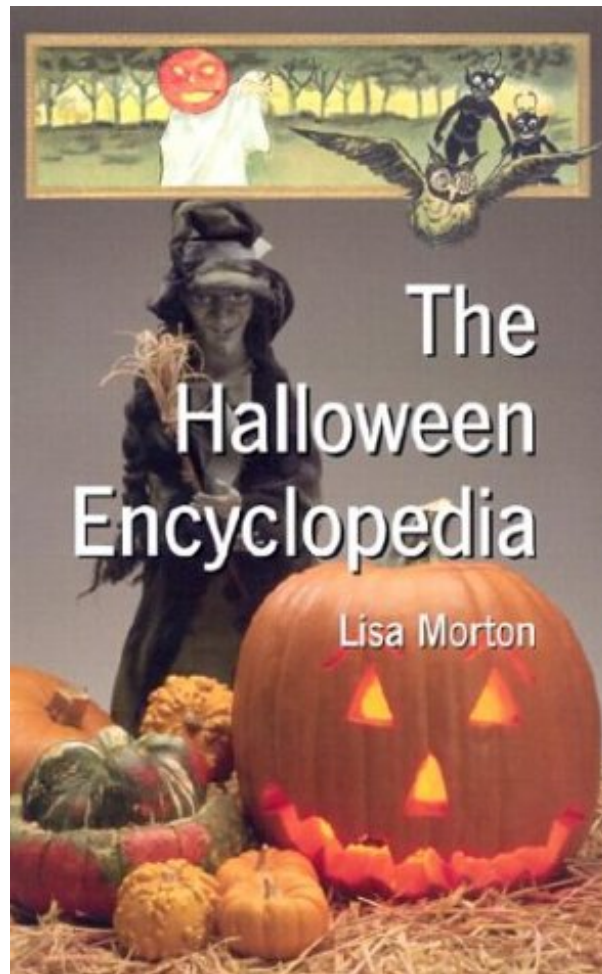
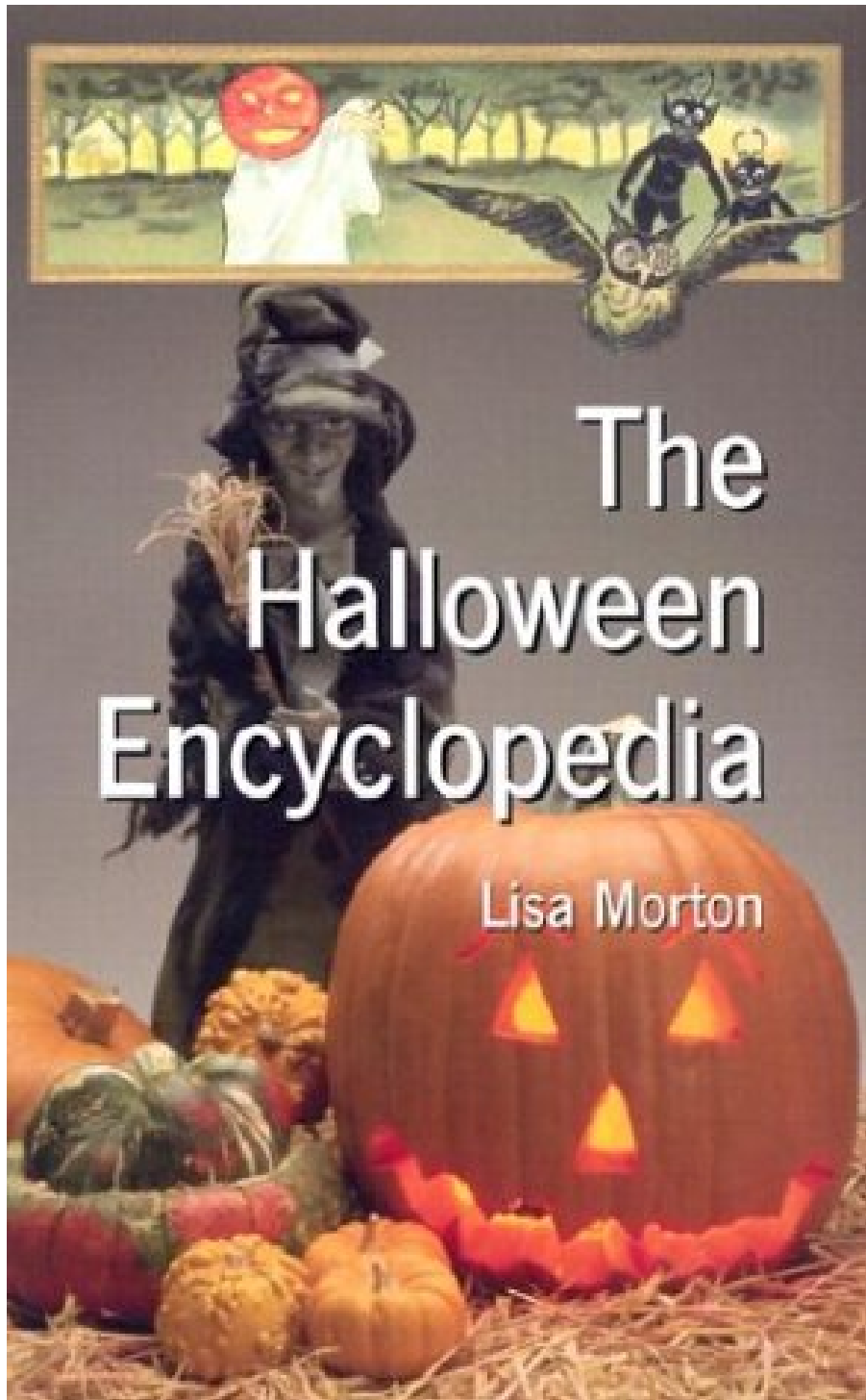


