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Horror Movie Renaissance

Paul Swartz

Voice Editor

For 97 years, the Oscars have given out the award for Best Picture. The winning film is immediately immortalized in film history as one of the most important of its era.

Only once has the Academy given it to a horror movie.

During the 64th Oscars in 1992, "Silence of the Lambs" became the first and, as of now, only horror movie to win film's most coveted award. Depending on your definition of horror movie, only six to eight horror movies have ever even been nominated.

This year, that number will almost certainly increase.

According to multiple reports, Warner Bros. is planning to launch Oscar campaigns for "Sinners" and "Weapons," two of the most critically acclaimed movies of the year, which both happen to land firmly in the horror genre. With the full weight of one of the largest media corporations in the world behind them, the films will almost certainly get nominations, if not for Best Picture, then for many others.

This is not only good news for the movies represented, but it's a step in the right direction for the genre's perception.

For decades, horror has been seen as a lesser form of the art, reserved for simplistic stories and inferior production values. But this has never actually been true. Films like "Halloween" and "The Shining" have become iconic not just in horror but in cinema, and their influence can be traced throughout film history.

"Alien" pioneered the art of special effects. "The Exorcist" mainstreamed the idea of supernatural fear into film. There is maybe no movie more influential to modern thrillers than "Psycho." All of these movies have been lauded retrospectively, but horror is rarely appreciated in its time.

Movies like "Sinners" and "Weapons" not only make the case for more accolades for horror films, but they also encourage studios to take more risks.

Neither of these films slotted into a previously established franchise. They were original stories made by brilliant creatives. There was no guarantee of box office or critical success, and yet both were achieved.

The genre is consistently the most profitable. Budgets are often lower, but audiences routinely show up in theaters. Studios see this and try to adhere to the low-risk, high-reward formula. But "Sinners" and "Weapons" had bigger budgets with star-studded casts, and both paid off multiple times over. Now, the studio is getting good press for giving the productions the means to succeed in the first place.

Horror has always provided for the studios. It's time for the studios to provide for horror.

Industry creatives are increasingly viewing horror as an untapped medium. Jordan Peele became one of the most sought-after filmmakers in Hollywood solely through horror. Ryan Coogler had made multi-billion dollar films, and then immediately turned to horror for his first original movie.

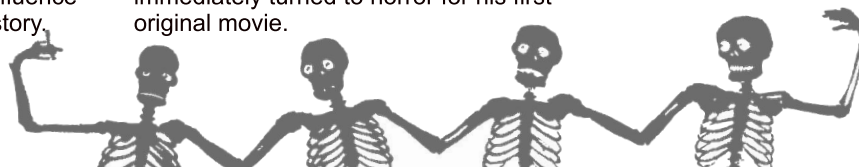
The lack of recognition for horror at the Academy Awards is also symptomatic of existing biases within the industry. Independent horror has given some of the past several years' most groundbreaking and exciting films. From "Hereditary" to "Talk To Me," indie horror has been loved by the masses, but neglected by awards ceremonies.

Horror is rarely recognized if it doesn't come from a big studio, and even rarer if it doesn't come from Hollywood. Take the 1998 Oscars, where a relatively weak Best Picture nominee class could've easily benefited from introducing broader audiences to Kiyoshi Kurosawa's masterpiece "Cure," now recognized as one of the best horror movies ever made.

Horror is universal in a way few other genres are. The Academy is finally starting to recognize international films for their merits; the next step is to recognize each genre within as well.

The perception of horror is finally shifting. "Sinners" has a legitimate shot at Best Picture. It's one of the most universally praised films of the year and one of the most commercially successful, which usually leads to good results at the Oscars.

As Halloween approaches, don't just view these horror movies as good for the time of year. Watch them as valid, comprehensive and important parts of the art form. From Hitchcock and Carpenter to Coogler and Peele, horror's role in cinema has been invaluable, and that's not going to change any time soon.



THE SCREAM

Spirit Halloween Will haunt the planet forever

Rome Tews

Co-Editor-In-Chief

Another year, another aggravating Halloween trend.

We all know Spirit Halloween as a one-stop shop for all things spooky. The haunted conglomerate has it all, be it trendy costumes, unearthly home decor or mainstream access to alternative clothes and accessories.

Well, actually, the seasonal retailer could have had it all. Alas, Spirit Halloween Superstores LLC rolled too far into the deep pockets of Spencer's and gave up whatever cred the company might have established.

Spirit Halloween is deep in the throes of fast fashion, annually opening its stores with cheap plastic bits and bobs that can and will end up in a landfill for the rest of our earthly escapades.

