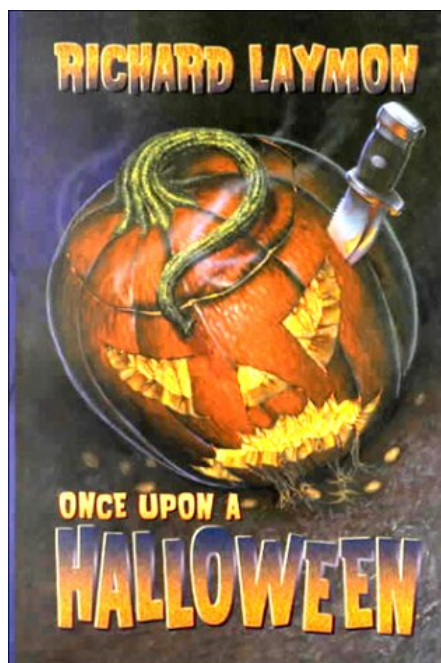




Once Upon A Halloween

Richard Laymon

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Trick or treat.
Say your prayers
Tonight, all hell breaks loose.

It's Halloween night. The old Witherspoon house stands all alone in the dark, the last house on a dead-end street. Its only neighbors are thick woods and a moonlit graveyard. Not long ago, a grisly murder/suicide took place in the house. Now, it is said to be haunted.

Haunted but no longer abandoned. Three years ago, Laura and Shannon moved in. They're young, pretty, friendly . . . and, best of all, generous with candy on Halloween. Tonight, they're getting ready for a costume party. Shannon is upstairs getting dressed and Laura is downstairs handing out candy to trick-or-treaters.

It's a perfect Halloween night until Laura opens the door and finds herself facing a lone teenaged boy . . . a terrified boy who says: "Let me in! They're gonna get me!"

And, for Laura and Shannon, the party begins.

It's Halloween night and there are ghosts and goblins in the streets. And something much worse in the graveyard...

Once Upon A Halloween Details

Date : Published 2000 by Cemetery Dance Publications
ISBN : 9781587670121
Author : Richard Laymon
Format : Hardcover 252 pages
Genre : Horror, Holiday, Halloween, Splatterpunk, Fiction

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From Reader Review Once Upon A Halloween for online ebook

Ian says

Halloween. A large house on a dead end street, near a graveyard. Trick or Treaters. Albeit a cliché, but it's still a great set up for an exciting read! Right from the start, where a panicked teenage boy forces his way into the house saying "Let me in! They're gonna get me!" you know you're in for a real treat! This is one of my favorite Laymon books. It might not be his best work, but the creepy atmosphere Laymon's created makes you want to keep turning pages to its thrilling conclusion. Definitely a guilty pleasure.

Chris says

I read this book from start to finish while I was supposed to be working. It feels like a large chunk of the story was incomplete, like perhaps some characters were introduced in an earlier book so the back story is missing entirely. Although having double checked this is in fact not a follow up. If I'm wrong please let me know, I'd love to read anything that would make this book a more complete experience. That complaint aside I enjoyed this thoroughly, I like the way Laymon writes, his characters are often quite thin and according to some unrealistic, but to me they just feel right. This story feels like a movie I've always wanted to see, it has gratuitous sex and violence, children undergoing what I would call a very adult adventure. The fact that the story takes place on Halloween in a small town was enough to make me pick it up.

Alejandro says

Cool option to read on Halloween season!

A TRICK-OR-TREAT TO REMEMBER

This is a Halloween adventure with almost anything you may think that could happen in just one night...

...when that night happens to be **Halloween!**

This could be an ideal project to be film by Chris Columbus **AND** Quentin Tarantino!

Since you have kids meddling into hazzardous situations but also totally inusual characters with dialogues showing that they are not two-dimensional personages whom only are thinking about the stuff at hand.

The characters even right in the middle of a life-or-death situation, they are having thoughts in their heads that no one wouldn't deny that they are perfectly reasonable thoughts, showing how complex are human beings.

Maybe, the only that Columbus could have troubles is that this story has a lot of nudity, even in moments that you can't predict or expect. Tarantino could be okay with that, hehehe.

Actually, for a story with so many nudity, it's almost rare to find that there isn't a single sexual scene. It's not a complain, only an observation.

The story has so many characters that you can't predict when you'd be able to meet all of them, but don't worry, that you won't have troubles to understand who is who. Each chapter is told from the point of view of certain character, even in scenes where several characters are interacting, you may well having two or more chapters developing the scene but from different points of view, also you will get intersecting scenes where character who started in separate places, they may meet and interact in unpredictable ways.

So, then why only 4 stars and not a full five? Well, I won't spoil anything, don't worry, I will only say that the choices of certain deaths (it's a horror story, it's hardly a spoil to say that people will die) were kinda odd (not how, but who and why) and the final climax scene is quite wacky and I don't know, not exactly bad to say that it's hard to accept even in the crazy logic of a horror story, but definitely it could be done differently. I could say that I liked how the story was resolved, but still there were stuff that bothers me, so taking out a star can ease my mind, hehehe.

I wouldn't be surprised if some readers would find how the the final climax was solved, just too far-fetched and truly hard to accept. But hardly it's a reason for not reading the novel since it's quite entertained.

What I can say that definitely the chaos theory is having a blast in this story where you aren't able to predict how the story will be developed, what you will meet in there, and how it will intermix.

Get into your costume, pick your candy bag and have your Trick-or-Treat trip of your lives!

