

# Children of the night...

What music they make...

In keeping with the Halloween season, I thought that line was appropriate. Bela Lugosi's role as [Dracula](#) still is one for the ages. Today, that movie seems quaint and common, but in 1931 it terrified the audience. I've been told and read that the 1922 silent movie [Nosferatu](#) was even more chilling. Someday I must see that film.

Other versions of Dracula were horrific, bad, funny and just plain campy. There was Dracula vs Frankenstein, Dracula vs Batman. There was a Son of Dracula (Young Dracula) and an Old Dracula. Dracula was even [Dead and Loving It](#). He even discoed in [Love at First Bite](#). Today there are many more vampire stories out there, they all started with Dracula.

Why this fascination? Hard to say. Terror lurks in dark places. We as a society gather in light areas. We bring light into the dark. We try to chase away all shadows. Vampires, werewolves and their ilk are creatures of the shadows and dark. They strike a nerve with us. They chill our bones. They the moral of a story. Live a good life and evil will not happen to you. Stay with the group, do not go off alone after dark. There is evil out there and it has a name.

Today, we try to scare ourselves and we call it fun. We have horror movies, haunted mazes and houses, horror books. Things designed to get a bit of thrill in our lives. Things designed to get our blood flowing.

I do love the Halloween season. I wish that our haunted theater had been a reality, now I have no plans for Halloween. I'm too old to go "Trick or Treating" and I know of costume parties yet. Last year, even without the party, I put on my Dracula cape and went around the local area. Maybe this year, I'll shop at Wal\*Mart.

And what brought all this up...

The Children of the Night, what music they make... Owls in the trees, a dog or coyote howling in the distance on a chill dark night. Yes, the children of the night make music, and to my ears there is nothing better...

And yes, this is a [play](#) our theater should do... if we don't do a haunted house in October, we should at least do one themed play...

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## The Prankster

One of highlights of [The Office](#) outside of the main plot is the dynamic exhibited by Jim and Dwight. I just roll with each scheme that Jim cooks up to get Dwight week after week. Whether it be placing his desk essentials in jello (Episode One), playing a game of Hot and Cold for him to locate his desk (in the men's restroom), or using a stop watch to monitor his time wasting (oops, is that a SPOILER), Mr. Halpert is a master of the well-conceived and well-timed prank. Follow the [link](#) for a list of the best and feel free to comment on these or any that may be missing.

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## Getting To Know Gunner, Aarvid, And Kanute

Well, Tuesday and Thursday nights were auditions for the next

[WCCT](#) production. [Don't Hug Me](#) tells the story of a travelling karaoke machine ("LIFESTYLE SYSTEM") salesman who travels to the local tavern of a northern Minnesotan village on the coldest night of the year. I have not had the opportunity to read the entire script but what I read cold at the auditions was hilarious. We did not get the chance to sing any of the songs from the show but (judging by the titles) they will be great fun. "Don't Let The Door Hit You In The Butt" caught my attention as it was a song we skipped over during our readings.

Before the readings, we were encouraged to try a Minnesotan accent. I vaguely knew something, enough to make an attempt. Ya, you know. Watch [Fargo](#) and you will see (or [Drop Dead Gorgeous](#) which I have never seen) and you will know. I really like the part of Gunner. He is the owner of the tavern and is an outspoken, northwoods version of Archie Bunker. The fast-talking salesman Aarvid ([Head of the Class?](#)) could be fun as well as he is slightly reminiscent of a Harold Hill. We really did not get to learn much of the role of Kanute who seems to be a rather clueless character who is engaged to one of the two female characters.

Now... for the singing part of the audition. There was a keyboard on stage with a book of Broadway tunes open to "Getting to Know You" from [The King and I](#). Ok... it is a female piece but it was there so why not. Following my short off the cuff a capella excerpt, the director told me that "That was too good." AWriiighty then, I will do worse on Thursday... HAHAAHAHAHAHAHA. Unfortunately, the only person who got to sing was the one person who did not show up Tuesday night. In total there were 6 people who tried out. 4 men and two women. The cast calls for 5 (3 men and two women). I feel sorry for the one guy who does not get a part. If that turns out to be me... OH, WELL. However, I have all the confidence in the world that it will not be me.

