



FALL FEST

MUST-DO ACTIVITIES IN
CHARLOTTE THIS FALL

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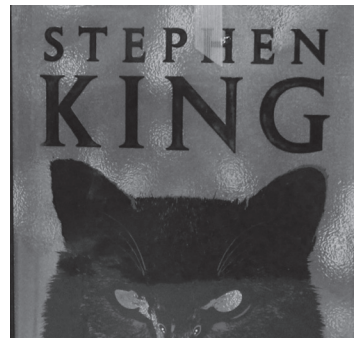
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Stephen King's work
Photo by Isabella Lain



Cat Beck with a tarantula
Photo by Jacob Scannell



Pumpkin spice latte and pastry
Photo by Isabella Lain



Knight jousting while on horseback
Courtesy of Carolina Renaissance Festival

FALL FEST

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The perfect Halloween playlist for the spooky season

by Delaney Nielsen
Contributor

Creating the perfect Halloween playlist can be tricky. It seems like if a song has something scary or to do with a monster, it belongs on the list. The following list contains songs that give off eerie vibes and focus on the holiday. Enjoy, and hopefully, you will be able to have a really scary time.

'This Is Halloween' from 'The Nightmare Before Christmas'

Being the most recognizable "The Nightmare Before Christmas" song, there is no doubt that this song makes it on the list. It gives light to holiday creatures by making them actual monsters. The use of lines such as "pumpkins scream," "teeth ground sharp" and "fingers like snakes" gives you an idea of the fright one should experience here. This song has perspectives from shadows, clowns, eerie wind and other frights.

'Monster Mash' by Bobby 'Boris' Pickett

Another Halloween classic, "Monster Mash," looks into a party full of monsters. Although we never know what this song is about, you can imagine how excited everyone was at this "party." This song makes the excitement evident by explaining how monsters come from all over to participate. Because of the subtle cues about whatever is taking place, this is a good choice for any Halloween playlist to make people think.

'Dead Man's Party' by Oingo Boingo

Although not the creepiest, it still gives a chill to anyone who listens. As a song about death, "Dead Man's Party" gives the perspective of someone who has died and is waiting for his invitation to the "party." They talk about how they are dressed up, possible reasons for death and how they are ready to go.

'What Are You Going To Be For Halloween?' by Matthew Gray Gubler

It is always a battle trying to pick your costume for Halloween. "What Are You

Going To Be For Halloween?" gives you costume ideas. Things like a pumpkin and a witch are listed, but according to Gubler, you can be anything as long as you scare your family with it.

'Spooky, Scary Skeletons' by Andrew Gold

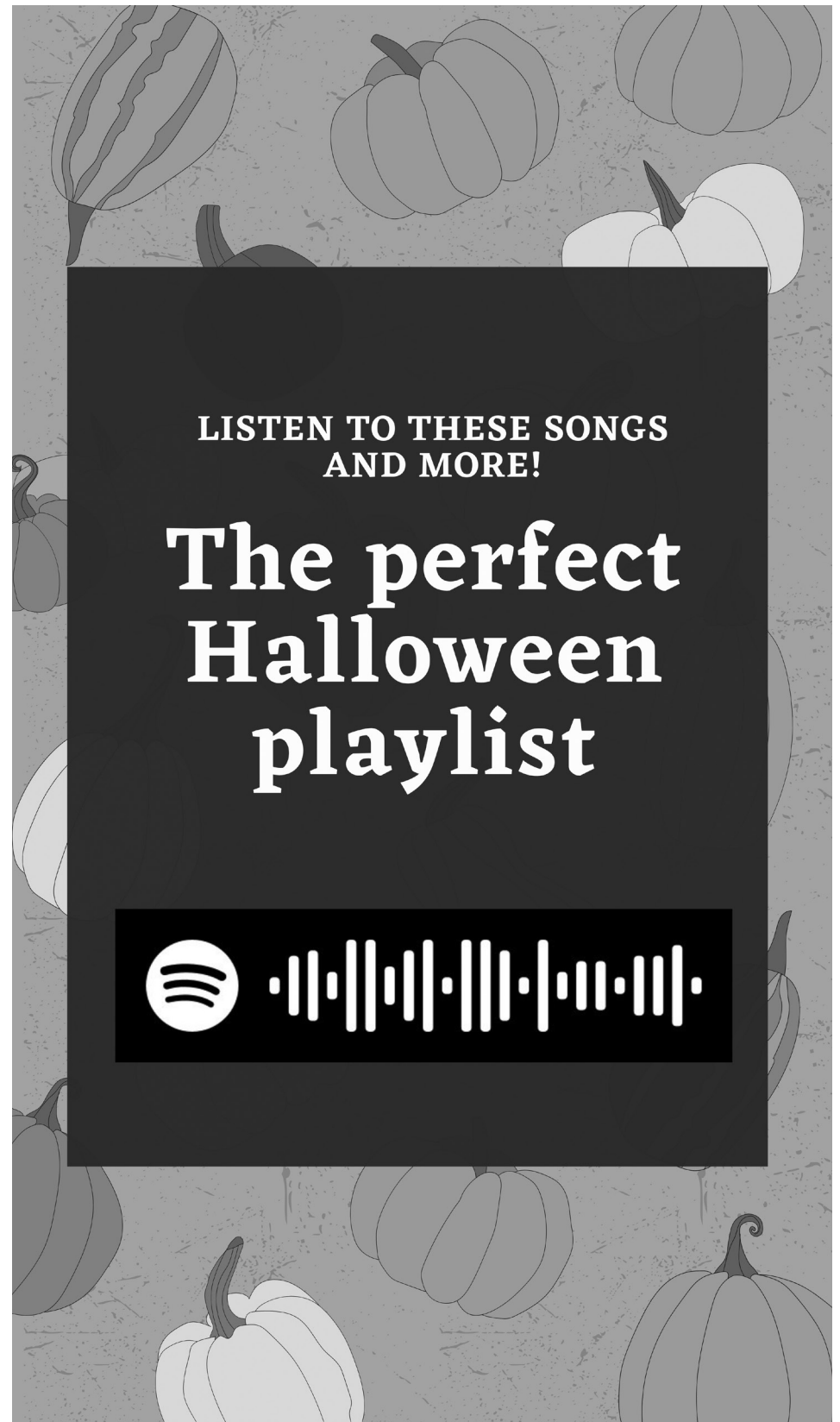
As the title suggests, this song is dedicated to the ever-iconic skeletons. This song brings a mix of admiration and wariness regarding these holiday rulers. It discusses how they "shout startling, shrilly screams" while being misunderstood. This is an excellent song to play when you want to be playful and spooky at the same time.

