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# The Hallowed Eve: Dimensions of Culture in a Calendar Festival in Northern Ireland (Irish Literature, History, and Culture)

*Jack Santino*

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In Northern Ireland, Halloween is such a major celebration that it is often called the Irish Christmas. A day of family reunions, meals, and fun, Halloween brings people of all ages together with rhyming, storytelling, family fireworks, and community bonfires. Perhaps most important, it has become a day that transcends the social conflict found in this often troubled nation. Through the extensive use of interviews, *The Hallowed Eve* offers a fascinating look at the various customs, both past and present, that mark the celebration of the holiday. Looking through the lenses of gender, ethnicity, and religious affiliation, Jack Santino examines how the traditions exist in a nonthreatening, celebratory way to provide a model of how life could be in Northern Ireland. Halloween, concludes Santino, is a marriage of death and life, a joining of cultural opposites: indoor and outdoor, domesticity and wildness, male and female, old and young. Although current folk and popular traditions can be divisive, Halloween in Northern Ireland is universally considered to belong to everyone, regardless of their background or political leanings. The holiday is a dramatic example of how a community comes together one day a year, and these Northern Irish traditions capture the fundamental and everyday dimensions of life in Ulster.

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