

■ Video game review

# Trick-or-geeking: A gamer's night in

A slew of classic and contemporary video games offer bloody alternatives to typical fright-night fares

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PULSE REPORTER

What up, nerds? Have any big plans for Halloween? Me neither. Here are some games to play on Halloween to fight boredom while you're dispensing candy to little kids.

"Resident Evil 4" (GameCube, PlayStation 2): "Resident Evil" games suck. Their controls are clunky, their inventory system is archaic and their combat is only passable. "Resident Evil 4," on the other hand, is one of the greatest games ever made. In "RE4," Capcom addressed all of the above complaints and created a frighteningly good game. If you haven't played "RE4" because you don't have a GameCube, fear not. This week saw the release of the PS2 version. Go get it, now.

A Castlevania game (Various): One of the earliest successful titles that combined horror and games. All gamers have their favorite "Castlevania." Some say that nothing beats the original, others claim that "Symphony of the Night" is the best. I'm partial to "Dracula X."

"System Shock 2" (PC): One part RPG, one part FPS and all pants-changing scary. In "System Shock 2," you wake up from cryogenic sleep on the Von Braun, a corpse-ridden, derelict spaceship. You must explore the ship to find out what exactly happened to it. This game's use of sound is its greatest strength. There's nothing scarier than the pained wail of a feral lab monkey.

"Super Ghouls 'N Ghosts" (Super Nintendo): In this side-scrolling classic, King Arthur fights the Hallmark versions of all sorts of stereotypical scary imagery: Ghosts, gargoyles, zombies, werewolves, etc.

"Doom 3" (PC, Xbox): When played with the lights off and the sound up, "Doom 3" will make you jump. Set on a cramped Mars space station, the game pits you against the same onslaught of demons that the first two Doom games did, but this time there's a catch. Apparently, soldiers of the future can't hold a gun and a flashlight at the same time, so players have to choose between shooting and seeing in the game's pitch dark environments. "Doom 3" is a great game when it comes to those "Where the &\$%@ did you come from?" scares, but after a few hours it gets old.

"Alone in the Dark" (PC): A survival horror game made before there was a survival horror genre. This H. P. Lovecraft-inspired original spawned three sequels as well as an absolutely horrible movie that starred Christian Slater and Tara Reid.

"Luigi's Mansion" (GC): Luigi, proof that there is nepotism in gaming, thinks he's a Ghostbuster in this early title for the GameCube. It's a great-looking game with some fun mechanics, and it really shows off the sorts of special effects that the GameCube can pull off. But the game's short playtime and lack of true innovation cements Luigi's position as second fiddle to his brother Mario in video game history.

"Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem" (GC): A standard survival horror game with a twist, "Eternal Darkness" features an insanity meter that introduces all sorts of weird effects. Blood will drip down the walls; you'll hear voices whispering. The game's most devious trick is when it tries to convince you that the game needs to be reset. If you do reset the system you'll lose all your unsaved progress.

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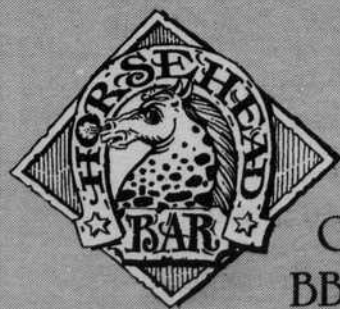
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