'Come Little Children' by Sarah Jessica Parker

From the original "Hocus Pocus" soundtrack, the character Sarah Sanderson sings this tune to lure Salem's children in and give them a potion. The song tries to sound hopeful for children by promising them good things like playing and access to a land of enchantment. In the movie, Sarah is flying over Salem, adding to the feeling of helplessness about the whole situation from all parties involved.

'Oogie Boogie's Song' from 'The Nightmare Before Christmas'

This song brings up the last scare of the season. With the other major holiday in the film being Christmas, this song brings a balance of both celebrations. It leans towards the Halloween side, with the titular character being a more dominant figure, hushing Santa whenever he speaks. The splashes of Christmas come with Santa mentioning his role and how important it is. This is the perfect end for a Halloween playlist, as it still allows you to celebrate each holiday.



Stephen King and the purpose of horror

by Cat Beck
Staff Writer

“The arts are obsessional, and obsession is dangerous. It’s like a knife in the mind [...] You use the knife carefully, because you know it doesn’t care who it cuts.” — Stephen King, from the preface to “Night Shift.”

For a book about zombie pets and knife-wielding toddlers, Stephen King’s “Pet Sematary” is at its most horrifying when depicting reality. Through all the calamities that befall the protagonist and his family, the book dances on the edge between supernatural scares and legitimately plausible tragedy, elements of both bleeding into each other until it is hard to tell them apart. At its core, “Pet Sematary” is an exploration of death, suffering and guilt – horrors that are far from fictional.

There is a macabre fascination that comes with the horror genre; it is woven into every step of the process, from the imagination of the author to the half-disgust half-delight that constantly urges the reader to turn the page. King himself has acknowledged the strange space the horror genre occupies in our minds. The preface to one of his short story collections, “Night Shift,” digs into what King believes horror is at its core. “The tale of monstrosity and terror,” he writes,

“is a basket loosely packed with phobias; when the writer passes you by, you take one of his imaginary horrors out of the basket and put one of your real ones in – at least for a time.”

But what becomes of the genre when the horror itself is all too real? King’s work constantly walks this line between real and unreal, and the simplest explanation is the extent to which his stories are drawn from his own life. Perhaps the best example of this in his entire body of work is found in “The Shining.”

In “The Shining,” husband and father Jack Torrance finds his most disturbing impulses drawn out of him by the haunted Overlook Hotel. The film adaptation is missing an element that is at the core of its source material – the slow, psychologically terrifying descent of Jack Torrance.

A particularly memorable scene in “The Shining” was omitted from the film adaptation entirely. In it, Jack discovers a wasps’ nest while replacing the shingles on the hotel’s roof. The nest will become an ongoing symbol, and its’ appearance prompts a train of introspection in Jack regarding his history of alcoholism and violent tendencies. The wasps have been made slow and sluggish by the cold, so

Jack uses a bug bomb to clear out the wasps and gives the empty nest to his son Danny to keep in his room.

The nest, of course, is not really empty, and Jack’s alcoholism and aggression are not as securely tucked away as he thought.

Stephen King has been fairly open about his struggles with alcoholism, a trait he shares with Jack. The themes and symbols of King’s work are rarely buried deep. “The Shining” is about addiction and abuse as much as it is about a haunted hotel.

“Pet Sematary,” too, is about death and grief as much as it is about zombie cats. The central supernatural event of the book is the twisted resurrection of the protagonist’s two-year-old son, Gage, but this does not exist in a vacuum. The characters’ uneasy relationships with death and the freak accident that killed Gage had to come first. These are both plausible and horrifying on their own.

The purpose of horror, according to King, seems to be a sort of catharsis – an externalization of our deepest fears into something fictional and, thus, more manageable. What this fails to explain is why the macabre realism of horror is often one of its most fascinating elements. “The Shining” and “Pet

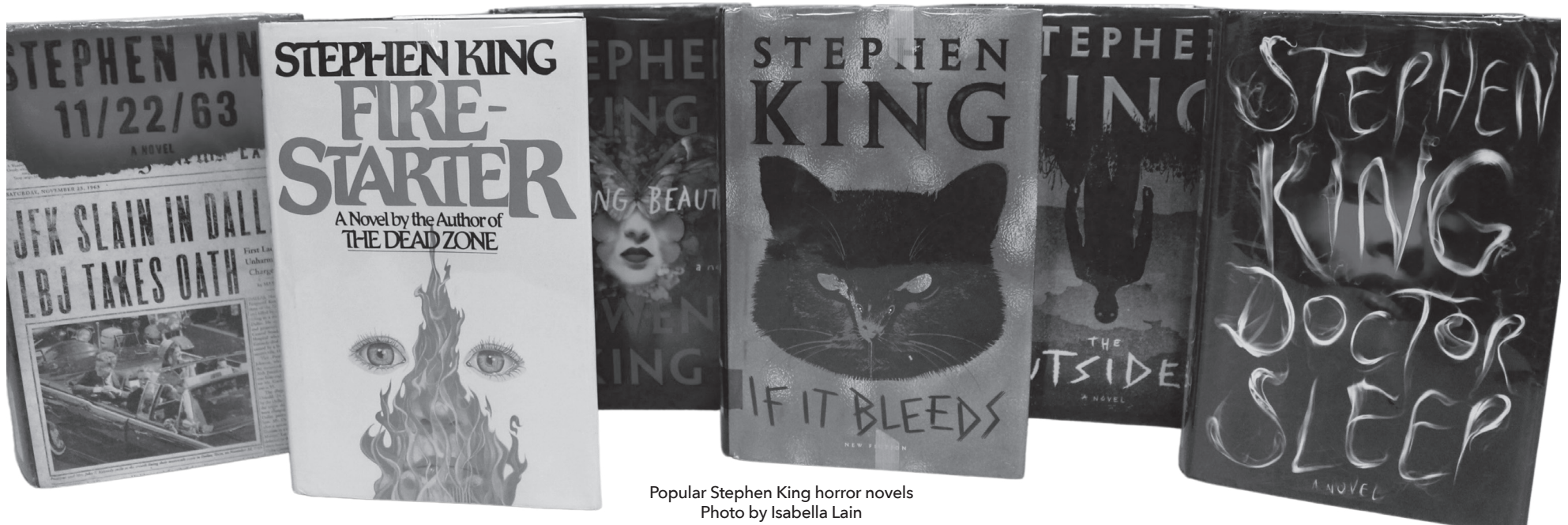
Sematary” were massively successful. I, for one, thoroughly enjoyed them both.

