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**SNEAK
PEAK**



ZINE // OCTOBER 2020

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Back Cover Art by Brooke Rees

GO VOTE!

WHO'S HAUNTING WHO?

By Marriya Schwarz

Hey, Craig! Quick question: Do you remember the office? You know, that place you used to go for 8 hours a day while I would soak in our bathtub and let the stress and the unfinished business of my immortal existence drift away?

Honestly, this whole 'social distancing' at home thing has gone on a little longer than I can take. And I know, I know: it's COVID-19, and you're staying home to protect others, but Craig, you're not even following precautions. If you're going to pretend to social distance, don't throw a breadmaking party with 20 of your closest friends, take pictures of your brioche, and post them on Instagram with #SunsOutBunsOut. That's right: I'm the one who knocked Kimberly's freshly baked banana bread right out of her hands and *I will not apologize for it*. When I tried to bring out the tape measure to demonstrate that you weren't staying 6 feet away from each other, you shut the kitchen doors and lined all the windows with salt. I had to stay outside, humming a lively dirge to myself for 2 full hours.

I understand pandemics – I truly do. I mean, how do you think

I died? It was a cloudy Thursday in 1918 and I slipped on a banana peel

"If you're going to pretend to social distance, don't throw a breadmaking party with 20 of your closest friends, take pictures of your brioche, and post them on Instagram with #SunsOutBunsOut."

while reading the news coverage of the influenza crisis.

But you have to understand: I need some me-time. I'm suddenly not allowed to do my 4 PM re-enactment of the fall that led to my demise because you're on a 'Zoom conference call.' What? Would I get in the way of that dumb beach virtual background you use to demonstrate you have 'fun quarantine vibes'? No one's falling for it, Craig. We all know Wine Wednesday is a cry for help. When I wanted to moan about the pain of my ongoing existence, you shushed me because you were watching *The Daily Social Distancing Show with Trevor Noah*. When my supernatural energy lowered the temperature of the room, you asked me to leave, since I was making your freshly brewed Keurig coffee cold. And when I flickered the lights on and off, you yelled at me because you were 'power napping'... for 6 whole hours. I can't do anything anymore.

Do you see the problem here, Craig? Do you get it? I get no space; I get no privacy. We're together 24/7. I used to be able to subtly move one of your decorative pillows to the other side of the couch, and you would come home all confused, wondering if you

had left it there or if there was something weird going on in the house. Our relationship was mysterious and magical. It was this fun little song and dance we used to do every day, but now you know: I'm the one moving the pillows and the mail and your stupid Nintendo Switch. Well, you know what? If I made an Animal Crossing island, it wouldn't have you, Craig.

All I'm asking is for you to follow social distancing guidelines, so that we can end this pandemic and you can leave me alone. Or burn the possessed doll in the attic that my soul is attached to and let's be

"[Let's] end this pandemic [so] you can leave me alone. Or burn the possessed doll in the attic that my soul is attached to and let's be done with it."

done with it. Just take me out; no one asked you to start a quarantine podcasting series or YouTube vlogs of you cooking pasta for one, Craig.

Look, we can figure this out, but you have to respect me here, man. After all, I was here first.

Anyway, sorry about writing all of this in blood on your bathroom mirror; I just needed you to know how I felt.

P.S. Don't worry about where I got the blood.

P.P.S. Sorry about your cat. ■

A Note from the Ghost in Your House During COVID-19



A Tornado Tore Up My Dreams



By Marriya Schwarz

For as long as I can remember, I have had three main goals in life: 1) to have my picture hanging up on the wall of some random family-owned restaurant because I've single handedly eaten their 28-inch pizza, a 7-pound burrito, or a burning hot curry, 2) come to a place in my life where I can feel at peace with myself and feel accepted by those around me while working at a career that brings me both wealth and happiness and feel financially stable enough that I'm not worried about the \$10 I spent on the magnetic letters I used on the cover of this zine when I could have easily just made it all digitally and maybe it was a stupid freaking purchase and I want a government that actually puts the country first and not some guy who tweets out that everyone should lock up people or liberate states and PEOPLE ACTUALLY LISTEN TO HIM WHEN HE'S JUST SHITPOSTING IN ALL CAPS WHILE ON THE TOILET... and 3) to win a Halloween costume contest.

The first goal comes from TV, the second from the news, and the third from my past. From beginners (a pretentious version of daycare where everyone was 3 and screaming, but they insisted on trying to teach us French and that kiwis are actually good fruits, even though I remember them sucking and I refuse to try them ever again) to fifth grade, I went to a local private school. Like most private schools I've seen on TV, this school had a fairly strict dress code. We all had to wear collared shirts and blouses in any solid color, as long as they did not match our bottoms, which were

Khakis, corduroy pants, etc. It was a strictly no jeans, no hair dye, no nose piercings kind of place. The few times that we were allowed to break dress code were Denim Days, Field Day, and Halloween. So naturally, Halloween became kind of a huge deal. Everyone would dress up, attend the class party, go on a costume parade around the outside of the school, and listen as they announced who won the costume contest for each grade.

As soon as I was able to dress myself, I started coming up with my own Halloween costumes and used them for both school and trick-or-treating later on. There was no store-bought bullshit. And they were always very strange picks: one year, I went as an Elf on Vacation and wore a bathing suit, a beach towel, and an elf hat. Another year, I went as Flo the Progressive Girl and had multiple concerned neighbors ask if my parents worked at Progressive and if this was all a marketing ploy. Sometimes I was even topical: When the NHL had a lockout, I went as the Ghost of Hockey. And for one of my favorite years, I dressed up in a Christmas sweater and Santa hat and went as "Confused," greeting confused trick-or-treaters with shouts of "Happy St. Patrick's Day!" and "Happy Arbor Day!"

But literally none of this mattered because one of my friends, Hannah, had this incredible mom who would help her hand make the most intricate of costumes. Don't get me wrong: I love my parents, but one time, my sister's Belle costume got torn and my father stapled it back together. Meanwhile, Hannah would come into school as a full paper mache Humpty Dumpty

or a puppet with floating strings. She won the costume contest every single year, and being a little asshole at the time, I was absolutely envious.

