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THE BATTALION
SCREEPY CLASSICS

The Blair Witch Project
Heather Donahue
1999

Whether loathed or loved by moviegoers, there has been little middle ground in reaction to *The Blair Witch Project*. Ironically, most of the complaints of one side have been the rallying points of the other — specifically, the film's dependence on the viewer's imagination. Despite extremely creepy aural effects, viewers must devote themselves to the experience and truly engage themselves as if the protagonists' plight is theirs.

The tale of three student filmmakers getting lost in the woods and encountering a malevolent stalker draws on some of our most primal fears of the natural and supernatural world. It has been remarked as terrifying for its artistic lack of visual clues coupled with the startlingly convincing portrayal of terror.

Man? Beast? Supernatural Entity? Whatever it is the viewer fears most is what he imagines stalking the students through the woods, trying to tear into their tent, and ultimately driving them into one of the most chilling and original final moments of any movie ever. The closing shot will haunt waking hours as well as nightmares for days to come.

— Michael Whitlow

The Omen
Gregory Peck, Lee Remick
1976

Ever thought of little kids as creepy? *The Omen* boasts the creepiest child of them all: Damien, also known as The Antichrist. When U.S. diplomat Robert Thorn's (Gregory Peck) wife Katherine (Lee Remick) gives birth to a stillborn child, the couple adopts another baby, a little boy, whose mother died. What they got was so much more than they bargained for, as at age five, people around the boy begin dying mysteriously.

The movie was released in 1976, and any gore that is prevalent in modern movies was used only at the most powerful moments, including a decapitation that has made its way into the horror hall of fame. With shocking scenes, unforgettable music and a child's smile that can send chills down your spine, *The Omen* is sure to stay with you long after the credits finish rolling.

— Denise Schoppe

Silence of the Lambs
Anthony Hopkins, Jody Foster
1991

Silence of the Lambs, a classic in the history of the horror genre, has everything needed to be a required part of any Halloween fright-fest. Anthony Hopkins stars as Hannibal Lecter, a brilliant thinker with fine musical and artistic tastes and a life sentence for murder and cannibalism.

The movie is based around a hunt for a serial killer who is terrorizing young women across the country. While this plot has been used frequently in horror movies, it never fails to terrify. Hopkins delivers a convincing performance as an incarcerated — and insane — murderer, and it is hard to dislike his character even though he eats his victims.

Unlike some horror movies that have unrealistic plots and unbelievable horror, *Silence of the Lambs* gets most of its scares from the fact that it could happen. It is a very frightening look at the darker side of human nature and it makes you look at your neighbors differently.

— Emily Vizec

When A Stranger Calls
Carol Kane
1993

When A Stranger Calls is every baby-sitter's worst nightmare come true.

Jill Johnson (Carol Kane) is baby-sitting for two children when she receives phone calls from an anonymous caller who asks if she has checked on the children. What follows is a creepy series of events which end in murder.

The plot thickens when the killer escapes from the mental hospital and a determined detective (Charles Dunning) decides to take the law into his own hands. As the detective sets out to find the killer, the killer sets out to find the now-solo baby-sitter.

While the actual storyline will keep viewers mildly scared, director Fred Walton passed on several opportunities to increase the film's horror-quotient. There are times when viewers may be unsure where the dragging plot is going.

This movie might make you think twice about answering the phone while baby-sitting, but it certainly won't keep you awake at night in fear.

— Erica

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