So if the horror is real, why do we like it so much?

The most troubling question here is whether writers and readers alike use the genre as an excuse to indulge in violent fantasy. In an instance like “The Shining,” where the evil lives within the protagonist as much as without, what does the fascination with the macabre have to say about you, me and anyone else engaging with it?

This is the uncomfortable in-between zone the horror genre lives in. To define horror simply as a tool for exploring frightening and taboo topics would ignore its undeniable appeal. To define it as pure entertainment would ignore its value as a medium for discourse. These two aspects of the genre are inseparable and bring the constant question of how to approach a difficult topic without glorifying it.

It is really no wonder topics like these – abuse, violence and death are taboos. They need to be acknowledged, but we do not know how. We are afraid to talk about them because we are afraid to think about them; we know the real fear lives within us.



Popular Stephen King horror novels
Photo by Isabella Lain

Halloween tales of Charlotte

by Cat Beck & Annie Turk
Staff Writers

Urban legends and ghost stories are universal. All across the world and throughout history, people have passed down twisted tales of hauntings, curses or other unexplained phenomena. These stories often center on a specific location, where modern ears can still hear the whispers of the past. Here in Charlotte, we have our assortment of urban legends.

Ghosts in the Carolina Theater

Every theater has its ghost stories, and after sitting empty for almost 40 years, it is no surprise that the Carolina Theater on North Tryon St. is no exception.

The Carolina Theater opened in 1927 with a showing of the silent film “A Kiss in a Taxi.” After years of success, it lost business to suburban movie theaters and ultimately closed its doors in 1978. After that, it sat vacant, avoided a fire and saw several unsuccessful attempts at renovation. Then, in 2017, construction began to restore the building.

The most notable of the Carolina Theater’s ghostly guests is Fred, the specter who began his hauntings before the theater’s initial closing. Legends abound, including construction tools disappearing and lights refusing to stay on. Is Fred, the figure seen by staff members on the stage or watching from the balcony, responsible for these? We do not know. Construction is still underway, so the story of the haunted Carolina Theater may not be finished.

Eleanor Mills and the Reed Gold Mine

You likely already know about the gold nugget outside Barnhardt Student Activity Center here on campus. It came from the nearby Reed Gold Mine, and rubbing it for luck is a UNC Charlotte tradition. What you may not have known is the haunted history of the mine the nugget came from.

Legend tells of a miner by the name of Mills, either Eugene or William,

depending on your source. His relationship with his wife, Eleanor, was strained to say the least. During one of their many fights, Eleanor tripped and fell down the stairs, where her husband found her dead. Chillingly, he could still hear agonized groans coming from her lifeless body. Panicked, he threw her body down the mine shaft. Legend has it the voice of Eleanor Mills can still be heard emanating from her final resting place in the Reed Gold Mine.

The Lake Norman Monster

There is a reason why water is so scary. The world is made up of 71% water, with most of it unexplored, so we have no idea what lurks beneath the surface. There is a legend that a creature resembling the mythical Loch Ness monster has been taunting Lake Norman residents since the creation of the manmade lake in 1963.

Affectionately known as Normie, the Lake Norman monster has been

described on over 100 different accounts as appearing crocodile or fish-like, stretching approximately 10 feet long.

There is even a website, lakenormanmonster.com, dedicated to tracking the sightings of Normie. The website also features a children’s book that shares the story of this creature. Additionally, investigators from multiple shows, including “Boogeyman” and “America’s Monsters,” have theorized whether or not the Lake Norman monster is real. Have you ever spotted Normie while on Lake Norman?

Wherever old buildings and well-known landmarks exist, it never takes long for urban legends to spring up. Maybe it is just a part of human nature to speculate about the unknown, or there is an element of truth to these myths and legends. Whatever the case, stories like these remind us not to overestimate how much we know about the world. So keep an eye out – and maybe keep the light on.

Urban legends and myths of Halloween

by Benjamin Greenzaid
Contributor

All Hallow’s Eve, the holiday now known as Halloween, is rich in history and tradition. Similar to all holidays, it also contains its fair share of legends, from razor blades in candy, to heightened crime. But just how true are these urban legends? Where did they start, and should they be trusted?

One of the best-known legends includes a rather violent thought: harmful things in candy. The origins of this myth are unknown, but its inspiration is quite logical. With children receiving candy from strangers, the thought of the unknown causes fear. The stranger could have done something to the candy, and while there are a few instances of this legend coming to life, it is not common. In one famous case, a boy named Timothy O’Bryan died after eating Halloween candy poisoned by his father. Even the father’s motive had nothing to do with Halloween. He had poisoned the

candy with cyanide to claim Timothy’s life insurance. Another instance of stranger candy danger came in 1964 when a woman named Helen Pfeil gave children insect traps. These traps weren’t in candy wrapping, and no children were harmed by what Pfeil called “a prank.” In 2000, a man in Minneapolis was found to have been putting needles into chocolate. Experts have found from many studies that no child has been gravely injured by strangers tampering with candy. While stranger danger is still strongly advised, there is little reason to be afraid of the candy handed out by said strangers.

Another Halloween myth is the idea that decorations are secretly dead bodies. This legend may get some tread from horror movies, but real-life evidence is difficult to find. In 2005, a hanged woman was found in Delaware after being left in a tree for hours. This woman was left for so long because people walking by the

tree thought the body was a decoration for Halloween. In California in 2009, a person was left on a porch for two weeks because of neighbors’ assumption that the body was a Halloween decoration.

The only urban legend that truly holds up is the elevated crime rate. Halloween night’s crime count is usually about 50% higher than any other day during the year, with crime reports going up 17% on the day. The roots of Halloween crime go back to the 1800s when Irish and German immigrants first came to America in droves. These immigrants practiced more of the trick than the treat with pranks such as tipping over outhouses, uprooting vegetables in gardens and placing cattle on barn roofs. These traditions became smaller as trick-or-treating became a larger part of American culture following World War II, but they never disappeared completely. Today, the tricks have migrated to the night before Halloween

and have become a night of widespread crime. Most crimes around Halloween do not involve person-on-person violence. Usually, the crimes include cars getting keyed, broken windows or graffiti. On college campuses, drunk and disorderly conducts are common as well. However, this can be said for just about every other major holiday, including Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, Independence Day and even St. Patrick’s Day.

All in all, urban legends stemming from Halloween are a dime a dozen, but the true ones are few and far between. Behind each urban myth lies only a kernel of truth and, thus, shouldn’t be taken very heavily. Halloween is a time to enjoy candy, show creativity in costumes and have a fun night with friends. As long as you remember to be safe and protect yourself, there’s nothing to fear. Happy Halloween!