THE HALLOWEEN ENCYCLOPEDIA BY LISA MORTON



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From Booklist

Several hundred A-Z entries cover the history, folklore, symbols, rituals, artifacts, and activities of Halloween. Morton's research extends to Wiccan lore, Celtic observances, and Christian mythology, including the Mexican celebration of the Day of the Dead. She writes enthusiastically about folk customs and is sensitive to the controversies surrounding horror literature, witchcraft, and demonism. Without undue pedantry, she explains the house-to-house souling pilgrimage, the incorporation of cabbages in Scottish holidays, the source of the boogeyman in bogs, and the lengthy training of Druid priests in predicting the future. Contributing to data are detailed photos and line drawings--players enjoying a fireside game of snap-apple, an illustration from the Luttrell Psalter, a cook preparing holiday eggs, children around a bonfire. A lengthy entry on Guy Fawkes Day, which absorbed many Halloween traditions, includes a detailed history, an engraving of the gunpowder conspirators, descriptions of regional variations, and the texts of several popular rhymes.

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THE HALLOWEEN ENCYCLOPEDIA BY LISA MORTON PDF

The concept of Halloween as a holiday and cultural phenomenon worthy of serious study is only a few decades old, and only since the mid-1980s have scholars started to accept that Halloween's place in modern society (especially in American society) deserves more attention than it has received in horror fiction and children's books. The first book devoted solely to Halloween was published just over a century ago, and now, Halloween has its own encyclopedia. Major entries include Samhain, the Celtic ancestor of Halloween; witches, a major Christian addition to the mythology of Halloween and one that still generates interest and controversy; skeletons, a universally recognized symbol of death; the Day of the Dead, the Mexican holiday that is often compared to Halloween; the jack-o'-lantern, which has its roots in folktales starring the rascally Jack who always manages somehow to beat the Devil; and trick-or-treating, the most loved and misunderstood American Halloween ritual. Hundreds of small entries cover Halloween history and mythology, fortune-telling lore, harvest legends, and 20th century additions to the holiday's rituals.

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- 240 pages

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- Used Book in Good Condition

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Very satisfied

By Stephen Maxwell

Nearly brand new library copy!

