



## Summer's End

*Lisa Morton*

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## **Summer's End** Lisa Morton

When Lisa Morton, author of *The Halloween Encyclopedia*, is called in to consult on the recent discovery of a fifteen-hundred-year-old Celtic manuscript, she's at first excited about the light this monumental find might shed on Samhain, the mysterious Celtic precursor to Halloween.

Conor ó Cuinn, the Irish archaeologist who excavated the manuscript, thinks it reveals ancient magic. Lisa is skeptical...until people around her begin dying. Dr. Wilson Armitage, the university professor who was translating the manuscript, is found torn apart by wild animals...or was he actually attacked by vicious sidh, malicious Celtic spirits that wreak havoc every Samhain?

As October 31st approaches, the border between our realm and one of murderous spirits begins to dissolve. Can Lisa survive Halloween night and use her knowledge to set the world right again?

## **Summer's End Details**

Date : Published October 4th 2013 by JournalStone (first published September 30th 2013)

ISBN : 9781940161037

Author : Lisa Morton

Format : Paperback 98 pages

Genre : Horror, Fantasy, Novella, Fiction, Holiday, Halloween

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## **From Reader Review Summer's End for online ebook**

### **Nikki says**

I got this book from Librarything's giveaway program. It's not completely terrible, but it felt completely colourless to me: it wasn't scary or gripping, I don't care about the characters, I'm not impressed with the faux-scholarly approach.

Two things that immediately present themselves as maddening about this book: 1) the narrator telling us she's a complete sceptic... and then buying into the events of the plot with barely a moment's hesitation, and 2) wanting us to believe she's a good person somehow because she doesn't sacrifice a young boy, even to save the world. Maybe that was the most horrifying thing about this -- that the author wants us to believe that she, as a character, would simply walk away and do nothing about the fact that she honestly believes a man will kill his son as a sacrifice. She'll just hope it won't happen. Right then! Protip, author: if this ever really happens to you, you may find calling the police to be a strategy of use.

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### **Mary says**

This book seemed to drag for me for the first few chapters. They seemed to read more like a history book and it was hard for me to keep the information straight as it was pretty boring. Once I got past that though, it picked up fast and the creepy, Halloween feel hooked me.

Lisa Morton, the main character, is an authority on Halloween and author. She is sought out by an archeologist who has information about ancient Druids and Celts that will change the way Lisa and the world think about everything about Samhain, Halloween. From then on the book is filled with magic, spells, people being killed, and things that go bump in the night and will make you sleep with your lights on. A perfect story for the Halloween season. Just make it through the first few chapters and then the story will pick up for you.

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### **Wulf Krueger says**

Occult nonsense and boring at that

Let's instead start at the very beginning: The cover. It looks cheap and badly done. Tons of artifacts, especially around the arms. The text looks like it belongs to some romance novel, not a wanna-be occult horror "novella".

And, oh, yes, it certainly is a "novella" which is good because much more than the about 24,000 words this thing offers would have been insufferable.

Since some endorsements are placed prominently at the beginning, let's see what others have to say. A certain Gary A. Braunbeck states it's "the best work she's ever done" - well, thanks, Gary, for the warning. He adds another notable statement "Don't start reading with any preconceived notions about horror \*or\* storytelling because they'll be shredded into confetti [...]"

He's completely right: I've always thought storytelling was about making the reader feel, breathe and live within the story. Gary wouldn't agree, I guess, if he thinks what Morton does is storytelling.

According to some Ray Garton, Morton "has created something so strikingly unique that it stands alone in the genre." - Yes, I don't think I've ever read something so uniquely bad in the genre - congratulations!

Anyway, why is this book so bad after all? It's full of pompous, self-important crap - most illuminating are the first two sentences:

"My name is Lisa Morton. I'm one of the world's leading authorities on Halloween."

Just prove it, Morton, don't shove it into your readers' faces like that. After all, you did some research after all. You have a whopping 21 footnote references - ok, 11 of them are references to this very book, other books written by yourself, other occult short-stories or just links.

Anyway, the story is quickly summarised (don't worry, no spoilers) - the hero, the author's alter ego, meets someone who found an age-old manuscript, that someone sets something evil free and the hero tries to fix that.

