Something wicked this way comes: special collections as viewed by a technocrat

Abstract
When the title of my presentation today began to make the rounds a few months ago, I was asked by several people the inevitable question: Who is the wicked one? Us (special collections) or you (the technocrat)? The answer, inevitably, is “Yes,” which is, of course, why I settled on that title in the first place. As a science fiction reader, I could have selected any number of other titles suitable to the topic, including “The Year’s Best Horror Stories,” “Worlds of Weird,” or “The Dispossessed.” None, however, as evocative as Mr. Bradbury’s.

As a point of departure, and since . . .

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Something Wicked This Way Comes is a 1962 dark fantasy novel by Ray Bradbury. It is about 13-year-old best friends, Jim Nightshade and William Halloway, and their nightmarish experience with a traveling carnival that comes to their Midwestern town one October, and how the boys learn about combatting fear. The carnival’s leader is the mysterious “Mr. Dark”, who seemingly wields the power to grant the citizenry’s secret desires. In reality, Dark is a malevolent being who, like the carnival, lives off Their way of looking at the world shapes the novel, from its words to its very story. Bradbury’s brand of scary comes from the imagination of a twelve-year-old boy. [Applicable if you are NOT in the twelve to fourteen-year-old boy range]: Bradbury totally gets what it’s like to be a twelve to fourteen-year-old boy. (Almost as if he was one at some point!) Something Wicked This Way Comes isn’t just a supernatural tale of spooky fun, but a tribute to that very special time in a guy’s life. If you remember what it was like to be that age, the novel takes on the tone of nostalgia. In many ways, Something Wicked This Way Comes can be viewed as a companion novel to the lighter Dandelion Wine, which tells the story of two young boys over the course of a magical and idyllic summer. In a brief “Afterword”, Bradbury explains the origins of the novel. In 1950, just after the publication of The Martian Chronicles, Bradbury had dinner with the actor/singer Gene Kelly, star of Singing in the Rain. Bradbury spent the next five years writing Something Wicked This Way Comes from the Dark Carnival screenplay. The title of the novel comes from a remark made by the “weird sisters” in Shakespeare’s Macbeth: “By the pricking of my thumbs / Something wicked this way comes”.

2019
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February: 0

2018
January: 0
February: 0
March: 0
April: 0
May: 0
June: 0
July: 0
August: 0
September: 0
October: 1
November: 0
December: 1

2017
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May: 7
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September: 0
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