Back in the old days, approximately 40 years ago, punk, goth and other music-based subcultures created their looks through DIY and community collaboration to customize themselves in ways that signaled identity, beliefs and rebellion against the status quo.

In the modern era, however, people curate a certain "aesthetic" to "romanticize" their lives through a set of characteristics or interests a certain "-core" may have.

Take the cottagecore stereotype. Cottagecore people love natural flowy fabrics like linen, have a knack for cooking and gardening and want to live out their days in a cute stone cottage.

Are the hallmarks of a cottagecore girlie really that enjoyable to all these people? Maybe, but more often than not, this type of aestheticism signifies a want to belong.

There's no better way to belong than to buy everything that would make someone cottagecore, regardless of what that community actually believes.

That's just it, actually. Instead of surrounding oneself with a community and forming hobbies, opinions and fashion ideals among them, people sit alone, likely in bed, staring at a little screen all day that tells them how they need to dress.

If they pick an alternative subculture to "associate with," Spirit Halloween is the place to start, because is it true that alternative fashion typically has a stigma of gatekeeping and preclusion?

Yes.

But this is not that. This is a desperate plea for some consideration in where and who you purchase your clothes from.

Do you need to dress a certain way to be part of a subculture?

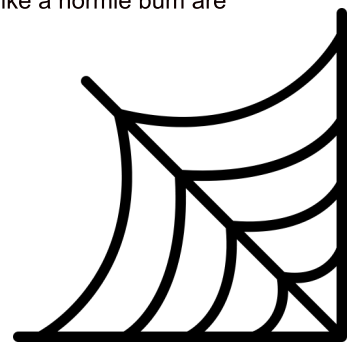
No.

The requirement of looking like a specific type of goth or emo is a scheme sold to you through certain "alt influencers" who won't even acknowledge the variety of styles that have existed likely longer than any of us have been alive, see pastel or cyber goth influences.

A "Spirit Halloween gothic finds!!!" haul on TikTok isn't worth breaking the backs of child laborers and littering millions of tons of textile waste onto the planet each year, don't you think?

All this nonsense is just another attempt to differentiate humans and put them in little, capitalist boxes so corporations can suck not only every dime, but the life out of every baby bat who ever tried to fly.

Protip: Stomping fascists and looking like a normie bum are not mutually exclusive.

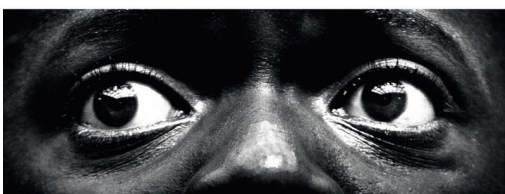


THE SCREAM

Top Five Halloween movies that still hit every spooky season

Jordan Jones

Assistant Voice Editor



GET OUT

Halloween means two things: a bunch of candy and movies that'll make you jump out of your seats and leave you questioning why you're watching them in the dark. Every year, we ask the same question at least once:

What's the best Halloween movie?

Now, everyone has their favorites, but these five are the ones that hit year after year.

Halloween (1978)

When you think of classic slasher movies, this is the one. Before all the sequels and reboots, "Halloween" started it all. Michael Myers in a creepy mask, haunting music, small-town dread and a machete in hand. It's simple, suspenseful and perfect for your classic Halloween movie list. And honestly, this movie is still quite terrifying. No matter how many movies came out after its release, this was the start of iconic slasher movies.

Child's Play (1988)

Let's be real – no Halloween watchlist is complete without a Chucky movie. This movie is old but gold. "Child's Play" is a perfect mix of creepy and ridiculous. It's that kind of "so bad, it's good" horror that keeps you entertained the whole time. Even though the quality is a little dated, watching a terrifying doll cause havoc never gets old.

Scream (1996)

"Scream" is an absolute classic. If you've ever yelled "Don't go in there!" at the screen during a horror movie, then "Scream" is for you. It plays on every horror cliché while still scaring you for real. "Scream" is funny, scary and definitely one of the best 90s horror movies. Ghostface isn't just another killer in a costume – he's why we still talk about 90s horror movies today.

Coraline (2009)

This is technically a "kids movie," but come on, this is one of the creepier ones. The button eyes? The Other Mother? It gives me the creeps just thinking about it. "Coraline" is eerie in the best way. It's the kind of movie that makes you want to turn on a light while watching. This movie will not only give you one of the best viewing experiences of your life, but will also taint you with an uncanny sense of humor throughout the film.

