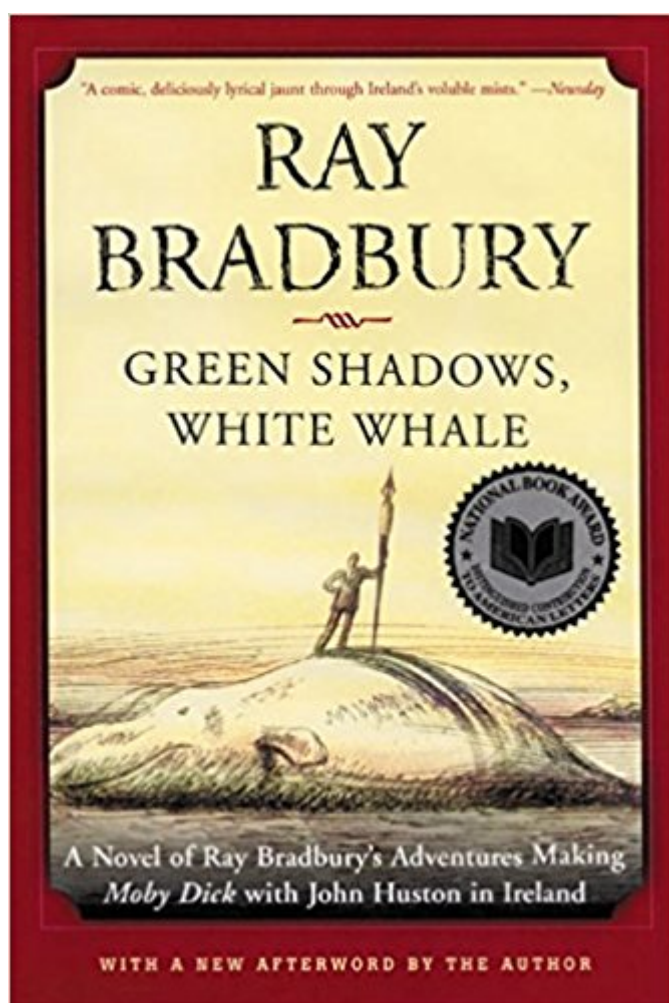


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# Green Shadows, White Whale: A Novel Of Ray Bradbury's Adventures Making Moby Dick With John Huston In Ireland



## Synopsis

In 1953, the brilliant but terrifying titan of cinema John Huston summons the young writer Ray Bradbury to Ireland. The apprehensive scribe's quest is to capture on paper the fiercest of all literary beasts -- Moby Dick -- in the form of a workable screenplay so the great director can begin filming. But from the moment he sets foot on Irish soil, the author embarks on an unexpected odyssey. Meet congenial IRA terrorists, tippling men of the cloth, impish playwrights, and the boys at Heeber Finn's pub. In a land where myth is reality, poetry is plentiful, and life's misfortunes are always cause for celebration, *Green Shadows, White Whale* is the grandest tour of Ireland you'll ever experience -- with the irrepressible Ray Bradbury as your enthusiastic guide.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Do whatever you can to LISTEN to this book as read by RAY BRADBURY himself. The Audio version is the only way to enjoy this. Ray Bradbury's impression of John Huston is hilarious. Plan a long trip in your old car that has a cassette player and listen to this on the way. You won't want to stop for gas or bathroom breaks. We laughed out loud! Listening to Ray Bradbury's Irish brogue during this book has been some of the most entertaining moments I've experienced in my life.....if you're into that kind of thing, you know hilarious moments. *Green Shadows, White Whale*

The characters jump off the page. The collage of stories meld together in a meaningful narrative that captures Ireland, Melville and Huston. Then Bradbury bares his soul in the most poignant fashion. Well worth a read before or after visiting Dublin, but visit you will.

Green Shadows is a memoir of the time Bradbury spent in Ireland in the 1950's working on a screenplay for Moby Dick. Most of the book deals with his impression of Ireland and the Irish, as recounted in personal experiences, possibly embellished with poetic license. His dealings with director John Huston make up the subject for the rest of the book. Like Bradbury, I am a fan of Huston's movies. Huston's wide-ranging choice of subject matter and his ability to translate literary work to the screen are impressive. Unfortunately, the portrait Bradbury draws of Huston reveals a character who is usually filled with bonhomie but who can easily veer into sly bullying - a fascinating man, but one who may be difficult to work with. At the same time, Bradbury is courageous enough to reveal his own vulnerabilities in such a situation. I found the book to be engaging throughout and very well written.

Although Bradbury shines in his apt descriptions and observations, some of this narrative is dated and gets lost in the area between fiction and nonfiction.

This is the best book you'll never read. Bradbury is on everyone's favorite author list (if you read), but this is special. He never wanted to write about Ireland, or about Huston, but like all his books, the dreams and visions haunted him until he did, and then he wrote the story to match his dreams, all in short story clumps. This is my favorite book of all time, and I ordered this one to replace the one I wore out. If our most trying experiences make us who we are, this is what made Bradbury who he was. Just brilliant!

Read this book when I was much younger and loved it (definitely 5\* then, now 4 3/4\*). Actually, I love almost anything Irish, and that hasn't changed. Decided to reread GS,WW after a trip to Ireland. My slightly revised impression is that while very well written, the book seems to be trying a bit too hard to impress through descriptions and similes. While it does not go into Irish history at all, it shows insights into and love of the Irish character ("character" emphasized). Learned quite a bit about John Ford, a fascinating character whom I had only known through his films. GS,WW is often serious and thought-provoking, but is filled with many humorous and even laugh-out-loud incidents.

A fun read.

Great read. Not the usual Bradbury.

So many people think of Ray Bradbury as a Science Fiction writer, but he really is a writer of great dimension. In *Green Shadows, White Whale*, he shows us a great view of Ireland as seen through his acquired pub friends, as they tell him stories, and through the people he meets. Written almost as a collection of short stories, his use of words is poetic! We also get a glimpse of the strong character of John Huston. Bradbury plays the upper crust, fox hunting, privileged Ireland against the common man with humor and imagination. I thoroughly enjoyed his book!

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