

## = Treehouse of Horror IV =

" Treehouse of Horror IV " ( originally known as " The Simpsons Halloween Special IV " ) is the fifth episode of The Simpsons ' fifth season and the fourth episode in the Treehouse of Horror series of Halloween specials . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on October 28 , 1993 , and features three short stories called " The Devil and Homer Simpson " , " Terror at 5 ½ Feet " , and " Bart Simpson 's Dracula " . The episode was directed by David Silverman and co @-@ written by Conan O 'Brien , Bill Oakley , Josh Weinstein , Greg Daniels , Dan McGrath , and Bill Canterbury .

In " The Devil and Homer Simpson " , Homer Simpson announces he would sell his soul for a doughnut , and the Devil appears to make a deal with Homer . Homer tries to outsmart the Devil by not finishing the doughnut but eventually eats it and is sent to Hell . A trial is held between Homer and the Devil to determine the rightful owner of Homer 's soul . In " Terror at 5 ½ Feet " , while riding the bus to school , Bart Simpson believes he sees a gremlin taking apart the bus piece by piece . Nobody sees it except for Bart , so he tries to remove it on his own . In " Bart Simpson 's Dracula " , Mr. Burns is a vampire and Bart falls victim to his bite . Lisa and the rest of the family go to Burns ' castle to kill Burns so Bart can return to normal .

As with the rest of the Halloween specials , the episode is considered non @-@ canon and falls outside of the show 's regular continuity . The episode makes cultural references to television series such as The Twilight Zone , Night Gallery , and Peanuts . References are also made to films such as Bram Stoker 's Dracula and The Lost Boys . Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 14 @.@ 5 , and was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network the week it aired .

## = = Plot = =

Bart introduces each of the three segments by walking through a gallery of paintings and each time choosing one of them as the focus of his story .

## = = = The Devil and Homer Simpson = = =

In a parody of The Devil and Daniel Webster , at work , Homer states that he would sell his soul for a doughnut after finding that Lenny and Carl took all the doughnuts and threw them at an old man ( Abe Simpson ) " for kicks " . The Devil , revealed to be Ned Flanders , appears and offers Homer a contract to seal the deal . However , before Homer finishes the doughnut , he realizes that Ned will not be able to have his soul if he does not eat all of the doughnut and keeps the final piece in the refrigerator . Unfortunately , while half @-@ asleep and looking for a midnight snack , he eats the final piece of the " forbidden donut " , and Ned instantly reappears to take possession of Homer 's soul . Marge and Lisa plead with Ned , finally getting him to agree to hold a trial the next day . Until then , Homer is sent to spend the rest of the day being punished in Hell . At the stroke of twelve midnight , Ned brings Homer back to the Simpson household for his trial . Then , when the Simpsons ' lawyer , Lionel Hutz , flees after ruining his case , Marge makes a final effort to save Homer by displaying a photo from their wedding day . On the back of the photo , Homer has written that , in return for Marge giving him her hand in marriage , he pledges his soul to her forever ; therefore , it was not his property to sell at the time of his deal with Ned . The jury rules in favor of the Simpsons and the presiding judge dismisses the case . Enraged , the Devil leaves , but not before he turns Homer 's head into a doughnut .

## = = = Terror at 5 ½ Feet = = =

In a parody of the Twilight Zone episode , " Nightmare at 20 @,@ 000 Feet " , after having a nightmare in which he is killed in a bus crash , Bart rides the bus to school one rainy morning . He panics when he sees a gremlin on the side of the bus loosening the lug nuts on one of the wheels .

Bart unsuccessfully tries to convince the other passengers of the danger . In desperation , Bart climbs halfway out the window to scare off the gremlin with an emergency flare . The gremlin catches fire and falls from the bus , but is found by Ned Flanders , who decides to adopt the creature . When the bus finally stops , everyone sees the obvious damage , but Bart is still sent away to an insane asylum for the rest of his life for his disruptive behavior . Bart is relieved as he is finally able to rest , but the gremlin appears in the back window of the ambulance , holding Flanders ' decapitated ( yet still living ) head , which makes Bart scream in terror .