Five scariest games to play this Halloween

CELEBRATE THE SEASON WITH SOME OF THE MOST TERRIFYING EXPERIENCES GAMING HAS TO OFFER

by Joey Ellsworth
Asst. Sports Editor

Spooky season is upon us, and nothing says “scary” like a well-made horror game. A successful mix of jump scares and an eerie atmosphere makes for an exhilarating experience that some of the best video games can deliver.

We take a look at my personal five scariest games I have played to get you ready for this Halloween.

5. ‘Inside the Backrooms’

“Inside the Backrooms” joins horror games such as “Phasmophobia,” “Dead by Daylight” and “Friday the 13th” as fun ones to enjoy with friends but, unlike most multiplayer horror games, truly scares its players.

“Inside the Backrooms” is one of several games that take after the locations and creatures detailed in The Backrooms community.

Players do not need to know about The Backrooms prior to playing the game, which will teach you about the creatures along the way as you explore the four levels, and if the horrifying creatures that roam the liminal spaces are not enough to scare you, “Inside the Backrooms” is VR compatible to make your experience that much more frightening.

We can anticipate seeing more from the game as it continues through the early release stages. The game is not expected to see its full release for another eight months. This specific game comes in as arguably the best of Backrooms games and is currently available on Steam at a low price of just \$4.99.

4. ‘Fears to Fathom’

The episodic psychological horror game, “Fears of Fathom,”

is one to write home about.

Unfortunately, only two of the five episodes are out, but the third will be released by the end of 2022.

The VHS film aesthetic and eerie atmosphere are the building blocks for the fear the game brings to its players. “Fears to Fathom” does an outstanding job of laying the groundwork early in its episodes. While things may feel initially slow, the terror comes at you hard with well-placed jump scares and realistic horror that players alone in the dark dread to even think about.

While the first episode was well-made, improvements and new features make the experience even more terrifying. This includes a lengthier episode, interactive NPCs and your voice being heard by those who lurk in the shadows when you hide.

Episodes one and two are the only ones available on Steam. Episode one is free to play, while the second is \$2.99.

3. ‘SCP: Containment Breach’

This comes as the only free game on the list. “SCP: Containment Breach” is severely lacking in several areas, which include graphics, story and the smoothness of AI.

While the game lacks in some areas, the price or lack thereof makes up for it. One thing the game does not lack is fear. The dangerous and anomalous creatures will undoubtedly keep you on edge with your life on the line at every turn. This game is especially ideal for those who follow or are active in the SCP community.

The game can be downloaded for free on Steam.

2. ‘Tattletail’

This game comes in as possibly the most surprising entry on this list but do not let the cute and nostalgic facade of “Tattletail” deceive you. This game is terrifying!

This short horror game has you playing as a child in the ‘90s who opens his Christmas present early to find a toy called Tattletail, which is heavily inspired by the popular 1990-2000s toy, Furbys. You must keep Tattletail out of trouble until Christmas day without letting its demonic “mama” catch you.

Unlike most horror games, “Tattletail” does not rely on jumpscare to put fear in its players. Instead, the game utilizes persistent fright in its atmosphere and gameplay to deliver terror that most games can only hope to accomplish.

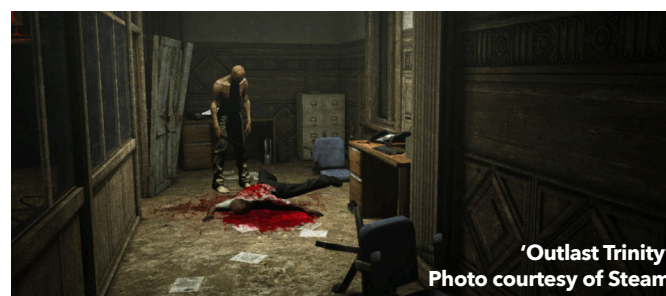
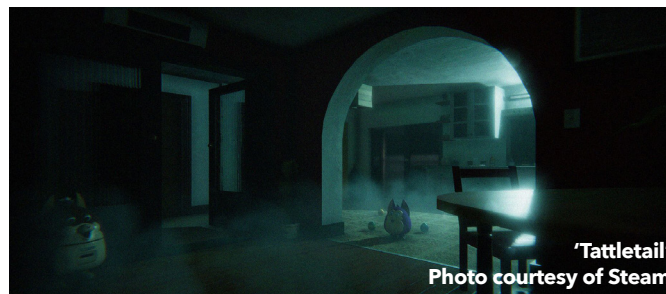
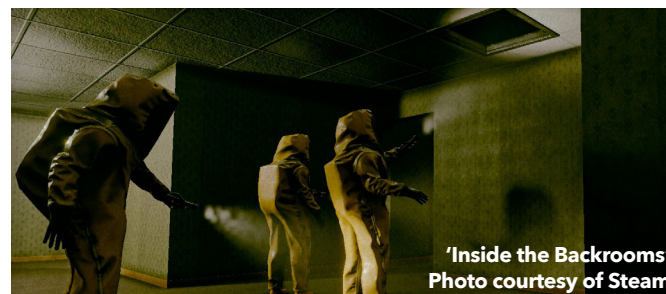
“Tattletail” is just \$4.99 on Steam and includes a free DLC.

1. ‘Outlast Trinity’

“Outlast Trinity” is a bundle of “Outlast,” “Outlast: Whistleblower DLC” and “Outlast 2.” The first and second Outlasts are very different experiences, but either is guaranteed to fill you with genuine fear.

The games have much to offer, from playing a journalist investigating horrific and mysterious events at a run-down psychiatric hospital to a different journalist stranded in a cultist mountain village trying to save his wife.

“Outlast Trinity” is currently on Steam, Playstation Store and the Xbox Games store.



Using exposure therapy to cure my fear of spiders

by Cat Beck
Staff Writer

One of the most common and well-known fears is arachnophobia: the fear of spiders. I am one of many people with this fear.

I would call myself an animal lover, and there are not many animals that I am afraid of. But there is something about spiders I cannot stomach. I want to like spiders, and they sound cool in theory. But every time I see one in person, alarms start going off in my head, saying “danger!” So I decided to try to overcome my fear once and for all.

I called Last Place on Earth Pet Shop in Charlotte and asked if they would let me come in and hold a tarantula. Sarah, the staff member I spoke with, agreed to help make that happen, and Jacob, a *Niner Times* photographer, came with me.

The tarantula Sarah had in mind was what she called one of the “safer ones.” I was unsure exactly what made the

others unsafe, but I did not ask. Later she explained that it was “safer” because it was slow and didn’t jump. I’m really glad I did not get one that jumps!

