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The Book Of Halloween



Synopsis

The Book of Halloweâ™en by Ruth Edna Kelley is a classic. Originally published in 1919, it was the first attempt at creating a compilation of Halloween history and folklore. Ruth Edna Kelley was a librarian from Massachusetts whose body of work is not entirely vast, but whose contribution to the study of Halloween and the folklore and history associated therewith is beyond measure. With this book, the author takes us on a journey across the millennia and two continents exploring the roots and traditions of this most fascinating holiday. This present edition contains an introduction by New Orleans Voodoo Priest and Halloween enthusiast James Duvalier.

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Customer Reviews

I was so thrilled to discover that this book is back in print! My grandmother owned a copy, and I read it over and over again at Halloween when I was a little girl. It is the ultimate history of the Halloween holiday, from ancient times to the early Twentieth Century. The author, Ruth Edna Kelley, was herself just 25 or so when the book was originally published in 1919. I'm not a very good review writer, but I wanted to let anyone who is considering buying this book know that this is a very nice

edition, and the cover is just adorable. Everything I remember from childhood is there, except for a few blurry black and white pictures that were never very exciting to begin with. What makes this book great are the words, the accounts of how Halloween was celebrated in various countries, especially the Victorian Era games people played at parties, including about a dozen "tests" for discovering the name or seeing the face of your true love in a vision. I am crazy for anything having to do with this era, and re-reading *The Book of Hallowe'en* after all these years was like stepping backward in time and really being there. The accounts are so vivid, it really makes you want to just live now the way they did then. With this book, you could accomplish it. Everything you would need to have an authentic Victorian Halloween party today is right here. Best of all, it's just \$13.95. I've seen used copies selling on [Amazon](#) for over a thousand dollars! I'm just tickled, really! This is a great book!

Tara Conrad praised this book very well in her review, so I won't rehash the reasons *The Book of Hallowe'en* is a great work of folklore and fun. I do want to point out, though, that her review refers to the Better Days Books edition, which is considerably cheaper and has an awesome cover. It's the same book on the inside, so save yourself a few bucks! This review will likely populate to all editions of this book by all publishers, so please note that the Better Days Books edition has "Lulu.com" listed as publisher (I don't know why) on the product page. But you'll know you're there when you see the cover - an adorable Halloween owl sitting atop an old-fashioned, round-eyed jackolantern. And a list price of \$13.95! Attention Wiccans and pagans! *The Book of Hallowe'en* is probably the best history of the Samhain holiday ever compiled. Ruth Edna Kelley really did her homework, and the literal centuries of folklore gathered in this book, from all over Europe and America, is a priceless source of information every person with a magickal inclination should have in their library.

Hallowe'en aficionado number one right here. Skeleton Jack was based on me. I thought there was nothing I didn't already know about my holiday, but apparently I missed a few things from the turn of the century. Be prepared though. This book is wonderful as a chunk of history re-printed in the glow of a new millennium, but it's also dated in some ways of thought. That the people of Better Days Books left the text intact instead of editing it is very admirable. You'll be reading history as it was written, not as it has been changed to be. Sadly, despite being very educational and exciting, Ms. Kelley is a rather poor author. The text is brief on subjects and jumps around considerably. Still an enjoyable read, but I found myself wanting more on subjects that only received a mention. Overall, for the very reasonable price of this paperback, you can't go wrong. If you're even the slightest bit interested in how Hallowe'en was celebrated in and around the author's time, as well as speculation

on customs from long before her time, definitely purchase this book.

Published nearly a century ago, 'The Book of Halloween' is a treasured collection of historical information associated with the origins, customs and superstitions surrounding Halloween and its lesser known counterpart Walpurgis Night (a.k.a., May Eve). Tracing early Celtic, Scottish, Manx, Welch, English, Briton, and "Teutonic" (i.e., Scandinavian/Germanic) influences, Ms. Kelley presents an amalgamated holiday rooted in pagan influence, co-opted by Christianity, steeped in augury tradition, and subsequently adopted and engrained into North American culture. Ruth E. Kelley's book truly is an amazing wealth of information; unlike a number of its vintage Halloween counterparts, her book, fortunately, remains in regular publication via a handful of different publishers. However, because of this particular publisher's (Better Day Books) dubious decision not to include the original photographs and artwork, I can not recommend purchasing a copy of this book from them. Other publishers (and even Google's public domain website) offer all of the original text and images, so why would this particular publisher choose not to do the same? Don't let this publisher sell you a compromised product; find a copy of the book that includes ALL of the original material.

This is an older view of Halloween. It gives an excellent overview of Halloween and gives a splendid idea about the spooky goings on during the late 1800s and early half of the 1900s. I recommend it.

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