

TGIF

THANK GOD IT'S FRIDAY

THE 13th



Le Rond-Point



SOMMAIRE:

Un Extrait du Chant XI de l'Odyssée

Et je lui adressai des paroles ailées
Mère, pourquoi donc ne puis-je pas t'embrasser
Pour que, même en Hadès, tous deux nous puissions,
Liés l'un à l'autre jouir de ce frisson?
La grande Perséphone aurait-elle élevé
Pour moi ce spectre afin de me désespérer?
Puis à ces mots, mon auguste mère intervint
« Ô mon petit, malheureux parmi les humains
Perséphone, enfant de Zeus ne te trompe en rien.
Telle est la loi des mortels quand la mort advient.
Les nerfs lâchent les os, et les chairs sont défaites;
L'ardeur violente du feu brûlant les détruit
Le thumos s'enfuit des os blancs, anéantis
Mais l'âme, telle un rêve, voletant, volète. »

*Traduit et composé par les
hellénistes de Terminale*

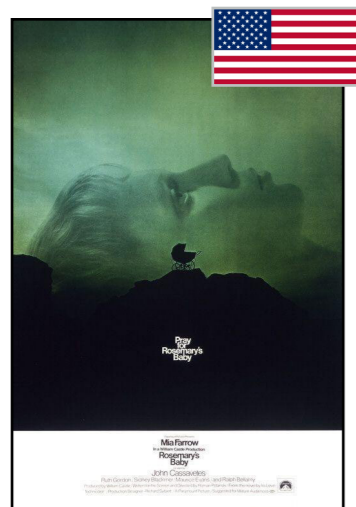
- 4 Nine horror films from around the world
- 6 Samhain
- 8 Four spooky books for this halloween season
- 10 La randonnée solitaire
- 12 Around the world on 01/11
- 14 How do you bury your dead?
- 18 Into the pitch-black night
- 19 Where de Jack O'Lanterns come from
- 20 Crossword



NINE HORROR FILMS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

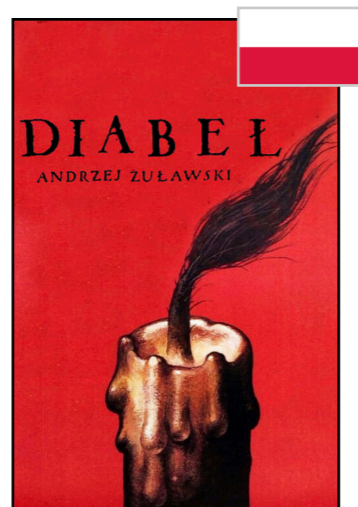


In this special edition of Le Rond-Point, I'm combining two of my passions: horror and listicles, to bring you a curated list of some of the best horror films out there. The twist is, to break ties with the very American horror canon, we're going to widen the scope and look at horror films from around the world: 9 countries, 9 films. Fear transcends borders! There's something in this list for everyone: from bona fide classics to arthouse oddities, if you don't find something for you in this list, I'm terribly sorry and you are allowed to register a complaint at lerondpoint@eleve.lyceefrançais.org.uk, though it seems unlikely that will be a problem since this is a great list. You're welcome!



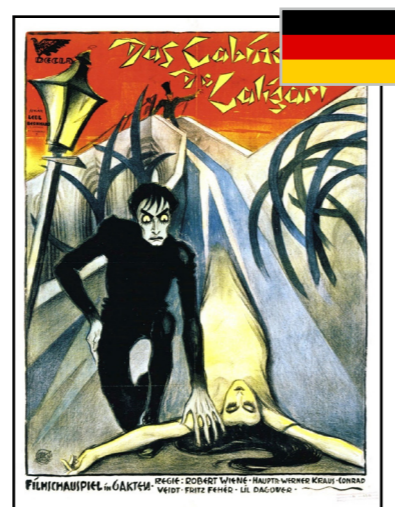
Rosemary's Baby
1968 - Roman Polański

A young couple moves into an infamous New York apartment building to start a family. Things become frightening as Rosemary begins to suspect her husband and neighbours are involved in a satanic conspiracy. Starting the list off with a classic. The most terrifying thing about this film isn't the witches and demons - it's the petrifying anxiety and frustration that snowballs into total isolation. Extremely ahead of its time in technique and in message, with a stellar performance by Mia Farrow at its centre, this film is sure to keep you hooked from start to finish.



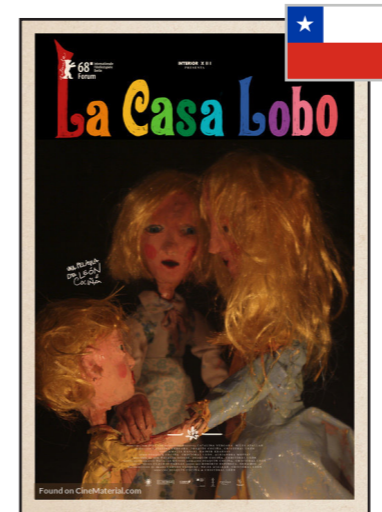
The Devil
Diabeł - 1972 - Andrzej Żuławski

A young Polish nobleman, Jakub, is saved from imprisonment by a stranger who wants in return a list of his fellow conspirators. Following his mysterious saviour across the country, Jakub sees the chaos and moral corruption and, demented by what he has seen, he commits a number of seemingly motiveless killings. A unique and thought-provoking film. If you take it seriously, it's a Faustian nightmare of madness and debauchery. If you don't, it's a bunch of Polish people screaming their heads off and copulating, which is still fun! Either way, an unforgettable watch.