“Safer sounds good,” I said.

She told me to relax and that they could tell when you’re scared.

“The biggest thing is to not drop it,” she said. “So you should probably sit down.”

I sat cross-legged at the reptile area entrance and held my hands. Sarah set the tarantula’s cage on the floor next to me and scooped the spider into her hand.

“Nobody will be able to tell it’s not your hand if you want to back out now,” Jacob said. But I had come that far and did not plan on backing out.

The first thing I noticed was how light the tarantula was. The ends of its legs were sharp – not to the point of discomfort, but it was still surprising. Sarah said it was a curlyhair tarantula,

and upon closer inspection, I could see the delicate swoops in the fine hairs covering its legs and body.

As the spider slowly walked across my palm, a thin strand of webbing trailed behind it. I did not realize tarantulas could make webs. One of its front legs lifted into the air.

“Oh, he’s waving at me,” I said with a nervous laugh.

Then I noticed something strange about the tarantula’s legs and counted them again. Each side of its body had four legs, but near its mouth were two more “legs” about half as long.

“I see the eight legs,” I said, “but what are those shorter ones in the front?”

“Oh, you mean the fangs?”

Bad question.

It started to creep onto my wrist. Having it higher than my palm made me nervous, but Sarah assured me it wasn’t poisonous.

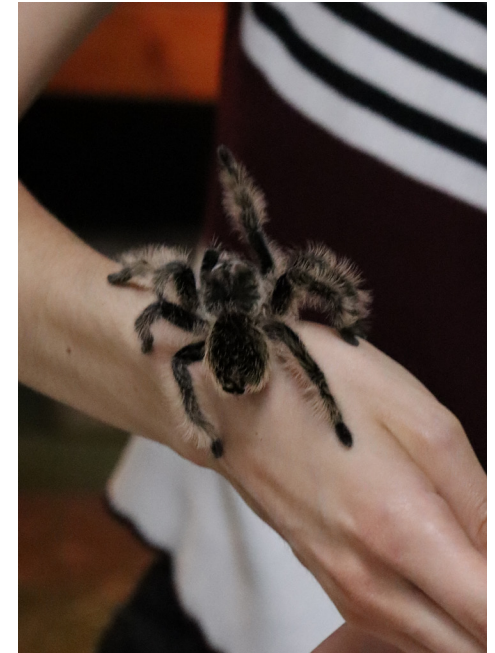
When I returned to my dorm, I looked it up out of curiosity. Poisonous things are dangerous if ingested; venomous things are dangerous when they bite or sting. Curlyhair tarantulas are venomous but not deadly, so Sarah technically was not lying. I wonder if she was worried I would drop the spider if I knew.

I was never at ease while holding the tarantula, but I did begin to feel a vague affection for it. The slow and deliberate movements of its delicate legs were actually kind of charming. It struck me how vulnerable this creature was; I was more of a threat to it than it was to me. The tarantula could not help that people were afraid of it.

Still, those fangs hovering just above my skin weren’t exactly reassuring. I told Sarah I was done and thanked her. She took the spider and put it back in its cage.

So, did it work? Is my fear cured?

I would be more comfortable holding a tarantula now that I have done it once,



Tarantula on Cat Beck’s hand
Photo by Jacob Scannell



Cat Beck faces her fear of spiders through exposure therapy
Photo by Jacob Scannell

but I do not think my fear of seeing a spider in front of me will go away soon.

That being said, while spiders still have not gained my trust, they have gained my admiration. I meant it when I said I felt a strange affection for the tarantula I held. Being able to admire the beauty and complexity of a creature is an experience worth having, even if it is scary. I would have to hold a lot more spiders before I stopped being scared of them, but despite the fear, I think spiders are pretty incredible.

My biggest takeaway from this experience is to have an open mind. Just because you are afraid to do something does not mean it is not worth doing. Who knows? Maybe you will gain a new appreciation for scary things if you face your fears.

Cozy gaming: Feel-good games to cuddle up with

by Annie Turk
Staff Writer

A name coined by gaming influencers, ‘cozy gaming’ is a blanket term for games that bring joy through wholesome and risk-free play. Typically targeted toward women and created by indie developers, the trend of cozy gaming has taken the gaming community by storm and is a gentle way of inviting non-gamers to play.

These games usually include a low risk for failure, simple game instructions, a welcoming environment and an aesthetic that allows users to focus on artistic and social engagement in a stress-free setting. This genre of games evokes feelings of comfort and satisfaction while targeting the needs of creativity and fantasy. The relaxed tempo and ability to play for either short or long periods may appeal to gamers who need a respite from the typical violence-filled and intense games that flood the gaming market today.

Many people embrace cozy gaming by creating a comfortable environment to play in. Since most cozy games tend to be single-player, it is easy to set up a safe space to play that fits your needs. Inspired by many cozy gamers on TikTok, a typical cozy gaming setup includes a cohesive color scheme, comfortable seating and a decluttered space. Many

players opt for a neutral color scheme to match all their gaming technology and accessories like mice and keyboards. There is also now a market for gaming console skins, essentially vinyl stickers that wrap around your device in pretty colors and designs to give your gaming console a fresh and unique look. While all of this is cool, all you need to start cozy gaming is your preferred gaming device, like a phone or laptop, and the games themselves. It is all about how you feel that makes cozy gaming different from hardcore gaming.

The gaming field is filled with new games labeled as cozy coming out all the time. The rise of the popularity of “Animal Crossing” in 2020 made many gaming developers finally understand the already present need for cozy gaming. Some games are available on most gaming consoles, but check where you can play before starting. Here are some recommendations of games that help satisfy all the criteria of a cozy game to get started:

‘Unpacking’

A game about a simple life milestone of unpacking after a move: this zen puzzle game invites the user to follow the story

of someone through eight moves while decorating the space and learning clues about their life through puzzles along the way. “Unpacking” is sure to please cozy gamers with its unique soundtrack and meditative gameplay.

‘Spiritfarer’

“Spiritfarer” is a cozy management game about dying. While that may sound morbid, you follow the journey of Stella, a Spiritfarer, by building a boat to explore the world and help care for spirits before they move on to the afterlife. Various activities like fishing, cooking, harvesting and crafting will help guide you through the emotional stories along the way.

‘Coffee Talk’

In “Coffee Talk,” you are an alternative-Seattle barista who listens to the problems of mythical customers while preparing them a drink with the ingredients on hand. This game allows players to learn about the humanity of people through role-playing gameplay.

