**Something Wicked This Way Comes**  
Adapted by Ray Bradbury from the novel by Ray Bradbury  
*Especially for Grades 7-12  
Barter Theatre – fall, 2016

(NOTE: standards listed below are for reading *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, seeing a performance of the play, and completing the study guide.)

**Virginia SOLs**  
**English** – 7.1, 7.4, 7.5, 7.7, 7.9, 8.2, 8.4, 8.5, 8.7, 8.9, 9.1, 9.3, 9.4, 9.6, 9.8, 10.3, 10.4, 10.6, 10.8, 11.3, 11.6, 11.8, 12.1, 12.3, 12.4, 12.6  
**Theatre Arts** – 7.6, 7.18, 7.20, 8.5, 8.12, 8.18, 8.22, TI.10, TI.11, TI.13, TI.17, TI.6, TI.9, TI.12, TI.15, TI.17, THII.11, THII.12, THIV.12, THIV.13

**Tennessee/North Carolina Common Core Standards**  
**English Language Arts – Reading Literature:** 7.1, 7.3, 7.4, 7.7, 7.9, 7.10, 8.1, 8.4, 8.7, 8.10, 9-10.1, 9-10.4, 9-10.6, 9-10.10, 11-12.1, 11-12.4, 11-12.7, 11-12.10  
**English Language Arts – Writing:** 7.1, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 8.1, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 9-10.1, 9-10.7, 9-10.8, 9-10.9, 11-12.1, 11-12.7, 11-12.8, 11-12.9

**Tennessee State Standards**  
**Theatre 6-8** – 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2 **Theatre 9-12** – 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2

**North Carolina Essential Standards**  
**Theatre Arts** – 7.A.1, 7.AE.1, 7.CU.1, 8.A.1, 8.AE.1, 8.CU.1, 8.CU.2, B.C.1, B.C.2, B.A.1, B.AE.1, B.CU.1, B.CU.2, I.A.1, I.AE.1, I.CU.2, P.C.1, P.A.1, P.AE.1, A.C.2, A.A.1, A.AE.1

**Setting**  
The week before Halloween in Green Town, a small town in the Midwest.
Characters

Voice of Ray Bradbury – the narrator
Tom Fury - lightning rod salesman– sells lightning rods
Jim Nightshade – a thirteen-almost-fourteen year old boy
Will Halloway– Jim’s neighbor, one day older
Mr. Halloway – Will’s father
Mrs. Halloway– Will’s mother
Mr. Tetley – runs the cigar store in town
Crosetti– the town barber
Mr. Dark – owns the carnival that has come to town
Miss Foley – Will and Jim’s teacher
Jim’s mom
Ice Woman – a carny woman, locked in ice
Cooger – co-owner of the carnival
Electrico – who Cooger becomes
Robert – Miss Foley’s nephew
Policeman
Girl – Miss Foley after a carousel ride
Dust Witch

Vocabulary Words

scarab       maze       philosophize       carnivore
pandemonium  illustrated  tainted           deliverance
menagerie    tattoo      folio            naiveté
calliope     trance      gorge            gibbering
huckleberry  hypnotize  vapor            titillate
guillotine   vandal      ulcerating       coincidence
Synopsis

It is one week until Halloween, which means Will Halloway and Jim Nightshade are one week away from turning fourteen. Tom Fury, a lightning-rod salesman, visits their town and warns the boys that a storm is coming. Fury gives Jim a free lightning rod to put on his roof. After the boys attach it, they visit Charles Halloway, Will’s father, at the library where he works. Halloway feels old at fifty-four, and yearns to be young again. On the way home, Halloway sees a sign in a store window advertising *Cooger & Dark’s Pandemonium Shadow Show*. Jim and Will find a similar handbill in the street. The boys are excited that a carnival has come so late in the year, but Halloway has a bad feeling about it. At three o’clock in the morning, the boys hear a train whistle. They realize it is the carnival train and sneak out to watch – only the train appears to have no driver, and the carnival tents, instead of being put up, appear to be woven by a giant spider. The boys run home.

The next day is bright and beautiful, and the boys explore the carnival. On the midway they discover their teacher, Miss Foley, panicking inside the Mirror Maze. They help her out - then Jim goes into the maze and Will has to pull him out as well. Jim insists on coming back that night, and Will agrees, but then they find the lightning-rod salesman’s bag and they realize that they must stay to learn what has happened to the man. They end up at the carousel. A huge man grabs Will and Jim and tells them that the merry-go-round is broken. Then Mr. Dark appears and tells him to release the boys. Mr. Dark introduces the other man as Mr. Cooger, the co-owner of the carnival. Mr. Dark tells Will and Jim to come back the next day. They start to run off but then they hide and watch. What they see is unbelievable – Mr. Cooger rides backwards on the carousel and when he steps off of it he is twelve years old.
Synopsis (cont.)