The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari
Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari
1920 - Robert Wiene

Francis and his friend Alan visit The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, an exhibit where the mysterious doctor shows the somnambulist Cesare and awakens him from his death-like sleep. After all the screaming in The Devil, maybe some silence will do you some good. Everything about this film is bursting with a haunting energy, from the set design to the intertitles. A hundred years later, this is still a deeply original and interesting film. An essential watch!



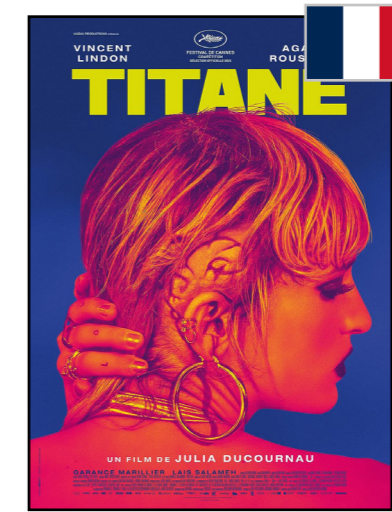
The Wolf House
La Casa Lobo - 2018 - Cristóbal León

After escaping from Colonia Dignidad, a German colony in the south of Chile, Maria takes refuge in an abandoned house. A dark fairytale about a terrifying time in Chilean history. Something deeply sinister permeates each frame of this stop-motion nightmare. Beyond a haunting and surreal atmosphere, though, this film subtly yet powerfully explores the psychological and literal entrapment of a tyrannical cult.



A Tale of Two Sisters
장화, 홍련 - 2005 - Kim Jee-Won

A recently released patient from a mental hospital returns home with her sister, only to face disturbing interactions between her mother and the ghosts haunting their house. We're at the seventh film and I still haven't mentioned any good old-fashioned ghost stories. It was about time! This film executes its rather simple narrative excellently, and transcends it thanks to incredibly evocative acting and use of colour. Will leave you scared, maybe confused, but in the best possible way.



Titane
2021 - Julia Ducournau

Following a series of unexplained crimes, a former firefighter is reunited with his son who has been missing for 10 years. A Palme d'Or winner and for good reason. Beyond all its weirdness and body horror, this film would be nothing without its heart. A truly empathetic and intimate film that doesn't lose itself in its provocative nature. People talk about "elevated horror" all the time, and if any film fits that category, it's this one.



The Skin I Live In
La Piel que Habito - 2011 - Pedro Almodóvar

A brilliant plastic surgeon creates a synthetic skin resistant to any damage. His guinea pig: a mysterious and volatile woman who holds the key to his obsession. Almodovar veers away from his usual melodramatic style and creates a slow-burn thriller that swaps huge claw hands with a surgical knife and scalpel. Interesting reflections on gender and consent, although, seriously, how the hell do you come up with this plot.



Helter Skelter
ヘルタースケルター
2012 - Mika Ninagawa

Top star Lilico undergoes multiple cosmetic surgeries to her entire body. As her surgeries show side effects, Lilico makes the lives of those around her miserable. It's rare to see a character on screen that is treated with such empathy. Helter Skelter pulls you in from the beginning: a dramatic orchestral score plays over with a sequence of brightly coloured images - billboards, magazine covers, make-up displays. The honesty with which it is approached paired with the hypnotising cinematography make this a brilliantly unique work.



Suspiria
1977 - Dario Argento

From the moment she arrives in Freiberg, Germany, to attend the prestigious Tanz Academy, American ballerina Suzy Bannion senses that something horribly evil lurks within the walls of the age-old institution. Closing the list off with another classic. A hypnotizingly colourful house of horrors complete with neon lights and a barbed wire room (typical for a ballet school). This film throws realism out the window to bring you something bloody, cerebral, and beautiful.

Well, that brings us to the end of the list. You have seven days to watch one of these films or something horrific might happen. Don't laugh, it's true. I wouldn't risk it.

Origin and meaning:

Samhain was the most important festival in the Celtic calendar, being one of the four fire festivals, along with Beltane, Imbolc, and Lughnasa. It was celebrated throughout the British Isles and Ireland, most notably in the Celtic regions of what are now known as Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Galicia, and the Isle of Man off the Welsh coast. Beginning at night (the Celtic day started and ended at sunset), this particular festivity can be considered the Celtic equivalent of the New Year (with Beltane marking the equivalent of midsummer), and thus was an integral part of Celtic traditions.

Celebration:

During the night, the barrier between the physical and spiritual worlds was believed to break down, thereby allowing beings from the other side to cross over into the physical world. The hearth was left to burn out (instead of being revived) while the late harvest was collected. Once the harvest was finished, the celebrations with the druids would start. A community fire was lit, using a sacred wheel meant to represent the sun, the ritual sacrifices were made, and everyone took a part of the flame back home with them to relight the extinguished hearth.

However, just because it was a festival and a celebration does not mean it was without stakes: participation was mandatory during all three days and nights, and failure to do so would result in a punishment from the gods, usually severely impairing, such as illness or death. All military activity was also suspended, under threat of the death sentence if anyone drew a weapon or committed a crime during this holy time.