Then, in 4th grade, Hannah mentioned to me that she and her mom had run out of time to put together a super cool costume for the Halloween costume parade. I thought that she was just downplaying the situation, and she was going to pull out a wild Cinderella costume replica with glass slippers that she would explain to the judges were made of real glass after she smashed them into the tan pavement. But when I looked across the room at that year's Halloween party, I noticed it: Hannah was going with store-bought this year, and Reader, *this was* my year.

It was a perfect coincidence because everyone else had gone store-bought this year with a bunch of superheroes, princesses, and one girl dressed up as a tornado. Plus, I just so happened to be wearing my strongest costume yet. My sister and I had come up with the perfect idea: I wore high heels, jeans, a tank with spaghetti straps, makeup, a colorful wig, and a sign reading "Dress Code Violation."

It was a *hit*. All of the judges loved it, including the 8th grade president weirdly patriotically dressed up as Uncle Sam, who called it "genius" and that everyone was talking about it. During the costume parade, I walked with confidence and made sure to prominently show my sign and declare "I'm a dress code violation. Get it?" so many times that I'm sure someone wished their toy machete was real.

Finally, it came time to announce the costume contest

winners for each grade. With bated breath, I waited for the fourth grade announcement on the blue floor of our half gymnasium / half performing arts auditorium. And then it happened: Our school principal, who was dressed as some kind of off-brand Cat in the Hat while his poor son was dressed as mini Cat in the Hat, announced the fourth grade winner:

"Anna Polk as a tornado," he said.

I was shocked.

I hadn't even thought of Anna as being part of the competition. Anna's 'tornado' costume was just her dressed in black and she waved around a black scarf while spinning. Sure, it took endurance and balance, but I really thought my costume was a high heel shoe-in in this competition. I congratulated Anna, but I was absolutely heartbroken.

It turns out that they thought my costume was 'inappropriate' and 'went against the dress code,' which WAS THE POINT. This was THE MAN keeping me down - er-Cat in the Hat?

Obviously, there are more important things in life than costume contests and Halloween shenanigans, and I have taken a third and second place win in a college competition, but it just goes to show that you can't beat the system. I've tried, and I was beaten by a tornado. Maybe *I* was the natural disaster all along. Now excuse me while I try to eat a 12-patty hamburger and beat a world record somewhere where they appreciate me. ■

BLOODY NOSES

And BAD ASS BITCHES

(A closer look into the presence of bloody noses in storytelling media)

By Silvana Smith

If you're anything like me, you have a penchant for female characters who aren't just the one dimensional Strong Female Character™, but who are just as complex, emotional, and messy as the real women in my life (lol, sorry for the call out guys). Thankfully, due to the current Golden Age of Television, as well as the rise of numerous brilliant female writers over the years, there has been no shortage of these characters. But as I've looked back on my favorite movies and shows featuring these characters, I've noticed a bit of a trend. Not only are these character #messy with

their life choices, they are also covered in blood. No, these aren't slasher films or some gory sci-fi saga. These women are having a surprising amount of bloody noses. In fact, bloody noses have appeared in more than just a few of my favorite movies and television shows. Now I'm not talking about the overused trope of characters having blood drip down their nose as a sign of psychic powers. Often being a physical marker of the height of emotions hitting a boiling point, these instances I'm referring to act as plot points, comedic relief, and even cosmic metaphors. But even despite their sometimes absurd presence, they always add a little something extra to some of my favorite stories.

In no particular order, here are my Top 5 Bloody Noses in Fictional Media:

1. Emma - {Emma}

One of the few narrative liberties taken in this particular film adaptation of Jane Austen's Emma was the insertion of a nosebleed where it didn't exist in the novel, which might seem controversial but is actually one of my favorite parts of the whole film. Whilst in the middle of an emotionally charged, surprise proposal, Emma's nose begins to bleed just as Mr. Knightly asks for her hand in marriage. Talk about comedic timing. Breaking through the beautifully pastel world of Regency England, the bright red blood cuts through any facade of composure during an emotional upheaval. Breaking their gaze, Emma is able to come to her senses and list the reasons why his proposal poses such a

problem. It also speaks to the reason why I love bloody noses in the first place. It illustrates one of the most female struggles in life of having your body betray you, your body's way of letting your emotions show when you're trying your hardest to keep them inside; a theme present in all the nosebleeds included in this list.

2. Ruth Elms - {The Hour; Season 1 Episode 1}

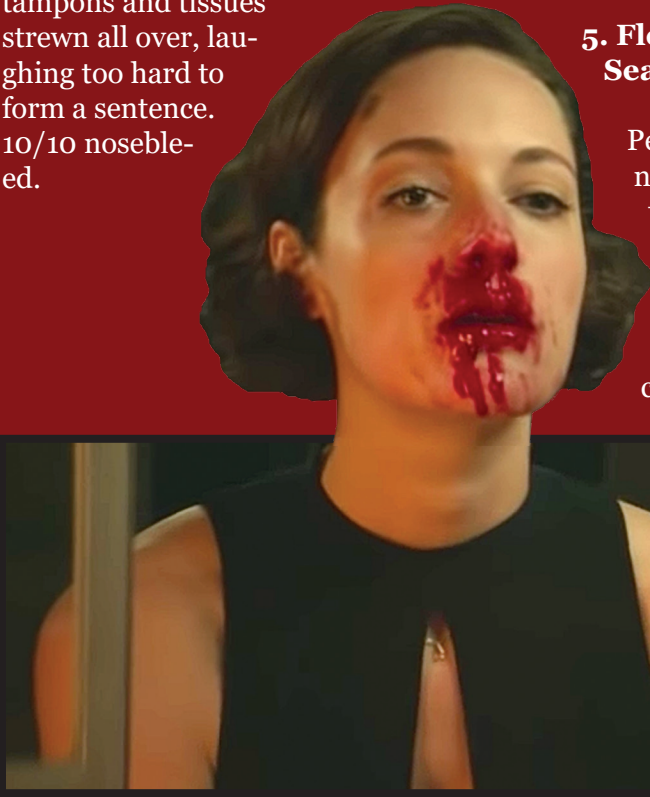
Ruth Elms is a tragically unhappy society girl that suffers from chronic stress-induced nosebleeds. Although it doesn't take long for Ruth to fall victim to a complex government conspiracy and die in the first episode, her nosebleeds coincide with major events where malicious characters are trying to manipulate her. Although some might stereotype this particular incarnation of a female nosebleed as weak, or waif-like, I think having a nosebleed whenever evil men try to manipulate you is a pretty bad ass trait to have. Intuition is not something to be ignored, and sometimes your body has ways of making sure certain emotions do not go unnoticed.