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# Wonderful Fall Day

Since I joined the YMCA (Anyone Feel like dancing here???, not me thanks!), Thursdays has been one of the days I stop after work to get a little exercise in. Today I just could not see dropping in. It was just too nice out. Still I needed to get a little exercise in and still enjoy the fall evening.

My youngest and I took a quick trip to [Harrison Lake State Park](#) and took a stroll around the lake. Roughly 3.5 miles of hiking. Not a bad way to spend the afternoon. There was a cross-country meet going on, so we had to find an out of the way spot to finally park. We were able to avoid most of the runners (not get in their way) and we had a good time walking.

The walk around the lake reminded me of the last time I took the full trip around the lake. It was quite a few years ago. My daughters always liked picnics at the park for birthdays and such. Since 3 out of 4 were born in months when picnics are in season, we did it quite often. Harrison Lake was one of the many parks we went to (They have swimming there). My wife and I made the trip around that lake once. That was some 15 or 16 years ago. I'm not sure why we never made the walk again, but we didn't. I remember that walk because I had 1 of my daughters in a baby carrier on my back. One of the best ways ever devised to carry children (except for the hair pulling). When the 2 in the middle were young enough, I remember having one in the back pack and one in a front carrier. That actually made it easier to walk. More balance.

Anyway back to the first walk some years ago. I remember we didn't know the park very well, and at one point we thought we

were going through peoples' back yards. At the time we may have been, but as of today, the park seems to own most of the trail around the lake. There were two stretches of the walk when we had to walk on the roads around the park. Slight safety issue for those trying this walk with children, but it is minimized.

One more thing on the runners, that will never be me...

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## 7th to 7

No comments at all on the last blog post? I either posted this story before or I caught all of you on a bad day I guess. Anyway, I moved from 7th grade the other day to two different 2nd grade classes, and I do mean *different* in more ways than the obvious. Yesterday was generally a good day. I unfortunately had no break for specials like PE or music, but even without I didn't have much to complain about. There was an hour at the end of the day for computer lab and research, but though another ran that class I still had to be there. They were researching dinosaurs. Their entire day (well, almost) was actually based on this topic, from books to read for silent reading to centers work to the research at the end of the day. This topic is an early speller's nightmare by the way, with all those crazy names. I think I can spell some of the more common ones like T-Rex, er- I mean tyrannasaurus rex and pterodactyl. Those of course have come with practice. Let me just take a quick look at Wikipedia for some of the more unusual ones... Okay, just looking at [one single classification of dinosaurs](#) I found names like archaeornithomimus, anserimimus, struthiomimus, ornithomimus, pelecanimimus, shenzhousaurus, and harpymimus. Yech- see what I mean?

So again that day went well. A few students had to flip cards (oops, I mean "pull tickets" – small details like what things are called is of utmost importance to these concrete thinkers) but they were pretty well behaved. I wish I could say the same about today's class- some of them were all over the walls (figuratively). I would often have to repeat myself when I told someone to just sit down. Very chatty too. They did not seem to know how to do work with no talking. This is the sort of class I had when student teaching. The teacher also didn't leave directions for her behavior plan so I had to try to figure out how the one they had, one I was not familiar with, worked. They tried to tell me, but they couldn't agree on the details. I did mention doing things just right did I not? I had one boy who would just complain how I would do it. Needless to say I will not be using this plan if and when I have my own classroom someday.

This class also had no break, but there was a shorter lunch and less "off" (someone else in charge) time. In fact, the only time I had outside the classroom besides lunch was fifteen minutes to check out books in the LMC- they didn't even get recess outside of lunch. It wasn't in the plans, but even if it was they would have lost it. Needless to say between these two things the day felt quite longer than yesterday. Does this tell me I am not able to do it? Not at all. I think I need to come up with my own behavior plan next time rather than conform to the cooperating teacher's plan if I don't like it. That was probably also a mistake- trying to conform with how she ran things, automatically taking a follower (read: teaching assistant) role. Not good when I'm supposed to be training to be a leader. So, should I go back if the college agrees to give me another chance?

