Super Scary Story Online

I was always a big fan of the horror genre. Ever since I was a kid, it always interested me. It probably had something to do with my unrestricted internet access, but nonetheless, I remember being very attached to all things spooky. I was a huge fan of Halloween and took every opportunity to dress up in a costume and go trick-or-treating. I wasn't very social, and still aren't, but it didn't bother me when it came to Halloween. I went out every year until my mom told me I was simply too old. I was bitter, but I didn't end up going a single year after that.

I started watching horror movies much more often and reading scary stories on the internet. The internet is a vast place filled with all kinds of information, so it was very comforting knowing people with the same infatuations as I exist out there. Strangers post stories for readers to find. It became a guilty pleasure. My close friends and family know of my interests, but they would never really understand the way all those horror fans online do.

It was 01:00am on a Monday and I had just finished an important assignment that I ended up doing last minute. Not smart, but it's definitely not the last time I'll be doing that. I decided to unwind by finding a good story to read before bed. I stumbled upon a pretty old website forum, seemingly made in the early 2000s and not updated since, but the community seemed sort of active, so I gave it a try. In the end, one story caught my eye. It was by a user named Willowtree66. I tapped "Read more" and immersed myself in it.

By the time I had finished, I was amazed! The simplicity, the descriptions of fear, anticipation, and the unexpected twist had all formed a beautiful story with such an original plot. I'd never been so thrilled by an internet scary tale before. I tapped on the account of the user and saw there was a message option underneath. I thought that there would be no harm in a compliment, so I sent Willowtree66 a simple:

> *"Hi! I loved your story from the 5th of November."*

Then, I shut off my phone. I had an early class and I didn't want to miss the revising for my exam next week. Oddly enough, I had a very nice dream I couldn't remember when I woke up.

The next morning, I checked the website and saw no new messages. I went about my day and was just in time for my class. My day went by quick, so I got home and started doing some work. I was studying pretty late, when I heard my phone chime. I thought it might be too late for a text from a friend, so I checked. New messages from Willowtree66, it said. I opened up the chat to: "hello... thank you very much." It brought a smile to my face knowing they appreciated it, so I continued the conversation, praising their vocabulary and ability to make my skin crawl. I'm not known to get creeped out very easily, but they really hit the spot. I added that I was

a very self-indulgent horror fan and I'd love to see more. They shyly thanked me some more, nothing out of the ordinary, and welcomed me to read their other stories, which I accepted with ease.

> *"self-indulgent…? very interesting. i suppose i could say the same. horror is my escape from the boring, sad outside world. there's beauty in invoking fear in others through a simple story. fear is a powerful tool."*

I'm not gonna lie, I was a little off-put. But then again, I am also a bit of a weirdo. I do relate to the notion of the real world being quite boring, especially for an introverted college student like me. I suddenly sensed a deep loneliness within them that I certainly could identify with. I agreed and they seemed to cheer up a bit. We ended up chatting much longer than planned and I lost track of time. It was already 03:00am and I decided to call it quits. I said my goodbyes to Willowtree66 (or Willow, they said they prefer) and promised to read their other stories tomorrow. I fell into a dreamless slumber.

The next day, I read their other stories and they were all just as great. We texted more and more often and I started ditching sleep just to speak to them. The conversations often took a deep turn and we agreed on many things in life. They told me they were struggling with their physical health these days and that scary stories helped them cope. I didn't pry further, but who knew that I'd meet such a person over a horror forum. I never once considered they would be a creep or a pervert or something. They seemed like a very intelligent individual and I thought that there was no harm in just talking and discussing movies, books, or ideas. I even brought up that I'd thought about writing my own horror story or two. They enthusiastically supported the idea and even offered to help. I said I'd think about it.

Despite bonding so incredibly well with Willow, I started forgetting about schoolwork and missing assignments more and more. I skipped study sessions and lost sleep just to chat with Willow for hours about anything and everything. It reached the breaking point when my grades began to drop. I was obviously worried, but I also didn't want to stop speaking to Willow. In the end, it was clear what I should do. That's why I told Willow that I wouldn't be online anymore, at least until I fix my grades or otherwise.

I saw a little *Willowtree66 is typing…* bubble pop up before disappearing. I apologized many times but got no answer. I decided to try again the next day, but I wasn't sure, since they only respond in the evening or night.

The next day, nothing.

Tried again, but still nothing.

After a week, I gave up. I slept uneasily and kept tossing and turning in my sheets.

I got back to my old routine and did my best to fix the damage to my grades, but I ended up always glancing at my phone during the night before remembering that Willow and I lost contact.

Even when I could finally get some sleep, it was always fitful, with no dreams.

It was around 03:00am on a Monday. Right before finals week. A very, very stressful time. I was last-minute studying a lot of material because I really wanted to ace this to the best of my ability. Suddenly, I hear my phone chime. I wondered if it was one of my friends, but a subconscious part of me knew what I was really hoping for. I unlock my phone to see "Willowtree66 has shared a new post". I quickly opened the website to read it. I tapped "Read more". Slowly, my eyes went wide with shock.

