moving at the edge of the bed that he shoots himself in the foot? It's not funny: we can be our worst enemy. You know something? The Bible doesn't lie. In it we find out that being human means being in the nasty business. Being a sinner means being naturally rotten, naturally revolting. Worse than slime, snot, puke, and poison. Do you ever catch yourself being so bad you even disgusted yourself, but you couldn't stop? Sure you and I have, and for one simple reason: There's evil in us all.

Don't be afraid!

There is a way out! 2,000 years ago a special man walked this earth who not only claimed to be the Messiah or Savior, he also performed miracles and wonders. All sorts of *unlikely* people had their lives changed when they put their faith in him. Guess what? He's still around, and he loves you and me! He even died in our place to defeat the scariest thing of all: death—the final battle. When you put your faith in the Jewish Jesus of Israel, Savior of the world, you get to pass from death to life; you get to go to heaven when you leave this planet! So don't be spooked out by devils, witches, goblins, yourself, or your friends. Someone stronger than all your fears loves and can save you.

Don't go there!

There's only one thing you need to be **SCARED** of—there is a name for that phobia as well: *hadephobia*. Thankfully, you *don't* have to go there to find out if it's real or not. You know, that place that will *never* freeze over.