3. Selina Meyer - {Veep; Season 3 Episode 9}

Hands down the most chaotic nosebleed on the list and one of my favorite moments of the whole series, nosebleed #3 takes place as Selina Meyers shares news that through an unexpected resignation, she has now become the President of the United States. Although the actual nosebleed is had by Gary, her trusted bag man (not a female character), he

has the nosebleed in the name of his love for her, so I think it still counts.

As he starts crying after learning the news, blood begins to drip down his nose and thus begins the scene's descent into gleeful chaos as they relish in their triumph that has happened through no real effort of their own, only a side effect of the tragedy of others. Probably some of the best comedic writing and acting I've seen, Selina scrambles to calm Gary down and find something to stop the blood. As the nosebleed acts as a catalyst for this snowball of emotion, they then break down into laughter, unable to contain their excitement. Falling apart at the bits, they end the scene lying on the floor of a bathroom with tampons and tissues strewn all over, laughing too hard to form a sentence. 10/10 nosebleed.



5. Fleabag - {Fleabag; Season 2 Episode 1}

Perhaps my favorite nosebleed scene on this list, Fleabag takes not one, not two but three characters down with a bloody nose caused by a chain reaction of

4. Lady Bird - {Lady Bird}

In Lady Bird, the nosebleed comes right after her first time having sex. Adding to a moment that already didn't go as she planned, the nosebleed brings to the surface the awkwardness of the situation. As she swats away his hands as he tries to help her, Lady Bird concedes her cool-girl, im-the-main-character exterior she puts on, and pulls away from him to stop the bleeding, stating "I get nosebleeds sometimes." Definitely a mood killer. Emotions can be messy, disgusting, and hilarious; not always conducive to the perfectly romantic moments we create in our heads. Nosebleeds keep us tethered to the almost unbearable awkwardness of real life.

blows to the face. The nosebleed bookends both the beginning and end of what might be one of the best written episodes of television ever. The carnage is actually the first shot of the season, as Fleabag looks up at a mirror to reveal blood dripping down her face. It's when Fleabag wipes the final bit of blood from her face that she turns to the camera and says her iconic line: "This is a love story." There truly isn't anything gorier than a love story.

Acting as the climax of things not going as planned, Fleabag lets go of any sense of civility and gives into her female rage, punching her sister's douche husband in the nose. In retaliation, he punches her back causing her to ram into the priest behind her. Alarmed by the scene, the waitress then comes to their aid only to be struck by the husband by accident, until most of the diner guests are rifled over in pain. Finally, all the messed up shit bubbling underneath the surface of this seemingly normal family is revealed in the most theatrical and visceral way.

Nosebleeds remain, without a doubt, one of my favorite storytelling devices. I'm tired of seeing films and TV shows about women who constantly put on a brave face, and shove down emotions like a man in order to be seen as strong. Being a woman is, more often than not, messy, emotional, and bloody. Why shouldn't our stories reflect that? ■

stop rewatching the same five shows because it soothes your anxiety to know what happens next

A list of (quality) short, commitment-free, stress-free shows to watch

By Setareh Sanaei

I spent the first three years of college rewatching shows I’d already seen multiple times. I think I watched *Friends*, *New Girl*, *Arrested Development*, and *Gilmore Girls* twice each, just in those three years — plus some others that I had watched before. Was this because of my slowly (or quickly) developing anxiety disorder and knowing what would happen next helped me cope? Probably. I’ve heard the same sentiment from several of my friends and random people on Twitter.

So, we’ve established this is a very serious issue. How to solve it? Well,

this year I finally started watching new shows again, and let me tell you: TV is so good! There is a lot of quality entertainment that I was missing out on, and I thought I’d share some so that you don’t miss out too. Here, I’m listing short (1-3 seasons), light-hearted, and generally slow-paced shows. They’re not a big commitment and not super suspenseful or intense, but they’ll remind you that there is good TV beyond the five shows you keep rewatching. Think of them as gateway shows leading you to get back into the wonderful world of television.

Note: I’ve categorized these shows as cancelled, finished, or still airing. A cancelled show might leave you with the sadness of wanting more, and a still airing show might be a longer commitment than you want to sign up for.

FINISHED

***Fleabag* // Amazon Prime (2 seasons)**

My friend, Silvana, recommended this show to me and said it was some of the “best TV ever made.” Of course, I was skeptical, but boy was she right. I have watched a lot of TV, and this show is something else. The series is a dark-humored British dramedy about a woman in her mid-thirties who owns a cafe and is dealing with the loss of her best friend, Boo. Side note: the character is never named in the show but called *Fleabag* in interviews and such. We watch as *Fleabag* works through grief, financial troubles, a minor sex addiction, and strained relationships with her sister, father, and God-turned-



step-mother. And all the while, she is constantly communicating with the audience by breaking the fourth wall to give us her snarky comments and inner thoughts.

Fleabag finished after just two seasons, so you will be getting a short but complete viewing experience with this. As sad as it makes me, creator and lead actor, Phoebe Waller-Bridge, feels strongly that the show is over and she won’t make more. Admittedly, though I definitely wish we had more, the ending felt natural, and I was not at all upset at the conclusion. If there is any show you take away from this list, let it be *Fleabag*, and please, watch past the pilot. I know it’s a lot of sex. Just keep watching.

