The ghastly smell encompassed the motionless house, the howling winds slithered their ways through the creaking cracks of the ajar door. (a gorgeous opening, so atmospheric and I love the personification!) The moonlight punctured through the shattered windows, and the cold, humid air surrounded the ancient castle. Droplets started to form in the night sky, soon enough, water poured through the sky and the ground was soaked. Lightning pierced through the atmosphere, as thunder roared past the building. (This whole opening paragraph is incredible, Julian! You’ve used such impressive vocabulary and imagery)

The Rogers were on a roadtrip to a nearby seaside, but they were lost. Their phones died, car broke, and they were broke. Coincidentally, the castle appeared into sight, where else (was there) to stay other than this? (great rhetorical question!) So they stepped out of the car and trudged towards the castle. The walk was arduous (amazing word choice here), they were blinded by the water, and the climb towards the towering castle was the longest climb of their lives.

As they slowly approached the mystical castle, all of a sudden, the rain stopped, and they were let into the house. It was like a dungeon. (I love the sentence length variation here, very tense!) He rubbed his drenched hands against his soaking clothes, and stared blankly at the never ending corridor of darkness. He was startled, but at the same time, he ~~has~~ (had) (remember to keep tense consistent!) the responsibility to take care of his family, so he pulled on a confident face, turned towards his fear, and let his family inside.

Their footsteps seemed louder than usual, the sound of it ~~ringed~~ (rang) through the empty hall. Other than that, nothing was heard. A sudden crack was heard (I wouldn’t repeat this ‘was heard’ phrase, maybe you could say ‘a sudden crack sounded’) as they stepped on the already broken floorboards (‘fractured floorboards’ might sound better!). Sweat and rain dripped across his frightened face and landed on the tip of his shoes. Unanticipatedly, he heard the squealing of the door hinge from approximately 20 metres above, and as any curious human would do, he, leading his family, went on to discover the hidden secrets. (it’s all getting very spooky!)

He dragged his hands across the dusty railings of the wooden stairs, as he hurried his family. The old, unused floor was screaming as they walked across it, and soon enough, they were standing feet in front of the ghostly door. His heart was in his throat, beating ever so fast. (great use of showing, not telling!) He, went and explored the room, while his family stayed out. The door knob started to turn as it gradually shut itself, or ~~is~~ (did) it? He was trapped. The room was filled with darkness, the only source of light was the narrow stream of light coming from under the door. What should he do? (I like the repeated rhetorical questions, they really emphasise his panic!)

He stood there thinking, but all the thoughts that came to his frightened and s~~umbstrucked~~ (dumbstruck?) mind was fear. He stood there. Shocked. After a while, a ghostly outline of a person appeared in his sight, he felt a sudden shock of cold and ~~shivers~~ (shivered). The figure approached him, then he knew for sure, that the ghost figure would be the last thing he ~~will~~ (would) see before he ~~passes~~ (passed) out, or his death. And sure enough, he was correct. He passed out on the spot only to wake up to seeing himself at the exact same place.

His family was standing outside in awe, what could they do, all they heard was their heart pounding and the screams from inside the room. They cried for help, but no one came. Obviously no one came. What is happening, what is going to happen? (again, these desperate questions are so good!) They stood there helpless. But they can't just watch their family member get murdered. A minute ~~has~~ passed, nothing ~~has~~ happened, another has passed, nothing has happened, an hour has passed, but still, nothing was heard coming inside the room, what could this mean? Is he already gone? Could this be another death in this house?

**What Went Well:**

-Your descriptive writing is incredible, Julian! You use so many incredible pieces of imagery, especially right at the start. I love the weather images you use, of the moonlight ‘puncturing’ and the wind ‘howling’. This imagery is so effective in creating a wild, unruly atmosphere!

-Your understanding of the horror genre is perfect! You use some wonderful techniques, and your varying sentence lengths really stand out as a feature that heightens the tension!

-I really like your use of these desperate rhetorical questions throughout, your characters crying out to a reader who can’t help them. This is so vivid, and I really love the panic they convey, and how this adds to the overwhelming tension you’ve created in your story.

**Even Better If…:**

-Be careful when writing, that you don’t slip into the wrong tense. A few times throughout (I’ve marked where it happens) you slip into the present tense, which can take the reader out of the tense moment. Just make sure that you proof-read your work to make sure that, if you choose to write in the past tense, you maintain it throughout.

-I would love to see you incorporating some dialogue in your work, to further character development and the relationships between these characters. In horror writing, it can often be very effective to have a character cry out in dialogue, and maybe your specific story could have a scene where the family are screaming through the door to the main character.

-There are a few places where I feel you could craft your words even further, such as the ‘broken floorboards’ line, which I changed to ‘fractured floorboards’. This alliteration has a really nice sound to it, and I feel that you could incorporate techniques like that a bit more in your writing, just to match with the gorgeous imagery and vocabulary you’ve used throughout.