> *"hello. today is my last day here. or anywhere, for that matter. i am not sorry for what i'm going to do, so there's no need to feel sorry for me either. i am posting the last story i'll ever write. it's not very good, but i hope you enjoy it"*

Intense guilt washed over me. I thought about trying to help somehow, texting them or calling 911, but I just couldn't stop reading the story that came after.

> *"Rory loved Halloween. Every year he would go trick or treating. He had no friends to trick or treat with, but he was fine with that. He loved horror movies. He had no friends to watch them with, but he was fine with that.*

…Did I ever tell them my name? We talked so much, but surely I would've…

> *When Rory went to college, he moved into an apartment exactly 4.2 kilometers away and had to go by bus. He was a decent student, but with some quirks, like drinking coffee with lots of sugar or insomnia that kept coming back even if he took the medication he was prescribed.*

I can excuse a mistake like my name, but this is weirdly specific. Maybe I complained about the distance from my college sometime during our talks? Maybe I told them about my insomnia? All of a sudden, I can't seem to remember anything we ever talked about.

> *One day, he made fast friends with someone online. A troubled individual, but they were kind and warm and the two of them got along so nicely. Sometimes, he even wondered who the person was. Who they were behind the screen. Who they were behind the suit of flesh they wore.*

My mouth felt dry like cotton and the tips of my fingers were icy.

> *Rory was getting bad grades because he was so deeply memorized by the individual. He wanted a glimpse into the gore, blood, and bone they were made of. All the good and bad. Still, he valued the filthy human chores of capitalist slavery more than this individual. He left. And just like that, he had made his bed.*

Made my bed…?

> *One normal Monday, Rory was sitting on his bed with his legs tangled in the bedsheets, his laptop next to him on 13% battery power. He was reading a*

very interesting story. Little did he know, he had made his bed. He started to feel scared.

I couldn't believe what the hell I was reading. I was hesitant and frankly terrified, I told myself I was dealing with a stalker, hacker, or whatever. But something in me knew this was much more dangerous. I reached for my laptop slowly, as if I were to make a wrong move it would catch fire, and hovered my mouse over the battery percentage.

13%

My breath hitched and my gaze shot up to look around my bedroom. Nothing was out of place. I went to call the police. I opened the Contacts app, but my phone glitched. I tried again, a bit frantic. It only opened the tab with Willowtree66's story again.

He tried to call the police, or anyone else, but he just couldn't stop reading the story. Unfortunate. Next, he looked outside his window, but nobody he could notice was there.

My heart was beating rapidly inside my chest. How did they know I would…? No, logically anyone would go and call the police. They couldn't really know this beforehand. I dropped my phone onto the bed and rushed over to my window. It was closed with the blinds rolled down, so I opened them to check outside. It was pitch black and only the streetlight illuminated the side of the building. Not a soul in sight, just like the story said. I pulled the blinds back down and went to pick up my phone. I thought about trying to call the authorities again, but my phone had glitched out completely. The screen only displayed the remaining story.

The only reasonable option was to ask the neighbors for help. Someone is clearly stalking me. What if they get inside the building, or something? What's even worse is this unexplainable sinking feeling in my stomach that they just know. I shook it off and quickly walked to the front door. My hand gripped the handle, but when I tried to push it open, it was jammed. I tried again, and again, pushing and kicking. I slid down to the floor with my back against the door, my phone still in hand. I knew what I had to do, but my throat had closed up and I felt like I was going to die.

Rory tried to pry the door open, but it was useless. He sat down, trembling with dread. He then heard footsteps in the hall outside his apartment. Long strides, with heavy boots.

When my gaze stopped following the text, I heard it. The steps. My heart jumped and I sat up quickly. Stumbling, I took off to the kitchen. I grabbed a knife from a drawer and ran over to the large closet placed opposite my bed. I hid inside and closed the door. I glanced at the knife gripped in my shaking hands. Then at my phone.

Rory took something to protect himself with and hid. Where did Rory hide? Maybe in the kitchen cabinets? Maybe under the tablecloth? Maybe behind the shower curtain?

I could hear the steps getting closer. The door to the bedroom opened, and I slapped a hand over my mouth to quiet down my hysterical breaths.

Maybe under the bed?

They were inside.

Maybe in the closet?

Bingo.

And that's how Rory died. He was so scared."

I sobbed. The closet door opened. I couldn't see them in the dark. My phone fell out of my hands. I tried to fight them, but they were much stronger. They grabbed my hand and kicked me. I lost my grip on the knife.

They hugged me. They pressed their cold cheek against mine. I could feel them breathing on my neck. I could feel the tears streaming down my face. I was completely frozen.

They pulled out a pistol and placed the muzzle of the gun against the side of their head. Their other hand pressed our cheeks together harder.

The trigger went off.

- *This story was posted by Willowtree66 (3 seconds ago)*

Ema Žulić, 1.G2