***Easy* // Netflix (3 seasons)**

Ever heard of [mumblecore](#)? Well neither had I until I looked up *Easy* on Wikipedia and saw “mumblecore” listed as a genre, but it honestly seems like it was a term coined exclusively for this show. *Easy* is an anthology series that follows the lives of a large group of people in their 20s and 30s in a very naturalistic way as they deal with the difficulties of relationships and all the little life things that put stress on fragile relationships. Each episode is about a different group of people and their problems, but some characters appear twice in a season, and some appear as background characters in other characters’ episodes.



Every episode was written and directed by Joe Swanberg, which gives it a very consistent feel throughout, despite the fact that each one is about different people. I honestly can't think of any other show to compare to. The best way I can describe it is that it has kind of mockumentary vibes, it's slow paced, and it has very realistic human dialogue. It definitely has some drama, but it's not too heavy, and it makes you chuckle every once in a while, whether it be at a joke or at some really weird shit happening.

CANCELLED

High Fidelity // Hulu (1 season)

What can I say about *High Fidelity*? The music is immaculate, the cast is to die for, and I can't decide who breaks the fourth wall better, Phoebe Waller-Bridge or Zoë Kravitz. Oh, and it was cancelled after one absolute banger of a season. Hulu has just made my top five heartbreaks list.

The show, which is based on a movie of the same name from 2000, follows Rob, a 29-year-old record store owner in Brooklyn, trying to navigate life after her recent breakup with her fiancé. Rob often talks to the audience, feeling the need to justify herself whenever she feels guilty about a bad decision she made. She is obsessed with "top five" lists and music (she owns a record store, after all). Throughout the season, she can't really make up her mind romantically and it's quite a fun ride to watch her try to figure out what it

is she really wants. If you like good music and flawed, realistic, relatable protagonists, this show is for you.

Freaks and Geeks // Currently not on any streaming services but might be back* (1 season)

One of the best coming-of-age shows written and a cult classic, *Freaks and Geeks* was tragically cancelled because industry executives couldn't get their heads out of their asses long enough to figure out that the internet was the future and viewer numbers didn't matter anymore (read the [article](#) I wrote about this same thing happening to *Arrested Development*). Executive producer, Judd Apatow, has even [said](#) "Everything I've done in a way is revenge for the people who canceled *Freaks and Geeks*." *Freaks and Geeks* is also known for beginning the careers of several actors, including Linda Cardellini, Busy Philipps, and beloved comedy trio James Fanco, Seth Rogen, and Jason Segel.

The show is about a teenage girl and her younger brother, and their respective friend groups, the so-called Freaks and Geeks. The series starts when Lindsey, feeling lost, begins rebelling by hanging out with a group of carefree rulebreakers. This teen dramedy was created back in 1999, but the problems the characters face, from typical teenager things like fitting in and deciding between right and wrong to family troubles, are still accurate and relatable. We get a glimpse at why the "freaks" are outcasts, what causes them to act out, and how Lindsey deals with the troubles of wanting to fit in with them but not wanting to be a

bully.

ONGOING

Atlanta // Hulu (2 seasons)

If you haven't heard of *Atlanta* by now, I'm seriously worried for your health, as you are obviously being crushed by the rock under which you've been living. And honestly, I'm offended. Donald Glover is a genius and deserves everyone to love and praise his work. Amanda

Peet, wife of *Game of Thrones* creator David Benioff, even told Donald Glover that *Atlanta* is the best show on television. [Yikes.](#)

Anyway, sorry, I'm done fangirling now. *Atlanta* follows Earn, a college dropout in need of a job to take care of his daughter and girlfriend, signing up to be his cousin Al's manager when Al gains popularity as a rapper. The show follows the two trying to make it in Atlanta's rap scene, but it's about so much more than just rap. It's



Television

about racism, authenticity, family, friendship, and the difficulties of doing business with family.

One of my favorite things about this series has to be the way they don’t try too hard to break stereotypes. Where other shows might want to avoid seemingly negative stereotypes even though that is the lived experience of many people, *Atlanta* often leans into some of those experiences. We see the characters make mistakes, and exemplify some clichés like violence in the rap world or being an absent father. But *Atlanta* deals with these issues head on without flattening the characters into offensive stereotypes and walking that line where lesser shows would fail. Because of this, the show can be much more in line with real-life than a lot of others, and that’s what makes it so good. Real life isn’t always a success story. Real people are not trying to overcome stereotypes all the time; they are just trying to do what they think is right for them and their loved ones at each moment of their life.

The show is slow-paced and chill, but still touches on complex and heavy subjects without feeling *super* heavy. It’s perfect to watch a little at a time (no need to binge), and the cast is fabulous (I’m pretty obsessed with Donald Glover and Lakeith Stanfield, so... it’s amazing). Okay, go watch it, thanks.

Ramy // Hulu (2 seasons)

I’ll start by saying that as a Middle Eastern immigrant, the representation in media is practically nonexistent. I can’t think of any Iranian characters on American TV other than *Shahs of Sunset*, the reality show about a group of ste-

reotypical Iranians in LA. And as far as movies go, I can only think of ones where the Iranians are the bad guys (I’m looking at you, *300*). So, needless to say I was excited to watch a show about a Middle Eastern family living in New Jersey.

The show revolves around a millennial first-generation American, born to Egyptian immigrants and raised in a Muslim community. We watch as Ramy, the titular character, searches for a balance between finding his way in the world and being a devout Muslim. We see him question his beliefs about what life is supposed to be and how he should act, and how his faith plays into that. The show breaks many stereotypes about Arab and Muslim Americans, and gives us a view of Middle Eastern families that is very much needed in the world.

After Life // Netflix (2 seasons)

While the title may sound like it’s a knock-off version of *The Good Place*, *After Life* is actually a British dark comedy centered around a middle-aged man, Tony, grieving his wife who recently died of breast cancer. Tony becomes incredibly depressed, and he completely stops caring about life, contemplating suicide several times. We watch as he goes through life not giving any shits and thinking that since nothing matters anymore, he can be an asshole and tell it like it really is. Now that I describe it, it doesn’t sound chill at all, but I promise it won’t make you sad! It’s a sad story told by a really funny guy.

