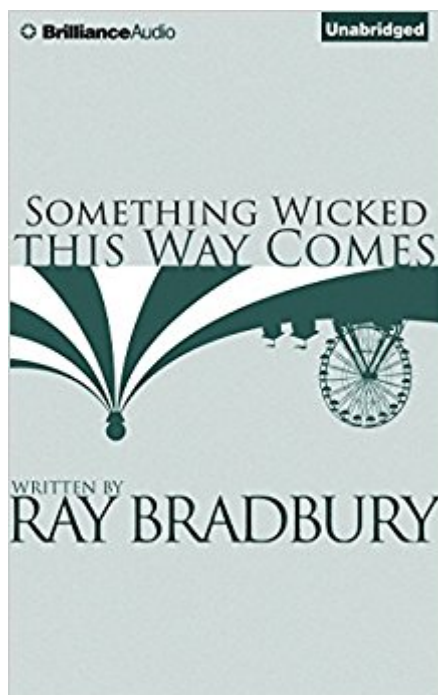


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# Something Wicked This Way Comes



## Synopsis

"By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes." The carnival rolls in sometime after the midnight hour of 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. Young boyhood companions James Nightshade and Will Halloway are the first to heed its call. From a place of safety, they watch a midway come to spectral life, their emotions a riot of eagerness, trepidation, bravado, and uncertainty. For they can sense the change that's in the air; that this is the autumn in which innocence must vanish in the harsh, acrid smoke of disillusionment and horror. 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 mazes and mirrors, as they learn all too well the heavy cost of wishes and the stuff of nightmares. All those who still dream and remember—and those who have heard the whispering but have yet to experience its dark, poetic power—you are welcome. A shadow show like none other is about to begin again.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A masterpiece of modern Gothic literature, *Something Wicked This Way Comes* is the memorable story of two boys, James Nightshade and William Halloway, and the evil that grips their small Midwestern town with the arrival of a "dark carnival" one Autumn midnight. How these two innocents, both age 13, save the souls of the town (as well as their own), makes for compelling

reading on timeless themes. What would you do if your secret wishes could be granted by the mysterious ringmaster Mr. Dark? Bradbury excels in revealing the dark side that exists in us all, teaching us ultimately to celebrate the shadows rather than fear them. In many ways, this is a companion piece to his joyful, nostalgia-drenched *Dandelion Wine*, in which Bradbury presented us with one perfect summer as seen through the eyes of a 12-year-old. In *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, he deftly explores the fearsome delights of one perfectly terrifying, unforgettable autumn.

--Stanley Wiater --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

*Something Wicked* is Avon's latest installment in its ongoing series of reprints of Bradbury's works in quality yet affordable hardcover editions. Appearing in 1962, this is the story of a diabolical carnival that wreaks havoc on the lives of the people of a small Illinois town, much like the one in which Bradbury grew up. This edition also sports a new afterword by the author. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Read this years ago as a teen, and something sparked a desire to read it again. Not in an electronic format, so this used, loved and much read paperback with all the charm of a paper and ink book was just what I needed. The smell of the paper, the feel of the book, and the beautiful, lyrical words of Ray Bradbury worked their magic on me, just as the magic in the book was worked on the boys. Wonderful how an author and his words can act as a time machine and take you back to a different time and place.

This is an amazing book; and is one of my all-time favorites as well as one of my top favorites of Bradbury's work (the other is *The Martian Chronicles*). It is a lot darker than the Disney film (basically the adult version of the Disney film) but well worth the time to read.

I purchased this book for my Gothic Literature college course. It arrived on time in fair condition. I purchased it used. The book was difficult to read at first because of the older language used but as I got into it and more used to the language I started enjoying it. Ray Bradbury did a great job of creating a unique story and setting the tone for it throughout the novel.

This book is part of Bradbury's loosely constructed Green Town trilogy (there's also a collection of related short stories). A sort of classic tale in its telling, the story unfolds as a nostalgic coming of age yarn mixed with horror involving two young boys. The main struggle explored by the author is