20 of 24 people found the following review helpful.

A delightful collection of Halloween lore

By M. G. SFAELLOU

I enjoyed this book very much. It is a sound scholarly work and even though it has all the meticulous research to appeal to serious folklorists, it will also be of interest to the general reader. Apart from the main dictionary entries, there are also two appendices (appendix 1 contains a chronology of Halloween and appendix 2 discusses how Halloween has been portrayed in literature and the arts - the cinema is included). In addition, the author provides us with a rich bibliography of mainly academic works as well as a useful index.

Halloween has long been a popular festival in Western Christendom. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, the equivalent remembrances for the souls of the dead occur on the 'psychosavvata' or 'soul Saturday'; yet these take place in spring (like the ancient Greek 'Antheseria', the entry for which is to be found on p.13). It is not surprising therefore that this book contains details about customs from mainly Catholic countries. Many of these ethnic customs and traditions relate to certain countries such as Mexico (e.g. 'El Dia do los Muertes' or the Day of the Dead)and the Celtic cultures, especially the Irish , Scottish and Welsh. Indeed there are many entries that pertain to terms from these aforementioned cultures. However, in some of the longer entries, traditions from some other countries are also recorded. For instance, in the fascinating entry on All Souls Day we are informed about distinct celebrations from various European countries such as Poland, Italy, Portugal and Germany etc.

There are, however, just a few constructive observations that could be made about certain very minor errors(which in no way detract from the exceptional quality of this book). For instance, in a few of the foreign language terms, especially those taken from Celtic languages, there could perhaps have been slightly more thorough editing. For instance, the Welsh 'hwch du gwta' mentioned on p. 166 as the 'black sow' is in

fact the black tailless sow and the middle word should be 'ddu'(pronounced as the archaic English word 'thee') and not 'du' (even though the Welsh word 'du' does indeed mean 'black', the word in this context should undergo a mutation and thus be 'ddu'). On the subject of the Welsh black tailless sow, the equally important Halloween ghost from Wales called the 'ladi wen' (white lady) was not mentioned. Moreover, the reference to the 'tylweth teg' should read 'tylwyth teg' (i.e. 'fair people' - one of several Welsh names for the fairies). The Irish word for fairy is 'si' (with an accent called a 'fada' on the 'i') whereas the author uses the outmoded spelling of 'sidhe'.

From the fellow-Celtic land of Cornwall, there is an interesting but too concise entry on 'Allantide'. Here the reference to the 'Allan apples' does not connect these particular apples to the ritual of (Cornish) girls placing them under their pillows to inspire a dream of their future spouses (alluded to on p.16). This detail could easily have been cross-referenced to both the excellent entry on 'bobbing for apples' and perhaps to the equally interesting entry on 'fortune telling'.

Something else that is of interest in this book is the frequent conflation that is apparent between Halloween and Christmas. Prof. Jack Santino (for whom there is actually an entry) referred to Halloween as the 'Irish Christmas'. Indeed, there is much in common between the two festivals in several cultures, not only in Ireland. This is why we can notice common traditions such as the Christmas game of 'snapdragon' also being played at Halloween. Other common customs can be seen in the entries on 'belsnickling', 'mumming', 'hogmanay', 'mistletoe' and 'strawboys' (the strawboys also feature in Irish weddings). Another noteworthy feature is the wise inclusion of Guy Fawkes Night/Bonfire Night (November 5th). Even though the 'Guy' (effigy) was not burnt in the original fires after the 1605 Gunpowder Plot (this custom was introduced a couple of centuries later), the bonfire on November 5th gradually replaced the earlier bonfires that had formerly been lit at Halloween. This book provides a wealth of fascinating information and opens up so many interesting questions about Halloween - both old and new. It is my favourite title about this celebration and I thoroughly recommend it!>

P.S. I am pleased to see that this wonderful work has been appreciated by other readers and that it has already been reprinted. In future editions (that is if the publisher is willing) I recommend that the work be further enhanced by the inclusion of a few more entries: e.g. the Lebanese festivities for Eid il Burbara. While these traditions concern St Barbara's day (4th December) they share many common elements with Halloween (fancy dress, trick or treating and pumpkins, etc).