Unfortunately, our hero, who never believed in magic and thinks she's a die-hard sceptic quickly starts believing any nonsense that gets thrown at her. She experiences (and does) something drastic but quickly shrugs it off to plan yet another atrocity. Very believable...

So, to banish something evil, she prepares to summon something even more evil without even really knowing if that'll help or "damn the world" but, hey, who cares about logic!

And when the hero's finally doing what she feels she has to do, the book dies with a whimper.

Coming back to the beginning and shredding something into confetti: If you bought this book, you know what to do. Or wait till Halloween and put it in your Jack-o-Lantern. Or delete it from your ebook reader and pretend it never happened - that's certainly more suspenseful, exciting and logical than this entire "novella".

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## **Natalie says**

I received this book through Library Thing Early Reviewers. Summer's End is about an author name Lisa Morton who is a leading authority on Halloween. Until this year when she discovered everything she thought she knew was wrong. When Lisa receives an email from Dr. Wilson Armitage about a manuscript about Samhain, she is intrigued. When she meets Dr. Armitage she meets his colleague Dr. Conor o Cuinn an archeologist who discovered the manuscript. What Dr. Conor o Cuinn has planned for Lisa involves a lot more than her research skills. Her life is thrown into chaos and will never be the same again.

I found Summer's End to be a very quick suspenseful read. I thought it was interesting that it was in a first person narrative. Lisa Morton has thorough knowledge about Samhain and Halloween. I enjoyed reading about the Celtic and Druid history. Reading this novella makes me wonder about the true history of the Christian conversion of the Celtic and Druid people.

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## **Bettie? says**

Disclaimer: I received an ARC copy from JournalStone.

Dedication:

For the real-life Ricky,  
who knows better than to leave me alone  
at Halloween

The two opening quotes make for an amusing juxtaposition.

Opening: **October 20, 2012**

**It's been less than two weeks since the world started to fall apart. During the third week of October, I received an e-mail with the subject line "Samhain query."**

Hmm, pet hate: first person singular. A short entry in the growing Hallowe'en genre that kept me reading to the moralistic end.

Characters:

Ms Morton

Dr Wilson Armitage

Charles Vallencey

Ricky

Dr. Conor ó Cuinn  
Mongfind

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### **Rocky Wood says**

Lisa Morton's 'Summer's End' is a unique take on Halloween and it's mystic origins. Morton is probably the world's leading expert in the subject and stars in her own novella In one of the better use of meta fiction I've read. As usual Morton's research is so deep that all the background facts merge effortlessly with the plot to form the completely believable world of a LA thinly separated from another reality; and a scenario that's all too possible. I particularly enjoyed her reimagining of important historic events that added another layer of texture. A relatively quick read, it's a page turner in the old fashioned sense and I highly recommend it to those who like their fiction dark, realistic and with a good dose of soul.

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### **Becca Rose says**

I won an ARC of this book from Goodreads giveaways!

When I first started reading this book I didn't think it was something I would enjoy....but a few chapters in and I was hooked!

An author, Lisa Morton who is a Halloween expert get's an e-mail from Wilson Armitage, a latin professor at UCLA about wanting help understanding an ancient Celtic manuscript that was recently discovered by an archaeologist, Conor 'o Cuinn. The manuscript was about Samhain, the Celtic precursor to Halloween (among other things).

At the beginning of the book Lisa has a meeting with the professor and the archaeologist. They talk a little about what they found in the manuscript and how it affects different histories, beliefs, and myths of Halloween. They give her a copy of the translation of the manuscript and want her to take a look at it. (after this is when I really got into the book)

The next day Conor wants a meeting with Lisa. He wants to talk about the magic and rituals in the manuscript. He tells her the magic is real and he can actually perform the rituals... and she can too.

This is a novella so it's short but it has all the elements of a great book: It has a great story line, there's a surprise you don't see coming, and I absolutely loved the ending!

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### **Suz says**

*An ARC was provided in exchange for an honest review. This did not influence my thoughts in any way.*

In general, I try to avoid novellas. There's only so much content that can fit into a hundred pages, so often novellas are lacking in character development and the plot has a tendency to feel rushed. When I received an ARC of *Summer's End*, the synopsis drew me in and I hoped it had managed to avoid some of the issues that frequently plague stories of this length.

