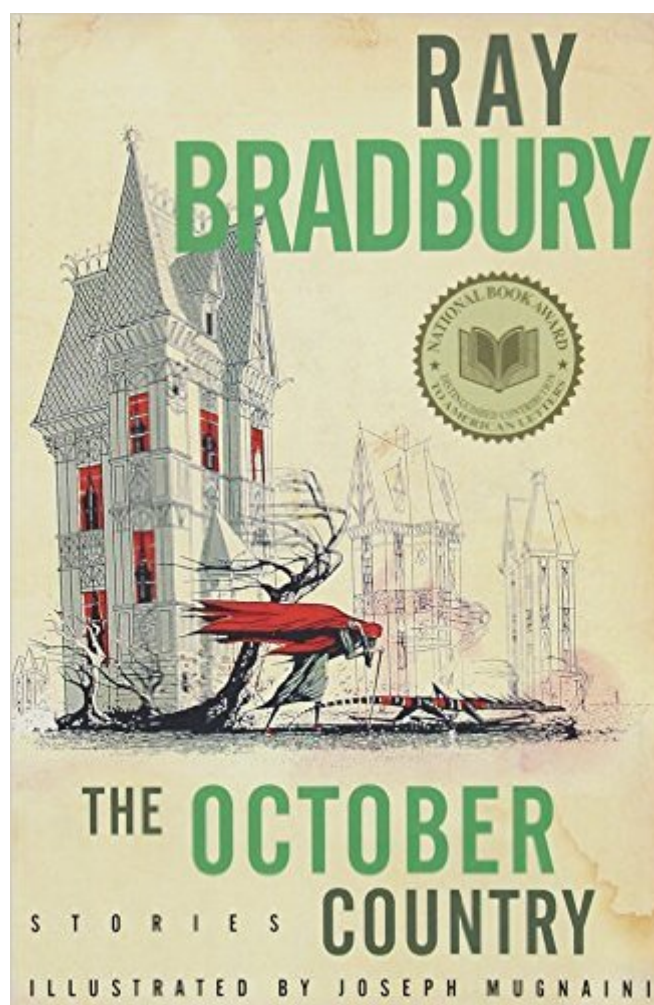


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The October Country



Synopsis

THE OCTOBER COUNTRY is Ray Bradbury's own netherworld of the soul, inhabited by the horrors and demons that lurk within all of us. This classic collection of short stories includes: THE EMISSARY: The faithful dog was the sick boy's only connection with the world outside--and beyond. . . THE SMALL ASSASSIN: A fine, healthy baby boy was the new mother's dream come true--or her worst nightmare. . . THE SCYTHE: Just when his luck had run out, Drew Erickson inherited a farm from a stranger! And with the bequest came deadly responsibilities. . . THE JAR: A chilling story that combines love, death . . . and a matter of identity in a bottle of fear! THE WONDERFUL DEATH OF DUDLEY STONE: A most remarkable case of murder--the deceased was delighted! Plus nineteen more terrifying tales! Renowned for his five-million copy bestseller, Fahrenheit 451, and hailed as the finest living writer of fantastic fiction, Ray Bradbury shows with each of these nineteen stories his brilliant knack for extracting the chilling essence of a world's insanities, disorders, and hang-ups. Once again he proves himself to be America's master of the short story. "An author whose fanciful imagination, poetic prose, and mature understanding of human character have won him an international reputation."--The New York Times

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a collection of nineteen classic stories (1943-1955) all under the very general theme that they take place in autumn. Most have a supernatural element, while some are more psychological, but almost all have a darker edge to them. A lonely dwarf finds a personal use for the mirrors in a carnival funhouse, until someone makes a cruel practical joke out of it. A man becomes obsessed

with the bones beneath his skin. A new mother is convinced that her child is trying to kill her. A poor family inherits a farmland and a terrible duty as well. An obstinate old woman simply refuses to die. A neurotic man fears the wind. With all the modern horror I read I find it refreshing to pick up Mr. Bradbury's work from time to time and travel back to a quieter, simpler era, and this anthology satisfies. The stories are no less chilling for being over fifty years old. If you like tales in the vein of 'The Twilight Zone' this is just the sort of thing you will like. This edition contains an introduction by the author in which he talks about the origins of some of the stories, and illustrations by Joe Mugnaini.

