

A Fall Event

Kim Kesty

Falcon Books

(24pp)

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The picture book A Fall Event is jubilant and comforting in its coverage of common Halloween activities.

In Kim Kesty's earnest picture book *A Fall Event*, Halloween is illuminated via seasonal neighborhood scenes.

Beginning with a straightforward invitation, "Come one, come all / This event is in the fall," the book focuses on how "there's always something to be seen" on Halloween. From there, Halloween activities are illustrated in succession, including a hayride through an eerie forest full of peeking eyes, costumed children and teenagers trick-or-treating, adults greeting their visitors with candy, and bobbing for apples.

The text itself is minimal. It features generic rhyming couplets on each page that are suitable for a board-book layout. With only an outside narrator to drive the momentum, Halloween is reduced to a series of loose observations. And the book's children are a collective feature more than characters in their own right.

Still, the book's rhythms are flowing and jubilant, helping to increase the book's sense of holiday expectation. And the illustrations have a classic quality: they include a vampire, a ghost, a fairy, and an astronaut. There's comfort and familiarity here—"an abundance of cuteness." Throughout, a motif involving toilet-paper streamers is a silly addition that conjures the prankster nature of the holiday. Scenic embellishments light up the images even more, including pumpkins, gourds, piles of colorful leaves, and black cats that strengthen the book's backgrounds. The litter-filled finale includes candy spilling from a jack-o'-lantern, somewhat dampening the otherwise pleasant atmosphere as it hints at people's carelessness.

Well wishes to "enjoy your Halloween" capture the book's fleeting tone and shared cheer in the picture book *A Fall Event*, in which Halloween is honored as a lighthearted celebration.

KAREN RIGBY (September 9, 2023)

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