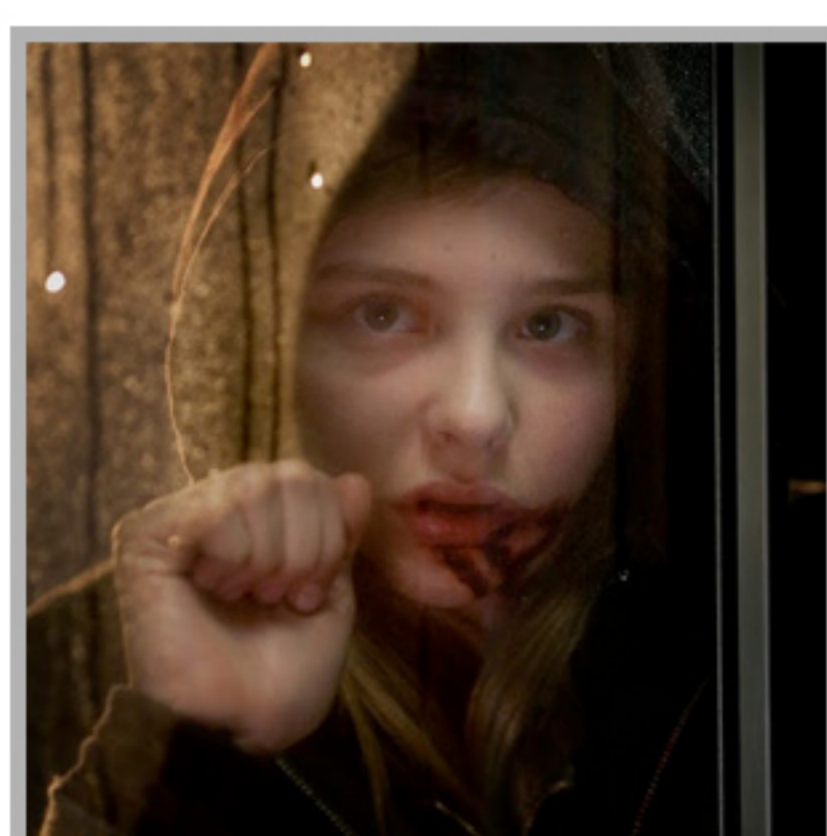


7 DIY Halloween Tips From Let Me In's Special Effects Artist Andrew Clement

Instead of heading to the store for your Halloween needs this year, use these tips and tricks from Andrew Clement, the special-effects wizard of *Let Me In*, out October 1st.

BY ERIN MCCARTHY

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October 1, 2010 6:30 AM

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If it wasn't for Popular Mechanics, Andrew Clement wouldn't be where he is today. The special-effects guru fondly remembers afternoons spent building projects from the magazine with his dad when he was a kid. That DIY how-to extended to Halloween, when Clement and his dad created elaborate costumes. "I was a mummy, a vampire, you name it," Clement says. "I would make my own masks and use foam to enhance my costumes. As a kid, I saw every store as a special-effects supply store. In the supermarket, the hobby shop and the hardware store, I would always think, 'What can I make out of this?'"

Clement has created animatronics for *Star Trek*, mocked up realistic doppelgangers of internal organs and innards for *ER*, and turned Jackie Earle Haley into a more realistically burned Freddy in 2010's *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Most recently, he handled special effects makeup for *Let Me In*, a remake of a Swedish vampire movie starring *Kick Ass*'s Chloë Moretz and *The Road*'s Kodi Smit-McPhee. "We made so much fake blood—I can't even estimate how much," Clement says. "I also had to create bite marks and acid burns, both of which I did a lot of research for."

On-the-fly special effects is the nature of his trade, so Clement is often forced to think outside the box. "No matter how carefully and completely I pack, sometimes I will find myself in a strange town—or country—and I am asked for something that was unscripted," he says. "I need to know where to find raw materials in the most common places, and how to combine them to make what I need." We asked Clement for his tried-and-true tips that will help you make your Halloween truly DIY. His No. 1 tip? "Be artistic, resourceful and careful, and there is no limit to the things you can create."

Fake Blood

"Really great fake blood is just a trip to the grocery store away," Clement says. "All you need is some light corn syrup, like Karo; a few bottles of food coloring and some diaper rash powder!" Here's Clement's formula: 1 pint corn syrup
1 ounce red food coloring
2 teaspoons yellow food color
17 drops green food coloring
1/2 teaspoon zinc oxide powder to make it more opaque*

*Clement recommends using a diaper rash powder with a high zinc oxide content, 15 percent or higher. "If you can get pure zinc oxide powder," he says, "it's even better."

Simple Adhesive

If you can't find spirit gum—an adhesive used to glue material to the face—Clement recommends using corn syrup as a temporary adhesive. "It can be thickened with a little flour if it is too runny," he says. "Remember, never use adhesives that were not designed for the skin!"

Weird Skin

Many household items can be used to create skin effects. "Paper towels can be crumpled up, stained with weak coffee or tea and glued to the skin with Karo syrup as an adhesive," Clement says. "Clear plastic food wrap can be used for a creepy transparent-skin effect." You can paint your real skin underneath, then plastic with different colored makeup or add thread and yarn to create the look of veins.

Upholstery Foam

Upholstery foam is a special-effects artist's best friend. "We use upholstery foam in the most professional creatures, and there are skilled workers who can make incredible, finished monsters out of it," Clement says. "It can be glued together using spray adhesive, cut into complex forms, covered with fabric or liquid latex or just painted as it is. Any good fabric store will have the foam and glue, and latex is usually found in a hobby shop. Use it under your costume to change your body shape, or make a whole creature mask from it!"

Silk

Clement always carries soft, colored silk gauze in his kit. "It is one of the most versatile materials I use," he says. Often, he saturates it with blood or K-Y Jelly to make membranes or stretches it between wires to create wings. "Get some flesh-colored silk and some spirit gum and you can make invisible tabs that you can glue to your face to stretch your skin or to help cover up your eyebrows," Clement says. "The dark colors are also great as part of a spooky costume."

Homemade Nose Putty

Though wax putty is available in stores, Clement makes his own nose putty—"which is meant for use on other things besides your nose, like ears and chins," he says—in a pinch by melting together equal amounts microcrystalline wax (usually carried by art stores for use in hand waxes, Clement says) and petroleum jelly, such as Vaseline. He then stirs in some colored face powder to tint it. "Don't do this over an open flame," he says. "Remember, wax is flammable! Let it cool, and now you can use it to re-sculpt your features into something crazy." If you find your putty is too soft, add more wax until you reach the consistency you're looking for.

Aquarium Tubing and Ear Syringes

"I used to get into a lot of trouble by going to the pet store, getting some clear tubing and connecting it to an ear irrigation bulb that was filled with artificial blood," Clement says. "Now I get paid to do it! The tubing-and-bulb trick has so many uses, from profuse bleeding to inflating a part of a mask or making a puppet's ears move. Use your imagination!"

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