that of desire and temptation. Chiefly this evolves between the contrasting main characters. The protagonists, Will and Jim, are best friends, with the main difference being that Will is a bit more cautious and Jim is a bit more adventurous with a slightly edgier worldview than his friend. Will's father (another main character), is old--to put it simply. Charles has come into fatherhood later in life and doesn't know how to make amends with that, as the youth of his son seems only to be a constant reminder of how aged he is. This dynamic sets the stage for things to come. Enter the horror. Bradbury's language is flowery, purple-colored prose from an older time. In looking at other reviews, it seems that this style is off-putting to some readers. Bradbury does not take a "window pane" approach to describing things (as author Brandon Sanderson might describe the style). His words fall from the abstract and are more akin to poetry. The author paints the scene with notes and chords and melody. The wording is thick and may take some chewing, depending on your mood or frame of reference. It's rife with allusion. That's not to say that the story is not there--nor is it boring or stylized. There is real tension and suspense. But, Bradbury coats the story in vivid hues to invoke tone, mood and perhaps the nostalgia he must have been thinking of when he wrote this. Indeed, the story itself is inspired by the author's own real life childhood experience from when a carnival came to his hometown. Still, no matter the author's style, there is a clear framework of a story. At times, it may seem a bit long--but not much. It's easy to see how other authors (like Stephen King for instance) were inspired by someone like Bradbury, when you have scenes involving sewer hideaways and sideshow freaks stalking through town on ill intent missions to find the two pesky young boys. Each time the protagonists escape the clutches of the Carnival, a new struggle ensues with solid reversals of fortune. And there is also the ever-present worry, that nobody will ever believe what is really go on here. Another thing to note of Bradbury's style is his use of the language to construct scenes. His prose may be purpled--but it is not so verbose. He has a wonderful way of describing these evil things lurking about the town as they tangle with the protagonists, and he does this without resorting to overwrought, visceral descriptions of violence. I felt particularly creeped out by the Dust Witch, Mr. Dark and even the eviscerated Mr. Electro who drolled out stoic declarations like a half-dead toad. All the characters of this dark Carnival had a presence, though not described in complete physical detail--I still had a sense of them. I could feel the mood, the fear they put into the protagonists. The story is a tad romanticized, and perhaps the voice of the young boys feels out of age at times. Yet, it pretty much works. All the capers the two get into seem realistic enough and appropriate for their age. The evil of the Carnival provides a stark contrast to the idyllic air around the boys, which keeps the nostalgia from going overboard. Also wonderful is the way that Bradbury creates problems between the boys, who are the best of friends

in every sense of the word (at times they seem like they are right out of a 1950's sitcom). However, the absence of Jim's father coupled with his curious and more daring side give him a darker edge and we are genuinely worried about him--just as Will is. This also rings true for Charles (Will's father) who starts off as a nice fellow, but weak. We get to know Charles and understand his feeling of helplessness and struggle through this with him as he must put aside all his neurotic worrying about getting old, embrace life, and understand that his age is what it is (and that it is not even close to as bad as he has convinced himself it is). This story started out as a short story first (check out the slightly darker version called "Black Ferris") and then morphed into a screenplay which Bradbury hoped his friend Gene Kelly would produce. That never happened so Bradbury took the time to turn the treatment into a full novel--which is what we have here. The book is a story of boyish adventure, yet Bradbury's style makes the stakes much grander. The Carnival is not just some group of street criminals meant to rip off the good townspeople. There is something more sinister at work. Jim, Will, Charles and the citizens of Greentown come face to face with the physical manifestations of evil of the world and learn that even their small idyllic town is not safe. The struggle is eternal, for today's struggle will be yesterday's battle. The war lasts a lifetime. Yet, it's not so heavy as all that, when the protagonists learn that they must trust to life's good graces to keep evil at bay. They find the necessary strength within themselves to arm against the evil "Autumn People" of the world. Lastly, the elixir of life plot device, which Bradbury plays with in this story, is also refreshingly simple and yet a wonderfully unique take on this common trope. What dangerous consequences lie behind the glorious promises of a fountain of youth? Read and find out. A heartfelt tale through and through. Podcast: If you enjoy my review (or this topic) this book and the movie based on it were further discussed/debated in a lively discussion on my podcast: "No Deodorant In Outer Space". The podcast is available on iTunes or our website.

An interesting story, to be sure. After all these years, I had never read the novel nor see the movie production. A local hangout was showing the movie on Halloween and it caught my attention, so I ordered the book. The story itself is intriguing and I had no problem being motivated to read the entire book. The only issue I had was with the embellished flair in writing. At times it was somewhat distracting even to the point of feeling like the writer had "gone off on a tangent." Also, at times, the descriptions and character conversations felt like they were from an older time (older than the 50s for sure). Still, all in all, I would consider this a good read!

I originally read this book in junior high back in in the early 70s and decided to rediscover this old

friend. I am glad I did this, because being much older, I picked up on a lot of subtleties I had missed the first time around. I enjoyed how lovingly Bradbury spoke of Jim Nightshade and his sidekick Will, as well as Will's father, Charles. It's as if he knew and understood them personally and wanted you to know them as much as he. The autumn setting was beguiling. I liked how the book never really showed their whole hand; referring to the supernatural circus folk as "autumn people," but never really explaining wholly exactly who or what they were, leaving this to our imagination. I especially appreciated how, all through the book, Charles was depicted as "just a janitor" working at the library but, towards the end, a different Charles appears to the surprise of his son Will. A whole new dimension to Charles appears. Beneath the surface is a man of great introspection, compassion, and intuitiveness. A great beginner book for anyone who has not read Ray Bradbury.

I always thought the movie version of this book was great, so I wanted to read the book from which the movie was based. A very good book. Now I think the movie is better since it has a faster pacing to the story, but that's only a minor issue. If you like Bradbury, this book should be included on your reading list.

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