Legacy:

Most of the modern Halloween traditions we know now originated from Samhain, such as Jack O’lanterns (originally turnips) and dressing up in scary costumes, as they were originally meant to frighten away ghosts and evil spirits. Jack O’lanterns, now commonly hollowed-out pumpkins lit from the inside, were originally turnips or rutabagas. Telling spooky stories is also not a new thing: folk tales about the Fae and legends were retold, so as to remind us of the fear of the Otherworld. So when you’re telling horror stories with friends, you’re actually perpetuating an ancient tradition. The same is true for ouija boards and other ways believed to communicate with the spirits of the dead.

The timing of this celebration, when it’s just starting to get chilly outside, is also a remnant from the agricultural year on which rituals were based: the cattle were herded back in, and crops collected, allowing for a large feast to mark the beginning of the cold season.

Unfortunately, little is known about Samhain as it originally happened, because the alphabetisation of Ireland only majorly occurred after Christianisation, which tried to eradicate the native pagan religion of which Samhain was a part. The Christians also used the placement of traditional festivals to make them coincide with new traditions, destined to replace the pre-existing celebrations. The holy day, now a holiday, of All Saint’s Day (Toussaint in French), with much of the same significance as was accorded to Samhain - at least in the spiritual crossing dimension - thus effectively replacing Samhain.

With all this in mind, perhaps Halloween will take on a new dimension - or you’ll remember why our predecessors feared the spirits...



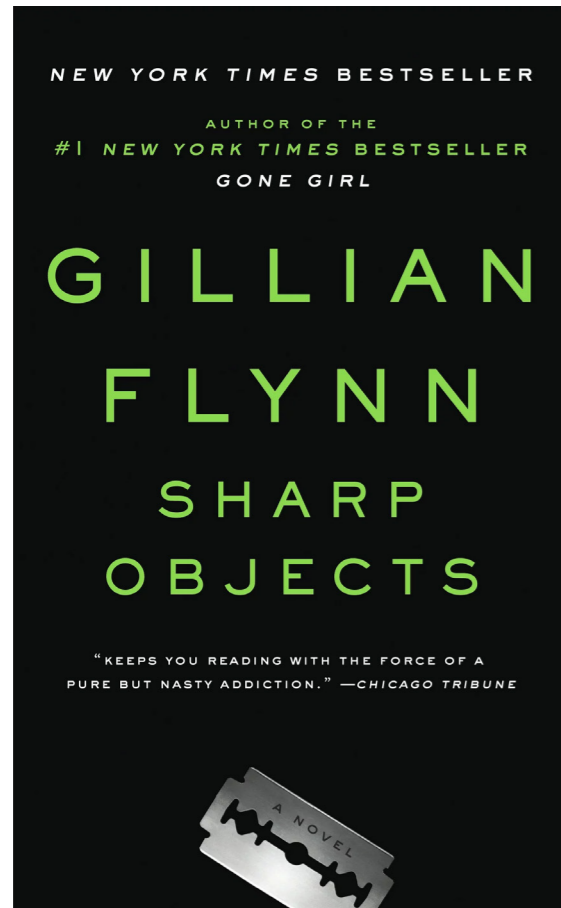
Samhain

Pronounced Sa-wun

Camille Chauve

Have you ever thought about the origins of Halloween? October 31st, the night on which it is now widely celebrated, is actually an inherited remnant from an ancient Celtic tradition: Samhain, celebrated in then-pagan Ireland. Literally meaning “summer’s end” in Irish Gaelic, it took place on the night of the 31st of October to the 1st of November, to celebrate the entrance into the “dark half of the year”, between the autumn equinox and the winter solstice.

Four spooky books for this halloween season



Sharp objects - Gillian Flynn

250-300 pages 🖐️🖐️🖐️🖐️

Camille Preaker, reporter fresh out of the psychiatric hospital, is sent back to her hometown to cover the gruesome murder of a young girl and a worrying disappearance. She struggles to piece together the puzzle while having to face the trauma associated with the place, her hypochondriac mother, and her young step sister.

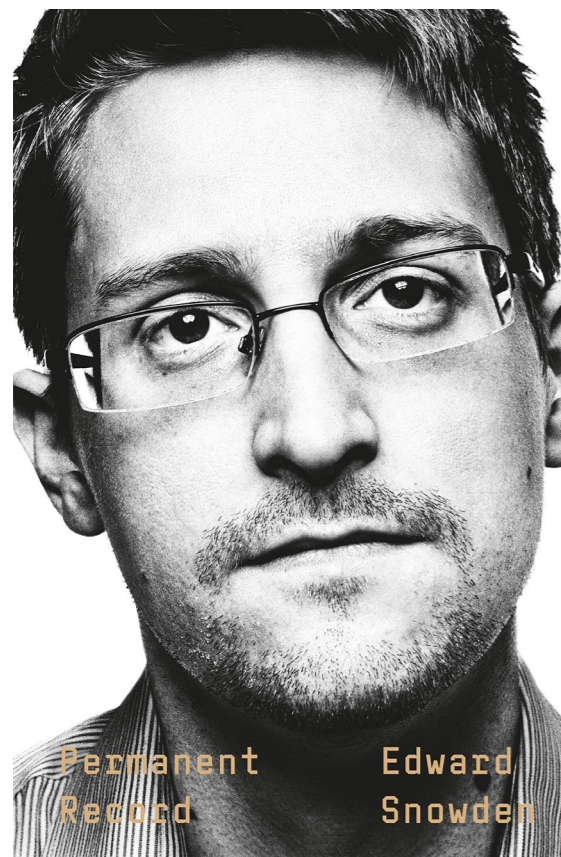
Perhaps ironically, this book is sharp, it is concise and masterfully written, particularly for a debut novel. However it is not an easy read: death, self harm, abuse, and rape are laid bare for the reader to see. Although the characters are brilliantly constructed they are fundamentally broken and unlikable people, victims of themselves and of each other. This all makes for a captivating reading experience which stays with you long after.

