

= Treehouse of Horror X =

" Treehouse of Horror X " is the fourth episode of The Simpsons ' eleventh season , and the tenth annual Treehouse of Horror episode , consisting of three self @-@ contained segments . It first aired on the Fox network in the United States on Halloween 1999 . In " I Know What You Diddily @-@ Iddily @-@ Did " , the Simpsons cover up a murder and are haunted by an unseen witness . In " Desperately Xeeing Xena " , Bart and Lisa gain superpowers and must rescue Xena star Lucy Lawless from the Comic Book Guy 's alter ego The Collector , and in " Life 's a Glitch , Then You Die " , Homer causes worldwide destruction thanks to the Y2K bug .

" Treehouse of Horror X " was directed by Pete Michels and written by Ron Hauge , Donick Cary and Tim Long . The episode contains numerous parodies and references to horror and science fiction works , including Doctor Who , I Know What You Did Last Summer and Battlestar Galactica . It also features actress Lucy Lawless and actors Tom Arnold and Dick Clark as themselves . In its original broadcast , the episode was seen by approximately 8 @.@ 7 million viewers , finishing in 34th place in the ratings the week it aired . Since its airing , the episode received positive reviews from critics .

= = Plot = =

In the opening scene , the two aliens Kang and Kodos introduce a variety show , with a live audience consisting of aliens . While they tell jokes , canned laughter is played , but the audience appears unamused . The Simpson family sits on the couch , with Homer appearing as the jack @-@ in @-@ the @-@ box from " Treehouse of Horror II " , Marge as the witch from " Treehouse of Horror VIII " , Bart as the half @-@ fly mutant from " Treehouse of Horror VIII " . Maggie is the alien / human mutant from " Treehouse of Horror IX " and Lisa is the victim of an axe murder . Lisa then asks what aliens have to do with Halloween , and Maggie , in Kang 's voice , says , " Silence ! " , and disintegrates her with a ray gun .

= = = I Know What You Diddily @-@ Iddily @-@ Did = = =

In a parody of I Know What You Did Last Summer , on a foggy evening with a full moon , the Simpsons are driving down a coastal road when Marge accidentally smashes into Ned Flanders , killing him . Homer manipulates the body in several escapades , which convinces Maude that Ned died of an accident and that he does not want an autopsy . Shortly after Ned 's funeral , the family finds the phrase " I Know What You Did ! " written in blood everywhere they go . They are terrorized by a cloaked figure , which drives them out of their house . Again , in the wild , they find Ned . It turns out he lived because he was bitten by a werewolf moments before the accident . Clouds uncover the full moon , Ned changes into a wolf and Marge , Bart , Maggie and Lisa run away . Ned mauls Homer to death while Homer mocks him .

= = = Desperately Xeeing Xena = = =

An X @-@ ray machine scanning Halloween candy malfunctions and gives Bart the ability to stretch his body like rubber and Lisa super strength . They become a superhero duo , calling themselves " Stretch Dude and Clobber Girl " . Later , Lucy Lawless (dressed as Xena) addresses fans at a science fiction convention . Comic Book Guy , who has styled himself as a villain called " The Collector " , kidnaps her using a magnet to attract her metal breast plate . Lawless tries to remove the breastplate but stops after she notices that her horny nerd fans have cameras ready . The Collector takes her to his lair , where he puts her in an aluminized PET film bag for " safekeeping " and imprisons her in a room of other similarly @-@ captured celebrities . Stretch Dude and Clobber Girl then enter the fray in an attempt to free Xena , but they are soon captured as well . The Collector suspends the duo over a vat of " Lucite " . After feigning interest in the villain , Lawless starts clobbering him . The Collector grabs his limited edition double edged lightsaber from

Star Wars : Episode I ? The Phantom Menace (which was released a few months before the episode) and ignites the blades , but when Lawless reminds him that he has removed it from its original packaging , he panics and ends up falling into the Lucite . Lawless then flies the children home (Lisa points out that Xena cannot fly , but Lawless reminds her she 's not Xena , she 's Lucy Lawless) .

= = = Life 's a Glitch , Then You Die = = =

On December 31 , 1999 , Dick Clark is celebrating New Year 's Rockin ' Eve in Springfield . Homer , the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant 's Y2K compliance officer , declares that he fixed all the possible Y2K problems at the plant , including the computers . Unfortunately , Homer forgot to fix his own computer , and in the process sends a virus across the world . Chaos ensues , and widespread looting begins . Krusty 's malfunctioning pacemaker apparently kills him in front of the family . Bart tearfully mourns his hero , but he perks up , after finding a note . The letter in Krusty 's pocket states that a rocket (codenamed Exodus) is being populated with humanity 's " best and brightest " , and will be launched in order to preserve human civilization on Mars . When they reach the shuttle , Homer fails to bluff his way on board by claiming to be the famous pianist from the film Shine but the armed guard recognizes Lisa as the ship 's designated proofreader . Lisa is only able to take one parent with her , and quickly chooses Marge . Homer and Bart find a second , unguarded rocket and board just before it launches . They quickly notice that the spaceliner is filled with such notoriously obnoxious and mediocre celebrities as radio psychologist Dr. Laura , film director Spike Lee , skating champion Tonya Harding , grunge rock singer Courtney Love , politician Ross Perot , actor Tom Arnold , MTV VJ Paulie Shore , and actress / talk show host Rosie O 'Donnell . Although the craft is headed directly for the sun , Homer and Bart eject themselves from the spacecraft and die of explosive decompression .