= = = Bart Simpson 's Dracula = = =

In a parody of Bram Stoker 's Dracula , after a news story about several vampire attacks , Lisa begins to suspect that Mr. Burns is a vampire , but the rest of the family dismisses her concerns . The family is invited to Burns ' castle in Pennsylvania , where Bart and Lisa discover a secret staircase descending to an eerie basement filled with coffins . As they investigate , vampires emerge from the coffins and encircle them . Lisa escapes , but Bart activates the " Super Fun Happy Slide " , causing him to be captured and get bitten by Burns . Bart returns to the table with Burns , who tells him to take a seat . Bart is very pale and is behaving oddly , but these factors get little attention by the family . Later that night , Lisa is awakened by a now undead Bart and his vampire friends . When Bart is about to bite Lisa , Homer and Marge interrupt and discover that Bart is a vampire . Lisa claims that the only way to restore him is to kill the head vampire , Mr. Burns . The family returns to the Burns ' mansion , where Homer drives a stake through Burns ' heart . Unfortunately , despite Burns ' death , Bart still remains a vampire . To make things worse , Lisa discovers that everyone in the Simpson family except for herself is a vampire , and that the true head vampire is inexplicably Marge , not Mr. Burns . With this revelation , the whole entire family swoops in on Lisa , only to stop and wish everyone a happy Halloween . Then , they all harmonize " Hark the Herald Angels Sing " , parodying A Charlie Brown Christmas .

= = Production = =

" Treehouse of Horror IV " was directed by David Silverman and co @-@ written by Conan O 'Brien , Bill Oakley , Josh Weinstein , Greg Daniels , Dan McGrath , and Bill Canterbury . It is the fourth episode of the annual Treehouse of Horror Halloween specials . As with the rest of the Halloween specials , the episode is considered non @-@ canon and falls outside of the show 's regular continuity . O 'Brien worked on the " wraparounds " of Bart introducing each segment to make sure that they " pulled " the episode together . The wraparounds are based on Rod Serling 's television series Night Gallery , in which Serling appears at an art gallery and introduces each episode by unveiling paintings depicting the stories . Executive producer James L. Brooks loved the show , so it was " great fun " for him to do the parody . Show runner David Mirkin thought the Treehouse of Horror episodes were the hardest episodes to do because the staff had to fit in all three stories in only 22 minutes . Mirkin said , " Things had to happen really fast . They 're really just crammed with jokes and story beats and everything . "

The first segment , " The Devil and Homer Simpson " , was written by Daniels and McGrath . The first time Devil Flanders appears , he looks the same as the devil Chernabog from the 1940 Walt Disney produced film Fantasia ; Silverman particularly admired the animation in that sequence . Oakley loved the idea of Flanders being the Devil because he is the one you would least expect . He also thought Harry Shearer did a good job of playing Flanders in a much darker way , while remaining very true to the character . Many scenes had to be cut to shorten the segment , including one that showed Homer 's severed head being used as a bowling ball by a demon in hell . This scene later appeared in the clip show episode " The Simpsons 138th Episode Spectacular " , which aired in the show 's seventh season .

The second segment , " Terror at 5 ½ Feet " , was written by Oakley and Weinstein . It was inspired by an episode of The Twilight Zone called " Nightmare at 20 @,@ 000 Feet " , in which William Shatner 's character is inside an airplane watching a gremlin tear apart the wing . Silverman

watched the episode to get inspiration for Bart 's facial expressions . Oakley said there was a lot of work put into the design of the gremlin in " Terror at 5 ½ Feet " to make him scary " within The Simpsons universe " . Mirkin said he felt the gremlin was well @-@ done because he looked scary and " yet it looks like a completely organic Simpsons character " . Üter , a character from Germany , makes his first appearance on the show in this segment ; he was conceived as a one @-@ time joke , but reappeared in later episodes because Mirkin felt he was " such a perfect stereotype " .

The third segment , " Bart Simpson 's Dracula " , was written by Canterbury . It is based on Francis Ford Coppola 's film Bram Stoker 's Dracula . Mirkin was a big fan of the film and pushed for a segment about vampires inspired by the movie . He liked the final result and felt Mr. Burns was perfect in the role as Dracula . Dracula and his castle was designed by Silverman . Mirkin , a " big " Peanuts fan , came up with the idea for the ending of " Bart Simpson 's Dracula " .

