

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

The Best Movies for Halloween (That You've Probably Never Seen)

Liggera Edmonds-Allen · Saturday, October 30th, 2021

Listen, I love *Hocus Pocus*. I love *Halloweentown*, *Nightmare Before Christmas*, and *The Addams Family Values*. But sometimes, my depression cave needs a little enrichment. Like the zookeeper throwing weird fish to a penguin, I am here to give you some new classics — some a little spooky, and others guaranteed to give you nightmares.

***Woman in the Dunes* (1964)** – Dir. Hiroshi Teshigahara



Kyôko Kishida and Eiji Okada in *Suna no onna* (1964)

A science teacher goes to the desert to look for some bugs and become a famed entomologist. Time gets away from him, and he misses the last bus home. Luckily, the villagers invite him to stay with a woman who lives in a sandpit, lowering the rope ladder so he can head to bed. When he wakes

up, though, the rope ladder has disappeared...

Remember Stephen King's *Misery*? This is the OG version. A touchstone of the Japanese New Wave, *Woman in the Dunes* is as unsettling as it is beautiful, forcing its audience to ask if they shovel sand to live, or live to shovel sand. Warnings for violence, nudity, sexual assault, and psychological torture.

Not Rated

Scary Meter: 4 out of 5

Weird Factor: 4 out of 5

Camp Slider: 1 out of 5

Funny Times: 0 out of 5

Cure (1997) – Dir. Kiyoshi Kurosawa



Masato Hagiwara in *Cure* (1997)

A detective investigates a string of eerily similar crimes, committed by average folks with no motive, and no memory of the attack. His only clue is the 'X' carved into each of the victims...

Half murder-mystery, half gory-horror, *Cure* is definitely a fun one. It is an oddly quiet film, with plenty of room to reflect on its social commentary. There are also plenty of moments of entirely inappropriate laughter. Warnings for intense violence, psychological distress, and discussions of misogyny.

Scary Meter: 4 out of 5

Weird Factor: 2 out of 5

Camp Slider: 1 out of 5

Funny Times: 2 out of 5

Audition (1999) – Dir. Takashi Miike



Ryo Ishibashi and Jun Kunimura in *Audition* (1999)

A lonely widower holds a series of auditions, with the actresses unaware that he is looking for a new wife. He finds the perfect girl, but she seems to be hiding something...

This is ‘The Godfather’ of every gory movie you’ve ever watched. *Audition* is considered either a feminist movie or a misogynistic one, examining the performance of femininity and objectification. You’ll either cheer for the main villain, or check every corner to see if she’s there. Warnings for intense violence, torture, vomit, and sex.

Rated R

Scary Meter: 4 out of 5

Weird Factor: 5 out of 5

Camp Slider: 2 out of 5

Funny Times: 1 out of 5

Scary Godmother: Halloween Spooktacular (2003) – Dir. Ezekiel Norton



Scary Godmother: Halloween Spooktacular (2003)

Hannah Marie is taken Trick-or-Treating by her jerk cousin, Jimmy. Jimmy and his pals scare her so badly that she runs away in tears and is found by a weird woman in a witch costume. Her new Scary Godmother takes her to a Halloween party filled with vampires, skeletons, and werewolves, and Hannah Marie learns that she's braver than she had ever thought.

Not into a fright night? No problem! This wacky, charming movie is one of my favorites. I had no idea why no one had seen it, until I realized it was a made-for-TV film! Worry not: you can stream it online.

Not Rated

Scary Meter: 0 out of 5

Weird Factor: 2 out of 5

Camp Slider: 3 out of 5

Funny Times: 5 out of 5

Bonus points: Family friendly!

***Teeth* (2007)** – Dir. Mitchell Lichtenstein



Jess Weixer in *Teeth* (2007)

Dawn O'Keefe, student leader of her school's purity program, finds that she has teeth in her vagina after being sexually assaulted.

One of my classmates said that watching this film in a movie theatre (at the 'Hell is a Teenage Girl' series hosted by RowHouse Cinema) was akin to a religious experience. A touchstone of gender horror — Warnings for sexual assault and violence.

Rated R

Scary Meter: 3 out of 5

Weird Factor: 4 out of 5

Camp Slider: 5 out of 5

Funny Times: 4 out of 5

Jennifer's Body (2009) – Dir. Karyn Kusama



Megan Fox in *Jennifer's Body* (2009)

After a concert gone wrong, Jennifer, resident hot girl of her high school, begins feasting on young men to stay alive and immortal.

Wait, you *still* haven't seen this? What are you doing? Go watch it *now*. Warnings for implied sexual abuse, and the use of homophobic language.

Rated R

Scary Meter: 2 out of 5

Weird Factor: 3 out of 5

Camp Slider: 5 out of 5

Funny Times: 4 out of 5

Bonus Points: Megan Fox and Amanda Seyfried!

Tucker and Dale vs. Evil (2010) – Dir. Eli Craig



Alan Tudyk and Tyler Labine in *Tucker and Dale vs. Evil* (2010)

Best buds Tucker and Dale are excited to take a vacation out in the woods. Things get complicated when a group of high schoolers have the same idea, and mistake the duo for murderous hillbillies.

An absolutely off-the-rails class commentary, with gore so gruesome that it swings back around to hilarity. This movie takes the ‘teens in the woods’ plot and turns it on its head, taking every cliché you can think of to its funniest conclusion. Warnings for gore, violence, and sexual content.