= = Production = =

" Treehouse of Horror X " was directed by Pete Michels and written by Donick Cary , Tim Long and Ron Hauge . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on Halloween , 1999 . " I Know What You Diddily @-@ Iddily @-@ Did " was conceived and written by former staff writer Cary . In the DVD commentary for the episode , Cary said that he came up with the segment after watching the 1997 horror film I Know What You Did Last Summer . " I had just seen the movie and I was like , ' Hey , there you go . ' " he said . While Flanders serves as the segment 's antagonist , the role would originally go to Grampa , who would chase Homer inside a roller disco . While Grampa does not appear in the segment , the Springfield Roller Disco is seen during the Simpsons escape from Flanders . Despite serving as writer for the segment , Cary left the series after finishing the first draft in order to work on the animated Austin Powers series , which never came to fruition . In his absence , the writing staff rewrote the last quarter of the segment and added the revelation that Flanders is a werewolf . In order to dispose of Ned Flanders ' corpse , Homer throws his body into Flanders ' house . After he is finished , he says " That 's the end of that chapter " , a phrase that Cary often uses in his everyday life . " That 's just something that comes up a lot in my life is when no matter if it 's a good or a bad thing , just move on " he said .

" Desperately Xeeeking Xena " was written by staff writer Long . At the beginning of the segment , Milhouse is seen wearing a plastic smock with a picture of Radioactive Man on it . The scene was based on an experience in Long 's childhood ; " I asked my mom for a Batman costume . And I got a smock that had Batman on it and said ' Batman ' . It was very dispiriting " he said in the episode 's DVD commentary . " Stretch Dude & Clobber Girl " ' s theme song was written by Long and composed by Alf Clausen . During the sequence , Stretch Dude and Clobber Girl are seen assaulting Saddam Hussein , the fifth President of Iraq . According to Long , the writing staff had a " passionate " discussion about whether the duo would be attacking Hussein or Iranian religious leader and politician Ruhollah Khomeini during the sequence . Scully quipped that Hussein was chosen because " he was always asking to be on the show . " The segment features New Zealand

actress Lucy Lawless as herself . According to Long , Lawless was very happy with the segment 's script . She was especially fond of the speech she gives to The Collector , in which she mentions that she was very tall as an adolescent . Lawless was directed by Scully , who commented that she was " terrific " . In an interview with the Hungarian online newspaper Origo , Lawless said that her part in the episode was the best experience she had guest @-@ starring for a show . " It was really funny when the Comic Book Guy kidnapped me " , she said .

" Life 's a Glitch , Then You Die " was written and conceived by Hauge . In DVD commentary for the episode , Hauge stated that , when writing the segment , he knew it would not age well . " I was aware of it at the time , that it wouldn 't last forever " he said , " But I wanted to capture that moment . " According to director Michels , the rocket which transported the " best and brightest " of the population was drawn to resemble a popsicle . The Simpsons ' staff had a lot of trouble finding a guest star for the second rocket , and the only person who agreed to participate was American actor Tom Arnold . In the episode , Arnold is depicted as an annoying , " not @-@ so @-@ great " celebrity . Although he was mostly in on the joke , Arnold did " bust [the staff 's] chops " a little bit when recording his lines . " He would say a line and then they 'd yell cut and he 'd look over at me and take a shot at me " Hauge said . Still , Hauge found Arnold 's performance " fantastic " and Scully said that he was a " good sport " . The segment also features television personality Dick Clark as himself . A few months after the episode aired , Hauge discussed the segment with Clark in a Fox studio . According to Hauge , Clark said that the episode gave the " biggest response " he had ever gotten from anything he had ever done . " After the career that he had in television for so long , just to give him a highlight was a highlight for me " Hauge said in the episode 's DVD commentary .

= = Cultural references = =

The opening segment , which shows Kang and Kodos attempting to entertain an audience of aliens , was " born out of [The Simpsons ' staff 's] love " of comedy teams like Martin and Lewis and the Smothers Brothers . The plot of " I Know What You Diddily @-@ Iddily @-@ Did " is based on the 1997 horror film I Know What You Did Last Summer . At the beginning of the segment , the Simpsons are seen escaping from a group of vampires . Holding a package of Super Sugar Crisp cereal , Homer starts singing a jingle about the cereal . Super Sugar Crisp is a reference to the breakfast cereal Golden Crisp , while the jingle Homer sings references " Can 't get enough of that Golden Crisp " , a jingle sung by Golden Crisp 's mascot Sugar Bear during advertisements for the cereal . According to Scully , the series ' staff had a lot of trouble clearing the song for the episode . " Apparently , they didn 't want the tune [...] used in this context " he said in the episode 's DVD commentary .

