YAHOTLINE

High Tech Horror

By Tess Grynoch

The horror genre is built on sight or the lack of it. We fear what we do not know. Is there a person following you down the dark alley that you cannot see behind you? Was the creak in the house a ghost since there was nothing to see when you went to check? The Mad Man of Moose Creek was last seen by a friend of a friend of mine on this very night…

Cyberspace has become another platform for the horror genre with visual and auditory stimuli. Programs can also delay the continuation of the story to build suspense. Here are a few online resources and games that are great for teens interested in horror or they can be saved for Halloween or a scary movie night.

Scary Stories Online

Stories for Your Screen
(http://www.storiesforyourscreen.com/)

This website provides short stories of five minutes or less of varying genres. The two horror stories, "Joralemon: Some places are better left unexplored" and "annie96 is typing… The creepiest chat history you'll ever read", both use a cellphone text format where you watch the dialogue of the two characters slowly appear on the screen, with every click a new message appears.

The slowly appearing text builds suspense because you can not read ahead. Joralemon also provides photographs and a Wikipedia link with more information about the location which makes the location more believable. Because seeing is believing. "Joralemon" and "annie96 is typing" are both teen appropriate but I would advise discretion for this site and only recommend to older teens who will use their best judgement when looking at the other stories.

Scary Website
(www.scaryforkids.com)

As the name would suggest, the website provides a wide array of scary resources for general audiences. Although it is called scary for kids, things that are scary for kids are still scary for adults, creepy clowns anyone? The short stories on the site are divided into several categories including ghost stories, Halloween stories, and urban legends. Each story is prefaced by a short summary which allows librarians to choose quickly from the vast array of stories for a scary stories night or Halloween party. The website also has a lot of other great resources such as lists and links to scary movies, scary games, and scary pictures.

Who's Watching You?

Terrifying Computer Games

The three games listed below fall into the survival horror games genre which has low violence and uses the vulnerability of being unarmed, low visibility, low power reserves, and/or trapped to provoke horror. During these games, teens are forced to ration their resources to survive.

Warning: The following three games are very scary. Teens are urged to play with caution. I would recommend that teens watch the game play on YouTube so players know what they are getting themselves into.

Slender: The Eight Pages (2012)
Developed by Parsec Productions
Available on Microsoft Windows and Mac OSX

The objective of this first person, survival, horror game is to collect all eight pages about the mysterious Slender Man who is following the player and has been described as a man in black with a featureless face. As bad as it is to be followed by a creepy man, the player is trying to find the pages in a forest at night with only a flashlight. The music also sets the tone, at least until Slender Man finds you and the game is over.

Five Nights at Freddy's (2014)
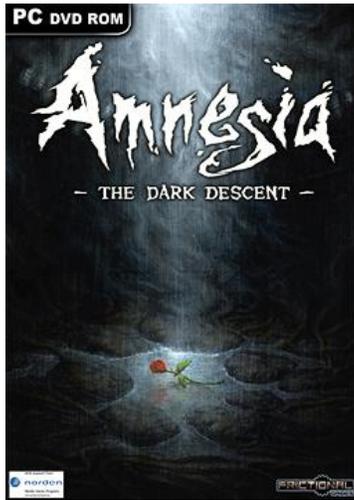Developed by Scott Cawthon
Available on Microsoft Windows, Android, and iOS

Five Nights at Freddy's also plays out from a first person perspective where the player is the night security guard at a pizza parlour with animatronic toys that come alive at night. The player is trapped within the security both with the limited ability to close doors on either side of the booth and switch between the various security cameras to watch the roaming toys. With limited power supply, the doors can only be kept closed for so long to keep the toys from reaching the player and forcefully putting him into a costume. The objective is to survive until dawn. The darkness and the feeling of being trapped within the security booth heighten the horror as players wait for the toys to leave the rooms next to them. 5 Nights at Freddy's now has two sequels and in 5 Nights at Freddy's 3 the player can leave the security booth in disguise.

Amnesia: The Dark Descent (2010)
Developed by Frictional Games
Available on Microsoft Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux

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The player plays as Daniel who wakes up in a castle with no recollection of who he is and how he got there so he must wander through the building to reclaim his memories while avoiding the monsters. The game has limited visibility due to the dark setting and the blurry edges that appear when a monster is near. The unpredictability and dark setting both contribute to the horror of this game.

More Horror Fiction Please

Here are a few web resources for teens who are looking for their next horror fiction novel.

Monster Librarian
(http://www.monsterlibrarian.com)

This website has a great book list dedicated to teen horror which is broken down into different categories such as vampires, paranormal romance and urban fantasy, and anthologies. Monster Librarian

recognizes the diverse range within the horror genre and has a great slogan, "Read to Survive".

Horror Writers Association
(http://horror.org/)

The HWA is a worldwide organization which promotes Horror and supports those who write it. Their purpose shows through in their website which is a great source for librarians, horror fans, and those new to the genre. The site provides a Horror genre reading list each year which has a separate YA fiction category. Other highlights are the list of Bram Stoker Award winners, writing tips, and interviews with YA Horror authors such as Darren Shan, Holly Black, and Kendare Blake. Paid membership is needed to access some areas of the site.

Horror World
(http://horrorworld.org/)

"Horror's #1 community on the web" is a great source for reviews and discussions on horror novels within a community of horror fans, writers, and publishers. The site also provides original fiction by popular horror authors. The majority of this website is communicated through blog posts so may be difficult for a teen recently interested in horror to navigate.

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Yikes, I need to find out more about horror!

Have no fear if YA Horror is not your forte. The Horror Writers Association gives a great introduction to the genre but I would also recommend YALSA's Genre Guide, "Horror for Teens" (http://www.yalsa.ala.org/thehub/2013/10/21/genre-guide-horror-for-teens/). The guide provides a description of the genre and its appeal to teens along with a list of popular Horror titles.

The best horror stories do not have endings. They just leave you wondering…

What did they really see that night?

Was the ghost real?

Who was staring back through the window?

Who's Watching You?

References

Provo City Library at Academy Square. (n.d.) Horror Fiction. Retrieved April 1, 2015, from provolibrary.com/horror

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