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# Monkey-ing Around

This morning before going to work, I caught a few moments of Good Morning America. One of the segments featured a pair of monkeys employed as waiters at a tavern in Japan called Kayabukiya. I'm not entirely sure what all goes on in the tavern except that the pair passes out hot towels to the customers as they order their first drink. No word on their rate of pay but they are tipped generously in boiled soya-beans. According to the report on GMA, many people have complimented the simians and noted that they are better than some human servers they have had previously. The names of the pair are Fuku-chan and Yat-chan. But check out the [link](#) to see the monkeys in action. I wonder if the owners of Kayabukiya are breaking any animal labor laws... cruelty to animals and such. Not sure if PETA operates worldwide.

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## Hauntings down for the count...

It is official, the Haunted Theater is officially canceled. The hard work and planning that went into this fund raiser is all for naught. I can't see why people would want to throw away a fund raiser. Even if it only raised \$100, it would be \$100 that they didn't have prior to the event.

I won't say more other than this may affect my future involvement in the theater. I'm not sure at the present time. They want money, but I guess there are only one or two ways to get it. This wasn't one of them. Too bad, the other ways aren't working, as far as I can tell.

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# Overweight???

There have been recent stories in the news about some extremely overweight people. One is the world record holder over 1000 lbs, another hit the scales at over 900 lbs. Sadly, the 900 lb man died from heart failure today. It simply astounds me that they could get that large.

I have a problem with both of these men reaching such weights. Both men were bed ridden, they could not get out of their beds. Both men gained weight after being bed ridden! I can see how they got to the point of being bed ridden. They could feed themselves at that point. I do question how the people taking care of them would not get help to make sure these men lost the weight once they could no longer move. Did they pay people to feed them?

No, you wouldn't want to starve them, but calorie content could be reduced. I'm not sure I would ever want to take care of someone who put themselves into that situation. Hard decision that. Once the person is stuck in their bed, they become wards of someone else. Should we as a society hold these people responsible? Who would make such a call?

Just some thoughts as I try to get this nearly 50 year old body back into shape so I can at least play one more game of softball.

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# Fire! No wait, just that time of the year.

Today was a special day that occurs just once a month. 10AM, first Tuesday of the month- the testing of the disaster sirens all over the area. I've always wondered what if there was a real disaster at this time? No one would believe it. It is also the season for testing something else. For the past two days I have been lucky enough to work at the two closest schools to me. One elementary, one middle. For the past two days I've been blessed with the classroom disruption known as the fire drill. I was warned of the impending one this week at the first school, and eventually told that Monday was in fact the day, but today at the middle school I didn't have much warning. In fact, I would have had none at all if it weren't for the happenstance of one of the students leaving the room (with permission) to do something, and being told by another student that there would be a fire drill. He came back and told us (there was a teaching assistant there as well). Of course student-to-student information cannot always be trusted when you're talking 7th grade, but we prepared for the possibility anyway. Sure enough, about ten minutes later we were headed out of the building and across the street. I bet that van driver coming up the street was none too happy about having to wait for a few hundred students to cross in front...

Yesterday I was with fourth grade, and had such a good day that, coupled with the clarity of being wide awake from an energy drink imbibed at dinner I was thinking- what if my calling to teach the grades I'm comfortable with was an accurate interpretation after all? I speak of a calling I felt back around ten years ago to teach. I was reading an article about teachers that day when I felt the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit on me seeming to tell me "this is

what I want of you.” After that I started to teach, badly at first due to my lack of experience, 4th grade at my church. A new 4th and 5th grade ministry was formed that same year which I joined and still teach to this day. A couple years after I went back to school to finish a degree. I had come so close to an electronic engineering degree and failed at the very end. This time I would be going to become certified as a teacher. Well, I did very well for most of it, just like with my electronic engineering degree some years earlier, but like that degree I failed to pass the ultimate test. Back then it was a senior design project. This time it was student teaching. I did an excellent job on my lesson planning, an okay job on teaching the plans, and a horrible job managing the classroom. One of the rooms had over thirty students, but that’s no excuse I guess. After that, I cooled my heels and started substituting- the professors at the school felt sorry for me and gave me a degree anyway, calling it success after so much time spent in school, but to this day it hasn’t felt like success.

