



Green Shadows, White Whale: A Novel of Ray Bradbury's Adventures Making Moby Dick with John Huston in Ireland

By Ray Bradbury

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The title of this lighthearted, beguiling autobiographical novel is a play on Peter Viertel's *White Hunter, Black Heart*, which, like this book, dealt with the legendary director John Huston. This is Bradbury's comic account of his trip to Ireland to write the screenplay for Huston's adaptation of *Moby-Dick*. The movie itself is merely a background constant that anchors this series of vivid, ear-tingling vignettes and anecdotes. Bradbury describes his awed dealings with the erratic, eccentric and impulsive director, and his delight upon being accepted among the regulars at an atmospheric pub called Heeber Finn's. It's a great place to hoist a wee drop and listen to stories told in the best Irish brogue. Finn himself imaginatively tells of the time when George Bernard Shaw supposedly dropped into his establishment. Then there's the community's encounter with a "willowy" (read: gay) stranger and his crew of ballet dancers, a man who--to everyone's surprise--proves to be no mean raconteur. Bradbury's prose is as vibrant and distinctive as the landscape in which these delightful tales are set. Illustrations not seen by PW.

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From Kirkus Reviews

Bradbury goes mainstream with a hymn to Ireland and alcohol, focusing on writing a screenplay with John Huston for the director's film *Moby Dick*. Set in Dublin and the Irish countryside where legendary director Huston has settled in as a squire, the story and the Irish gift for gab allow Bradbury's love of metaphor to find a basis he's never known before. With all of the silver-tongued folk speaking inspiredly in the normal tenor of their stout-and whiskey-fueled conversation, Bradbury spouts eloquence as naturally and exuberantly as John Millington Synge--and fine talk it is you'll be hearing. Young Bradbury arrives at the Huston estate in awe of Huston and instantly finds himself in company with a laughing ogre given to whiskey pranks and the famed man's false bonhomie. The episodic plot circles about a wedding that Huston decides to throw for a longtime friend, less about the actual scriptwriting and difficulties met in harnessing the *White Whale* to the needs of Hollywood. Other eddies include the (fictitious) arrival of teetotaler George Bernard Shaw at Heeber Finn's pub, during which the old renegade outtalks even the most inspired of the whiskey-laced barfolk; the pub's reaction to a visiting team of gay ballet dancers, which turns wittily on Finn's recognition that the Irish male is closer in nature to these gays than one would suspect; and on Huston's savaging of Bradbury's self-esteem. It rains twelve days out of ten in Ireland, we discover: "I stood looking at the gray-stone streets and the gray-stone clouds, watching the frozen people trudge by exhaling gray funeral plumes from their wintry mouths, dressed in their smoke-colored suits and soot-black coats, and I felt the white grow in my hair." Despite the apt but sad romanticizing of alcohol, and an unfortunate title echo of Peter Viertel's novel *White Hunter, Black Heart* (about Viertel's scripting *The African Queen* with Huston), Bradbury's triumph. He has never written better. -- *Copyright ©1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

About the Author

In a career spanning more than seventy years, Ray Bradbury, who died on June 5, 2011 at the age of 91, inspired generations of readers to dream, think, and create. A prolific author of hundreds of short stories and close to fifty books, as well as numerous poems, essays, operas, plays, teleplays, and screenplays, Bradbury was one of the most celebrated writers of our time. His groundbreaking works include *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Martian Chronicles*, *The Illustrated Man*, *Dandelion Wine*, and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. He wrote the screen play for John Huston's classic film adaptation of *Moby Dick*, and was nominated for an

Academy Award. He adapted sixty-five of his stories for television's *The Ray Bradbury Theater*, and won an Emmy for his teleplay of *The Halloween Tree*. He was the recipient of the 2000 National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, the 2004 National Medal of Arts, and the 2007 Pulitzer Prize Special Citation, among many honors.

Throughout his life, Bradbury liked to recount the story of meeting a carnival magician, Mr. Electrico, in 1932. At the end of his performance Electrico reached out to the twelve-year-old Bradbury, touched the boy with his sword, and commanded, "Live forever!" Bradbury later said, "I decided that was the greatest idea I had ever heard. I started writing every day. I never stopped."

Users Review

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Jane Cuellar:

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