Permanent Record - Edward Snowden

350 pages 🖐️🖐️🖐️🖐️🖐️

In 2013, Edward Snowden brought the world to a screeching halt by exposing the U.S government's mass campaign of surveillance on their citizens and the rest of the world. In this captivating sad and emotional memoir he tells the story of an intelligent young boy growing up at the dawn of a new online age.

He retraces with remarkable honesty the different roles he has played: from computer geek to spy, and finally to the Internet's reluctant whistleblower doomed to exile. This might not be a thriller in a classical sense, but it is terrifying nonetheless and great read for anyone

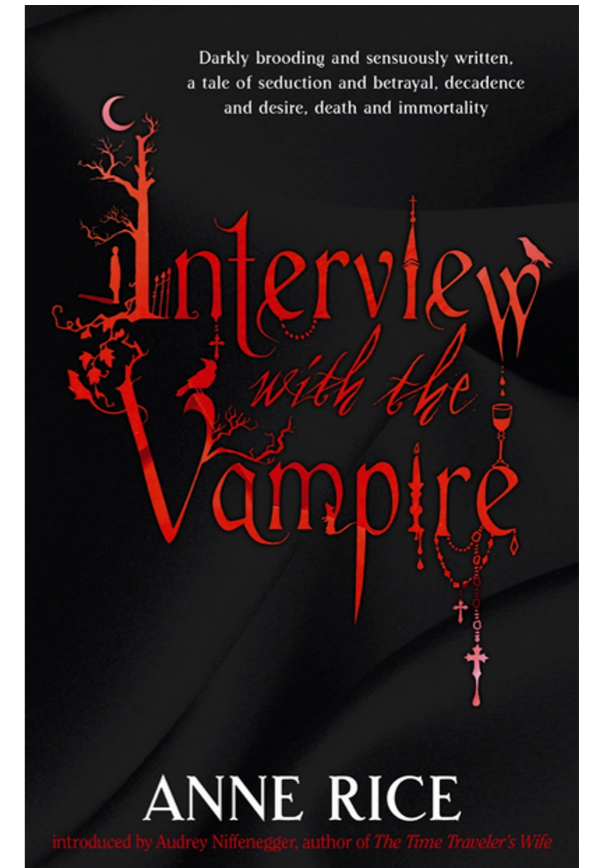


Interview with the Vampire - Anne Rice

400 pages 🖐️🖐️🖐️🖐️

Step aside Dracula! There's a new kid on the block (from 1976). This book is a wild ride... Louis de Pointe du Lac is a beautiful young plantation owner born in 1791 near New Orleans. Dissatisfied with life he begins to act recklessly and comes face to face with Lestat de Lioncourt, the equally beautiful and dramatic but unhinged vampire. Set in the present day, the book is a long interview where Louis recounts his entire life with Lestat and their vampire daughter Claudia, the strange pseudo family they form, their travels and the other vampires they meet.

This book is a classic for a reason, its poetic, strangely homoerotic, and macabre writing style is addictive but uncomfortable at the same time. The characters are so fun and all utterly insane, making for a great distraction from everyday life. The movie is equally great as it features Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt with glorious wigs.