Sammy Franco says

I'm a big fan of Richard Laymon. Two of my favorite titles include "The Traveling Vampire Show" and "Night in the Lonesome October." I find his writing style to be direct and straightforward. He doesn't try to be clever or witty with his writing style, which often leaves the reader confused or irritated. Instead, Laymon just tells his story. Unfortunately, this one wasn't memorable. In fact, it was hopelessly forgettable. I won't delve into the actual story flaws, but the story arc was implausible, bordering on idiotic.

If you're looking for a decent Halloween themed fiction story, I suggest looking elsewhere.

Happy hunting...

Fawaaz Manuel says

So this was a short one. Forty four chapters and all. A good read if you looking for a short story. A bit predictable here and there but good in a sense. As always some nudity involved and what is up with all the women in Laymon's books having short blond here? Is that what he always fantasised about? Anyway the last chapter was like the first chapter in a book throwing you off course and learning the characters. Maybe this book had a early dead line. But a great book and will recommend it.

John says

ONCE UPON A HALLOWEEN is so bad, it's good.

Problem is, I have no idea whether it was intentionally crafted that way.

From a horror perspective, the book is a total flop. Nothing about it comes anywhere close to being scary, nor is it even particularly violent. There is lots of action and scenes of people being chased by homicidal witches, but it's all way too cartoonish to be legitimately thrilling.

That being said, the unrelenting campiness of this book--whether intentional or not--approaches the level of parody, making it enjoyable in a very tongue-in-cheek sorta way. Laymon takes all the things we associate with bad, B-grade horror films (i.e., the pointless nudity, the dumb action scenes, the cheesy Satanic rituals, the random supernatural phenomena, the absurdly high body counts, the kinky sexual undertones) and then dials these elements up to 11.

I like to think that Laymon wrote ONCE UPON A HALLOWEEN as a send up of Halloween-themed horror, and as a self-parody of his own distinctive, anti-literary writing style. Others will consider it irrefutable evidence that Laymon is a hack novelist whose mind never advanced beyond adolescence.

Probably they're right.

Caleb Golden says

I honestly don't get where all the hate for this book comes from. I thought it was much better than the 500 page snooze fests like Body Rides or The Stake. Having said that, I do have a few issues with it.

The big thing for me was that it's too short and you don't really have time to bond with the characters. I think a few more side plots could have been added if for no other purpose than to extend the book. Second, it lacks the graphic sex and violence you expect from Laymon, so I don't know what book the reviewers who claim the story has too much sex were reading because there's not a single sex scene and rape is only implied. All that aside, I think it was a good book but far too pricey. The high price tag is due to the fact that each copy is signed by Laymon himself, not his best work but still entertaining if you're a hardcore fan and want to add this little piece of Laymon history to your collection.

Gianfranco Mancini says

[Cultists! Kids in peril! Swords! Pumpkins! Hatchets! Babes! Graveyards! Blood! Killer ghosts! Cheerleaders! Shootings! Death! Boobs! (hide spoiler)]

Mike Marsbergen says

Good violent fun. If you're looking for blood and gore and T&A this Halloween, give this (or any Laymon book) a read.

Lisa Pallan says

It was different, kept your interest but kind of ended dumb. Will read this author again.

Alan Overholser says

It was not a good book. I have been in the mood for horror novels since it is Halloween time. This one started out intriguing and then proceeded to get increasingly stupid, ridiculous, and disappointing. I kept reading because it was at least somewhat entertaining, and I decided to finish it because it was a really quick read. The plot is completely unbelievable (supernatural elements aside), largely because the main characters do not react to things like normal human beings would. The plot is not creative, and there are loose ends that aren't resolved in any way. I would not recommend this book. For any reason. Unless you are trapped in a room and the only way that you are allowed to leave is by reading this book. Or some such scenario like that.

Peter says

Halloween is my favorite time of the year. During the month of October, I like to read books that involve a Halloween theme. This October one of the books I pick out was Laymon's Once Upon A Halloween. I wanted to like this Laymon story but I just could not. The story line was weak and the characters were really thin. The story jumps back and forth and is told from different viewpoints and sometimes get lost. Somethings that happen in this story are far fetched and I don't mean supernatural. This Laymon story fall short and does not make the grade.

Adam Light says

So-so outing from the master of boobs and brutality. Easily forgettable, but not without its moments. This book was enjoyable, but seemed rushed, not nearly as satisfying as I had hoped.

Angel Gelique says

3-3.5 stars. Review to come.

Justin says

Once Upon A Halloween follows a Halloween night where cultists kidnap trick-or-treaters for a midnight sacrifice dragging in a bunch of other people into a descent of utter ridiculousness. The characters are thin, and if there are any main characters considering it jumps from various viewpoints, then I guess Laura and Shannon are two twenty-somethings living in a haunted house. While they get ready for a Halloween party, a teenage boy, Hunter claims he's being chased by some cultists. After a bunch of senseless violence and nudity, Laura, Shannon, their dates, and kids led by a father, Jeff get pulled into the mess.

I admit I found this book entertaining for a Halloween read, but there wasn't much substance. It got to a point I didn't care much for the characters and they didn't seem as distinct from one another. At points they did have some desires and possible subplots which could take shape, but they were an afterthought (like the ghost in Laura and Shannon's house). Also, I have trouble believing an eight year old boy could gun down a

cult. The ending doesn't resolve much and seems to end abruptly. But at that point, I didn't care. For a quick, turn-your-brain-off Halloween read, this was okay.
