



Haunted Seasons: Television Ghost Stories for Christmas and Horror for Halloween (Palgrave Gothic)

Derek Johnston

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Why do the English have ghost stories at Christmas? Why does US television have special Halloween episodes? Is this all down to Dickens, or is it a hangover of an ancient, pagan past? Why does it survive? *Haunted Seasons* explores these and related questions, examining the history and meaning of seasonal horror. It reaches back through archaeological evidence of ancient beliefs, through Shakespeare, and Victorian ghost stories, and the works of M.R.James, and onwards to radio and television. The broader genre of supernatural television is considered in relation to the irruptions of abnormality into the normal, along with the significance of time and the seasons in these narratives and their telling. Particular focus is placed on the BBC *Ghost Story for Christmas* strand and the Halloween episodes of *The Simpsons* to help us interpret the continued use of these seasonal horror stories and their place in society, from fireside to television.

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