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LIFE/STYLE

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Frighteningly good flicks

Halloween junkie **Caomhan Keane** guides us through the A-Z of horror, including classics like 'Carrie', 'Dracula' and 'Nightmare on Elm Street'

ARGENTO, DARIO

With his fetishistic adherence to style over substance, Argento's films hum with the outrageous. Convoluted, over the top plots featuring gruesome kills, badly dubbed actors and music that seems to pump neon through its lush, lurid colour schemes. *Suspiria* is his masterwork, where a young girl ends up studying at a German ballet school that may or may not be home to a sect of witches.

BODY HORROR

The fear that comes from losing control of your own body has been used to tap into our anxieties about motherhood, AIDS, global warming, etc. David Cronenberg is the sub-genre's brightest star. And while *The Fly* is considered his classic, *The Brood* is a more personal and terrifying meditation on how the inherited trauma of childhood can manifest to traumatise everyone that crosses it.

CARPENTER, JOHN

While plenty of directors worked their magic in the horror genre before him, John Carpenter made its most profitable franchise when he released child-killer Michael Myers from a lunatic asylum to stalk babysitters one Halloween night. But for a more unsettling watch, and one of the most disturbing onscreen deaths in the genre, check out his previous flick, *Assault on Precinct 13*, about a gang, gunning for revenge, laying siege to an isolated police station.

DRACULA

In book form, its outsold only by the Bible, so it's no wonder Dracula is one of the most filmed characters of all time. My fave is Frank Langella's swooning *Dracula* (1979) which works as a glorious gothic metaphor for sexual abandon, where our fanged hero is not so much a stilted monster, but a brooding menace whose desires have left him misunderstood by society. The haunting production design is a gothic delight.

EXORCIST

Enough has been said about William Friedkin's 1973 classic. Its 1990 sequel, *Legion*, is a more than worthy successor where a "thought to be dead" serial killer stalks the halls of a hospital offing those with tenuous links to the earlier film.

FREDDY KRUEGER

While the first movie is good, the third movie, 1987's *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors*, is so much better. A group of teens are terrorised both in and, ultimately, by their dreams while institutionalised in a psych unit. After their parents torch the neighbourhood paedophile,



Horror classics: Linda Blair (left), Freddie Krueger (above) and right Slender man and Pennywise, and Blair Witch Project.



left Christopher Lee as Dracula, and, above, Janet Leigh in Psycho.



he returns from the dead to stalk their nightmares with his bladed glove. Not particularly scary, it features an array of killer lines and dazzling deaths, most gloriously where Freddie's blades turn into needles as he flirts with a former heroin addict.

ED GEIN

The Silence of the Lambs, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Psycho* get so much sicker when you remember their most disturbing scenes all drew inspiration from this real-life murderer and body snatcher. Gein turned the skulls, skin and other body parts he stole from a graveyard into household things like lamps, bowls and bedposts while also making leggings from human skin, a belt made from nipples and an actual female bodysuit. Now that's a *How Clean Is Your House* I'd watch!

HOLIDAYS

While Carpenter's *Halloween* is perhaps the best known holiday horror it's neither the first nor the best. That honorific belongs to 1974's *Black Christmas*, which also originated the classic line "The call is coming from inside the house" and a

dazzling early performance from Margot Kidder as a boozy, hurting sorority girl, for my money, the best performance in all of slasherdom.

INTERNET

Few cinematic horrors have worked the public nerve as much as those urban legends contained on and spread by the internet. Has any knife happy maniac invaded public consciousness as much as Slenderman or Momo?

JUMP SCARES

If horror is a mental work out, then jump scares are its cardio. That moment where all is quiet until it's not and the killer or monster leaps out of nowhere giving the audience a microdose of dopamine and adrenaline, resulting in a buzz.