Ray Bradbury's name is synonymous with imagination and in this collection of short stories he proves that beyond a reasonable doubt. I know, I used to cringe at his name. That is before I learned that he didn't just write science fiction (a genre of which I am not too fond). These stories range from a bizarre account of one couple's visit to a Mexican town and the mummies that reside there (The Next In Line), a loyal dog that brings its young bed-ridden owner things from out in the world, even things from cemeteries (The Emissary), a baby born with an evil intelligence (The Small Assassin), a man who is the heir to Death's job (The Scythe), and an observant boy who deals with a tenant vampire in a very unique way (The Man Upstairs). The stories I have listed are of particular impact and my favorites of the collection, but overall word for word, page for page each story is priceless. If you are a fan of horror fiction or just plain old imaginative writing in general invest in the works of Ray Bradbury, you won't regret it.

Every year just before I reread The Homecoming. It was the first Bradbury story I ever read, way back in 5th grade, and I fell in love with it immediately. When Bradbury writes about an apple pie, in a few quick words you smell it. I love this collection, as I love Fahrenheit 451, The Martian Chronicles, and The Illustrated Man. The stories in here range from the odd to the silly to the chilling, the kind of stories you want to tell in a tent by a flashlight on a camping trip with your old buddies. They are for the child and the terror in us all. May you all fly with Uncle Einar!

Mr. Bradbury is truly one of the most creative, macabre, intelligent writers of this or any other century. This collection of 19 stories is a fine example of the range of Bradbury's abilities. I must admit, after the first couple stories, I wondered aloud the excellent reviews the book received. After I'd finished, however, I realized how remarkable this book is. I gave it a 9 (out of a possible 10) rating; the above graphic is actually 4.5 stars. Of the 19 stories, only one or two are veritable duds.

About half are above average reading, and the remaining seven or eight are simply enchanting. Or harrowing. Or, well, touching. "Uncle Einar" is touching. By the way, here's my top five stories in "October Country," which I'd recommend to any reader wishing to enjoy a Poe-type experience: 1. The Wonderful Death of Dudley Stone 2. The Scythe 3. The Wind 4. The Crowd 5. The Small Assassin

"The October Country" is often overlooked when fans and literary critics cite both "The Martian Chronicles" and "The Illustrated Man" as comprising some of Ray Bradbury's best tales of fantasy and science fiction. Without question, "The October Country" also merits ample praise for Bradbury's prodigious gifts as an elegant story teller and prose stylist. These stories were first written and published between 1943 and 1955, comprising his first major body of work devoted to horror and fantasy. It was truly a pleasure reading these tales after a long time; they remain as vivid and fresh as when I had encountered them for the first time years ago in high school. Ray Bradbury offers a fascinating look into how they were written in the Introduction that he has written for this edition. Bradbury's affection for small-town Midwestern United States - so readily apparent in his "The Martian Chronicles" - is an underlying theme in his book, especially in tales such as "Uncle Einar" and "Homecoming", which are, in part, inspired by his own youth. But yet another underlying theme is Bradbury's penchant for psychological horror, that is as terrifying as some of his best science fiction short stories (e. g. "The Illustrated Man"); three classic examples in this collection include the tales "The Next in Line", "The Small Assassin", and "The Scythe". Overall, Ray Bradbury's prose and storytelling skills certainly place him alongside Edgar Allen Poe as two of the United States' foremost masters of highly literate tales of horror. I certainly regard Bradbury as one of the finest writers of our time.

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