

Halloween: spooktacular celebration or phony festival?

Whoever invented this holiday must have been a friggin’ genius

The sooner I can turn my living-room light back on, the better



KELSEY
TANASIUK

point

31 October, All Saint’s Eve. Pooky Night. Hallow’s Eve. Halloween. Quite possibly the greatest holiday to ever be created by humankind. It’s a lofty title, but I believe that Halloween is more than worthy. The reason being? Candy and costumes.

Seems pretty basic—but not at the root of things. Halloween is essentially about an escape from social confines and rules. For one night a year, rules are null and void. The costume part is obvious. It’s an excuse to dress like the freak you really are, paired with the fact that no one is allowed to question your decisions. And of course, to quote the film *Mean Girls*, “Halloween is the one night a year when girls can dress like a total slut and no other girls can say anything about it.” If you’re into that kind of thing.

Halloween is about experimentation in that respect; for those who don’t want a full costume, it’s just as easy to dress outlandishly and try all the styles they had previously been afraid of.

But more widely appreciated is the candy. I have a serious sweet tooth, and for some reason the candy scored on the various 31 Octobers of my life has always tasted sweetest. Many would attribute this to the fact that it’s free (or at least was when we were younger). Candy you don’t pay for is always going to be the tastiest, right?

Not necessarily. You see, this is where the rules are broken once again. I believe that Halloween

candy tastes better because it’s a forbidden fruit. How often do parents turn to their children and impart on them the one piece of knowledge that they hope will get them through life in one piece: “Don’t take candy from strangers!” But somehow, magically perhaps, this rule is waved on All Hallows’ Eve. Suddenly the “stranger candy” we believed to be filled with glass and poison is fair game and as tasty as we could ever dream! In fact we’re encouraged to head from house to house to collect the deliciously forbidden sweets.

But what exactly makes strangers’ candy safe all of a sudden? Is the magic in the air enough to cleanse poison? Is it that the children are all wearing masks, so the villains that their parents warned them about can’t recognize their youthful faces? Or perhaps it’s that the bad guys just can’t decide who to prey upon thanks to the scores of brats making their way to their doorstep. Safety in numbers, as they say.

Of course, our parents always told us not to eat anything till we got home so they could check it. But once again the craziness that is Halloween takes hold! Rules be damned! It’s our candy and we worked hard for it. *There would be no waiting.* We were such rebels sneaking candies in under cover of darkness as we paraded around like a bunch of show dogs in silly costumes, our parents never the wiser thanks to wrappers discarded on the lawns of our unwitting neighbours. We gnawed on Tootsie Rolls and lollipops with caution, thoughts of razor blades slicing our gums thrown to the wind.

Sure, Christmas has presents and Santa and love for your fellow man, Easter may have bunnies and chocolate and bearded guys dying on crosses, and Canada Day has its hot dogs and booze. But I say you can’t beat the pizzazz of “stranger candy” and silly costumes. Wanna fight about it?



RAMIN
OSTAD

counterpoint

Yes, actually I would like to fight about it. To some naïve youngsters, Halloween might be considered the most exciting night of the year; a night filled with adventure, scary and inventive costumes, and bags overflowing with candy. But the truth is, these people don’t understand the inherent dangers involved in this hazardous, deranged and completely ridiculous event.

For many, the dangers of Halloween begin with the costume. It all seems so innocent at first. Groups of people, young and old, gather together to create imaginative and detailed alter-egos for one night of the year. The implication is that this is all for fun, and that it brings out the creativity and humour in people. However, there’s a more disturbing psychological reasoning that’s truly behind this activity. By allowing ourselves to become something other than what we are, we are expressing a secret desire to change our lives. It does nothing but expose just how insecure and unhappy we are with ourselves.

When a person dresses like a fireman or a police officer, they are probably expressing delusions of grandeur and the desire to be known as a hero. If a man dresses up like a robber with a knife stabbing a flower, he could be expressing a deep-seeded desire to take his mother’s virginity, according to Freud. And, frankly, if a woman uses this opportunity to dress up like a whore

with impunity, she’s a bloody whore to begin with. In fact, I’d like to know just what kind of role-playing fantasies Ms Tanasiuk is going to express this year.

Why should this kind of avoidance behaviour be allowed? People should just be happy with the lives they have and seek professional help for whatever horrendous desires they may experience. The fact that so many gather together in order to express such a desperate cry for help saddens me.

Besides the obvious psychological implications, the proponents of Halloween would tell our children to ignore one of the fundamental rules of social intercourse. As Kelsey points out with surprising intelligence, there is a well known adage that instructs us never to take candy from strangers. But she and her cultist brethren would have you believe that this maxim can be waved using “magic,” and that this “magic” will protect you and your children from the dangers of strange adults attempting to bait them with sweets and chocolate. Who knows what kinds of dangers lie within the candy bowls of a stranger? Can you really know what they mean when they offer children a Mr

Big bar? I think not. You say that you do not pay for the candy, Kelsey? I beg to differ. You may pay for it with your life!

Do not listen to these sadists with their tales of fun, adventure and “pizzazz”—whatever the hell that is. Halloween is a dangerous, deranged night filled with devious people committing dastardly deeds. The best course of action is to stay cooped up indoors, resisting all the urges you feel for candy, sweets and dressing up like a dominatrix in order to express feelings of self-flagellation. Otherwise, you may be lost forever in the doom-filled night that is Halloween.





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