

= Treehouse of Horror VIII =

" Treehouse of Horror VIII " is the fourth episode of The Simpsons ' ninth season . It first aired on the Fox network in the United States on October 26 , 1997 . In the eighth annual Treehouse of Horror episode , Homer Simpson is the last man left alive when a neutron bomb destroys Springfield until a gang of mutants come after him , Homer buys a transporter that Bart uses to switch bodies with a housefly , and Marge is accused of witchcraft in a Puritan rendition of Springfield in 1649 . It was written by Mike Scully , David X. Cohen and Ned Goldreyer , and was directed by Mark Kirkland .

= = Plot = =

= = = The H?mega Man = = =

Mayor Quimby generates controversy after making an offensive joke about France . After refusing to apologize , the French president launches a neutron bomb directly into Springfield . Homer had been inspecting a bomb shelter he was considering buying from Herman 's military surplus store . After the blast , Homer emerges from the shelter and seems to be the only person in town to have survived . Homer is soon confronted by a band of hostile Springfield citizens who have become mutants . Homer flees back home where he finds that his family survived the blast because their house was protected by its layers of lead paint . Marge and the children kill the mutants with shotguns that they were hiding behind their backs and the family head off to steal some Ferraris .

= = = Fly vs. Fly = = =

Homer buys a matter transporter from Professor Frink . That night , Bart , after experimentations involving the family pets , steps into the teleporter with a fly on his arm , thinking that he will become a mutant superhero . He comes out with his normal head , but with the fly 's body whilst the fly has his body . Bart enlists the help of Lisa . However , she is chased by the fly and cornered in the kitchen . Bart tries to stop the fighting , but is quickly eaten by the fly . Lisa then sees this as an opportunity to undo the process and pushes the fly into the teleporter . Bart comes out the other end , now with his head back on his real body . Homer then pulls out an axe and angrily chases Bart for using the device .

= = = Easy @-@ Bake Coven = = =

In 1649 , the town is witness to many witch burnings . In the church , the townspeople try to figure out whom to condemn next . People begin accusing others and soon they erupt into chaos , until Marge intervenes . She tries to talk sense into the townspeople , but Moe accuses her of being a witch . Quimby assures her that she is entitled to due process which means she will be thrown off a cliff with a broomstick ; if she is a witch she will be able to fly to safety , in which case the authorities expect her to report back for punishment . If she is not a witch , then she will fall to an honorable Christian death . After being shoved off the cliff , Marge flies up on the broomstick revealing that she really is a witch and vows to conquer the whole entire town . She returns to her sisters Patty and Selma . The sisters watch Ned and Maude Flanders talking about how the witches eat children , which gives them the notion to do just that . They knock on the Flanders ' door and demand their sons , but before they leave , Maude offers the witches gingerbread men instead . The witches like these better than the children so they go to each house , getting goodies in exchange for not eating the children . As they fly off , the Sea Captain says that is how the tradition of Halloween and trick @-@ or @-@ treating started .

= = Production = =

" The H?mega Man " was written by Mike Scully , " Fly Vs . Fly " was written by David X. Cohen , and " Easy @-@ Bake Coven " was written by Ned Goldreyer . Large portions of the " Fly vs. Fly " segment were cut , including the original ending where the fly also emerges from the teleporter , but is considerably larger and the Simpson family ride it to the mall .

The producers had trouble with the censors over several segments in this episode . The opening segment of the episode , which features a Fox censor being stabbed to death , was pitched by David Mirkin and had a difficult time getting through the real @-@ life censors . They had issues with the size of the knife and the sound effects used . Originally , the TV @-@ rating was supposed to stab the censor with a dagger , but Fox objected because it was too gruesome and was changed to a cutlass . The censors also objected to an unaired scene where Homer does his naked church dance on an altar . The scene was reanimated so that Homer was dancing naked in the front row .

This episode was the only Treehouse of Horror episode that was directed by Mark Kirkland . It was also the last episode Brad Bird worked on ; he left the show to direct The Iron Giant . " Easy @-@ Bake Coven " was storyboarded by Kirkland and the backgrounds were designed by Lance Wilder . Although Kang and Kodos make brief appearances in every Treehouse of Horror episode , their brief appearance in this one was nearly cut . David X. Cohen managed to persuade the producers to leave the scene in .

= = Cultural references = =

As with the majority of the Treehouse of Horror episodes , numerous cultural references are made throughout the episode . " The H?mega Man " is an extended homage to film The Omega Man , which was one of Mike Scully 's favorite movies as a child . In the same segment , Homer runs over Johnny and Edgar Winter while fleeing the mutants pursuing him , mistaking them as mutants as the Winter brothers are both albino .

The title " Fly vs. Fly " is a reference to the Mad magazine comic strip " Spy vs. Spy " , while the segment itself is based on the film The Fly . In " Easy @-@ Bake Coven " , the animators referenced the film The Crucible for many of their designs , and Edna Krabappel is wearing a Scarlet A , which is a reference to the novel The Scarlet Letter .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Treehouse of Horror VIII " finished 18th in ratings for the week of October 20 ? 26 , 1997 , with a Nielsen rating of 11 @.@ 2 , equivalent to approximately 10 @.@ 9 million viewing households . It was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , beating King of the Hill .

" Treehouse of Horror VIII " won a Golden Reel Award in 1998 for " Best Sound Editing - Television Animated Specials " for Robert Mackston , Travis Powers , Norm MacLeod and Terry Greene . Alf Clausen received an Emmy Award nomination for " Outstanding Music Composition for a Series (Dramatic Underscore) " for this episode , which he ultimately lost . The A.V. Club named Comic Book Guy 's line " Oh , I 've wasted my life " as one of the quotes from The Simpsons that can be used in everyday situations .