‘Wytchwood’

“Wytchwood” is a crafting adventure game where fairytales and gothic fables

are real. While exploring the woods, you become a mysterious witch, where you will grow and collect magical ingredients for brewing. You can then cast enchantments on the characters and creatures you meet. The storybook art style and unique puzzles will immerse you in a mythical fantasy world.

‘Stardew Valley’

A cozy game where you get the chance to revitalize your grandfather’s farm you just inherited. Exploring caves, growing vast fields of crops, raising animals and even marrying the locals while becoming a part of the community is what makes “Stardew Valley” so appealing to cozy gamers. You get the opportunity to decorate, role-play and build in this all-in-one game that is perfect for both short and lengthy gaming sessions.

To get ready for some cozy gaming, change into comfortable clothes, find a comfy place to sit, turn off all harsh lights, turn on cute little lamps, or maybe even light a candle. Having a nice, warm drink and a snack at the ready are also essential, so find some time to decompress and start cozy gaming now.



‘Stardew Valley’
Photo courtesy of Steam

The history of pumpkin spice

by Katelyn Kerr
Contributor

It is what we wait all year for (well, some of us, at least). The perennial favorite: pumpkin spice. It is making its way back onto our shelves and into our hearts. The fall season is not complete without this highly contested blend spice, but do you know its origin story?

First and foremost, let's get something out of the way: pumpkin spice is actually a blend of different spices, including nutmeg, ginger, cinnamon and cloves.

The history of these spices goes back thousands of years. The oldest, nutmeg, can be traced back to Indonesia 3,500 years ago. Throughout history, these spices have been used for medicines and food. Cinnamon cured fevers, nutmeg treated flatulence and warmed ginger was believed to be an aphrodisiac. In culinary history, these spices were highly prized among members of the elite.

When discussing the history of spices, it is important to remember the spice trade and its ramifications on indigenous people. In the 1300s, European merchants made their way to the Banda Islands in what is now Indonesia. After this initial contact, the European merchants began trade routes to these islands for these highly coveted spices, no one more so than the Dutch East India Company. At one point, a pound of nutmeg was considered more valuable than gold. The Dutch presence in the Banda Islands resulted in the massacre and enslavement of indigenous Bandanese peoples. This is not to say you cannot enjoy your pumpkin spice lattes or the cinnamon you sprinkle on top of the pumpkin pies, but acknowledging the origin of the spices we use today is crucial.

Throughout their early history, the spices in pumpkin spice were mainly used as medicine and in food. In 1675, a British pumpkin pie recipe called for cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and pepper. In 1761 "The Practice of Cookery" listed an ingredient called "mixed spices," which included nutmeg, clove and Jamaican pepper.

But how did we end up with the bottles we see in the spice aisles? While recipes listed the four spices together, they would not be packaged together until 1934. The most prominent spice manufacturer at the time, McCormick & Company, came out with a new product called pumpkin pie spice. Previously, bakers had to buy the usual four spices separately, resulting in more expensive grocery trips and the ubiquitous wild goose chase when one grocery store ran out of a particular

spice. Packaging the spices together made baking easier. After McCormick & Company released their version of the spice blend, many other companies followed suit.

Today, pumpkin spice is a holiday staple. For many of us, the moment this spice makes its way back to store shelves and lattes marks the beginning of the holiday season. For some of us, it also marks the beginning of three months of tasting pumpkin-laced everything until you either become one or succumb to your fate of never escaping the pumpkin. Whatever relationship you have with pumpkin spice, you cannot deny it has a fascinating history.

Time warp: Halloween in the Victorian Age

by Katelyn Kerr
Contributor

"The essentials for a successful Halloween party are: a number of jolly young people brought together, an air of mystery pervading the gathering space, some good things to eat and a leader who knows the time-honored games of fate." Quoted from "Dennison's Bogie Book."

"Suggestions for Halloween Parties" sums up the rules for throwing a Halloween party, Victorian style. So, with Halloween right around the corner, let's have some fun doing the time warp and seeing how people celebrated the night of fright a hundred years ago.

Like most occasions in the Victorian Age, Halloween called for a party. However, parties in the early 1900s differed drastically from how we celebrate today. For starters, Victorian Halloween parties were not huge ragers with copious amounts of booze. Instead, parties were elaborate social events. Postcard invitations would be sent out weeks beforehand, with a detailed picture on the back and a rhyme or riddle on the front.

Take this rhyme as an example:

"Tho awful wails of ghost and sprite
And fearful sights infest the night
Don't be afraid o' the witches' power
But come at the appointed hour."

When you entered the place of the party, it would usually be completely dark. Victorians loved creating a vibe for Halloween. This meant that houses must be completely dark, only illuminated by the light of candles or jack-o'-lanterns. In addition to the spooky ambient lights, Victorians were big on handmade decorations. This was mainly due to the lack of industry; no manufacturing equals no mass-produced Halloween items. Instead, Victorians would make their decorations out of commonplace items like crepe paper or paper mache. Keeping with the DIY decor, people would also use natural materials to decorate, too. Dead tree branches and lots and lots of leaves were standard for creating a perfect Halloween table setting. In addition, often undesirable

parts of Victorian houses would be used to create a spooky atmosphere. Places like the laundry rooms would be transformed into creepy scenes to backdrop a lively party. However, the most coveted location for a Halloween party in 1922 was the barn. Similar to a big house with no parents, barns provided a place of mystery and excitement, adding to the spookiness of Halloween.

At these Victorian parties, the guests would partake in fortune-telling games. These games reflect the general attitudes toward Halloween. While we in 2022 associate the holiday with gore and consumerism, Victorians saw Halloween as a much more romantic affair. Halloween parties were one of the few places young people could flirt with one another without breaking social rules. Fortune-telling games at Halloween parties were played to predict things like love, luck and marriage. Tamer activities evolved into the parlor games played at Victorian house parties, whereas the more daring ones became cautionary tales told to scare the listeners. Popular

fortune games included apple paring, a game where the participants would peel an apple in one continuous motion and then throw the peels over their left shoulder. Afterward, the participants would look at the peels, and whatever letter they saw in them would be their future lover's letter. For a bit of Victorian Halloween fun, try playing Dumb Cake: a Halloween game where the players bake a cake in complete silence and whoever comes to eat a piece of cake first is supposedly your future lover. Warning: do not play with hungry roommates around.

So as we wrap up our blast from the past, let us remember the delightfully weird ways Victorians celebrated Halloween. While their traditions may seem antiquated or lame, some of their traditions are fun. Try taking a page out of the 1922 book this Halloween, you may end up enjoying it, or you may end up summoning a Victorian ghost. Either way, your night will be ghoulishly cool.

