

= Treehouse of Horror II =

" Treehouse of Horror II " (originally known as " The Simpsons Halloween Special II ") is the seventh episode of The Simpsons ' third season . It first aired on the Fox network in the United States on October 31 , 1991 (Halloween 1991) . It is the second annual Treehouse of Horror episode , consisting of three self @-@ contained segments , told as dreams of Lisa , Bart and Homer . In the first segment , which was inspired by W. W. Jacobs 's short story The Monkey 's Paw and The New Twilight Zone episode " A Small Talent for War " , Homer buys a Monkey 's Paw that has the power to grant wishes , although all of the wishes backfire . In the second part , which parodies the Twilight Zone episode " It 's a Good Life " , Bart is omnipotent , and turns Homer into a jack @-@ in @-@ the @-@ box , resulting in the two spending more time together . In the final segment , Mr. Burns attempts to use Homer 's brain to power a giant robotic laborer .

The episode was written by Al Jean , Mike Reiss , Jeff Martin , George Meyer , Sam Simon and John Swartzwelder while Jim Reardon was the director . The episode is presented in a similar format to the previous season 's " Treehouse of Horror " and contains several similarities to the previous episode , such as Marge 's opening warning , the tombstones in the opening credits and the appearance of the alien characters Kang and Kodos . " Treehouse of Horror II " was the first episode that employed the " scary names " idea , in which many of the credits have unusual names . The episode contains numerous parodies and references to horror and science fiction works , including The Twilight Zone , Frankenstein , Bride of Frankenstein , The Thing with Two Heads and Invasion of the Body Snatchers .

In its original airing on the Fox Network , the episode had a 12 @.@ 1 Nielsen rating and finished the week ranked 39th . The episode received positive reviews , and in 2006 , IGN listed the third story as the eighth best Treehouse of Horror segment . The episode was nominated for two Primetime Emmy Awards : Outstanding Individual Achievement in Sound Mixing for a Comedy Series or a Special and Alf Clausen for Outstanding Music Composition for a Series .

= = Plot = =

At the beginning of the episode , Homer is watching the news on Halloween night while eating candy , which ends up being taken by Jimbo and Kearney after they threaten to egg his house . Marge and the kids return home after trick @-@ or @-@ treating with a big haul of candy . Despite warnings from Marge that eating the candy will cause nightmares , Homer , Lisa , and Bart eat from the large candy pile . That night , all three try to sleep , and Lisa is the first to have a nightmare .

= = = Lisa 's Nightmare = = =

In the first of three segments , the Simpsons visit Morocco (which Homer mistakes for Monaco) . Homer purchases a severed monkey 's hand that will grant four wishes , despite the vendor 's warning that the wisher will meet with grave misfortune . Back in Springfield , the family argues in how to use the wishes . Despite Marge 's warning to heed the advice of the vendor in not using any of them , Maggie is granted that first wish : a new pacifier . Next , Bart wishes for the Simpsons to be rich and famous . His wish is granted , but the people quickly tire of the family 's annoying antics , cheesy merchandise and celebrity treatment . Horrified by these wasteful wishes , Lisa wishes for world peace and Homer is furious . While all countries declare peace and destroy their weapons , the aliens Kang and Kodos realize the human race is " ripe for the plucking " and , armed only with a slingshot and a club , enslave the Earth . At the house , Homer blames Lisa and deems her own wishes to be selfish . She defends herself , claiming that Bart and Maggie 's own wishes were also selfish as well and felt that hers was the only selfless one . Soon , Marge catches the people who are angry with the Simpsons and calls for a temporary truce in the family . Determined to make a wish that cannot be twisted , she begs Homer to do the right thing and use the last wish to get rid of the aliens . Much to her dismay , Homer refuses and demands a turkey sandwich , but the turkey turns out to be a little too dry . With all of the wishes used , he goes to throw out the paw , but his

neighbor Ned Flanders asks about it . Hoping to see Flanders suffer , Homer gladly hands the paw over . Ned 's first wish is to " Get rid of those awful aliens , " which is accomplished when Moe chases after Kodos with a board with a nail sticking out of it , then brings the aliens back to the flying saucer . Kodos laments their failed invasion , but Kang assures him that humanity is doomed : they will end up in an arms race creating increasingly bigger boards and bigger nails , which will ultimately " cause the human race to create a board with a nail in it so big to doom mankind . " Everyone celebrates and after Flanders wishes to " spruce up the ol ' homestead , " his house is converted into an opulent castle , making Homer jealous . Lisa wakes up from her nightmare and begs Bart to keep her company . Bart sleepily complies after Lisa gives him a candy necklace . Bart then has a nightmare .