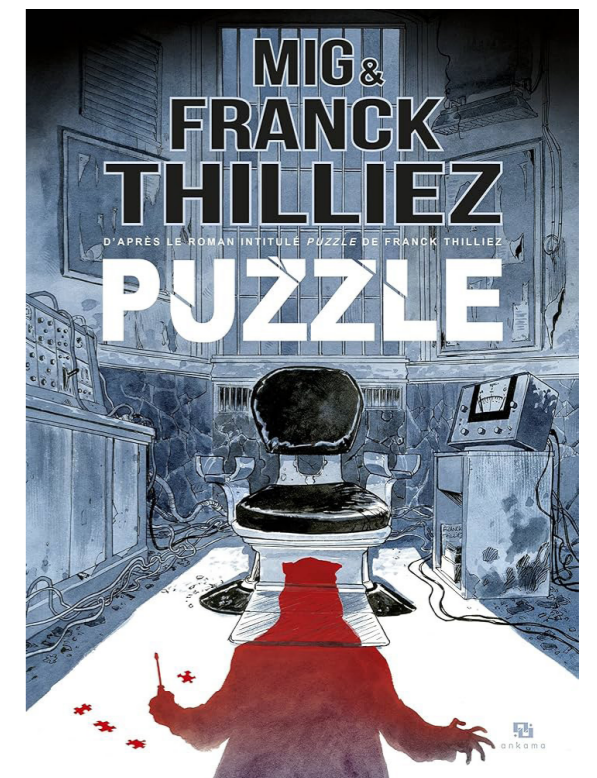


Puzzle - Frank Thilliez

450 pages 🖐️🖐️🖐️🖐️

Puzzle, un thriller psychologique, suit deux spécialistes, Ilan et Chloé, de chasse au trésor qui participent à un nouveau jeu: Paranoïa. Il y a seulement deux règles. D'abord, tout ce qu'ils vont voir n'est pas la réalité, quoi qu'il soit, cela fait tout partie du jeu; ensuite, l'un d'entre eux va mourir. Quand les premiers cadavres sont découverts, les protagonistes voient le jeu et la réalité se mêler et ne savent plus quoi penser; par contre, ils sont en danger, ça ils en sont sûrs.

Ce livre est terrifiant, on se retrouve dans la peau des personnages à frissonner avec chaque bruit de l'hôpital psychiatrique abandonné, et à se demander si nous pouvons faire confiance à ce qu'on lit.



La randonnée solitaire

Dans ce texte quelques paragraphes de ChatGPT se sont immiscés, pouvez-vous les repérer?

Sous la canopée ombragée de la forêt en plein jour, Sarah ressentait une atmosphère pesante et troublante. Chaque bruit était amplifié, chaque mouvement semblait scruté par une présence sinistre. Les oiseaux avaient déserté, laissant place à un silence inquiétant. Une sensation d'isolement la glaçait malgré la clarté du jour, et elle avait l'étrange impression que la forêt retenait son souffle, cachant quelque chose de terrifiant dans ses profondeurs.

Ce voyage était censé la calmer, la détendre. Son psychologue lui avait conseillé de prendre l'air pendant un mois afin de se remettre de la mort de son frère. Il avait 14 ans, seulement 14 ans, et il l'avait quittée. Elle ne l'avait pas vu depuis un an, elle ne l'avait pas vu grandir, changer. Bien sûr ils s'appelaient souvent mais ce n'était pas la même chose que de l'avoir devant elle, en chair et en os, d'entendre son rire insouciant, et surtout de pouvoir le prendre dans ses bras. Aurait-il finalement été plus grand qu'elle ?

Sarah s'arrêta de marcher, déjà essoufflée, déjà épuisée. Elle devra changer de psychologue parce que cette solitude extrême lui était devenue intolérable. Cela ne faisait qu'intensifier son isolement interne et elle n'en pouvait plus. Mais, étrangement, la multitude de fines branches tordues lui donnait l'impression d'être protégée, d'être embrassée sans être asphyxiée. Le silence vide qui l'entourait ne la dérangeait plus ni même l'ambiance étrange de cette forêt. Elle s'assit au pied d'un arbre, plaçant ses paumes sur la couverture de feuilles mortes et humides à ses pieds. Elle ferma ses yeux avant de pousser un long soupir.

Un ruissellement l'a sortie de son profond sommeil. Cela faisait longtemps qu'elle n'avait pas aussi bien dormi. En ouvrant les yeux, elle fut accueillie par un rideau noir, il faisait déjà nuit et les rayons de la lune ne parvenaient pas à percer l'épaisse couche d'arbre qui l'abritait. L'absence de bruit, surtout la nuit, commençait à l'inquiéter, elle avait l'impression d'avoir les oreilles bouchées et les yeux bandés. Il fallait qu'elle sorte d'ici, et, si elle s'en rappelait bien, le refuge de montagne n'était pas bien loin. Sarah sortit sa lampe torche de son sac, l'alluma, se leva et se mit à chercher les balises sur les troncs des arbres. Elle marchait d'un pas hésitant, légèrement dérangée par la vision restreinte qu'elle avait de la forêt.

Ses pas faisaient des crissements, brisant le calme sinistre de la forêt. L'air frais et sec lui donnait la chair de poule et le vent se mit à souffler de plus en plus fort. Les arbres se mirent à bouger, à chanceler de droite à gauche comme suivant une mélodie macabre. La lumière de sa lampe torche se mis à trembler et elle –

Un cri perçant et inhumain déchira l'air, la figeant sur place. Des branches craquèrent, et une ombre sinistre se dessina devant elle. C'était une créature cauchemardesque aux yeux rougeoyants et à la silhouette grotesque. Elle ressemblait au monstre des contes que ses parents leur racontaient à elle et son frère, le drekavac. Les cris stridents de la bête résonnaient dans les ténèbres, faisant trembler Sarah d'effroi alors qu'elle tentait désespérément de fuir le prédateur nocturne qui la pourchassait.

Une semaine plus tard :

“Bienvenue aux infos de 8h ! Aucune nouvelle de la disparition de la jeune femme dans la forêt de Lipovica. Seules des traces de sang furent trouvées à quelques kilomètres de l'autoroute. La police poursuit ses recherches. L'inspectrice de police, Anja Ilić a un message à vous transmettre: nous vous encourageons à ne pas sortir seuls ou à rester chez vous, jusqu'à nouvel ordre. Nous vous tiendrons informés de la progression de l'enquête !”

