



# Ray Bradbury: A Critical Companion (Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers)

*Robin Anne Reid*

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Reviewers and critics have not always agreed on how well the science fiction label fit Ray Bradbury, but the immense popularity of works like *The Martian Chronicles* and *The Illustrated Man* leaves no doubt as to the enduring status of this important writer. This Critical Companion examines, in a Literary Heritage chapter, the situation of Bradbury's works within the science fiction genre and explores thematic concerns that set works like *Fahrenheit 451* and *Dandelion Wine* apart from conventional popular SF writings. This introduction to Bradbury, written especially for students, traces Bradbury's interesting life, examining his early literary efforts, his forays into Hollywood, and his recent writing projects. Eight of Bradbury's major works are discussed at length, each in its own chapter, including two works published within the last ten years: *A Graveyard for Lunatics* (1990) and *Green Shadows, White Whale* (1992). Clear, thoughtful analysis is also given for *The Martian Chronicles*, *The Illustrated Man*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, and *Death Is a Lonely Business*.

In each chapter, analysis of the important literary components is given: plot, setting, characters, and themes. In addition, the genesis, critical reception, and an alternate reading of each work is also discussed in clear terms for students and general readers. Suggestions for further reading on Bradbury and his writings are also provided in a select yet extensive bibliography. This volume is ideal both for students reading Bradbury for the first time and for dedicated Bradbury fans who wish to appreciate his work with a deeper critical perspective.

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