Although there is a fictional Marvel Comics character called Collector , Long did not base The Collector on him . While carrying Lawless with an electromagnet , The Collector says " Care for a Rolo , sweet Xena ? " The reference was included because the writing staff were given free Rolos at the time . In The Collector 's lair , several celebrities are seen stored in aluminized PET film bags . Some of these include The Simpsons ' creator Matt Groening and Tom Baker , who portrayed the fourth incarnation of the doctor in the British science fiction television series Doctor Who . " There are several Doctor Who actors but Tom Baker is the one we always go with " Hauge explained in the episode 's DVD commentary . Other captives include actress Yasmine Bleeth , Gilligan from the series Gilligan 's Island and Spock and Seven of Nine from Star Trek . The segment also features the series ' first reference to Star Wars : Episode I ? The Phantom Menace , when The Collector uses a mint @-@ condition of Darth Maul 's double @-@ bladed lightsaber . Because the episode was written before the film 's release , the writers did not know " how bad it was gonna be " , in their view , and therefore did not include any " obligatory shot " at the film . As he dies , The Collector poses as Lorne Greene 's character Commander Adama in the science fiction series Battlestar Galactica . Coincidentally , Lawless would go on have a recurring role on the re @-@ imagined Battlestar Galactica .

Hauge based " Life 's a Glitch , Then You Die " on the hysteria involving Y2K , a digital problem that occurred the night into January 1 , 2000 . Humans escaping an unsavable Earth in rockets is a

reference to the 1951 film *When Worlds Collide*. In a scene in the segment, several celebrities, including actor Mel Gibson and former Major League Baseball player Mark McGwire, can be seen waiting in line for the first rocket. They both guest starred as themselves in two earlier episodes from the season. Others in the line include businessman Bill Gates, director Ron Howard, former President Jimmy Carter, scientist Stephen Hawking, rock musician Paul McCartney, basketball player Michael Jordan and ice skater Michelle Kwan. Those on the doomed ship include actors Pauly Shore and Tom Arnold, politicians Ross Perot and Dan Quayle, singer Courtney Love, TV presenters Rosie O'Donnell and Laura Schlessinger, film director Spike Lee, reverend Al Sharpton and figure skater Tonya Harding.

= = Release and reception = =

In its original American broadcast on October 31, 1999, "Treehouse of Horror X" received an 8 @. @ 6 rating, according to Nielsen Media Research, translating to approximately 8 @. @ 7 million viewers. The episode finished in 34th place in the ratings for the week of October 25 @-@ 31, 1999. Following the episode was a rerun of "Treehouse of Horror IX", which was originally broadcast the previous year. In 2000, "Treehouse of Horror X" was nominated for a CINE Golden Eagle Award, which it ultimately won. It was also nominated for a Golden Reel Award in the category of "Best Sound Editing - Television Animation", which it lost to the *SpongeBob SquarePants* episode "Mermaid Man & Barnacle Boy". On October 7, 2008, "Treehouse of Horror X" was released as part of *The Simpsons: The Complete Eleventh Season* DVD set. Mike Scully, George Meyer, Ian Maxtone @-@ Graham, Ron Hauge, Donick Cary, Tim Long, Matt Selmán and Pete Michels participated in the audio commentary of the episode.

Following its broadcast, "Treehouse of Horror X" received positive reviews from critics. In his review of *The Simpsons: The Complete Eleventh Season*, Colin Jacobson of DVD Movie Guide wrote "Even in the series' crummier seasons, the staff always seems to come up with a good Halloween episode", and that "Treehouse of Horror X" "continues that trend". Of the three segments, Jacobson found "Life's a Glitch, Then You Die" to be the weakest. He wrote "[...] other than a good ending, it simply doesn't have a lot going for it" and added that it is the most dated of the three. He continued, "'Diddily' offers a fun horror spoof, and 'Xena' is a terrific superhero bit with plenty of cleverness." DVD Talk's Ian Jane gave the episode a positive review as well. Considering it to be one of the season's best episodes, Jane wrote "This one, like so many that have come before and since, is a great blend of horror movie parody and Halloween themed fun in Springfield." In 2007, Seb Patrick of Noise to Signal included "Desperately Seeking Xena" in a list called "The Ten Best Treehouse of Horror Vignettes". Although he disliked Bart and Lisa's part in the segment, Patrick wrote that it "earns its stripes by being perhaps Comic Book Guy's finest hour". He also praised the segment's references, as well as Lawless' line "A wizard did it", a phrase used to explain continuity errors. In 2009, The Collector's marriage proposal to Lawless was included in "Line @-@ O @-@ Rama: Comic Book Guy", a compilation of what IGN considers to be The Comic Book Guy's best lines.