Rated R

Scary Meter: 1 out of 5

Weird Factor: 1 out of 5

Camp Slider: 3 out of 5

Funny Times: 5 out of 5

The Last Exorcism (2010) – Dir. Daniel Stamm



Ashley Bell in *The Last Exorcism* (2010)

Pastor Marcus feels guilty for his years of profiting off the faithful, especially when performing sham exorcisms. He decides to make a documentary exposing the tricks of the trade, making his way to Louisiana to perform the titular last exorcism. Of course, the one exorcism he decides to record turns out to be the real deal!

At first glance, this might appear to be your typical found footage horror film. There are some great giggles and social commentary happening here, but something incredible (and terrifying) is bubbling under the surface. Warnings for violence, misogyny, and discussions of sexual assault and incest.

Rated PG-13

Scary Meter: 3 out of 5

Weird Factor: 1 out of 5

Camp Slider: 1 out of 5

Funny Times: 4 out of 5

Over the Garden Wall (2014) – Dir. Katie Krentz, Patrick McHale



Over the Garden Wall (2014)

While adventuring on an Autumn afternoon, half-brothers Greg and Wirt find themselves lost in a strange forest called the Unknown, which seems to fluctuate through time and space. Hopefully some of the wacky characters they meet can help them find their way home!

If you ask any teenager or college student what they're watching this Fall, you'll probably hear this title. This star-studded mini-series has quickly become its own tradition. Told almost as a fairy tale, the folksy music, silly characters, and story-book style visuals are sure to charm any viewer. There is something a little more sinister lurking in the shadows, though...

Rated TV-PG

Scary Meter: 2 out of 5

Weird Factor: 4 out of 5

Camp Slider: 1 out of 5

Funny Times: 4 out of 5

Bonus Points: Family friendly! Plus, the vocal talents of Elijah Wood, Christopher Lloyd, John Cleese, Shirley Jones, Bebe Neuwirth, and *TIM CURRY!*

***Raw* (2016)** – Dir. Julia Ducournau



Laurent Lucas and Garance Marillier in *Raw* (2016)

After eating meat for the first time in her life, Justine finds herself with cravings that can only be satisfied by human flesh.

Like *Teeth* and *Jennifer's Body*, this movie is up there as one of the cornerstones of gendered body horror – absolutely required viewing. Warnings for animal meat imagery, vomit, dissections, gore, and sexual content.

Rated R

Scary Meter: 3 out of 5

Weird Factor: 5 out of 5

Camp Slider: 4 out of 5

Funny Times: 2 out of 5

Possum (2018) – Dir. Matthew Holness



Sean Harris in *Possum* (2018)

A children's puppeteer returns to his boyhood home in England, following an unnamed scandal that has sent him into hiding. He travels with a puppet named Possum, who he is attempting to destroy. This task isn't as easy as he would have expected, and he is forced to confront his stepfather and traumatic past.

Author opinion note — this is my favorite horror movie of all time. Densely atmospheric, *Possum* weaves stunning physical performance with horrifyingly abstract visuals. Warnings for spiders, animal abuse, depictions of sexual assault, and discussions of sexual violence against children.

Unrated

Scary Meter: 5 out of 5

Weird Factor: 4 out of 5

Camp Slider: 0 out of 5

Funny Times: 0 out of 5

Bonus Points: Made My Mother Leave the Room Award!

***Ready or Not* (2019)** – Dir. Matt Bettinelli-Olpin, Tyler Gillett



Samara Weaving in *Ready or Not* (2019)

Grace marries into a rather eccentric family, and goes straight from the wedding to their estate. Their wealth comes from a game-making ancestor, and family tradition has the new bride playing games with them at the dead of night. Unfortunately, Grace pulls 'hide-and-seek' out of the hat, and has to fight to survive the night.

I didn't expect much when I first saw the trailers, but this movie has a genius mix of comedy, body horror, and gore, with some top-notch acting to boot. Whether you're there for the suspense, the creepy children, or the badass soundtrack, this dark-comedy has something for everyone! Warnings for over the top violence, distressing animal imagery, and vomit.

Rated R

Scary Meter: 2 out of 5

Weird Factor: 2 out of 5

Camp Slider: 5 out of 5

Funny Times: 5 out of 5

Bonus Points: Samara Weaving!

***Freaky* (2020)** – Dir. Christopher Landon



Vince Vaughn in *Freaky* (2020)

*Millie is just your average, unpopular high school girl. Sure, her town is haunted by the legend of The Butcher, but who doesn't love a bit of hometown folklore? In a bizarre twist of fate, she wakes up in the body of the **very** real serial killer, and only has 24 hours to get her body back.*

This movie was a gem to find. It's as ridiculous as it sounds, and perfect popcorn material. All the movie asks of you is to strap in and come along for the ride. Warnings for graphic violence, bloody imagery, sexual content, and a threat of sexual assault.

Rated R

Scary Meter: 1 out of 5

Weird Factor: 2 out of 5

Camp Slider: 5 out of 5

Funny Times: 5 out of 5

Bonus Points: Vince Vaughn and Kathryn Newton!

Happy Halloween, ya filthy animals!

Compilation advised by Julia Levine, Katie Mae Ryan, and Anna Toutain.

Summaries for the films *Raw*, *Teeth*, and *Jennifer's Body* provided by Katie Mae Ryan.

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