KING, STEPHEN

While much of the recent adaptations of his work has been infuriatingly poor — *It*, *Pet Sematary* — they don't call him the master of horror for nothing. From killer sewer dwelling clowns (*IT*) to telekinetic prom queens (*Carrie*), paperback stans (*Misery*) and the type of haunted hotel TripAdvisor was created to

protect you from (*The Shining*) you do have your pick with King.

LOOSE MORALS

You're V-card was as effective as a bulletproof vest in the horror genre. But woe and behold those who cast it aside. For a delicious spin on the concept check out 2007's *Teeth*, where a woman's vagina protects her purity from predators...in extreme ways!

METAPHOR

No genre reflects the horrors of their day more explicitly than horror. From the fear of foreigners depicted in *Dracula* to the fear of where science was leading us in *Frankenstein*, *Godzilla* and the monster movies of the 1950s tapped into peoples nightmares about the atomic age, while high school shootings led to the resurgence of the slasher genre in the 1990s.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

Long before *Get Out* landed all the acclaim for its subversive look at race through the horror genre, there was George A Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), with a black lead whose treatment at the end of the film continues to be a shocking

indictment of the world we live in.

OSCARS

While only six horror films have ever been nominated for the academy's top honour, they have rewarded-or at least nominated, some of the most iconic female roles in history — Ellen Ripley (*Alien*); Margaret and Carrie White (*Carrie*); Annie Wilkes (*Misery*); Clarice Starling (*Silence of the Lambs*) and Baby Jane Hudson (*Whatever Happened to Baby Jane*) all earned the actors Oscar nods.

PARENTHOOD

As if the night feeds, tantrums and cracked nipples weren't bad enough, you also have to consider if your child is the spawn of Satan. *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Omen* might be the best-known examples of this trope, but *Hereditary* is more traumatising.

QUEER GAZE

The gay comes gloriously out of the shadows in *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2* featuring the most 80s BDSM slasher death ever where a character is towelled to death in the showers. Our hero gets more jock strap revealing action from his best mate and his

PE teacher than his girlfriend and spends the movie in various states of undress as a demon tries to get him to enact desires he's trying to suppress.

REMAKES/REBOOTS

If the recent *Halloween* reboot has taught us anything, its remaking and rebooting horror movies makes smart financial sense but is often artistically draining. One of the best cases of it working is Philip Kaufman's 1978 remake of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, which features one of the most chilling final scenes in any horror ever.

SCREAM QUEENS

With dozens of also-rans, the definitive scream queens — Jamie Lee Curtis and Neve Campbell — single throatily kicked off the slasher craze in their respected decades.

TUNES

Remove the soundtrack from movies like *Halloween*, *Jaws* or *Psycho* and you may as well remove those movies from cinematic history. For an underrated synth gem that will put you in the seasonal spirit, watch *Halloween III*.

VIETNAM

The depraved lack of humanity shown by their soldiers was brought home and out on the American people through the horror genre in the 1970s. Particularly in movies like *The Last House on the Left* where a trio of killers accidentally take shelter in the homes of one of their victim's parents to the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* where middle-class draft dodgers are terrorised by the people whose land they have trespassed onto.

XENOMORPH

Whilst exploiting our deepest fears, horror can also be made up of individual parts — its soundtrack, its production design that can stand alone as art in their own right. HR Giger's designs for the titular *Alien* are one such example, as beautiful and intricate, as they are scary.

YIKES!

The conservative Irish censor banned so many of horrors' greatest flicks, they created a schoolyard brownie points system for anyone who got their hands on *Cannibal Holocaust*, *The Exorcist*, *Child's Play* and *From Dusk Till Dawn*.

ZERO BUDGET

Many horror movies cost next to nothing and become box office GOLD. *Open Water*, *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th*, *The Blair Witch Project* and *Night of the Living Dead* all cost under a million, in some cases under \$100,000 and have all made hundreds of millions at the box office.

MAKING CENTS



Consumer advice with Gráinne McGuinness



Three months, three steps to a financial reboot

AS PART of our Made in Munster series, we are talking to local firms devoted to helping individuals and families make the best of their finances. I asked Carol Brick, managing director of financial advisers HerMoney, to suggest three things households could do over the next three months that would put them in a better position going into 2020.