= = = Bart 's Nightmare = = =

In the second segment , Springfield is held in a grip of terror by Bart , who has omnipotent powers . Bart turns whoever is not happy with his rule into another being , and even history is changed to suit Bart 's pleasure . When Homer refuses to turn off a football game so that Bart can watch " The Krusty the Clown Show " (which has been running for 346 consecutive hours) , Bart transports him into the football stadium in place of the ball for a field goal kick . As Homer creeps back into the house , trying to surprise Bart with a blow to the back of the head , Bart transforms him into a jack @-@ in @-@ the @-@ box . Marge suggests that the two see Dr. Marvin Monroe . The doctor says that Bart is desperate for paternal attention from Homer and suggests that the two spend more time together . Despite being a jack @-@ in @-@ the @-@ box , Homer spends quality time with Bart , and they soon become a normal , loving family . Bart turns Homer back into a human and the two share a warm family moment , causing Bart to wake up screaming . Bart and Lisa wake Homer and Marge and beg them to let them sleep in their bed . As the two crawl into bed , Homer laments that he has to go to work in a few hours and dozes off , becoming the last one in the episode to have a nightmare .

= = = Homer 's Nightmare = = =

In the third segment , Mr. Burns fires Homer for his laziness and incompetence . Looking for work , Homer answers a classified ad to become a grave digger . Meanwhile , Burns is nearing the completion of his giant robotic laborer , which he hopes will eventually replace weak @-@ bodied human workers . The only remaining step is to implant a human brain into the machine 's body . Searching a graveyard the following night , Burns mistakes Homer , snoring in an open grave , for a newly buried corpse and , despite signs that Homer may still be alive , removes Homer 's brain with an ice cream scoop and places it in the robot . However , Robo @-@ Homer is just as lazy and incompetent as he was as a human , using his x @-@ ray vision to locate donuts . Burns declares the experiment a failure and , after restoring the brain to Homer 's still @-@ living body , kicks the robot , which topples over and crushes Burns . Afterward , he tells Smithers to get some surgical tools and ether .

Homer wakes up screaming after Bart bites him . While going to the bathroom , Homer finds Mr. Burns 's head grafted on his shoulder , Burns revealing that due to the fact his own body was crushed , Burns 's head was instead surgically placed onto Homer 's neck . Homer , in a stage of denial repeatedly mumbles that it is all a dream , and Mr. Burns sarcastically reassures him , " Oh that 's right , it 's all a dream ... or is it ? " and laughs maniacally .

In a faux sneak preview for the next episode , Lisa reminds Homer that her class is hosting an " all you can eat " spaghetti dinner while Burns reminds him that they have a reception for Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands that same night . This causes Homer to remark how he hates having two heads .

= = Production = =

" Treehouse of Horror II " , the second edition of the Treehouse of Horror series of episodes , was

written by Al Jean , Mike Reiss , Jeff Martin , George Meyer , Sam Simon , and John Swartzwelder . Jim Reardon was the director . The episode is presented in a similar format to the previous season 's " Treehouse of Horror " , and contains several similarities to the previous episode , such as Marge 's opening warning , the tombstones in the opening credits and the appearance of the alien characters Kang and Kodos . " Treehouse of Horror II " was the first episode that employed the " scary names " idea , in which many of the names in the opening and closing credits have unusual nicknames . The idea came from Al Jean , who was inspired by old issues of EC Comics . Although the names quickly became more silly than scary , there has been a wide variety of special credits . For example , the director 's name is given as Jim " Rondo " Reardon , a reference to his idol , Rondo Hatton . The " scary names " became such a burden to write that they were cut for " Treehouse of Horror XII " and " Treehouse of Horror XIII " , but after hearing complaints from the fans , Jean decided to bring them back . The alien characters Kang and Kodos had been introduced in the previous year . There was a debate about whether to include them in all Halloween specials after the episode ; eventually , the writers agreed to make it a tradition .

During the beginning of the segment " The Monkey 's Paw " , Hank Azaria faked some Arabic . Usually , the writers get inspiration for the Halloween specials from old horror stories , but recently , the writers tried to conceive of their own stories instead of creating more parodies . Also , when the Moroccan salesman tries to warn Homer Simpson , saying " You 'll be sorry " , the animators forgot to move his lips . They only realized their error after the broadcast , so they decided not to change it . While writing the segment , Sam Simon , one of the writers , wanted the fingers to go down in such an order so they would eventually have the middle finger sticking up . Once the animation would have been complete , however , they could not have gone through ; Fox would have refused to air the episode . They had considered the alternative of deliberately blurring the middle finger themselves , but decided that Fox would have also refused . For this episode , there were a lot of loop lines ; for instance , the ending to " The Monkey 's Paw " was added to the last second . As a result of the loop , they still retained Flanders 's old house next to his newly created castle . In order to make the episode fill the time needed , the animators often extended the laughing time for Kang and Kodos .

The second segment is based on The Twilight Zone television series episode " It 's a Good Life " . That episode had also inspired the third segment of Twilight Zone : The Movie , which starred Nancy Cartwright in her debut feature film role . The segment parodies the narration of The Twilight Zone , and the producers were pleased with Harry Shearer 's portrayal of Rod Serling . In addition , though it took a long time , the design of the monster version of Snowball II by Rich was greatly enjoyed by the producers , who thought it looked " just hideous , just right " . Bart 's prank call to Moe was thought of by John Swartzwelder , one of the writers ; however , Hank Azaria detested the line . According to George Meyer , the animation for when Bart sits up , screaming , was extremely tough , especially to make the mouthlines natural .