Must-do activities in Charlotte this fall

by Annie Turk
Staff Writer

Charlotte is making a comeback from COVID-19 this year in terms of entertainment and fun things to do around the city. With so many different events and activities set to happen this fall, there is sure to be something you and your friends can check out!

SCarowinds

The Carolinas' largest Halloween event is back. SCarowinds transforms the theme park into a dark and scary haunted property that will get your adrenaline pumping. Horror-filled mazes, terrifying creatures and exciting live entertainment are included in your adventure to the park. Scarowinds is open on select dates now through Oct. 30.

Carolina Renaissance Festival

Time travel back to the Renaissance in the 29th annual Carolina Renaissance Festival. This immersive outdoor experience includes the Village of Fairhaven and an open-air artisan market where you can find arts and crafts, games and rides, jousting knights on horseback,

falconry, mythical creatures and more. The Renaissance Festival will be on Saturdays and Sundays through Nov. 20.

BayHaven Food & Wine Festival at Camp North End

Help support and celebrate Charlotte's Black culinary experts while learning about cooking and enjoying great food. The BayHaven Food & Wine Festival was created to raise awareness of Black culinary experts and develop opportunities for hospitality industry newcomers. The second annual event will be held from Oct. 19-23.

Charlotte Hornets

Basketball season is back in full swing, which means eating buckets of popcorn while watching the Charlotte Hornets at the Spectrum Center. Try going to one of their themed nights for even more fun. Sometimes, the Hornets host a college night where students get tickets at a discounted rate, so follow them on social media for announcements.

Fall concerts

Various musical artists like Lizzo, Stevie Nicks and Greta Van Fleet are performing in Charlotte this fall. So if you want to enjoy the weather, try listening to a new artist at one of Charlotte's outdoor venues like the Charlotte Metro Credit Union Amphitheatre or PNC Music Pavilion right down the road from campus.

Uptown Farmers Market

Open every Saturday, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. until Dec. 10, the Uptown Farmers Market is filled with vendors selling locally grown fresh foods that help support our community and educate people on how to eat more healthily and sustainably. Pick up some fresh fruits and vegetables from the local farmers or browse the selection of the finest meat, poultry and seafood in town. There is something for everyone to enjoy with a variety of specialty vendors, including florists, bakeries, artisan good makers and even food trucks.

Carrigan Farms

Located in Mooresville, Carrigan Farms has all the fall-themed activities you can imagine, including pumpkin picking on the farm, visiting the petting zoo or going on a hayride. On select October nights, the farm mutates into Scarrigan Farms, where you will find a haunted trail that will have you sleeping with one eye open. The farm also offers some fall fan favorites from apple cider donuts, slushies and cider using apples grown on the property.

Rural Hill Amazing Maize Maze

From now until Nov. 5, you can wander through one of the largest corn mazes in the Southeast. Located in Huntersville at Historic Rural Hill, the Amazing Maize Maze is spread out across seven acres of corn. This perfect fall activity is available day and night, but try not to get lost!

College Halloween costume ideas

by Emily Kottak
Arts & Culture Editor

Let's be honest; dressing up is not just for kids. College students love dressing up too, though it is often on a budget. Whether you are opting for a group, couple or solo costume, here are some easy ideas.

Group costumes

1. Disney princesses: Dressing up as Disney princesses is a great option for a group costume. You can easily find options on Amazon for this. There are so many ways to dress as these characters and have all your friends participate.

2. 'Scooby Doo': Dressing up as "Scooby Doo" characters is perfect for a group of four or five. Whoever dresses as Scooby can get a dog onesie and either purchase or DIY the collar.

3. 'Wizard of Oz'

4. 'Toy Story'

5. Mario characters: This could be taken in various ways depending on the characters you choose. However, the best options would be Mario, Luigi, Peach, Daisy, Yoshi and Bowser.

Couple costumes

1. Clark Kent and Lois Lane
2. Firefighter and dalmatian
3. Anakin and Padme
4. Corona beer and lime
5. Cookie Monster and a cookie
6. Cosmo and Wanda from 'Fairly Odd Parents'
7. Mike Wazowski and Sully from 'Monsters Inc'

General ideas

1. Zombie

2. Bratz Doll

3. Damian from 'Mean Girls'

4. Tinkerbell

5. Football player

6. Scarecrow

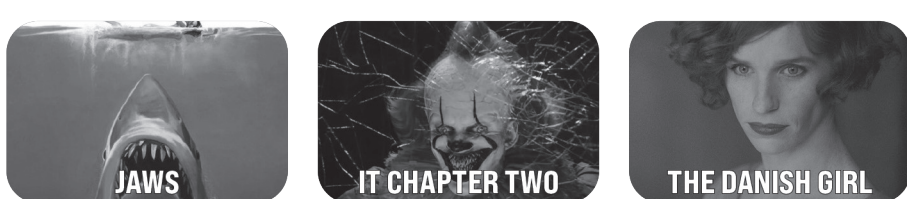
7. M&M

8. Minion

9. Cereal killer: This one is a punny costume. All you need is a white tee shirt, fake blood and mini cereal boxes. Then, splatter the fake blood on the shirt and tape the small cereal boxes all over it.

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The overrated and underrated things about fall

by Bethany Ivan
Asst. Arts & Culture Editor

We can now finally say that autumn is upon us. The temperature is getting cooler; the leaves are changing to a beautiful red, yellow and orange, finally breaking out our cozy and trendy clothes and, of course, the return of the spooky season.

Though we can celebrate the return of some fall trends, clothes, food and movies, as well as welcome new ones, some things about fall are either overly praised or not appreciated enough.

Here is a list of things about fall that I think are either overrated or underrated.

Overrated

Pumpkin spice everything

I think we are going a little overboard with everything being pumpkin spice flavored. As a pumpkin spice lover myself, it may be an autumn classic as the taste is sweet and the smell is soothing, but it is also a little basic. Eating pumpkin spice pastries and drinking pumpkin spice flavored coffee is delicious but let me make one thing clear: to get it as a coffee flavor or as a pastry is one thing, but to get it as a flavor of popcorn, a chocolate bar or as a cup of ramen noodles, that is where I need to draw the line. Everything does not have to be pumpkin spiced flavored for it to be fall!



Cheesy fall Instagram captions

Every time I am scrolling through Instagram and I see fall photos with those cheesy fall Instagram captions such as, “I’m fall-ing for you,” “Sweater weather,” “Hay there” or “Pumpkin spice and everything nice.” The cute play on words may be clever, but I think they are overused and unoriginal.

