

Real Cosmic Horrors

Perceptions of High School I find, tend to vary widely and wildly. One perception that I don't find touched on enough is the terror that comes with it. I know that I have taken my fair share--and another helping--of terror in my times at 320 West, 600 South, Lindon. However, these horror stories are not of the variety that I talk about in my English class when I should be writing essays.

I'll share a few of these stories. I remember one soccer game, playing goalkeeper, and facing down ALA's legendary Joe Viaje, the Goliath if I were David, in a one-on-one situation. However, unlike the biblical hero, I left the battlefield with less glory, and more grass between my teeth. A year earlier, somebody should have seen the look on my face when I saw that I was the only boy on the fashion statement winterim list. It was like that of a stone man after witnessing the Medusa wearing Prada. And more recently than I'd care to admit, I was able to viscerally feel what authors of the cosmic horror genre had been speaking of for ages: an unknowable and terrifying entity, a teenage girl. I hoped to get a phone number to go on a date sometime. However, upon walking up to her, the little people pulling levers inside of my head suddenly decided to take some vacation time. In my eyes, the lights were on, but nobody was home. I forgot how to put a number into my phone, and said to the unfortunate recipient of this awkward conversation: "uhhhhhh my phoone isn't workingggg, I'm just going to write the number down." I illegibly wrote it down on my excerpt of Alexander Pope, which then required a handwriting expert and about fifteen minutes of careful deciphering to even hope to have an accurate translation. I share all of this to say: I. Know. Horror.

However, I don't think that my terror is necessarily unique to me. Rather, it is that high school and middle school, are by nature, very scary. While the trials I stated before are real, I found the larger difficulty to be continuing on to my next class after a particularly heartbreaking lesson on the Holocaust. Sometimes getting up in the morning, knowing that you have eight challenging

periods, and no time after school, proves daunting. I worried for so long about my college admissions that I cried about getting into my college of choice, with more emotion than I've ever felt over any sporting event. The raw perseverance that it required for me to get through Sophomore spring finals, even with questionable success, was by far harder than the sum of its exams. I can't count the amount of late nights I've spent finishing Socratic papers. Even when the weekend rolled around, sometimes I couldn't help but leave a friend's house early, feeling depressed. Our life is composed of these trivial yet very difficult experiences. If we decide to regularly go it alone with this struggle, this terror, our lives will be filled with it. There will be no need to watch *Nightmare on Elm Street* or read H.P. Lovecraft on the weekends. We will be living through it ourselves. It's easy to let your school experience be turned into a lonely, cosmic horror.

However, I think that there is a solution. Sometimes the relief that is required after being berated by a proverbial monster is only found in the embrace of someone you're close with. After being secluded in the creature of your own emotions, the best course of action can be to talk out your feelings with a friend in a Macy's parking lot, listening to *Ribs* by Lorde and arguing intently about whether ice cream can "have a nice chew" or not. For so many years, I decided to fight a battle against my own personal graphic slasher film. I chose to go it alone. Until only recently, did I decide to truly let people in, and let them make fun of how terrible the movie is. Because, if there's one thing I know about horror movies other than that they are often scary, it is that they can be--with the right people--the most corny and laughable things you've ever seen. Searching for help and support through our trials is not weakness--it is survival. It is only through help, perseverance, and wise decision making, that you can also survive through your own Maeser cosmic horror.