Admittedly, I'm a complete sucker for Celtic mythology and lore, so when the first few pages began to introduce the concept of Samhain and the traditional practices during this festival, I was ecstatic. The author even included footnotes with additional details and stories that I was able to look up and read. For those interested, this extra effort added much depth to the beginning of the book. I was a little disappointed that this trend did not continue throughout. Once the plot began to unfold, the amount of footnotes was greatly diminished. I think that continuing the trend would have been beneficial. For example, the reader could have benefited from additional lore and information about the sidhe, to allow full understanding of the concept of these creatures.

Character development in this novel was unique in that the author herself was the main character and narrator. Considering the length of the book, she was very successful in developing herself to a satisfactory degree. Having herself as the narrator and main character also served to avoid the problem of developing additional characters. We met a few other characters during the course of the story, however as it was the narrator's first time meeting them as well, in depth characterization was not necessary. The reader was not entitled to any more information than the narrator receives herself.

By having herself as the narrator and main character, Ms. Morton sows doubt into the very fabric of the plot. With the addition of facts wound into the narrative, we begin to wonder if this is really fiction at all. Druids once existed, could their magic have as well? Is it really so implausible that a manuscript could be found? I know that I will not be looking at Halloween the same way again. I'll be especially cautious with those jack o lanterns.

Now for my lament. Like so many things in life (just take your pick of the numerous available metaphors for such a situation) the novella was over way too quickly, leaving me wanting more. I'm not talking about wondering what happens after the end. It's everything that happened in between. The novella contained many scenes that would have greatly benefited from additional details. I'm not going to mention what specific scenes since I am strictly anti-spoiler. Just know that this book, with its amazing and unique plot could easily have been a full length novel.

Overall, I do recommend this novella for anyone who enjoys shorter books or for anyone particularly interested in Celtic mythology. I do hope to see this wonderful story expanded upon some day.

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### **Kay Sachse says**

As Early Reviewer of Librarything I got a copy of this novella, apparently a kind of hybrid thriller annex fantasy story. But after I read the first pages I thought that I had ended up with a scientific approach of Lisa Morton towards the meaning of Halloween. That was kind of boring but fortunately the story changed into something with a plot shortly after that.

Lisa Morton, the 'writer' of this story has a lot of insights about the Celts and their history. That's why she is asked to have a look at ancient scriptures of a female Celtic druid that might change our knowledge about history and the end of the Druids. Lisa meets the men who are researching those papers and they, especially an Irish archeologist named Conor ó Cuinn, challenge her to test the ancient knowledge and try out some of

these spells they appear to work, still! Not only one of the researchers gets killed in course of their explorations, but Lisa also changes into a completely different creature.

But do they really have to change the course of the world and change all the bad things that have happened during the last 1500 years.

Reading this 90 pages long story was kind of funny, but this hybrid genre is not my cup of tea because to me it's neither fish nor flesh, only a fantasy story that tries to appear to look like the truth. Well, nice try, but no, not quite.

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## **Chris says**

Summer's End by Lisa Morton 4 stars

This little gem of a novella totally creeped me out! Nice twist to the usual "Halloween is real" plots we get this time of year. In this book, there is a Celtic manuscript that needs translating so the archeologist seeks out an author/expert on Halloween-ish things. The twist is when you realize the lead character is actually the author, Lisa Morton. She inserts herself flawlessly with not a word or phrase out of place to pull the reader out of the book-clearly she is a master of her craft(pun intended!!). I enjoyed not only the actual story but the structure of the story and how she put it all together. I don't usually read novellas since they don't have much meat to them and skim over details, but not this one. There are details aplenty and footnotes to help you along the way. Very nicely done, not too horrifying but with just enough weirdness, magic and mayhem to make me glad I read it before the sun went down. I will definitely be picking up more by Lisa Morton. 4 stars

I received a copy of this book to review-the opinions expressed are my own.