A couple years later, I had an idea that I would get secondary certification (6th-12th) and get certification that way. I would teach science in middle school I thought. Well, after being told by a professor there, who had even filled in as head of the education department for a short time, I was later informed that no, it was a mistake and the policy of no second chances at student teaching still applied, even if I changed from elementary to secondary. I then applied to another school and was accepted, but then once again I was later told that no, it was a mistake and they couldn’t take someone who started a teaching program elsewhere. It has now been a year since that decision and a lot of wasted money taking classes to fulfill that secondary degree. Thanks a lot. ☐

This brings me back to today. As I was saying, last night I had some sort of clarity on this and the shortcomings I have thought I had seemed somehow miniscule, and that I could

indeed teach reading and writing as well as the things I'm good at- what was I thinking? I am most comfortable with upper elementary so why should I have settled for a secondary degree anyway? I am now seeking confirmation with God that I am ready for this and have His approval and blessing. My mind has been changed so often that I can't be sure on my own that this clarity is true or just caffeine-induced. I do have some other lifestyle changes I need to make, particularly as I am not sleeping well again. I had started Tae-Bo about a month ago, but then I pulled some leg muscles, followed by severe lower back pain (both are gone now), and finally the flood in the basement where I was working out. I'm still not positive about guys and aerobics, even if it is martial-arts aerobics, but it's better than running or laying out big \$\$ for weight training equipment or a fitness center membership. Hopefully this can help me sleep once I start again.

So... how was today? Well, I had no problems. It was another LD/BD resource position like last week, but the kids were much better behaved than the one job. In fact, talking was the only issue leading me to believe they were strictly LD (learning) issues. I am a little perturbed about the rest of the week though. I had a three day assignment that was cancelled at the last minute. I logged in to the system to confirm it again and it was gone, no call about it no nothing. I called the system as that is where it actually does the cancellations- for some reason it doesn't do them through the web interface- and all I got was a busy signal. That explains the lack of a call I guess- the phone interface was down. I eventually got through and it did tell me the job was cancelled, so now I have to fill those days again. Actually I did find a local 2nd-grade position for tomorrow, so that beats getting up at 6AM (other job) but now I work until 3:30 instead of 1:45 (Wednesdays are early dismissal days in the one district). Well, that's part of being a sub I guess.

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# The Office – Season Premiere!

**WARNING – SPOILERS AHEAD! THIS POST DETAILS THE HAPPENINGS DURING THE OFFICE PREMIERE – YOU’VE BEEN WARNED!**

I can’t believe I didn’t get around to writing about the Office season premiere until now! For goodness sakes, it aired almost two weeks ago! It all began when our kids were acting up so much that we didn’t catch the premiere episode when it aired on tv the Thursday night before last Thursday night. Still with me? Doesn’t really matter... just skip to the part of the post you like. Thinking we had set our computer to tape The Office premiere or that we could find it online, we didn’t fret too much until it was time for bed and we still hadn’t found it. Finally got ahold of it late Friday night after some corn maze fun, stayed up way too late to watch it, followed by a busy weekend, a chaotic week, and another bustling weekend before I got a chance to write about it! So anyway, here is my take on The Office’s premiere episode. I always like what [tvguide.com](http://tvguide.com) has to say in their tv show blogs, so I copied and pasted their tv show blog synopsis of the premiere and that’s in italics. I will interject my own comments throughout the article, and those are in **BOLD CAPS**. A brief break for the Vice Presidential debate last Thursday, and then some more funny new Office episodes begin this Thursday!!!