Get Out (2017)

Jordan Peele absolutely snapped with this one, making it the "perfect" Halloween movie. "Get Out" isn't just creepy or scary; it's smart. It mixes real-world issues with slow-building horror that makes you feel trapped right alongside the main character. It's easily one of the best modern horror movies, proof that scary can also be clever.

Whether you're watching scary movies for nostalgia, the chills or the endings that keep you up all night, Halloween movie nights never disappoint. Just grab some popcorn, kill the lights and maybe double-check that your doll collection didn't just move.



THE SCREAM

Final girls need love too

Scarlett Rose Binder
News Editor

Warning: spoilers for the “I Know What You Did Last Summer” and “Scream” movies

Laurie Strode. Sidney Prescott. Ellen Ripley.

These are the faces of the “final girl” trope. The women who make it to the end of the horror movie, the ones cursed to either love or live.

They don’t get to have both; it’s one of the unspoken rules of the final girl.

Other rules of survival are more commonly known. The famously meta franchise “Scream” lays them out plainly: never have sex, never drink or do drugs and never say “I’ll be right back.”

A fitting addition to this list might be “never fall in love.” It doesn’t end well. Not if you’re falling for the final girl.

But after all they go through – the stalking, the slashing, the screaming – don’t these women deserve a little love more than anyone?

Some have come close to a quasi-happy ending, one where residual trauma is eased by the possibility of companionship. In “I Know What You Did Last Summer” (1997), Julie James and her boyfriend, Ray, are left reeling from their near-death experience and the loss of their friends, but they still have each other.

For 28 years, their story stood as an exception to the rule. Then came “I Know What You Did Last Summer” (2025). The latest installment didn’t just kill off Ray; it made him the villain first, an offense to the original storyline.

Those are the choices, though. Final girls’ boyfriends seem destined to be dead guys, bad guys or dead bad guys.

Just ask Sidney Prescott. The “Scream” heroine has more than earned her title as one of the most iconic final girls of all time. Over six films, she’s been through it all.

Spoiler alert: first, the boy she was dating turned out to be Ghostface, her personal terrorizer. This primed her for paranoia throughout the sequel, which she spends suspecting her new boyfriend... right up until he’s murdered in one of the most tragic horror deaths I’ve seen.

Poor Jerry O’Connell. Why did he have to die?

The answer is simple. These slasher films are nothing without shock factor. The stronger a character’s connection is with the heroine, the more devastating their death will be.

So, the significant other dies, and the final girl is doomed along with them, designated to a life of being left behind.

Love or live; one, not both.

As this rule becomes routine, audiences become desensitized to it. At this point, would it not be more shocking for the lover to live? Is it not time to give the final girl something to live for?

After all, a strong woman is not made less by love. Her survival is not diminished by the survival of her partner.

So, in the upcoming “Scream 7,” when Ghostface inevitably comes looking for Sidney’s love interest, it might be time for her to bring back the line: “not in my movie.”

Some rules are meant to be broken.





THE SCREAM



What lurks in the score

Nikko Wotherspoon

Copy Editor

The most memorable, terrifying moments of any horror movie aren't made by what we see but what we hear. Before the killer strikes, the monster appears, the jumpscare happens, there is music.

Music in horror films isn't just background ambiance; it's a fundamental directing tool that manipulates and controls pacing, transforming visual scenes into visceral experiences and shaping viewers' emotions.

Music can attack our nervous systems head-on. That creeping violin, pulsing bass or sudden, deafening silence. These cues bypass our rational thought and trigger our primal responses. Horror music composers exploit this by clashing notes that create tension designed to keep us on edge, putting audiences in a state of unease. For example, a slow build of strings creates anticipation, elevates cortisol levels and hooks viewers.

The genius of horror lies in its ability to manipulate tension and release. Interestingly, silence has become one of modern horror's most potent tools.

Films like "A Quiet Place" use the power of silence to their advantage. The lack of music makes the movie more terrifying than any score, creating space where every ambient sound becomes threatening. Noise then makes the viewers physically feel dread, chest pressure and even nausea.

However, it isn't just the music that creates this tension.

Composers and directors work hand in hand to choreograph audience emotion with precise timing. The score actively directs your attention, telling you what to feel and often spoiling the surprise before seeing it on screen. When that ominous music kicks in as a character walks toward a door, you already know something's waiting on the other side.

This applies especially to jump scares. The period of quiet or ambient sounds, the visual surprise and the sudden musical "stinger" make it powerful. The buildup in music creates anticipation through increasing volume or escalating dissonance, and then the sharp, high-frequency sound at maximum volume triggers an involuntary physical response.

The difference between an effective jumpscare and an ineffective jumpscare comes down, ultimately, to its musical setup.

