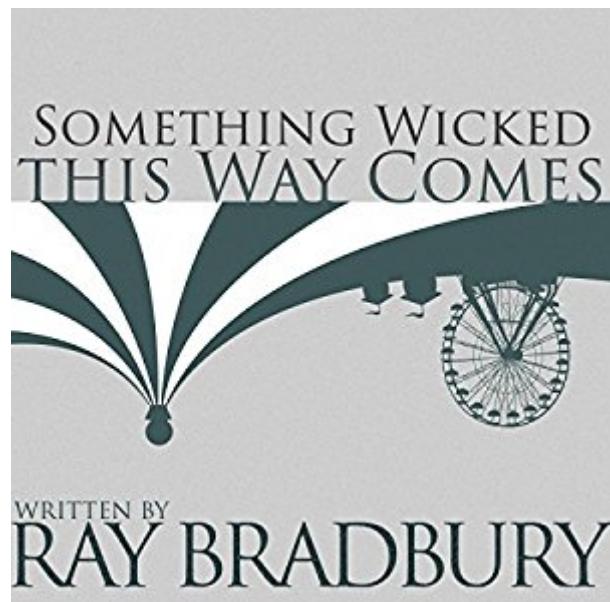


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Something Wicked This Way Comes



Synopsis

Few American novels written this century have endured in the heart and mind as has this one - Ray Bradbury's incomparable masterwork of the dark fantastic. A carnival rolls in sometime after the midnight hour on a chill Midwestern October eve, ushering in Halloween a week before its time. A calliope's shrill siren song beckons to all with a seductive promise of dreams and youth regained. In this season of dying, Cooger & Dark's Pandemonium Shadow Show has come to Green Town, Illinois, to destroy every life touched by its strange and sinister mystery. And two inquisitive boys standing precariously on the brink of adulthood will soon discover the secret of the satanic raree-show's smoke, mazes, and mirrors, as they learn all too well the heavy cost of wishes - and the stuff of nightmare.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If there's one thing that Ray Bradbury excels at, it's his ability to recapture the range of emotions and attitudes that were present in all of us when we were just young, impressionable children. It's a sign of a talented writer if he or she is able to make the reader feel nostalgic for a childhood that one didn't have. *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES* pushes all the right buttons in reminding us of the wonder that was present in everyone. A lot has been said about the prose of this book, and it's certainly of a higher quality than one would be expecting from a "horror" story. It's quite poetic and most of the time it is excellent at painting the scene. However, there are a number of places where it feels forced and pretentious, as if Bradbury is writing that way just to show off his thesaurus-reading

skills. But for every turn of phrase that falls flat, there exist several chilling moments that will be forever etched in the mind of the reader. It's a step above the sort of material that one usually finds in genre works. The point of view from the two children is executed amazingly well. As in his other novels and short stories, Bradbury demonstrates his superb ability to realistically portray the beliefs and emotions of children. They aren't overly mature, but neither are they childish. He's hit the nail so perfectly that it really feels as though one is reading a true-life account of some curious boys, rather than a fictional account. On the other hand, breaking up the action between two children means that we never really get extremely close to either one. There's some nice interaction between one of the boys and his father that deals with the grown-up's attempt to develop a backbone and to stand up to the evil carnival people.

"By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes." This quote from Shakespeare adequately describes this now-classic work of horror by Ray Bradbury. Bradbury manages to use evocative language and charming characters to draw the readers into what is almost a parallel world. Will Holloway and Jim Nightshade are boys born two seconds apart -- one on Halloween, the other on the day before. Will is the ultimate innocent, while Jim is darker and more knowledgeable about the world. These two have been inseparable friends all their lives, despite their different personalities and tiny events that divide them on subtle levels. Then, one day, a strange carnival comes to their town, with a freak show and a carousel. But a more sinister undercurrent runs in this carnival: The freak show, with its tattooed "illustrated man," blind gypsy witch, and murderous dwarf, is more menacing than the townspeople expect. And when Will and Jim see the carousel change a man's age, they become the targets of Mr. Dark and his evil cohorts -- for fates worse than death. Bradbury's writing is a mixed bag. While it's extremely evocative and often surreal, it becomes a little clumsy at times. He refers to the carousel horses having "panic-colored teeth," but never explains what this description means. His metaphors occasionally become very strained, and at times the lapses into philosophical musings become distractions to the overall plotline. However, he expertly draws out a feeling of horror with only a few words, never overdoing the descriptions of something that terrifies Jim and Will.

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