= = Cultural references = =

The wraparound segments are a reference to Rod Serling 's television series Night Gallery . " Terror at 5 ½ Feet " is a parody of The Twilight Zone episode " Nightmare at 20 @,@ 000 Feet " . The title and a majority of the plot of " Bart Simpson 's Dracula " is a parody of the Francis Ford Coppola film Bram Stoker 's Dracula . The ending of " Bart Simpson 's Dracula " is a reference to A Charlie Brown Christmas . The title " The Devil and Homer Simpson " is a reference to the short story " The Devil and Daniel Webster " in which a farmer sells his soul for prosperity but is then defended in court against the Devil with a jury of the Devil 's choosing . The demon who is feeding Homer donuts says : " I don 't understand it . James Coco went mad in fifteen minutes ! " James Coco was a character actor known in the 1970s ... He parodied the Belgian sleuth Hercule Poirot , penned by Agatha Christie . In the movie , James Coco ? s character throws a volley of subtle food jokes . In his last years , Coco received attention for his culinary talents and best @-@ selling cookbooks . The James Coco Diet , an educational book which included chapters on menu planning and behavior modification as well as choice recipes ) , was just one that he promoted on the talk show circuit . It is probably not a coincidence that he often played characters with extreme food issues . The jury at Homer 's trial consists of John Wilkes Booth , Lizzie Borden , John Dillinger , Blackbeard , Benedict Arnold , the starting lineup of the 1976 Philadelphia Flyers , and Richard Nixon . The first time the Devil appears , he resembles the demon Chernabog from the Walt Disney film Fantasia , especially after Homer discovers a technicality and starts taunting the Devil that he 's " smarter than the devil " , until the Devil turns into the Chernabog @-@ esque demon and glares at him before disappearing . The scene in Hell where Homer is fed all the doughnuts in the world , and asks for more , is a direct parody of the cartoon Pigs is Pigs , in which a generic pig character ( a Porky Pig @-@ esque character ) known for being a glutton is taken in by a scientist and forced to eat all the food in the world . At Mr. Burns ' castle , Lisa notices a tome resting on a stand in the basement . She runs over and reads the title : " Yes , I Am a Vampire , by Monty Burns . Foreword by Steve Allen , " a reference to American actor Steve Allen . Shortly after she finds the tome , she makes allusions to Shemp and Curly Howard of the Three Stooges , mistaken Bart 's fearful attempts at getting her attention as impressions of the two . In " Bart Simpson 's Dracula " , Bart is seen floating outside Lisa 's bedroom window . This is a parody of The Lost Boys as well as Stephen King 's novel Salem 's Lot . The family 's plan to kill the head vampire is also a reference to both the film and novel . In particular , the twist revelation that Burns is not the head vampire is also a reference to the twist ending of The Lost Boys . The closing credits of the episode features a version of the Simpsons theme that is a combination of the instruments used in The Munsters theme song and the harpsichord and clicking from the Addams Family theme song .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Treehouse of Horror IV " finished 17th in the ratings for the week of October 25 to October 31 , 1993 , with a Nielsen rating of 14 @.@ 5 , translating to 13 @.@ 6 million households . The episode was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week .

Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . The authors of the book *I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide* , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , said the episode included many notable sequences and was " probably the best " *Treehouses of Horror* episode . They particularly liked the scenes in Hell where Homer is punished by the Devil , and Chief Wiggum 's attempts to deal with Dracula ( whom he thinks is a mummy ) in the " *Bart Simpson 's Dracula* " segment by ordering the Egyptian wing of the Springfield museum to be destroyed . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson thought " *Terror at 5 ½ Feet* " was the best segment of the episode . Jacobson praised " *The Devil and Homer Simpson* " as clever funny , and described " *Bart Simpson 's Dracula* " as " easily the least effective " , claiming it , " presents some good moments but never quite takes flight " . Patrick Bromley of DVD Verdict gave the episode an A grade and called it " one of the very best " Halloween specials , although said " *Treehouse of Horror V* " was better . Central Michigan Life 's John Thorpe named it the tenth best episode of the series , and wrote : " The best part comes when Homer decides not to eat the last part of the doughnut , thus saving him from hell . Hilarious . " DVD Talk 's Bill Gibron gave the episode a 4 out of 5 score .

Kim Nowacki of Yakima Herald @-@ Republic named " *Treehouse of Horror IV* " her " all @-@ time favorite " episode . She praised the parodies of *The Twilight Zone* and *A Charlie Brown Christmas* . The episode 's reference to Bram Stoker 's *Dracula* was named the 32nd greatest film reference in the history of the show by Total Film 's Nathan Ditum .