Created by and starring Ricky Gervais, this show has strong *The In-*

vention of Lying vibes (which he also wrote and starred in). If you enjoy dry humor and laughing at morbid jokes that make you feel like you really shouldn’t be laughing, watch *After Life*. I promise you’ll get a kick out of it. It’s surprisingly light-hearted and funny for a show about death and depression.

Never Have I Ever // Netflix (1 season)

Coming-of-age, but make it 2020 and realistic. And by realistic, I just mean that it’s refreshing to see a show about high schoolers actually acting like high schoolers and not solving crimes and getting cocktails (you know which shows I’m talking about). *Never Have I Ever* is about high school sophomore Devi Vishwakumar, who is dealing with the recent death of her father on top of usual teenage dilemmas. After a difficult freshman year, Devi comes back to school ready to reclaim her social status and decides the best way to do that is by getting a boyfriend. The show presents a hilariously authentic view of being a teenage girl and a daughter of immigrants and breaks Asian stereotypes along the way. I’m not sure if the best part of this show is the way Devi reacts to everything in an absolutely ridiculously dramatic way, that it’s created by Mindy Kaling and Lang Fisher, or the fact that it’s narrated by professional tennis player John McEnroe. Overall, 10/10 would recommend. A show that makes me laugh this much even though I don’t really relate to the character even a little bit is a show well-written and well worth the watch.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel — I didn’t include this because it’s a little fast paced and I didn’t feel like it fit in with my list, but it’s definitely a fun watch and only three seasons are out so far!

Euphoria — This is only one season and you’ve probably already heard of it, but honestly, it’s very stressful for me to watch.

Modern Love — I haven’t watched this yet, but Marriya recommended it while reading my list, and just looking at the cast, I’m obsessed.

**Freaks and Geeks has been taken off Netflix, possibly because of a copyright issue with the music. However, both Netflix and Amazon have a button saying “remind me when it’s back” so I assume they’re working out the issues.*

Watching Twitches with a Triplet:

Why *Twitches* is the Best Bad Movie to Watch this Halloween Season

By Brooke Rees

It's that time of year again. The time when we choose a pumpkin that has offended us and consequently carve out its flesh. We don Superman t-shirts and Hogwarts robes (which I'm usually already wearing under my clothes anyways, just in case I do actually have superpowers or my letter from Dumbledore has finally arrived). In essence, the spectacle of Halloween is beautiful. It's the one day of the year where it's socially acceptable to give candy to children who you do not know. But Halloween, like most of 2020, looks a little different this year. Actually, let me clarify. It doesn't look a *little* different, like when your rich great aunt shows up at the next family reunion with slightly higher cheekbones and slightly fewer facial expressions. It looks *a lot* different. Like Khloe Kardashian before FaceTune was invented!

So instead of bewitching the town at all hours of the night, for Halloween this year, I've mostly been bewitching my couch and some popcorn. After watching a few scary movies, my Disney+ subscription was burning a hole in my dad's wallet (thanks for forgetting you still subscribe to it, Dad!), and I suggested to my roommate that we watch a Disney Halloween movie. After scrolling for a while, I settled on *Twitches*, and *gasp* to my horror, my roommate had never seen this beloved classic. Here's what happened:

Expectations: Like I mentioned, my roommate, Megan, had never seen this true cinematic masterpiece. Aside from the many other interesting and wonderful things about Megan, her go-to "tell us something interesting about yourself" is that she is a triplet. A triplet watches *Twitches*. Will she finally admit she also has shared womb magical powers? Will she like this movie without the childhood nostalgia acting as a crutch? Let's find out!

First thing's first: Based on the title alone, I wanted to see what Megan thought *Twitches* might be about. Her first guess? "Hmmm, *Twitches*. Well *Twitches* sounds like witches. So, what about witches who have Tourette's? They try to do spells but it always goes poorly because they have a twitch right in the middle of it." She was a little far off but honestly that idea has absolutely been pitched at the Hallmark Channel before. Next, I gave her a hint by telling her it was a DCOM (Disney Channel Original Movie). She had never heard of the phrase and thought it meant "decomposition." She was in the right spooky mood by then, but at that point, I was mainly just worried about her childhood. After finally letting her in on the plot, the movie watching began. We soon settled on a few observations as to why *Twitches* is the absolute best worst movie to watch on Halloween. They are ranked as follows:

1. The Fashion!

The terrifying reality of early 2000s fashion can accurately be summarized by Megan's exclamation of "Oh, I love tweed! Oh no. Not like that." While rewatching *Twitches*, I was overcome by the image of my 9-year-old self rocking a pair of gauchos and a sequined half-cardigan. What I wouldn't GIVE to have the sheer unearned confidence of a woman living and dressing in 2005. Fashion plays an important role not only in the visual aesthetics but also in Camryn and Alex's relationship. They wear matching 'amulets' (like that wasn't setting yourself up to have

magical powers. If you don't call it a 'necklace,' you were just begging for some evil forces), and even meet in a high-end clothing store. Though Alex's interaction with the store clerk gave me false expectations for my future job interviews, since she's basically just persistent even though she doesn't have any real qualifications, there's no denying that the fashion is one of the main attractions of this movie.

2. The Plot Holes!

Some things only look good at a distance. Like my face. Or American democracy. *Twitches*, unfortunately is one of those things. If you possess literally

any shred of critical thinking while watching this movie, the threads start to unravel. I believe, however, that this just makes it all the more enjoyable. It's like a Choose Your Own Adventure novel where you get to fill in the many plot holes yourself! In that sense, *Twitches* forever lives on in my mind. In case you wondering, here are some of *Twitches* biggest mysteries, pointed out by Megan whose thoughts were not clouded by nostalgia: what exactly is Coventry? Did Miranda really have to stay and help rule? It seems like she spends most of her day roaming around a CGI castle. What exactly is the darkness (besides horrific CGI)? Does the darkness only kill houseplants? Is the darkness...me?