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## **Tracy says**

First of all, let me disclose that I won this book in a Goodreads contest. That being said, and I hate to say the following: it was awful. Truly awful. The author couldn't decide whether to do a short story or a novel, so she settled on something in between -- and failed. What we get is a short-ish story packed with tons of explanations of "history" so that you'll be able to follow along with the story at hand. The fact of the matter is that there is no connection with any of the characters, there is no climax, and the plot is wanting. I mean, half the characters in the book are mentioned vaguely one or two times for absolutely no reason. And the end is completely foreseeable. Honestly, the "book" is boring, boring, boring. I felt like I was reading a story from a classmate in my creative writing 101 class in college. Would not recommend.

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## **Frank Errington says**

Review copy

What a great way to kick off the Halloween season. Can you think of anything better than a new novella from the writer who's become synonymous with the holiday?



Lisa Morton is the author of *Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween* which was awarded the 2012 Bram Stoker Award for Superior Achievement in Non-fiction, and also won the Grand Prize at the 2012 Halloween Book Festival causing her to become affectionately known as the Queen of Halloween.

*Summer's End* is unique in that the writer is also the protagonist in the story which leads to this epic opening line. "My name is Lisa Morton. I'm one of the world's leading authorities on Halloween. And this year I discovered that everything I thought I knew, was wrong."

The title explanation was pretty good, too. "...the Celts had celebrated 'summer's end' (the literal translation of 'Samhain') with a three-day long party of drinking, feasting and horse racing."

What follows is an entertaining blend of real-life Lisa and story Lisa as the author finds herself caught up in desperate attempt to set history back on it's proper track.

Plenty of scary moments and a few that can best be described as cringe-worthy. *Summer's End* by Lisa Morton is officially available on October 4th, 2013 from Journalstone Publishing. If you'd like something fresh to kick-start your Halloween spirit, this is the one.

Strongly recommended.

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### **Christopher Payne says**

When Lisa Morton, author of *The Halloween Encyclopedia*, is called in to consult on the recent discovery of a fifteen-hundred-year-old Celtic manuscript, she's at first excited about the light this monumental find might shed on Samhain, the mysterious Celtic precursor to Halloween.

Conor ó Cuinn, the Irish archaeologist who excavated the manuscript, thinks it reveals ancient magic. Lisa is skeptical...until people around her begin dying. Dr. Wilson Armitage, the university professor who was translating the manuscript, is found torn apart by wild animals...or was he actually attacked by vicious sidh, malicious Celtic spirits that wreak havoc every Samhain?

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### **River says**

I received this book in exchange for an honest review. Although I have read horror novels, *Summer's End* is the first of this kind I have picked up. The plot is without a doubt intriguing, and Lisa Morton does a wonderful job at making herself a character in this novella. There is the topic of Samhain and druids, and there are footnotes and some background to help the reader understand things. This was a major plus for me as I do not know much about Druid lore, Celtic mythology, and the stories behind the history of All Hallow's Eve.

There was a lot of telling rather than showing, and although there was some substance to this novella, I felt there were chunks missing in the pace that made it difficult for me to connect with any characters. The plot

and suspense of the *sidh* were enough to keep me going, however, and a little after halfway in, I was glad I did. It picked up, pulled me in, and wouldn't let me go. The author combined facts and folklore to create an effective Halloween novella that sets it apart from other "magic is real, and it's not all what you think" stories.

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## **Katy says**

**Book Info:** Genre: Dark Fiction

Reading Level: Adult

Recommended for: Those who like something different, those interested in Celtic culture

Trigger Warnings: murder, ritual sacrifice, mass murder

Animals: Cat murder, goat murder, attempted cat murder

**My Thoughts:** Wow, what a powerful story. It will baffle all expectations, since it is written like a journal. Or did this truly happen? That is the question that is left floating in the reader's mind after reading this.

I've been fascinated by Celtic culture for decades, and so I found this particularly interesting. I wonder how much of this the author has confirmed, or if it is something she made up completely? There is no way to know. I wish I could have read this a couple weeks ago, it would have been perfect for Halloween. If you've been looking for something shiver-inducing, but not too long, check out this awesome novella.

**Disclosure:** I received an e-book ARC from the LibraryThing Early Reviewer's program in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own.

**Synopsis:** When Lisa Morton, author of *The Halloween Encyclopedia*, is called in to consult on the recent discovery of a fifteen-hundred-year-old Celtic manuscript, she's at first excited about the light this monumental find might shed on Samhain, the mysterious Celtic precursor to Halloween.

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