

TV Review: 'The Simpsons' Scares Up Few Laughs With 'Treehouse of Horror'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on October 18, 2009 - 2:11pm

- [28 Days Later](#) [2]
- [Alfred Hitchcock](#) [3]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [4]
- [Dial M For Murder](#) [5]
- [FOX](#) [6]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [7]
- [North by Northwest](#) [8]
- [Strangers on a Train](#) [9]
- [Television](#) [10]
- [The Simpsons](#) [11]
- [Treehouse of Horror](#) [12]
- [Vertigo](#) [13]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [14]

CHICAGO – Even the most diehard fans of “The Simpsons,” a group of which I would proudly call myself a member, would admit that the last few seasons of the show have been disappointing at best and, at times, downright bad (especially the current season we’re in, which has produced fewer laughs than anything on FOX Sunday nights). The annual “Treehouse of Horror” episode has usually been a reliable standby, a bright spot even in weak seasons. If “Treehouse of Horror XX” is the bright spot of this season, it’s going to be the worst in the history of the show.



Television Rating: **1.5/5.0**

For years, starting around season twelve (and that may be generous), “Simpsons” fans like myself used to fall back on a crutch that went something like “Even sub-par “The Simpsons” is better than most TV.” Sure, we knew that the writing wasn’t nearly as clever or consistent as it used to be, but the show still had laugh-out-loud moments and was certainly more entertaining than most horrible sitcoms on the broadcast TV schedule. Even that flimsy defense of the show has started to ring false and this year’s “Treehouse of Horror” is a perfect example of why the show is starting to resemble an athlete way past his prime but still suiting up every week. We all hope for one more comeback. This season’s “Treehouse” is not that comeback.



In the 20th anniversary of THE SIMPSONS annual “Treehouse of Horror” Halloween special, Lisa strikes a deal with Bart to seek revenge on their teachers in a series of homages to classic Hitchcock, in “Treehouse of Horror XX” airing Sunday, Oct. 18 (8:00-8:30 PM ET/ PT) on FOX.

Photo credit: FOX

The structure is the same as it's always been - three scary stories, mostly inspired or satirizing something familiar. This time it's Hitchcock, "28 Days Later," and, well, the musical. Oooh, scary. Each chapter in this year's "Treehouse" is less interesting than the one that precedes it and the show only occasionally shows brief glimpses of the dark sense of humor that used to make these episodes so unexpectedly hilarious.



In the 20th anniversary of THE SIMPSONS annual "Treehouse of Horror" Halloween special, Krusty's latest fast food sandwich transforms Springfield into enraged zombies in "Treehouse of Horror XX" airing Sunday, Oct. 18 (8:00-8:30 PM ET/ PT) on FOX.
Photo credit: FOX

Some of the best moments of the prime of "The Simpsons" took place in "Treehouse of Horror" including an amazing "Nightmare on Elm Street" spoof, the first time Homer was ever seen in more than two dimensions, and a personal favorite, a time-travelling toaster. There's not an idea, scene, or joke in this year's "Treehouse of Horror" that you'll remember by the time you're done watching "The Cleveland Show," much less the next day at school or work.

The first segment is called "Dial M For Murder (Or Press # to Return to the Main Menu)" and features Bart and Lisa in a plot inspired by Hitchcock's "Strangers on a Train". After arguments with their teachers, the two Simpson kids decide to pull a "criss cross," where they'll help enact revenge on each other's enemy. Lisa thinks that just means pulling a "ding-dong-ditch". Bart cuts off Ms. Hoover's head. References to "North by Northwest," "Vertigo," and more make this a fun segment for Hitch fans, but this is ground that the writers of "The Simpsons" have covered before and less haphazardly.

Act one of "Treehouse of Horror XX" is a classic compared to the other two forgettable chapters. One would think that a segment inspired by "28 Days Later," in which Bart becomes the chosen one after it's discovered that he's immune to the zombie-making disease that has taken over Springfield (after the introduction of the new Krusty Burger, 'Burger Squared,' gives everyone something like Mad Cow Disease), would be memorable, but it's surprisingly light on jokes or clever moments.

Finally, the last segment of this year's "ToH" is a pseudo-musical in which most of the supporting characters, including the requisite cameo by Kang and Kodos, watch a twisted, "Sweeney Todd"-esque love triangle between Moe, Homer, and Marge, complete with stage mistakes and unusual songs. Moe accidentally seriously injures Homer and, partially using Homer's blood to brew his beer, woos Marge. It's a weird segment, even by "ToH" standards, and really not funny.

It's another disappointing episode of one of my favorite shows of all time. Like all fans, I still hold out hope that there's another great series of episodes or even a great season left in "The Simpsons". But that hope diminishes with every episode as lackluster as "Treehouse of Horror XX". The ending of this year's "Treehouse of Horror" features a classic character having fallen asleep. Don't be surprised if someone you're watching the show with hasn't done the same.

'The Simpsons: Treehouse of Horror XX,' which airs on FOX, features voice work by Dan Castellaneta, Julie Kavner, Yeardley Smith, Nancy Cartwright, Harry Shearer, and Hank Azaria. It airs on October 18th, 2009 at 7PM CST.



By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [16]
Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [15]

[15]

Source URL (retrieved on *Apr 23 2024 - 6:21pm*):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/9041/tv-review-the-simpsons-scares-up-few-laughs-with-treehouse-of-horror>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/28-days-later>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/alfred-hitchcock>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dial-m-for-murder>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/fox>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/north-by-northwest>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/strangers-on-a-train>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/television>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-simpsons>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/treehouse-of-horror>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/vertigo>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>
- [15] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>