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As children we let our imaginations roam free. Everything exists: vampires, the Loch Ness monster, the bogeyman, Bigfoot, aliens, werewolves—the list goes on. Why do we switch that off when we become adults? As we get older, our nightmares are populated by the looming threats of unpaid bills, rising gas prices, and psycho killers. That’s still some pretty scary stuff, but it can’t compare to the threat of a giant underwater creature waiting for the perfect opportunity to crash humanity’s party.

We’re pleased to note that the monsters have begun to rear their ugly heads again, in grown-up films like *The Host* and *Cloverfield*, and now in *True Blood*, HBO’s new series from the almighty Alan Ball (*Six Feet Under*, *American Beauty*). Set primarily in Louisiana, *True Blood* takes the Southern vampire cliché and turns it on its head. Transported to a world where vampires have literally “come out of the coffin” and confirmed their existence, some viewers may be surprised by how realistic it seems.

Based on a series of novels by Charlaine Harris, protagonist Sookie Stackhouse (Anna Paquin) is a simple Southern girl with a unique ability—she’s a telepath. Entrenched in the mysterious Southern underbelly, Stackhouse finds herself in dangerous, sexy, and downright confusing situations. Fans of the series need not doubt Ball’s ability to bring Harris’s world to life on the small screen in all its bloody glory; Vamps and Fangbangers will not be disappointed. *True Blood* airs Sunday nights on HBO.

—LAURA E. MARCUS



Anna Paquin as Sookie Stackhouse.