*Last season ended with cliff-hangers galore: Andy proposed to Angela, Jim was thwarted from proposing to Pam, Michael committed to playing babydaddy to Jan’s mystery spawn, and – this really killed me because my DVR cut off early and I only found out about this the next day – the cameras, those ubiquitous Office cameras, caught Dwight and Angela boinking*

minutes after she accepted Andy's proposal. The writers developed great storylines last season, and this premiere episode did a great job picking up those threads and setting up some great arcs for this season. **(AGREED! AT THE RISK OF ALIENATING POTENTIAL VIEWERS, I WILL SAY THAT THIS SHOW IS A COMEDY WITH SOAPY CHARACTERISTICS GIVEN ITS CONTINUING STORYLINES AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT. BUT IF YOU'VE NEVER WATCHED THE OFFICE, DON'T LET THIS OBSERVATION DISCOURAGE YOU! MOST TV SIT-COMS HAVE CONTINUING STORYLINES – YOU JUST DON'T ALWAYS REALIZE IT!)**

**\*\*\*SPOILER ALERT\*\*\***

Thursday's premiere was chock-full of big shockers: Jim's proposal to Pam at a rest stop, Ryan's return as a receptionist bent on revenge **(IT'S GREAT FUN TO SEE RYAN AT THE BOTTOM ONCE AGAIN – EVEN MORE FUN TO SEE HIM AT THE BOTTOM NOW AFTER HIS SMARMY ATTITUDE ALIENATING HIS CO-WORKERS)**, and Dwight and Angela's secret affair – consummated in an out-of-the-way warehouse closet. Lots to talk about, so let's get started.

The episode begins with the announcement of a corporate weight-loss contest, a still-unengaged Pam leaving for Pratt Design in New York ("what up, 2-1-2?") and Angela beeping Dwight for some Office lovin', right after Andy serenades her with a personalized version of Rihanna's "Umbrella" ("Angela-ela-ela"). Honestly, I would page Dwight for a booty call if somebody did that to me, so I'm definitely not going to moralize.

Meanwhile, Michael is in the "friend zone" with Holly, and, according to Jim, "killing it" because "she's kind of a dork." Cut to the "wicka-wicka-wicka" bebop (I think that's what the kids call it), and you appreciate that there's a special chemistry there. (I also loved the "Acting!" and Yoda impersonations in last season's finale.) Clearly, Jan and the baby are going to complicate matters, but since Michael may

have found in Holly the only woman with whom he could possibly have a healthy relationship, I'm rooting for them. The writers, though, seem hell-bent on making his journey with Jan and the baby as difficult as possible. I'm looking forward to the ride. **(I SO WANT MICHAEL AND HOLLY TO END UP TOGETHER – THEY'RE PERFECT FOR EACH OTHER AND SHE SEEMS TO ACTUALLY LIKE HIM. HE KEEPS BEING SO CLUELESS ABOUT IT THOUGH, ITS FRUSTRATINGLY FUN TO WATCH!)**

As for Jim and Pam: The writers really have it in for them, don't they? First, unrequited love. Then, Jim leaves and returns with a girlfriend. When he comes back, Jim is almost killed by Roy – thank God for Deputy Dwight and his can of mace! – and now, a long-distance relationship? Really? The Office has been great at avoiding clichés, and I hope it continues to do so by not sucking Pam into a complicating “friendship” with some college dude. **(I WAS NOT HAPPY TO SEE THE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE COLLEGE DUDE. PAM HAD BETTER NOT PULL A “ROSS” (REMEMBER THE TV SHOW FRIENDS?) AND CHEAT ON HER SOULMATE – SHE AND JIM ARE MADE FOR EACH OTHER, AND I THINK THE SHOW WOULD BE JUST AS ENTERTAINING IF THEY GO AHEAD AND LET THESE TWO GET MARRIED. IF THEY WANT TO FOLLOW IN CHEESY SITCOM FOOTSTEPS, THEN ADD A BABY OR TWO DOWN THE ROAD, BUT DON'T BREAK THEM UP!)**