3. The CGI!

Perhaps the most enjoyable parts of this movie are the scenes at the Coventry castle. Every time a scene would appear, Megan would glance over at me, a small piece of her will to live (or at least sit through this movie) slipping away. While this made me laugh the hardest, the CGI castle is admittedly pathetic. It gives me hope that I, with mediocre art skills, could also make it big in Hollywood.

Final thoughts: All in all, *Twitches* deserves an Oscar. And at the very least, it deserves a third film.



We’ve all had more than our fill of horrors this year. Maybe this Halloween we can try to forget all the scary shit going on in the world, lock ourselves in our houses, and focus on something a little less scary, like zombies, demons, or vampires. Escapism is a lifeline for many — now more than ever — and when is a better time to escape into another world, or another persona, than Halloween? With a mask on, you can be anyone or anything you want. I think we could all use some spooky songs to drown out our thoughts, so I made a point to make a playlist with spooky vibes all the way through because dammit, you deserve it! Enjoy<3

Ghosting // Mother Mother

“You don’t need treats, and you don’t need tricks. You don’t need no Halloween”

With a slow but spooky start, the creepy violin opening appropriately set the tone of the song (and playlist). This track will resonate with anyone who’s had more than their fair share of ghosts haunting their life, or done some haunting of their own (we see you insta stalking your ex, don’t lie). So forget that person living in your head long after you’ve said goodbye and watch a scary movie instead. Let’s be honest: we’ve all dealt with a lot of shit this year; we don’t need extra ghosts this Halloween.

Baby You’re a Haunted House // Gerard Way

For anyone who has survived the season of quarantine breakups

and came out the other side stronger than ever, (or at least trauma bonded) this catchy tune from MCR’s frontman Gerard Way captures how even with a few skeletons in your attic, you can still find someone who will laugh at your own misery with you.

“We’re gonna stay in love somehow, Cause baby you’re a haunted house now.”

Halloween // Phoebe Bridgers

“Baby, it’s halloween, and we can be anything.”

As the proverbial title track of this playlist, this song perfectly encaptures the somber tone of a starry October night spent wandering your neighborhood woods trying to forget that the world (or in the context of the song, a dead relationship) is falling apart. With slightly eerie and haunting lyrics, the incomparable Phoebe

Bridgers delivers another perfectly spooky ballad from one of the best albums of 2020.

Control // Halsey

“And all the kids cried out, ‘please stop you’re scaring me.’”

Whether the villains in your life live in your head or in reality, a lot of people have been confronting their worst fears lately. But there’s a certain kind of terror that makes you feel like a kid again and I think Halsey captures that feeling perfectly in this eerie track off her 2015 debut album. A bitter reminder that even as an adult you never stop asking “Who is in control?”

Howl // Florence + the Machine

“If you could only see the beast you’ve made of me.”

They say being in love changes you, but it’s not always for the better. This song delves into the scarier, vicious, almost visceral sides of love. In a 2011 radio interview, Florence once said “love is a madness, a sickness, it can possess you... I think that’s frightening. It taps into deep, primal fears.”

Spooks // Louis Armstrong

Back with some more spooky violins, we have a classic from Louis Armstrong, with creepy sound effects and all. The song depicts the story of a spooky encounter, finding a whole family of spooks just ~vibing~ and creeping out some humans one night. In a classic ‘50s musical fashion, this song is perfect for anyone having a vintage-inspired halloween.



Psycho Killer // Talking Heads

Jumping to the 1980’s, we have a Talking Heads classic. This also happens to be the origin of the iconic baseline sampled in that one Selena Gomez song. Nevertheless, the perfect spooky vibe for this playlist.

Walking with a Ghost // Tegan & Sara

Although this song doesn’t actually have that many lyrics and is basically the same few lines repeating, it’s pretty clear this song is about ghosting. Whether you’re the one leaving or the one being left, sometimes it’s best to let your own ghosts go. There’s nothing scarier than having an ex live in

your head rent-free.

Monster // Paramore

“I’ll stop the whole world from turning into a monster.”

This Halloween there is definitely more than a few ways the world feels like it’s turning into a monster. Although 2020 can feel like you’re fighting against a new obstacle each day, it’s good to give yourself some grace. This October weekend, give yourself space to recharge. Whether that means unwinding with a seasonal latte or blowing off angst by headbanging to a pop punk song.

“I’m only human, I’ve got a skeleton in me.”



Music

Evelyn Evelyn // Evelyn Evelyn

The opening track to an infinitely interesting project from Amanda Palmer and Jason Webley, is the song “Evelyn Evelyn” from the album *Evelyn Evelyn* by the fictional musical duo called Evelyn Evelyn. The album tells the story of two dicephalus conjoined twin sisters, Eva and Lyn Neville, who survive a series of Tragic Events™ and perform in a traveling circus before getting discovered on Myspace by Amanda and Jason who then rescue them and help them record an album and take them on tour. The album goes on to feature many guest vocals from icons such as Tegan and Sara, Frances Bean Cobain, Margaret Cho, Gerard Way, Weird Al, and

even Neil Gaiman, on a song called “My Space.” You can read the full, fictional, origin story on Amanda Palmer’s blog, and I highly recommend checking it out this Halloween.

Demon // M.A.G.S.

Sick of those demons in congress? Try dealing with your inner demons instead! From the multi-talented, multi-instrumentalist M.A.G.S., and indie rock artist from Buffalo, “Demons” is about “facing your fears but not necessarily conquering them more so coming to terms that there are some things that are so deep-rooted that you can never fully get past. You learn to cope with it instead of fighting it”



Creepin’ // Hayley Williams

“Poor little vampire babies, we bleed holy water”

Best song in the scene about insta stalking, hands down. The creepy imagery paired with the hypnotic guitar tones make this song as addicting as clicking that purple insta icon.

“Just keep on sucking on your memory of him.”

The Ghosts of Beverly Drive // Death Cab for Cutie

Another song about the aftermath of a dead relationship. A bop though.

Virgin // Manchester Orchestra

Slowing down the tempo for a slightly darker vibe, “Virgin” is off the band’s 2011 album *Simple Math*. Complete with a chorus of singing children, the ending chorus is truly epic (and spooky). The track describes the feeling of defeat, of having poured your heart, time, and blood into building something you cared about only to have it get torn down. The song captures the feeling of being witness to the downfall.