In the third segment , Burns and Smithers go down to the lab during Homer 's nightmare . The animators decided to make the animation a bit more impressive , and decided to do the concave and convex images of Burns and Smithers . Even though it was tough and took up more time , the producers felt that it was a necessary tour @-@ de @-@ force . Originally , Homer 's robotic voice was done post @-@ animation in order to avoid stress on the voice actor . One of the writers who created the Davy Crockett joke thought it was so funny that he actually mimicked the actions of Mr. Burns putting on Homer 's brain in the writing room ; the producers thought that it was hilarious , so they decided to add it into the episode .

= = Cultural references = =

In the opening sequence of the episode , the Peanuts gang scurry by as trick @-@ or @-@ treaters , à la It 's the Great Pumpkin , Charlie Brown . Marge 's hair in the opening segment recalls Elsa Lanchester 's character in Bride of Frankenstein . The plot of Lisa 's nightmare is a reference to W. W. Jacobs 's short story The Monkey 's Paw , and The New Twilight Zone episode " A Small Talent for War " . Near the beginning of the segment , Moroccan soldiers stop and search the Simpsons ,

finding souvenirs taped to Homer 's body which he was attempting to smuggle out of the country . This is a reference to the opening drug @-@ smuggling scene of the film Midnight Express . A billboard advertisement with Bart saying " Get a Mammogram , Man ! " can be seen . This was a reference to Bart 's popular slogan " Don 't have a cow , man ! "

The plot of Bart 's nightmare is a parody of The Twilight Zone episode " It 's a Good Life " , which was remade as part of Twilight Zone : The Movie . Jasper 's transformation into a dog is a reference to the 1978 remake of Invasion of the Body Snatchers . The scene in which Homer goes out with Bart during Bart 's nightmare to spend time with the boy , as well as the music accompanying the scene , parody an old anti @-@ smoking public service announcement , while the church layout was taken from a Norman Rockwell painting .

Homer 's nightmare is based on much of the film Frankenstein , and the end references The Thing with Two Heads . While Mr. Burns scoops out Homer 's brain , he hums the tune of " If I Only Had a Brain " which is sung by the Scarecrow in The Wizard of Oz . Burns also calls the robot that had Homer 's brain a " clinking , clattering cacophony of calligenous cogs and camshafts " , similar to the Wizard 's line to the Tin Man : " You clinking , clanking , clattering collection of calligenous junk ! " In Homer 's nightmare , The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson is broadcast on a TV . When Mr. Burns puts on Homer 's brain , he says " Look at me ! I 'm Davy Crockett " , a reference to Crockett 's popular image as a frontiersman who wore a hat of raccoon fur .

= = Reception = =

In its original airing on the Fox Network , the episode had a 12 @.@ 1 Nielsen rating and was viewed in approximately 11 @.@ 14 million homes . It finished the week ranked 39th . It was the highest rated show on Fox the week it aired , tied with In Living Color .

The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood praised the episode as " A marked improvement on the first , uneven Hallowe 'en special . All three tales succeed , with Bart 's nightmare of gaining awesome powers being perhaps the most successful " . Bill Gibron of DVD Verdict lauded the episode for having " wonderfully wild moments " , especially " the parody of The Twilight Zone 's ' It 's a Good Life , ' with Bart in the place of Billy Mumy 's omnipresent monster " . He gave the episode a score of 90 out of 100 a possible score . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson critiqued the episode as " not so hot their first couple of years " , though he admitted that " the 1991 incarnation does top the original from 1990 " . However , he thought that " None of the three stories stands out as particularly excellent , though the monkey ? s paw one probably works the best . Chalk up this episode as a decent Halloween set " . He thought the best quote was ? Damn it Smithers , this isn 't rocket science . It ? s brain surgery ! "

In 2006 , IGN published a list of the top ten Treehouse of Horror segments , and they placed the third segment at number eight . They wrote , " ' Treehouse of Horror II ' contained three quality segments , but [the third] was easily the best . Featuring a story reminiscent to Frankenstein , this episode made us laugh from beginning to end with Homer 's crazy antics . [...] The humor that is derived from the multiple movie and literary parodies was enough to leave a last impression on us as an audience ? and who doesn 't like a robot whose primary function is to find donuts ? " Writing for the Star Tribune , Neal Justin rated the episode as the one of his ten favorite episodes , writing , " The annual Halloween specials glow because all the rules are thrown out , never with more ingenuity than in this second installment . " The episode 's reference to Midnight Express was named the 18th greatest film reference in the history of the show by Total Film 's Nathan Ditum .

The episode was nominated for two Primetime Emmy Awards : Outstanding Individual Achievement in Sound Mixing for a Comedy Series or a Special and Alf Clausen for Outstanding Music Composition for a Series .