Around the world on 01/11

Spooky season is upon us! For Brits and Americans, that means trick-or-treating, dressing up as creepy fiction characters, and eating far too many sweets. But historically - and internationally - the time of year we call Halloween has been celebrated in a variety of ways under a variety of names. Here is a short list of the coolest ones, according to my personal taste.

Mexico: Día de los Muertos

You can't really talk about Halloween and not mention the Día de los Muertos. As has been shown in multiple iconic childrens' cartoons (think Coco, or the Book of Life), Mexican families believe they can briefly be reunited with their dead relatives or friends between October 31st and November 2nd. This belief stems from the idea that, on the Day of the Dead, the border between the worlds of the living and the dead dissolves... Families leave offerings, especially food, on gravesites or home-built *ofrendas* decorated with candles and flowers, and traditionally eat meals around these areas that they share with loved ones who may come to visit from the spirit world. Dressing up, especially as the dead, is also traditional in order to feel closer to those who have passed on.



A typical ofrenda

Lancashire: Leeting

Leeting, a tradition specific to Lancashire, consists in walking over to a tower in the forest and staying there from 11 to 12 pm with a lit candle; if the candle isn't blown out, you are safe from the evil magic to come the following year. The people of Lancashire believed there to be a gathering of witches every year in this forest, and practised this tradition out of fear rather than out of celebration - this practice went out of fashion centuries ago, but perhaps is closest to our modern idea of the "Halloween Spirit."

Guatemala: Festival de Barriletes Gigantes

Guatemala's Barriletes Gigantes is another festival held at the beginning of November to honour All Saints Day and the Day of the Dead: handmade kites are flown above over the cemeteries of Santiago Sacatepéquez and Sumpango. This 3000-year-old tradition is believed to be a way to communicate with the deceased - Guatemalans therefore decorate their kites with both symbols of their ancestry and contemporary social issues. They are true works of art, made of paper, cloth patches, and bamboo, sometimes constructed over an entire year.



A Guatemalan kite

Italy: Ognissanti

Ognissanti, or I Santi, is the Italian word for All Saint's Day, celebrated on November 1st. Since the IVth century AD, the country has used this date to honour the martyrs and saints of the Catholic Church, and the following day, November 2, is known as *Giorno dei Morti* - or the Day of the Dead (sound familiar?). On this occasion, traditions differ by region: in Sicily, it's believed that the dead bring sweets or small gifts to well-behaved children, and in the Lombardy region, it's customary to leave a vase full of water in the kitchen for the dead to drink when they visit during the night.

Costa Rica: Día Nacional de la Mascarada Costarricense

Every October 31, *Día de la Mascarada* is celebrated throughout Costa Rica. Participants wear large, colourful handmade masks and dance through the streets to folk music - a 200-year-old tradition traced back to pre-colonial customs and carnival. Certain cities, such as Cartago, Escazu, and Barva de Heredia, have such significant parades that they have become well-known exclusively for their mask making skills! Actually, "masks" may not be the right word: these giant papier-maché constructions, representing characters from pop culture, mythology, and politics...

Now that you've discovered so many different and varied ways of celebrating, you can choose another way to plan your own party - fly some kites or commune with your dead ancestors instead of testing the limits of your sugar tolerance! Have fun!

How do you bury your dead?

A look into the funerary rites around the world and throughout time.



A Malagasy burial in Madagascar

Famadihana:

The Malagasy of Madagascar believe that the soul can only leave the material world once the body is fully decomposed. Until the bones become dust, their loved ones must be carefully taken care of with gifts, money and alcohol left in the family tomb, and with the sacred Famadihana ritual that takes place once every 5 to 7 years. The Famadihana, or alternatively the “turning of the bones”, begins when a senior family member sees an

ancestral spirit, who asks them for new clothes for the cold. After consulting an Ombiasy, a traditional astrologer, for the exact dates of the ritual, the family exhume their dead relatives' bodies from their tombs. They then carefully wrap these bodies in straw mats, and carry them above their heads to be laid out. The bodies are then cleaned and dressed in new burial shrouds before being returned to their tombs, having now closed the cycle of life and entered into the world of the ancestors, the dead, for the next couple years.

To the Malagasy, the Famadihana is a moment of happiness and joy. Relatives share news and stories from their life to their ancestors, and ask them for their blessing and protection as the intermediates between the living and god. There is a two day long feast that includes dancing and celebrating, where grief is not even allowed. Death becomes a state to embrace and honor.

Viking Funerals

When picturing viking burials, most of us would think of the beautifully carved boats being sent out to sea, flaming arrows sent out to set the body laid out on it aflame. Although the practice of water burials did happen, it was nowhere near as common as we may think.

Vikings have been found to be both cremated and buried. Before the Viking's pagan beliefs began to dissipate under the influence of the Christian communities they would pillage, cremation was a necessary part of funerals. The smoke from the funeral pyre would carry the dead to the afterlife, becoming the ladder to the heavens.

Water burials capture this importance of cremation, but also the central place of boats for vikings. Like the smoke from funeral fires, the symbol of boats guaranteed safe passage for the dead into the afterlife. In the case of cremations, vikings were burnt with their ships, and in the case of burials, the grave was marked with a stone in the shape of a boat. However, some burials were even more extravagant: many viking graves have been found where they buried viking bodies with their whole longboat. This is the case of the “Oseberg ship”, a ship that dates back to around 834 AD, that was buried with the bodies of two women, one of the best preserved viking longboats to be found.

