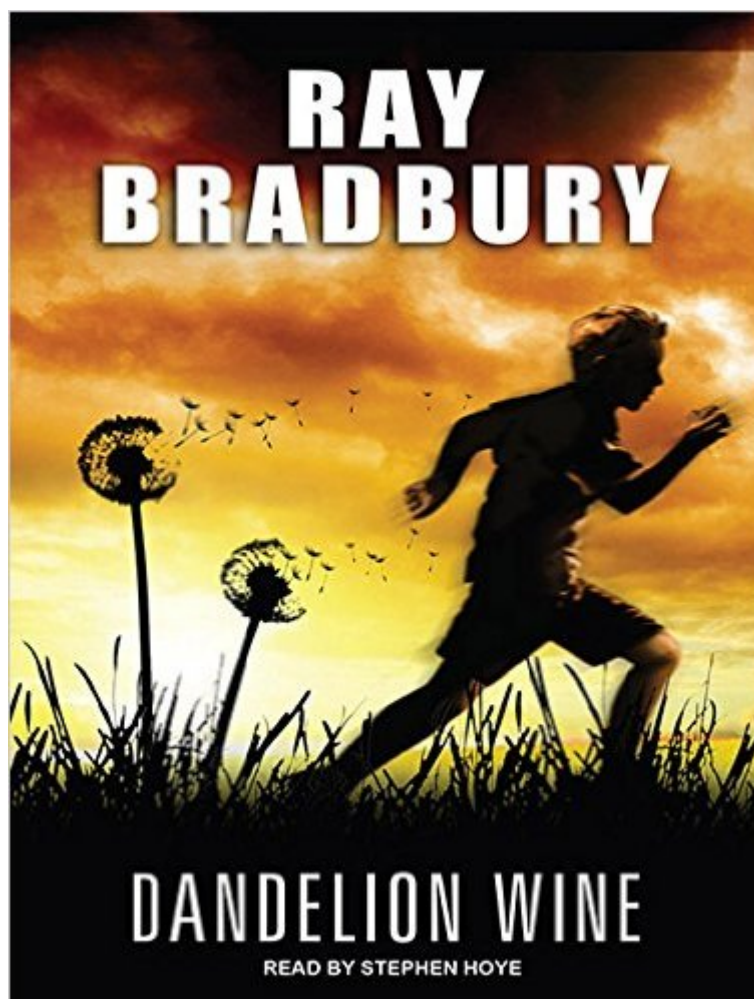


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Dandelion Wine



Synopsis

Ray Bradbury's moving recollection of a vanished golden era remains one of his most enchanting novels. *Dandelion Wine* stands out in the Bradbury literary canon as the author's most deeply personal work, a semi-autobiographical recollection of a magical small-town summer in 1928. Twelve-year-old Douglas Spaulding knows Green Town, Illinois, is as vast and deep as the whole wide world that lies beyond the city limits. It is a pair of brand-new tennis shoes, the first harvest of dandelions for Grandfather's renowned intoxicant, the distant clang of the trolley's bell on a hazy afternoon, It is yesteryear and tomorrow blended into an unforgettable always. But as young Douglas is about to discover, summer can be more than the repetition of established rituals whose mystical power holds time at bay. It can be a best friend moving away, a human time machine who can transport you back to the Civil War, or a sideshow automaton able to glimpse the bittersweet future. Come and savor Bradbury's priceless distillation of all that is eternal about boyhood and summer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

DANDELION WINE is first and foremost the story of a 12 year old boy discovering that he is alive. I was lucky enough to read this gorgeous, perfect novel, wrapped in a library's dandelion yellow hardcover, the summer of my 12th year, in the small town of New Haven, Indiana, probably wearing my own pair of Red Ball Jets or Keds, lying in my living room as usual, curled up in a chair with the screen door open to let in the blustery summer wind and sun, with the lush green Indiana grass blowing in waves just outside. I understood what Bradbury was saying at age 12, an incredible thing

in itself, since the themes here are fairly grown-up. Essentially, this book is about a boy flooded with the sudden realization of his own "aliveness", and never has a child's experience of innocent living been so perfectly, passionately illustrated. Douglas Spaulding lying in the grass, or feeling the keen pleasure and pain of carrying heavy laden buckets of self-picked berries out of the woods while the handles crease the insides of his hands. Douglas Spaulding discovering the wonder of a Number Two pencil, and the joy of rising early in the morning to watch his town come to life with the sunrise. Douglas Spaulding discovering that nothing makes a boy fly weightless through his summer vacation better than slipping his feet into the cool, cloudwrapped heaven of a new pair of tennis shoes. I found this book, at age 12 and several times since, to be an experience ranking with the most important books about human life that I have ever read. Bradbury sees so much, and conveys the experiences so clearly that one knows what Douglas and Ray know by the end. This is a book about passion and joy and being fully alive from moment to moment.

Magical. If the word 'magical' didn't exist, we would have to invent it in order to properly describe Ray Bradbury's DANDELION WINE. The premise is absurdly simple: one summer in a small Midwestern town during the late 1920's. On the surface it doesn't look like a lot to hang a novel on, but Bradbury puts so much heart, soul and, yes, love into his words that I defy anyone to call it an empty book. Bradbury has always written superbly for children, and slipping his characters into his own nostalgic childhood succeeds on virtually every level. I've always preferred Bradbury's short stories to his full novels, yet here he successfully manages to have his cake and eat it too. Most of the chapters are self-contained little story segments. In fact, I had come across portions of this book in short story collections, and had no idea that they were smaller parts of a larger work. Yet DANDELION WINE is much more than just a collection of stories. The children and adults alike grow and change as the summer days burn and then fade. Just like a real season, some events are disconnected from the rest and can involve seldom seen people, while other proceedings are intrinsically linked to their peers. The book itself is fairly difficult to sum up; every definition that I've tried coming up with has omitted several major elements. Of course, any summary that tried to include everything would be far too long and would contain none of the magic of the text. Children discover some fundamental and universal truths for the first time. Adults deal with their own fears and their own nightmares. And, of course, there are the usual wonderful collection of Bradbury eccentrics and strangers. Children are filled with awe and recognizably childlike without being annoying or unrealistic.

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