Going to a pumpkin patch

Going to a pumpkin patch may have been fun as a kid and for some people, it may be a tradition to go to a pumpkin patch and pick out the biggest or smallest pumpkin that they can find. Now, I think it is just for the aesthetic rather than just picking out a pumpkin to carve.



Black and red flannel

The black and red flannel may be comfy, but it is like everyone is wearing one or at least trying to get their hands on one. It is like I am looking at a clone of someone! On the other hand, if someone is thinking about getting a black and red flannel, has it ever occurred to anyone to try and wear it in a new way? Maybe that is something we should try for a change.

Apple pie

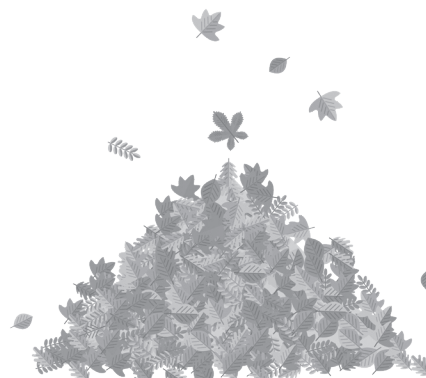
Apple pie is a delicious dessert that is enjoyed by all, especially if it is homemade or topped off with vanilla ice cream. But it is the fact that I can get it year-round, especially at any local fast food restaurant for a quick dessert or snack. Also, it is on almost everyone’s dessert menu for Thanksgiving.

Underrated ‘Hocus Pocus’

For those who do not know, this movie is about teenager and Salem newcomer Max, his younger sister Dani and his crush, Allison. The three visit the Sanderson Sisters’ house, who were three infamous witches from Salem many years ago. Max, as a joke, lights the Black Flame candle, which resurrects the Sanderson Sisters only for one night. As they come back to life, the sisters are determined to accomplish their plan: steal the lives of the children of Salem to remain young and beautiful and live forever. Yes, the movie may constantly play on Freeform and is referenced throughout the spooky season. Still, it is a fun and hilarious Halloween movie with a whole musical number that is really iconic!

Making leaf piles and jumping in them

Remember when we were kids, and our parents would rake up leaves into a pile in the backyard, and we would jump in those leaf piles? Honestly, I do not think you’re ever too old to rake up some leaves into a pile and just jump in them, for old-times’ sake! Just please be safe when doing so. But afterward, will you end up with leaves in your hair and all over your clothes? Yes, but it will be worth it!



‘The Nightmare Before Christmas’

Another movie played on Freeform that is referenced many times throughout the spooky season, but what is not to like? You get catchy songs, a haunting yet really cool storyline, and on top of that, the movie is both a Halloween and Christmas movie, which I think is a plus, all from the mind of Tim Burton!

Crew neck sweaters

These sweaters are one of my go-to articles of fall clothing, and of course, they serve their purpose of keeping me warm. To me, they can be cute and stylish, no matter what the style is: casual, baggy or formal. Honestly, anyone can make it work!



Thanksgiving

How can we forget about Thanksgiving? As soon as it hits Nov. 1, most people skip right to Christmas. We may be able to see our families on Christmas, but I see Thanksgiving as not only a time to be thankful but as another opportunity to see our loved ones, catch up and spend time with them, and of course, enjoy the delicious food everyone has made and brought to dinner.

'Gilmore Girls' fall episodes

THE TOP 10 EPISODES TO BINGE WATCH THIS FALL

by Jade Suszek
Asst. Photo Editor

“Gilmore Girls” is a television series from 2000 to 2007 with 23 Emmy wins. The television show ran on the CW network and is now available to stream on Netflix.

It features mother Lorelai Gilmore (Lauren Graham) and daughter Rory Gilmore (Alexis Bledel) in the small town of Stars Hollow. The series follows them through the ups and downs of ordinary life. Stars Hollow is a small town about an hour from Hartford, Conn. It is filled with some very interesting townsfolk and town traditions. Some traditions include festivals like the Autumn Festival, the 24-hour Dance-a-thon and the Festival of Living Art.

With the leaves changing colors and the temperature cooling down, it is a perfect time to snuggle up with hot apple cider and play some of the most memorable fall episodes of the series. These are my favorite fall-themed “Gilmore Girls” episodes.

10. Season 5 Episode 2, 'A Messenger, Nothing More'

Lorelai and Rory's relationship is strained, and they try to find new ground. The Cider Mill Opening Day Parade occurs and features children dressed as apples.

9. Season 6 Episode 6, 'Welcome to the Dollhouse'

Stars Hollow undergoes renovation to bring the town back to its creation and change back to the original street names from when it was founded. The episode is full of fall decorations and colorful leaves.

8. Season 6 Episode 7, 'Twenty-One is the Loneliest Number'

Rory's 21st birthday celebration is bitter since she and Lorelai are not on speaking terms. However, her grandma throws a lavish party to celebrate.

7. Season 3 Episode 8, 'Let the Games Begin'

Rory and Lorelai go on a college tour of Yale with Rory's grandparents. The tour did

not go as expected, but it did encompass perfect fall weather on their stroll.

6. Season 7 Episode 18, 'Hay Bale Maze'

The town selectman organized a Hay Bale Maze that encapsulated the entire town. In the maze, some unexpected revelations exist for some characters.

5. Season 4 Episode 9, 'Ted Koppel's Big Night Out'

The biggest football game of the season: Yale vs. Harvard. Rory goes with her grandparents to root for Yale, their alma mater, in style, especially during tailgating. Team spirit and cold weather fill the air in this episode.

4. Season 2 Episode 4, 'The Road Trip to Harvard'

A split-second change in plans lets the Gilmores tour Harvard. Rory sneaks into a class lecture, making her even more excited to attend university soon.

3. Season 3 Episode 7, 'They Shoot Gilmores, Don't They'

The annual 24-hour dance marathon ensues. Lorelai is determined to win, especially with her daughter by her side. Participants dress in vintage wardrobes, all around a light-hearted episode full of fun.

2. Season 1 Episode 7, 'Kiss and Tell'

The Autumn Festival is in full swing in Stars Hollow. The entire town is decorated with pumpkins, and leaves cover the ground. During the festival, a rumor spreads quickly about Rory and makes its way back to Lorelai faster than expected.

1. Season 5 Episode 7, 'You Jump, I Jump, Jack'

Rory discovers a secret society at Yale called the Life and Death Brigade. High jinx pursues, and Rory learns to be in Omnia Paratus, ready for anything.



'Gilmore Girls' on Netflix
Photo by Jade Suszek

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