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Halloween's Goblin Universe Disenchanted

By The Wingchair Critic

Like Jacqueline Simpson and Steve Roud's 'A Dictionary of English Folklore' ((2000), Lisa Morton's 'The Halloween Encyclopedia' (2003) represents a factually sound but poetically reductive examination of its subject. Both books sacrifice an inherent sense of wonder in the name of scholarly and/or academic respectability, with fairly sterile results, unlike, for instance, comparable works by British historian Ronald Hutton. The tone of Morton's text would be equally suitable to a handbook on carpentry or automobile repair.

Morton's approach is doubly underscored by the unenthusiastic, almost parsimonious, design of the book: with very few exceptions, the illustrations, all of which are in black and white, are disappointing, uninviting, and indefinite representations of their subjects. Considering the thousands of illuminating and visionary Halloween graphics available, those included suggest that Morton has little visual imagination whatsoever, and thus a probable weakness for interpreting the holiday's symbology.

Importantly, Morton's visual failing crosses over to the book's text: for example, in several entries, Morton expresses perplexity about the meaning and relevance of scarecrows at Halloween: "The popularity of scarecrows as a Halloween symbol is something of an anomaly, since scarecrows are not practical in late

October, when crops have already been harvested." One might as well ask why images of snow and snowmen play such a large part in traditional Christmas iconography.

Morton clearly understands--at least intellectually--that Halloween has undeniable agrarian roots and is partially a celebration of harvest; thus she should perceive that the scarecrow, on one level, represents the "autumn other" who, by proxy, presides like a vigilant demi-god over the stages of the agricultural cycle, which, of course, have traditionally culminated with Halloween. On the most basic level, scarecrows and snowmen are simply personifications of the seasons and holiday each represents. But, as human doppelgangers composed largely of vegetable matter, scarecrows are also 'betwixt and between' liminal figures of the highest order.

Throughout the book, Morton's commentary often suggests that she is and always has been an urban dweller with little or no first-hand experience of country life. A leisurely road trip through the Midwest, New York State, and New England during August, September, and October might provide Morton with the broad insight she seems to lack.

Elsewhere, many of Morton's entries seem sadly imbalanced. The entry for 'Guy Fawkes Night' is over six pages in length and 'Pranking' over four, while 'Devil' receives three meager paragraphs, and 'Ghosts,' only six paragraphs. Likewise, Latin America's 'Days Of The Dead' receives over four full pages of text, but 'Harvest' only two paragraphs. Some entries are padded with questionable material, such as the extraneous paragraph on Edgar Allen Poe's 'The Black Cat' which supplements the entry on 'Cats.'

Morton has an easy appreciation for late twentieth century cultural products like John Carpenter's 'Halloween' (1979), but no apparent insight whatsoever into what the 'Jack-O'-Lantern' might have meant to twentieth century audiences, or might mean to celebrants of the present era. Is the American jack-o'-lantern of today merely a meaningless colored shell mechanically and thoughtlessly carved and placed on porches and in windows? Or does the yearly ritual mean something, however obscure, to many who participate?

Anthropomorphic vegetable figures were a prominent Halloween symbol during the early twentieth century, when most Americans were still living agrarian lives, and yet there is no entry considering them, which may leave readers with the impression that the numinous aspects of many powerful Halloween symbols are simply beyond Morton's range of understanding or expression.

'The Halloween Encyclopedia' should have been a feast for the mind, imagination, and senses, but is unlikely to inspire enthusiasm in either those new to the study of the subject or those with considerable interest in it. Morton's reference to "the gays in American," as if such a label, which many with preferences for their own sex reject, could identify millions of diverse individuals, is unintentionally hilarious, and readers may wonder what Morton's unqualified aside that Reagan Administration oppressed "gays and gay rights" is doing in a book on Halloween.

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