The one thing that was always consistent in viking funerals was the presence of “graves goods”. These were gifts that were buried or burned along with the deceased, and were of equal value to their status. These could be weapons, jewels, tools, all to please the gods to help bring their dead to the afterlife. Shockingly, these tributes could also be slaves. One viking site in Norway had multiple decapitated bodies in a single grave, probably slaves based on an analysis of their diet. The death of their master had taken their own life, and they were now to spend the rest of eternity with him.

The Dead of Tana Toraja

The Toraja tribe in the mountainous areas of Indonesia bury their dead in a way that most of us surrounded by western norms around death would find terrifying: they don't.

Although they do eventually put their dead in a mausoleum, for weeks or even decades, the Toraja tribe lives with their dead. Since it's believed that the spirit continues living in the house, the dead are just considered sick relatives rather than dead. They're clothed, taken care of, even fed, in a separate room. This allows the family to raise the money needed for the usually expensive funeral, but it's also a practice that helps with relatives' grief. Death is a heartbreaking moment in most cultures, but not having to say goodbye to your loved one just yet helps draw out the grief over a longer time to help them accept it.

When the deceased are eventually put in a mausoleum, that is not the last that the family will see of them. During a ritual known as the Ma'nene, family members are brought out of their graves to be cleaned and clothed with a fresh outfit. After this, the family members have recently begun to take family photos with them, giving them accessories like sunglasses and jewelry and introducing the newer members of the family to their ancestors.

A glimpse into your future

What about burial rites in our time? While pagan traditions of old are slipping from common memory, that's not to say that funerals are any less relevant in our day and age. While it could be argued that death is glossed over euphemistically in conversation, forgone or even ignored in our squeaky clean society, capitalism stops for no man! After all, what is there to profit off if not the unspeakable?



"Fantastic afterlife vehicles" in Ghana

Your average coffin or casket (bulkier and heavier than a coffin) will cost between £450 and £10000 if you really feel like splurging out. A quick trip to the Co-op Funeral care (yes, they have a funeral branch, what can't Co-op do?) website displays a variety of options at a variety of prices, from reasonable to outlandish. Oak and cherry wood coffins average at £450, while more austere caskets are nearer to £3000. One model, titled the "Last Supper Coffin", which has a replica of the Da Vinci mural carved intricately into each side, is available in medium oak, dark mahogany and white. It costs exactly £1000.

The Co-op collection boasts an option to "customise a coffin". This would typically include carving in a message or a design; although the example they have displayed is an exact replica of a TARDIS from Doctor Who, so that your loved ones can continue their travels across time and space in their next life.

However, customisable coffins have been long established in cultural tradition in Ghana. In the Greater Accra Region, "fantastic afterlife vehicles" as they are known are functional coffins made by artists and carpenters. The Ga people believe that life continues in the afterlife the same way it does before death; the coffins often represent the deceased person's profession. Among others, Ghana airways planes, shoes, fish and cars have been photographed in the country. They are only ever on display on the day of the deceased person's funeral.

In more recent news, in El Salvador, Mexico, and across Latin America, a trend arose post the release of the Barbie movie in July of 2023. Bright pink coffins in honour of Barbie have been described as "death in plastic; it's fantastic". The Olivares Funeral Home promoted strikingly fuchsia coffins with the slogan "so you can rest like a Barbie". After the spike in popularity of the film, the home fully sold out of their models.

In all seriousness, there truly are infinite ways to incorporate some personality into coffins. Novelty coffins allow for some of the soul of the deceased person to transpire and can provide real closure for friends and family as an alternative to a dreary, unremarkable casket.

But beyond Mattel-branded funerals, what is the future of novelty coffins? Customers are looking to more sustainable materials for biodegradable caskets. Natural Endings, independent funeral service, lists material choices ranging from bamboo, banana leaf, cardboard, seagrass to wool. They generally range in price between £500 to £900. Cardboard is 100% biodegradable and wool is incredibly sustainable as sheep never stop producing it. If you're looking for a way to continue reducing your carbon footprint after you've moved on to another plane, a sustainable coffin might be one way to do so.

The opportunities are endless. Should you or your loved ones feel up for some casual browsing of coffins, funeral directors with fun website titles such as "Go as you please" and "Exit here" have a plethora of collections available to peruse. And while death remains no joking matter, it's never too early to consider your own mortality- why not go out in style?



