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## Movies

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### It's a dark and scary night: Time to curl up with a frightening flick

DEBORAH NICOL • THE DESERT SUN • OCTOBER 27, 2007

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Gannett News Service, MGM

Dominique Dunne, left to right, JoBeth Williams, Craig T. Nelson and Oliver Robins in a scene from the film "Poltergeist."



A muffled scream. A few out-of-tune notes on a piano. A wobbly camera from the point of view of a killer on the loose. On the most hallowed of eves, visions of terror take shape.

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Make a fright night of it with the following wicked flicks and chase each horrifying serving with a shot of "The Simpsons" annual Treehouse of Horror special.

### Phantasmic journey

Things that go bump in the night receive disturbing focus in the best ghost stories.

"The Haunting" (1963) tests the limits of bothered minds and throbbing walls, "Poltergeist" teaches developers that building on an ancient burial ground is bad business, and "The Sixth Sense" informs the living that even the dead get confused.

Treehouse of Horror I: "Bad Dream House"

### Killer serials

Stick it in a blender and hit purée, as horror series know how to churn out pulp. "Leprechaun: Back 2 the Hood" may be worthy of its predecessors, but when in doubt stick to classic thrills that are more relatable: a naive babysitter ("Halloween," 1978), an abandoned

summer camp ("Friday the 13th") and a restless slumber ("A Nightmare on Elm Street").

Treehouse of Horror VI: "Nightmare on Evergreen Terrace"

### If you can't scream, sing

"The Rocky Horror Picture Show" made aliens sexy again and its cult following requests the butter side down when audiences throw toast at the screen. Tim Burton follows suit with haunting songs (no fishnets required) and stop-motion brilliance. "The Nightmare Before Christmas" explores a town that fine tunes the wickedest night of the year, and "Corpse Bride" lets the dead have their wedding day.

Treehouse of Horror XIV: "Reaper Madness"

### Don't leave the kids alone

Since 1966, "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown" has led kids to question the sincerity of their pumpkin patch. In the Burton short, "Frankenweenie," man's best friend is jolted back to life in a boy's lab. Before Burton and company molded clay, Wallace and Gromit ruled the stop-motion world. In "The Curse of the Were-Rabbit," the oddball duo stalk a carrot-chomper with a monster appetite.

Treehouse of Horror III: "Clown without Pity"

### Laugh 'til you die

There is nothing like a good scare, but sometimes the terror comes from bad acting. Ed Wood sinks into B-movie absurdity with such cult films as "Plan 9 from Outer Space" and "Bride of the Monster." If it is difficult to discern the good funny from the bad, let the folks at Mystery Science Theater 3000 act as interpreters for flicks such as "The Pod People" and "The Brain that Wouldn't Die." Satire is not lost on "Young Frankenstein," a film that tweaks the classic tale into Mel Brooks' brand of hilarity.

Treehouse of Horror II: "If I Only Had a Brain"

Everyone has a favorite Halloween lineup, but these should keep viewers spooked until the trick-or-treat bags of sugar take effect.

### in your voice

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