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From School Library Journal

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Review

"With this collection of 21 stories and a poem, Bradbury employs the humor, empathy, and quirky approach

that have been the hallmarks of his career. . . . These accessible stories are quick to read but may linger long after the book is done. Recommended for all." (Library Journal on WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE PARIS)

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Over the course of a storied literary career that has spanned more than half a century, Ray Bradbury has taken us to wonderful places: across vast oceans to foreign lands, onto summer porches of small-town America, through dark and dangerous forests where predators wait, into the hypnotic mists of dream, back to a halcyon past to remember, forward into an exhilarating future, and rocketing through outer space.

In We'll Always Have Paris—a new collection of never-before-published stories—the inimitable Bradbury once again does what few writers have ever done as well. He delights us with prose that soars and sings. He surprises and inspires, exposing truths and provoking deep thought. He imagines great things and poignantly observes human foibles and frailties. He enchants us with the magic he mastered decades ago and still performs flawlessly. In these pages, radio voices become indomitable flesh and the dead arise to recapture life. There is joy in an eccentric old man's dance for the world and wonder over the workings of humankind's best friend, O Holy Dog. Whether he's exploring the myriad ways to be reborn, or the circumstances that can make any man a killer, or returning us to Mars, Bradbury opens the world to us and beckons us in.

Get ready to travel far and wide once again with America's preeminent storyteller. His tales will live forever. We will always have Bradbury—and for that reason, we are eternally blessed.

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"With this collection of 21 stories and a poem, Bradbury employs the humor, empathy, and quirky approach that have been the hallmarks of his career. . . . These accessible stories are quick to read but may linger long after the book is done. Recommended for all." (Library Journal on WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE PARIS)

Most helpful customer reviews

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

A Genuine Review by Someone Who Read It and Liked It

By J Reston

I always await the release of a new book by Ray Bradbury with some trepidation. As the author of classic collections including THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES, THE ILLUSTRATED MAN, THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN, and A MEDICINE FOR MELANCHOLY, he has set such a high bar for reader expectations that it is virtually impossible for an author in his late 80s to meet those expectations. Indeed, some of his later books have fallen far short of the level that he set in the 1950s. WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE PARIS does not quite rise to the level of those classic works, but the good news is that a surprising number of stories in this book still display the old Bradbury magic.

In his later career, Bradbury has been less interested in science fiction and fantasy than he is in capturing everyday life, ordinary characters and pivotal moments, so most of the stories in his latest collection fall in the latter category. My favorite is probably "Apple-Core Baltimore", a 4-page emotional tour de force that captures a man's bitterness toward a childhood friend who wronged him better than whole novels by lesser writers ever could. "Massinello Pietro" is a bittersweet character portrait of an eccentric man with a menagerie of animals who wants to celebrate life and teach others around him to do the same. Instead, he is deemed a neighborhood nuisance and public health menace and is threatened with the loss of everything that he holds dear. "The Reincarnate", which originally appeared in the World Fantasy award-winning anthology DARK DELICACIES, is an unorthodox zombie story wherein a dead man attempts to go home to his wife but learns that you can't go home again (especially when you're dead); however, the story has a happy ending of sorts. "The Visit" is a powerful story of a mother who comes to visit the young man who received her son's heart in a life-saving transplant procedure; both characters find solace in the meeting. "Pater Caninus" is a delightful vignette about a Golden Retriever who seems to be taking confession from patients at a Catholic hospital. The head priest is initially outraged but then realizes that he is guilty of the sin of pride. Written in the 1940s, "Ma Perkins Comes to Stay" is a retro-fantasy about a radio character who comes to life due to a woman's need for companionship, which makes her husband's life miserable. The story is a semi-whimsical commentary on some people's need to escape from reality; substitute television for radio and this story could have been written today. "Come Away with Me" concerns a man's sudden impulse to help a younger man whom he doesn't even know escape from an abusive relationship. The ending leaves at least one of them sadder and wiser as a result. This is just a sampling of the more memorable stories in this

collection.

Not every story is equally successful. The title story, about a bizarre encounter between an American man and a French man in Paris, misses the mark entirely. "The Murder" has an intriguing premise wherein one man bets another that he can get him to commit a murder before the month is up; it's not bad as is but with more development it could have been a great story. "Remembrance, Ohio" is simply an enigma; the story was confusing and its meaning unclear from beginning to end. Two or three other stories are slight and unmemorable. However, the successful stories outnumber the weak stories in this collection.