Bright pink Barbie-themed coffins

Into the pitch black night

A black sky covered the city, clouds formed a round blanket smothering the moon but a sliver of moonlight pierced through it to illuminate the district. In a small alley the brick road was wet with rainwater, the black cloud of storms were floating away, only to be seen in the distance marked by a faint rumble of thunder. Brick wall climbed vertically along both sides of the road reaching the end of the first floor before turning to a flat roof. Each door was plain but large and sturdy with small cracks visible all around and in its middle a single large metal ring was adorned. Each of them was surrounded by a circle of white bricks, above were singular windows, one above each door with dirty glass and two small wooden lines forming a set of 4 glass squares. The streets were dark and barely anybody could be seen, a small group of people in shabby clothes with noticeable stitch marks were entering their houses and a drunkard collapsed onto the side of the building, a bottle loosely held in his hand while three others rolled beside him. In the middle of this road walked a man in a confident demeanor. He wore clothes unfitting for this area. He was dressed in dark reddish-brown pants to which a leather strap surrounded his leg and carried a small leather pouch closed with a shiny metal and yet the other side adorned a satchel larger than the pouch held up by a thick leather belt with a golden buckle. His back was covered in a large fancy crimson trench coat reaching the lower parts of his legs, it was adorned by golden lining covering its edges then climbing around the collar. It had golden buttons who were loose and left the coat open revealing its dark blue interior. Under it was worn a lighter blue suit jacket with a black lapel over a plain waistcoat of the same color which enclosed over a white shirt whose collar was raised and the first button left open. Finally, he had a dark red fedora to which a shining white feather was attached and black leather shoes with a tight knot and dark gloves. His face was unusual, he looked young and charming and yet he had messy, long and wavy gray hair, a small mustache of the same color but his most fearsome feature was his eyes, so dark not even his pupil was to be sighted, looking into his eyes was like staring into the abyss.

Solan Plassard

Where do Jack O'Lanterns come from?

Maia Jacob and Daphne Delenclos



Jack O'Lanterns are everywhere during the Halloween season : but have you ever wondered where they actually came from ? After all, lighting up a spooky pumpkin is an odd ritual. This tradition originates from the Celtic Samhain celebration (Ireland), during which turnips – as strange as it seems – were carved into human faces and burned to ward off the spirits of the dead. When the Samhain festival was christianised, some of the Celtic traditions were preserved, and legends were invented to explain their origin; notably a christian tale which gave birth to the name of Jack O'Lanterns.



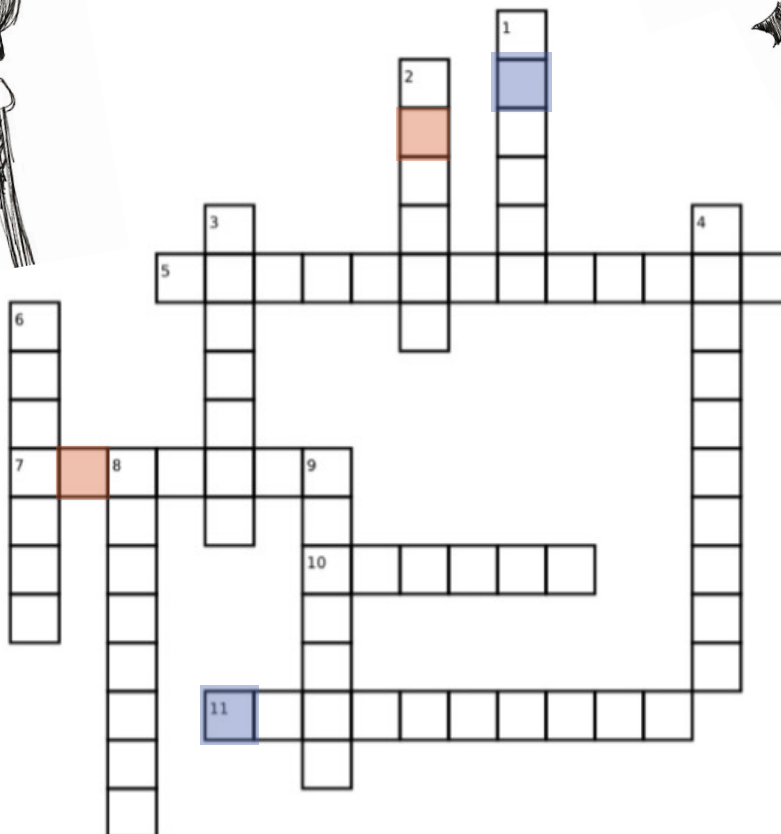
Long, long ago, lived an Irish drunken man named Stingy Jack. Jack was a malignant man, who once decided to play a trick on the Devil, as they were sharing a drink at the local pub. Jack pretended that he did not have any money to pay for the drinks, and persuaded the Devil to transform into a coin (or a different object depending on the version). He then threatened to trap the Devil forever into this form, if he did not agree to Jack's bargain, which was to prevent him from ever ending up in hell.



The Devil had no choice but to give Jack what he asked for. Jack thus enjoyed his mortal existence, until the moment of his death finally arrived. Yet Jack found himself barred from heaven as well as from hell. The Devil, still furious about Jack's trick, punished him by condemning his soul to wander eternally between hell and heaven. He gave Jack a turnip lantern to light his way.

As a result, the tradition of turnip carving was still practised in Ireland. The morality tale of Stingy Jack incited people to carve turnips in order to scare off Jack's ghost. Turnip carving was then exported to North America with the Irish emigration during the 19th century. The Irish discovered that pumpkins, more common in America than in Ireland, were easier to carve than turnips, and thus slightly changed their tradition. And that's how Jack O'Lanterns came to be.





Les paragraphes numéro: ___ et ___X sont écrit par chatGPT

Down:

1. A disturbing Palme d'Or winner
2. Where Jakub behaves badly
3. The colour of your favourite plastic coffin
4. A moment of joy for the Malagasy
6. Avoiding the evil magic with your candle
8. She struggles with a satanic conspiracy
9. An ancient Celtic tradition

Across:

5. The new Dracula
7. Pumpkins are the new _____
10. Bonding with the deceased family
11. A man stuck between Heaven and Hell