Carol believes careful financial planning is a hugely important component of family life: "It is key to achieving financial freedom and peace of mind," she said. "As a parent myself, I completely understand how difficult it is to see past the day to day running of a busy household, as well as work outside the home too.

"That said, too many families are failing to plan for the future in terms of saving, whether it's for short term emergencies or saving for children's third level education costs.

"Secondly an enormous amount of families have little or no provision in place should one or both parents have to stop work due to illness or even worse die prematurely."

She suggests the first step should be a household expenditure review.

"As Charles Jaffe's famous old say-

ing goes 'It's not your salary that makes you rich, it's your spending habits', she says. "With this in mind my advice is to kickstart your "2020 financial reboot" by conducting a rigorous review of your spending habits.

"Couples need to print out bank statements for a typical month (not December), then examine the various outgoing over the month and look at ways to make any possible savings."

Some of the questions you need to ask yourself are as follows:

- Can I firstly save any money on the big-ticket items in terms of monthly expenditure — when was the last time I reviewed my mortgage policy, mortgage protection cover and major insurance policies?
- Do I have any high-interest credit cards or other loans? Can I pay these off as soon as possible?
- Can I possibly spend less on certain items like grocery shopping or on energy bills?
- Am I getting the best deals available in terms of health cover, car & house insurance, etc?
- Are there any subscriptions I am paying for that are not being used any more?

Stage two is to build a household savings buffer: "Before you start sav-

Carol Brick, managing director of financial advisers HerMoney, has smart steps to save money.

ing for your 'wants', the priority should be on a savings fund to cover any unexpected expenses or emergencies," Ms Brick says. "This should ideally be at least four times your joint monthly net salary. A straightforward deposit (savings) account is the best option for this type of fund.

"After you have covered this emergency fund, then you need to look at larger items you may need in the next five years — for example, changing the car, house renovations, etc. These savings need to also be saved into a deposit account.

"Next, longer-term savings goals can be established. Examples could be saving to help your children go through third level education in 10 years' time or saving to ensure you have a comfortable retirement.

"In order to potentially grow this money as much as possible within the timeframe and in line with your end objective, then, investing in the markets may be a better option than a bank deposit account. Always engage with an experienced independent financial advisor to explore your best options in this regard."

Her third step is not about your own earnings or outgoing but rather checking your household entitlements: "We find that families frequently do not take the time to ensure they are claiming and benefitting from the correct tax reliefs and credits as well as any social welfare benefits and allowances they may be entitled to. For example, women returning from maternity leave should ensure their tax credits are increased to reflect the fact they are no longer in receipt of maternity benefit.

"Also, take the time each year to claim back tax relief on medical and dental expenses for the previous year. These can soon add up and it is simple to do via the 'myAccount' section of the Revenue Website or in your annual tax return if applicable."

DEAL OF THE WEEK

The English Market has long been one of the jewels in Munster's food crown. Now a shop dedicated to organic, local and seasonal produce — packaged entirely without plastic — makes the market even more of a draw for sustainable shoppers.

Virginia O'Gara, owner of My Goodness and long-time market seller, explained the reason for opening the shop: "I realised that a lot of my friends who were farmers were going home with loads of vegetables that they had spent all season growing," she says. "There is only a four-hour window to trade well at a farmers' markets, and not everyone can make it out, so we thought, wouldn't it be great if we could enjoy the seasonality of what I get to see all the time at the farmers' markets, and provide that in the city centre?"

"We wanted to find a way that we could help them out and provide whatever they had in excess to the people of Cork through the stall."

Visit My Goodness in the English Market or go to: www.mygoodnessfood.com/

■ If there are any consumer issues that you'd like Gráinne to address or if you have problems that Gráinne could help with, she can be contacted at makingcents@examiner.ie