Lest I be accused of being soft on Bradbury, I will say that I have not enjoyed all of his later books. I had to force myself to finish LET'S ALL KILL CONSTANCE, and I thought FROM THE DUST RETURNED was a muddled mess of a novel. But this collection shows that Bradbury still has what it takes when it comes to the short story at least.

I'll end by quoting the recent LA Times review of WAHP which summarized perfectly the qualities that Bradbury's writing displays: "Bradbury's strengths have always been in capturing something about people, places and moments..... while this isn't Bradbury at the top of his game, this collection pulls its weight and hits enough weird and beautiful poetic notes to satisfy and even surprise his constant readers." I wholeheartedly agree, and I think most Bradbury fans will enjoy this book.

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Each story is snappy and easy to read, yet you'll always want to go back and check it out again By Bookreporter

WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE PARIS is a collection of 22 never-before-published short stories written by one of the most celebrated authors of our time. These tales are mostly about men, or sometimes about men and women, and seem fresh and strange yet completely familiar.

In "Ma Perkins Comes to Stay," Ray Bradbury describes a man going crazy (or is he?) when a radio personality comes to stay at his house. Joe has heard of Ma Perkins because she gives advice on the radio. But he can't understand how she has come out of the radio to be sitting in his living room or why his wife is happy about it and not confused in the least.

Just as I was wondering where the science fiction that I had heard so much about was, I came to "Fly Away Home," a story of Mars exploration. Again, the theme of going crazy appears with the possibility that going insane is just a form of sanity. After all, it would be natural to feel uncomfortable after a six-month trip in a spaceship, correct?

"Miss Appletree and I" returns to the examination of long, successful marriages and what they mean. George and Nora have had a long-running joke that George has an ongoing affair with Miss Appletree, a beautiful woman with better qualities than Nora. As their marriage becomes dull, it is Nora, not George, who suggests that he bring up his "mistress" again.

Many of the stories seem reminiscent of Roald Dahl's creepy, strange tales that were at once simple and surreal. "The Murder" comes out of a bet that Mr. Hill makes with Mr. Bentley, who insists that he could never commit murder. Twenty cents goes to the winner of the bet: either Mr. Hill can trick Mr. Bentley into a killing, or Mr. Bentley is as kind and normal as he says.

The title story is not just a retelling of Casablanca. Instead, it describes how two men meet in the middle of the night in Paris while one is out getting pizza for his wife. It takes the classic scene of tourists meeting

locals and not understanding them and adds a touch of the surreal and strange to it.

Somehow I've missed out on reading Bradbury my entire life, and I couldn't decide if obscure short stories were the place to begin when he has such famous works to be read. This collection seems a bit better suited to an older or male reader than to myself, but it picks up steam as it goes along, and the selections in the second half are more interesting than the ones in the beginning.

Titles such as "We'll Always Have Paris" and "Come Away With Me" bring up flashes of the movies or songs in which the phrases also appear, and other stories are so true to life that they feel like I have already lived them. "Un-pillow Talk," almost entirely in dialogue, is like a story version of When Harry Met Sally.

WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE PARIS is heavily populated with characters. The people, sometimes strange and sometimes down to earth, are the most colorful things in the book. Each story is snappy and easy to read, yet you'll always want to go back and check it out again.

--- Reviewed by Sarah Hannah Gómez

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Worth waiting 50 years for a good memory, a good cry

By James T. Reed III

Ray Bradbury's stories always take time to seep into your mind. Once read, they transmogrify into metaphor, then, one day, they slap you in the face and explain themselves to you in an "Aha!" moment. Take one of Bradbury's earlier tales, "The Toynbee Convector," from the book of the same title. It seems a harmless little exercise until you wake up at 3 a.m. and realize that this profound piece of literature is actually an blueprint for how to save and rebuild the world! And, citing Bradbury's "We'll Always Have Paris," I recommend you start with "Pieta Summer," another seemingly joyful exercise that will stun you, make you cry, and bring you face to face with yourself and all the small and large incidents in your life that remain unresolved. In one line, Bradbury metaphorically apologizes to the universe, on your behalf! Read Ray Bradbury slowly and carefully. There is not one line in his works that isn't multi-layered, multi-textured, multi-metaphorical. Each story re-read will bring forth new levels of meaning. This is the author of a lifetime.

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