Yet, when we use musical motifs as a sonic calling for particular characters or locations, it gets the audience anticipating. For instance, John Williams' two-note "Jaws" theme instantly signals the shark's presence. Meanwhile, Michael Myers' "Halloween" theme is inseparable from the character. These signatures guide the director's choices about when to reveal threats.

Strip the music from any memorable horror movie, and it fails. While the image remains, the emotional manipulation evaporates. Music is the invisible director of our fear response, telling us when to tense up, when to relax and when to brace for impact. As new subgenres and movies arise and evolve, so will the viewer's relationship with music.

In the end, the truth remains: horror directors don't just show us terror, they conduct it, and music is their baton.

THE SCREAM

Three tips for crocheting Halloween keychains



Injy Wasfy

Contributor

You don't have to wear a costume everywhere to be festive on Halloween. Some of the best ways to celebrate the season are to make your own decorations. For all you crocheters, it's time to pick up your hook, small bundles of brown, white, orange and yellow yarn and start crocheting. For something you can carry everywhere that's easy to make, keychains are the best approach.

If you're stumped on what to start with, look no further than the iconic Halloween staples: pumpkins, candy corn and ghosts. These are just three examples of what they could look like, but don't be afraid to let your creativity flow. Now that you've seen these classic designs, here are some tips for making your own versions!



Start smaller than you think

Remember that keychains move around, so it's best to keep crochet keychains compact. As a guide, to achieve the scale of the examples, keep the width no more than seven single chains at most.

Keep colors to a minimum

It's tempting to want to make something colorful that pops even from far away, but things can get muddled fast with limited stitches to work with. Switching colors, even if done subtly, leaves little marks. But as you can see, the candy corn features three colors. That's because it's easier to switch between rows than between stitches. To keep it seamless, loop your hook around the stitch under it instead of working into chains like normal.



Beginner tip

If you only know how to make chains or rows, the next step is learning how to make the magic circle. While a new technique can seem challenging, the magic circle can be broken into simple steps.

Start by draping the yarn thread around two fingers, with the end facing you. Then loop again to make an 'X,' making sure to end on the left side of the first string. Once you have an 'X,' flip to the other side of your fingers, pull the thread farthest from your nails from under the other and make a chain. From there, you work twelve double or six single stitches and pull the free end of the yarn to close the circle. With this technique, you could make anything from ghosts to candy corn.



THE SCREAM

Staff Picks: Best trick-or-treat candy

Thanks to trick-or-treating, candy is just as important to Halloween as scary costumes and pumpkins. But not everyone wants the same candy in their trick-or-treat bag. Here are some of The Scout's favorites!

100 Grand Bar

Rome Tews

An underrated selection, the 100 Grand feels like the procreation of a Twix and a Crunch. Crunchy rice pops coated in chocolate surround a decadent, thick layer of caramel that melts in your mouth. It's the perfect treat after a long night of spooking and scaring.

Gummy Bears

Latif Love

I'm not a chocolate fan, so I generally opt for fruity candy. Gummy bears are the LeBron of candy – and I love LeBron.

Reese's Peanut Butter Pumpkin

Scarlett Binder

You can't go wrong with mixing chocolate and peanut butter... as long as you don't have a peanut allergy, that is. Good news for me: I'm peanut allergy free!

Sour Patch Kids

Paul Swartz

No candy has more to offer than Sour Patch Kids. You get the sour-sweet combo, the variety of flavors so the taste never gets old and, as a bonus, they stick to your teeth like glue so you get cavities. There is truly no candy that more completely exemplifies Halloween.

KitKat

Jordan Jones

Nothing's better than the classic snap of a KitKat. It's simple, sweet and endlessly shareable. Whether you're breaking it in half or eating it whole (no judgement), it's the best balance of crunch and chocolate perfection.

Payday

Celine Lamirand

I have never really been a fan of overly sweet things, but one thing I can get behind is the perfect balance of salty and sweet flavors a Payday brings to the table. Something about the way it's crunchy, soft, chewy and not too sweet is what really sells me. I don't think I have ever found a candy that balances those flavors as well as Payday.

Starburst

Davis Kinch

If there is one thing I like to do from time to time, it's to sit around and eat Starbursts. Starbursts have been my favorite candy for a while, as they have a soft texture and a fruity flavor.

Almond Joy

Injy Wasfy

They're called Almond "Joy" for a reason; eating them gives you the best combination of ingredients. The coconut flake filling lightens an otherwise strong chocolate, and the almond is the perfect cherry on top. Except it's an almond.