*And now on to my favorite scenes:*

*The return of Ryan*

*I found myself clapping out loud, it was that awesome that a humbled, court-ordered-community-service-oriented Ryan returns as Pam's temp fill-in. Ryan's out for some weird revenge angle, as evidenced by his menacing goatee, his black attire and his anti-Earl list, which includes Jim and – strangely enough – Kevin. I'm sure Michael will figure out a way to keep him around longer, but I wonder if the once-humble intern truly has turned irrevocably to the dark side. **(I THINK SO – RYAN WAS NEVER A NICE PERSON. SURE, THEY MADE YOU FEEL SORRY FOR HIM WHEN HE WAS A TEMP THE FIRST TIME, BUT HE WAS STILL A***

**JERK.)**

*"So you think it's a choice?"*

*The patented Office awkwardness of Oscar and Holly having the "I'm a lesbian... No, I'm actually not" exchange was fantastic. It certainly didn't reach the cringeworthy heights of last year's classic dinner-party episode, but it still managed to make me laugh and squirm like no other show on TV does. For some reason, that appeals to me. (THIS SCENE WAS HILARIOUS AND ONE OF MY FAVORITES – NUFF SAID!)*

*"That wasn't a tapeworm."*

*I would like to proclaim, in this, my initial Office blog, that Creed is my hero. He may be my favorite sitcom character of all time. Kelly says she swallowed a tapeworm to lose weight... that Creed sold her. Cut to Creed: "That wasn't a tapeworm." The only question that remains, and I'm afraid of the answer: What was it? (I AM A BIG FAN OF CREED ALSO – HE IS AN AWESOME CHARACTER, SOOO FUNNY. MY FAVORITE CREED LINE IS WHEN HE SAYS "YEP, IT'S CRAZY. IT'S CRAZY." IN THE EPISODE WHERE DWIGHT WANTS TO COOK A GOOSE IN THE OFFICE. IT DOESN'T LOOK NEARLY AS FUNNY IN TYPE; YOU HAVE TO SEE THE EPISODE. AND THEN THERE'S THE EPISODE WHERE CREED DYES HIS HAIR AND STARTS USING SLANG TO APPEAR YOUNGER – CLASSIC!)*

*"I've replaced Angela as head of the party-planning committee."*

*Phyllis reveals her Machiavellian side with this power play. As she caught Angela and Dwight doing their illicit dirty deed, her little upward smile indicated at the very moment she caught them that the party-planning committee chairmanship was all hers. You go, girl!*

*The big shocker: Jim and Pam get engaged!*

*On exit 17 off of what I can only assume is the New Jersey Turnpike, Jim drops on one knee and pops the question. I'm really glad they didn't drag it out and save the engagement for some sweeps or finale ploy. The unexpectedness of the*

*proposal, and how unassuming it was, really kept true to the nature of their relationship. For me, this is one the main reasons why this show is so great: The writers don't betray their characters. (AGREED!)*

*So, what did you guys think? Was the Season 5 premiere worth the wait? (IT WAS GREAT, BUT NEVER WORTH THE WAIT CUZ THAT MEANS THAT WE HAVE TO GO WITHOUT THE SHOW!) What did you think of the engagement? (VERY HAPPY ABOUT IT – CALMS MY FEARS ABOUT THAT RANDOM COLLEGE DUDE A LITTLE BIT – I WAS FEELING JEALOUS FOR JIM!) Did you see it coming or were you, like me, totally shocked? (I WAS SHOCKED, DIDN'T SEE IT COMING AT ALL, BUT IT WAS SOMETHING I WAS REALLY HAPPY ABOUT. I'M GLAD THEY DIDN'T SHOW IT TO US IN A PREVIEW!) Finally, what were your favorite scenes? (THE OSCAR / HOLLY EXCHANGE AND THE CREED / KELLY TAPEWORM INCIDENT WERE MY FAVORITES – KELLY LOOKING SO SICK AND PASSING OUT WERE PRICELESS! OVERALL, AS SO OFTEN HAPPENS WITH TV SHOWS, THE SEASON PREMIERE DID NOT DISAPPOINT IN THE SLIGHTEST! CAN'T WAIT UNTIL THURSDAY!!!!!!)*