

Quoth The Raven

Ever since Fox network acquired the rights to the World Series, the Treehouse of Terror (aka The Simpson's Halloween Special) has been pushed to the first weekend of November. The annual episode is actually three terrifying yarns told to send chills through the hearts of audiences. Ironically, my favorite to date is the original, particularly the Simpson's unique spin on [Edgar Allen Poe](#)'s classic, The Raven. In it, Homer is driven insane by the raven which strangely resembles Bart. It also featured the first appearance of [Kang and Kodos](#), alien invaders from Rigel VII. In their first episode, the beings were not bent on world domination; however, Lisa's suspicions got the better of her and the alien's left in disgust.

SPOILERS AHEAD: Tonight's episode featured three new tales. My favorite was the final homage to another classic Halloween special. The names were changed to avoid any lawsuits. Milhouse and Lisa sat in the pumpkin patch awaiting the arrival of The GRAND Pumpkin. Only in this tale, the creature comes alive after poor Milhouse sheds a tear after he is abandoned by his love. After witnessing the torture pumpkins go through for Halloween (turning into jack-o-lanterns, etc), the giant gourd vows REVENGE. Most of the other aspects resemble the Peanuts special (even down to Bart's holey Charlie Brown ghost costume and Ralph Wiggum's cloud of dust as Pig Pen). The Grand Pumpkin also featured the annual appearance Kang and Kodos. And in yet another nod, Marge practiced her trombone which simulated the adult voices of the Peanuts cartoons. While not as memorable as past years, I never miss a Treehouse of Terror.



The Whole Universe at Your Feet

Following Tuesday's adventures, our band went to a park I have never been to (unless you count California's version of 30 years ago... ITHASN'T BEEN THAT LONG). All I can say is OH, MY GOODNESS. Universal Studios Florida features 2 worlds and something for everyone that is even cheaper than going to Disney (but I love Disney, too). The first ride we caught was [Jimmy Newtron's Nicktoon Blast](#). If you have young kids who enjoy watching the cartoon characters on Nickelodeon this is a must stop area. Not only was the ride fun but in the shop following the ride, I saw Spongebob Squarepants. Outside (not Nicktoon characters but still...) we saw Scooby-Doo, Shaggy, and the Mystery Machine. Unfortunately, they were on their way out before we could get a photo.

Next ride was one that has been hyped since I was invited to go in late August-early September. Let me tell you, if you enjoy the thrill of a roller coaster and the chills of a haunted house... you must ride [Revenge of the Mummy](#). The only problem being... and this is not the last time it happened... I was the jinx who caused the coaster to malfunction. I'm not sure which ride started it off... maybe [taylhis](#) will be able to remind me... but it seemed that if there was a chance that a ride would stop, there I was in the middle. This was even more memorable because Chris and I were trapped in the hot room. But we eventually came to the ride's climax. It is a doozy.

The third highlight (not that I did not love ALL OF THE ATTRACTIONS... I could spend hours elaborating), was based on one of my favorite animated series. The entire area

surrounding the [Simpson's Ride](#) is devoted to Springfield. Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa... don't think we saw Maggie were all there. There is also a Quik-E-Mart featuring Squishees that we had to have. We have been trying to figure out in which episode of the series Mr. Burns proclaims that his lunch consists of "One boullion cube." Anyone? But the simulated roller coaster is just a blast too. It actually creates the sensation (however slight) of being on a coaster while being immersed in an animated adventure with the cast. Animated thrill rides have come along way since even Star Tours was introduced at the now named Hollywood Studios at Disney World.