“It’s never gonna be the same”

Let’s Kill Tonight // Panic! At the Disco

Honestly, Panic! At the Disco is a Halloween band if there ever was one. Especially on their third album, *Vices & Virtues*, their signature cabaret sound matched with a decidedly spooky concept album made for the perfect album



to soundtrack your spooky October nights.

Cemetery // Coin

Maybe the only upside to having gone through a year like 2020 is that something like that makes you reexamine your priorities and realize what actually matters. Although no one welcomes the reminder that we can die at any moment, it’s an important lesson to learn. Despite what capitalism tries to teach you, you don’t get to die taking all your possessions with you. Being the “richest man is the cemetery” means nothing when you’ve lived a miserable life.

Nearly Witches (Ever Since We Met...) // Panic! At the Disco

What’s spookier than a chorus

of children singing in French? Not much. Add the orchestral violins and you’ve got the perfect spooky ~vibe~. With beautifully composed lyrics that describe the intoxicating and bewitching power of falling for someone, “Nearly Witch” was perfect for the playlist. As the song follows a siren-like storyline, sometimes it’s nice to be reminded that men can be so attracted to women that the only explanation is that we have supernatural powers.

Evil Spider // BENEE

From the iconic voice from the TikTok sensation “Supalonley,” “Evil Spider” is BENEE’s more playful take on the sinister idea of seducing someone who’s already taken.

“Evil, bad intentions on my mind

Got my fangs out, better hide”

Haunted House // Florence + the Machine

“My heart is like a haunted house There’s things in there that scream and shout They make their music in the night Wish I could find a way to let them out, oh”

A brief but delicate song, “Haunted House” is the b-side track to her latest album, *Moderation*. With mostly piano and vocals, this nostalgic melody finishes this playlist on a softer note, slowly building to the line “I’m not free yet.” A bitter sweet reminder that even though we might be trapped in the hell that has been 2020, one day we’ll be free.

Stay Spooky :)

THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE “MONSTER MASH”

By Marriya Schwarz



One of the staples of the spooky season has to be Bobby “Boris” Pickett’s “Monster Mash.” It’s played at basically every Halloween party ever, over the radio, and in my head almost year-round — but what exactly is it?

It all started with Bobby “Boris” Pickett who figured out that he could do a pretty decent impression of Boris Karloff’s iconic Frankenstein voice. So, he literally decided to make a whole song based on this one skill — honestly, very impressive. After adding some foley sound effects with probably unpaid interns blowing bubbles through a straw to create a cauldron bubbling effect, the song was released in August of 1962. It quickly rose to the number one spot on the *Billboard Hot 100* chart in October, beating out The 4 Seasons, Nat King Cole, and Elvis Presley.

We all know “Monster Mash.” We all love “Monster Mash,” unless you’re Pam Halpert. But a closer look at the lyrics raises several questions.

Here’s what we know: A scientist — potentially Frankenstein — is working in a lab late one night when his monster rises and begins doing the ‘monster mash.’ It’s unclear if this was Frankenstein’s intention or if he’s just a shitty scientist who had seen too many Charli D’Amelio videos and was like ‘I can work with this.’ The dance quickly becomes a “graveyard smash” and “ca[tches] on in a flash.” Here’s the problem: Creatures apparently can’t just learn the dance/song with a standard TikTok tutorial or a Just Dance game because they physically have to visit the scientist to get “a jolt from [his] electrodes,” which also seems vaguely dirty. So my question is how exactly did this craze catch on in a flash if everyone has to first schedule a doctor’s visit



before they can do the dance? It’s hard to get people to just go get a flu shot; why was the ‘monster mash’ enough of an initiative?

Also, it’s weird where these creatures are coming from to get this electrode treatment: the vampires specifically seem to only dine in the “master bedroom.” Maybe I’m just speaking from my own perspective, but we have a “No Food Outside of the Kitchen” rule in our house. I feel like you wouldn’t want to dine on blood in the same place you’re sleeping; it could get messy! I’m just speaking from the perspective of someone with a period who has definitely bled on her sheets, and it’s not always easy to wash. Maybe try

the kitchen, vampires? A dining room perhaps?

“How did this craze catch on in a flash if everyone has to first schedule a doctor’s visit?”

The group of creatures named is also interesting. You have

zombies, “Wolfman, Dracula, and his son” all coming out to join in this craze. This ‘monster mash’ is unifying the HCU (Horror Cinematic Universe.) You might have thought that *Twilight* was the first series to unite werewolves and vampires in a common cause, but it was really “Monster Mash.” Also, say what you want about the bloodsucking Count Dracula, but what a great dad to spend time bonding over the ‘monster mash’ with his son! Plus, he was able to set aside his love for the “Transylvania Twist” (yet another thing that is mentioned but we have no idea what it is) and accept that the ‘monster mash’ is better because of his love of his son and his attempt to understand the viral crazes of the younger generation — at least that’s how I interpreted it.

Towards the end of the song, we get yet another realization: the song is for us, the living. But here’s the problem: we don’t know what the ‘monster mash’ is. The entire song is basically just an advertisement for the craze, but we never find out what the craze is. Is it a song? A dance? If it’s really the “hit of the land,” why have we never seen it? Why have we only heard a song ABOUT the ‘monster mash’? Maybe we misjudged all of the monsters in our closets and under our beds; they weren’t trying to scare us; they were trying to teach us the craze. Once we figure out the vaccine and treatments and everything, this is what modern day science should be focusing on.

Listen, I’m not saying that “Monster Mash” is a bad song. I agree with Igor — “Mash good!” — but I just wish we knew what the heck it was. ■

BAKING WITH BROOKE: SPOOKY SEASON



By Brooke Rees

This Halloween season, I've primarily been cooking up an anxiety disorder, but I've also spent some time in the kitchen. Now that I live in an apartment and not my parent's basement, I have to pretty much feed myself for every single meal. I won't pretend the novelty of being in the kitchen hasn't worn off slightly when it's 7:30 AM and I'm late for work and all I have to

pack for lunch is a solitary slice of ham and a yogurt (I guess this is Keto?), but I am still enjoying whipping up some holiday treats.

A while back, my mom got me a few Halloween presents (I'm an only child), which fed into this most recent batch of baking and cooking obsessions. She got me a skull-shaped baking tin, straight off of every Christian Girl Autumn's Pinterest board,

some Halloween sprinkles, and a skull-patterned rolling pin. Now the baking tin was versatile. I could go sweet or savory and I scoured the internet for possible recipes. Most of the savory dishes included some type of pizza, but at this point in my life I am over the fantasy that any kind of homemade pizza could ever compete with a restaurant-produced one.

Consequently, I decided to follow the bread crumbs to the Gingerbread house and take the sweet (and a little spooky) path. Though skull brownies did not pop up in my cursory Google search, the idea hit me like a ton of chocolate chips, and I set out to find the best recipe. I settled on [this](#) one, from **Love and Lemons**. Though skull shaped tins are not mentioned, I plopped the batter in and they turned out amazing. These brownies are fudgy and chewy, with the added bonus that the skull shape provides for a lot of those coveted brownie edges!

This article is dedicated to my cheap Target microwave, which, over the course of a single week, managed to set on fire an acorn squash, a potato, and produce soup so hot, when spilled onto my chest, it produced a second-degree burn. May my squash fire diminish, and may my own gourds heal.

After the brownies proved successful, I thought it was time to test out some of the other baking goodies. I made some sugar cookies using [this](#) recipe from **Sally's Baking Addiction**. For those who don't know, Sally is basically the Beyoncé of the Baking World. Well, no. I feel like Beyoncé is still the Beyoncé of any world, but Sally could be one of the really cool back-up dancers in this scenario. Things were going smoothly. My cookies held their shape nicely and smelled delicious, and all I had to do was dye my royal icing and get to decorating. That is when I discovered my error in buying ~organic~ food dye from Whole Foods. Instead of producing the definitely-can't-be-safe-for-human-consumption neon colors I was used to, this natural dye simply would not yield an orange color. This is the one holiday where orange is essential. It needed its moment, and instead all I was getting was a newborn diarrhea colored brown. My roommate got in on the action and improvised, throwing in some of her red-colored water flavoring and saving the day. While the frosting now had a slight tropical taste, our pumpkin sugar cookies were looking good enough to ea- I mean... post on Instagram.



Which Last-Minute Topical Halloween Costume Should You Be This Year?

By Marriya Schwarz & Brooke Rees

1

What are your plans for Halloween this year?

- A. Eating candy
- B. Watching scary movies
- C. Dressing up
- D. Socially distanced trick-or-treating
- E. Thinking about how scary general existence is
- F. It's just a regular Saturday night. Time doesn't exist. Seasons don't exist. I don't exist.

2

Pick a movie to get you in that spooky mood:

- A. *The Nightmare Before Christmas*
- B. *Ghostbusters*
- C. *The Exorcist*
- D. *Halloween*
- E. *Psycho*
- F. *Jupiter Ascending*

3

Pick a candy:

- A. Banana Laffy Taffy
- B. Snickers
- C. Twizzlers
- D. Who needs candy when I'm guzzling down my Flintstones vitamins on the daily?
- E. M&Ms
- F. Raisins and a toothbrush

4

What's your favorite thing about fall?

- A. Apple cider and pumpkin everything!
- B. Corn mazes and hayrides
- C. Halloween
- D. Jumping into leaves
- E. Election purgatory season
- F. HA! Trick question: It's spring... right?

5

What are your go-to socially distanced plans?

- A. Baking out of my 'Baking for 4' cookbook when I am only 1
- B. Zooming with friends and pretending that the Zoom back grounds still are funny even though the novelty of it has worn off
- C. Measuring to see if I can climb out of my bedroom via my hair yet
- D. Contact tracing, my dude
- E. Reading through Twitter in a dark bedroom
- F. Watching movies and waiting for this all to be over! It will be soon! Ha!

6

What were you already planning to dress up as?

- A. Chef
- B. Superhero
- C. Witch/Wizard
- D. Princess
- E. TV character
- F. I have time to think about that!

7

Which weird standard fake email greeting do you identify as?

- A. Hope this finds you well xx
- B. How unprecedented this is!
- C. Hang in there!
- D. Hope you and your family are all safe x
- E. I hope you're doing as well as can be expected right now
- F. Stay sane

Count up how many of each letter you answered!

If you answered mostly A's:

You should go as **'Banana Bread'**! You've probably turned to baking and sourdough starters to fill the void, and what better way to celebrate that than by going as banana bread for Halloween? Wear brown, grab a handy pan as a hat, and make a chic banana necklace.



If you answered mostly B's:

You should go as a **'Zoom Call'**! It's definitely not the same as actual human interaction and people can hack into it and show their dick on camera, but it's the best we have. I mean, what else are you going to do? Go running home to Skype? Dress fancy on top with pajamas on the bottom.



If you answered mostly C's:

You should go as **'In Need of a Haircut'**! This one's easy: if you already have a costume for being that one girl from The Ring, then you can just repurpose it! Just think about how great it will feel when you finally get the big chop.



If you answered mostly D's:

You should go as a **'Used COVID-19 Test Q-Tip'**! You obviously take good care of your health and believe that testing should be widespread, and what better way to be the thing that goes straight up people's noses? Dress in all white and wrap a white blanket/scarf around your head.



If you answered mostly E's:

You should go as a **'Debate Moderator'**! The patience, my GOODNESS! I don't know how you do it. This one's easy - just stand by a brick wall and say "Thank you, Vice President Pence" over and over again until a fly shits on it.



If you answered mostly F's:

You should go as a **'Confused It's Not March'**! I know there is no concept of time anymore, so let me be the first to inform you that it's actually Halloween... in October. That's right: we've been at this for MONTHS. Dress up in your best St. Patrick's Day gear and your own blissful ignorance!



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