They trace Cooger to Miss Foley’s house, where he pretends to be her nephew Robert, who got lost at the carnival earlier in the day. When he sees the boys, Cooger runs off. Jim follows him back to the carnival, hoping to ride the carousel. Will chases after him, and when he finally reaches the midway, Cooger is on the carousel, growing older, and Jim is about to join him. Will knocks the switch on the carousel and it flies out of control, spinning rapidly forward. Cooger ages over a hundred years before the carousel stops, and Jim and Will run off again. They return with the police, but Cooger is nowhere to be found. Suddenly Mr. Dark appears, and shows the policeman his latest act – Mr. Electrico. Mr. Electrico is really the dead Cooger who is shot through with electricity in order to restore him to life – temporarily. The policeman, convinced that there has been no foul play, leaves. Mr. Dark tells the boys to come back to the carnival the next day. Upon his return home, Will’s father questions him as to his whereabouts. Will, trying to keep his father out of it, promises him that he will tell all soon. The night the Dust Witch comes in her hot air balloon to find Jim and Will, but Will shoots down her balloon with a bow and arrow.

The next day carnival arrives in town, out searching for them. They hide under an iron grille in the sidewalk. Halloway discovers them but the boys convince him to keep quiet just as Mr. Dark approaches. Will’s father pretends not to know the two boys whose faces are tattooed on Mr. Dark’s hand, and when the Witch comes and begins to sense the boys’ presence, he blows cigar smoke at her, choking her and forcing them both to leave. Later that night Will and Jim meet Halloway at the library, where he has researched the carnival. He tells them that their best weapon is love. Mr. Dark suddenly shows up and the boys hide. He crushes Halloway’s hand when Halloway tries to fight him. Mr. Dark finds the boys and the Dust Witch casts spells on them. Mr. Dark takes them away and orders the Dust witch to stop Halloway’s heart, but when she tries, Halloway laughs hysterically, and his laughter drives her away. He goes to the carnival to get the boys.

At the carnival Charles Halloway outsmarts Mr. Dark, finds his son, kills the Witch, and destroys the Mirror Maze in a matter of minutes, all through the use of laughter and happiness. Then he and Will search for Jim, finally finding him at the carousel. Jim starts to ride and Will tries to stop him. Both boys end up going for a ride before Will is able to jump off and bring Jim with him. Jim falls into a stupor, close to death. Halloway grabs Mr. Dark and holds him close, killing him with affection. The carnival falls apart as Will tries to revive Jim. They save Jim by singing and dancing and laughing, for their happiness brings him back from the edge of death.
Ray Bradbury, American novelist, short story writer, essayist, playwright, screenwriter and poet, was born August 22, 1920 in Waukegan, Illinois. He graduated from a Los Angeles high school in 1938. Although his formal education ended there, he became a “student of life,” selling newspapers on L.A. street corners from 1938 to 1942, spending his nights in the public library and his days at the typewriter. He became a full-time writer in 1943, and contributed numerous short stories to periodicals before publishing a collection of them, Dark Carnival, in 1947.

His reputation as a writer of courage and vision was established with the publication of The Martian Chronicles in 1950, which describes the first attempts of Earth people to conquer and colonize Mars, and the unintended consequences. Next came The Illustrated Man and then, in 1953, Fahrenheit 451, which many consider to be Bradbury’s masterpiece, a scathing indictment of censorship set in a future world where the written word is forbidden. In an attempt to salvage their history and culture, a group of rebels memorize entire works of literature and philosophy as their books are burned by the totalitarian state. Other works include The October Country, Dandelion Wine, A Medicine for Melancholy, Something Wicked This Way Comes, I Sing the Body Electric!, Quicker Than the Eye, and Driving Blind. In all, Bradbury has published more than thirty books, close to 600 short stories, and numerous poems, essays, and plays.

A Brief History

Barter Theatre was founded during the Great Depression by Robert Porterfield, an enterprising young actor. He and his fellow actors found themselves out of work and hungry in New York City. Porterfield contrasted this to the abundance of food, but lack of live theatre, around his home region in Southwest Virginia. He returned to Washington County with an extraordinary proposition: bartering produce from the farms and gardens of the area to gain admission to see a play.

Barter Theatre opened its doors on June 10, 1933 proclaiming, “With vegetables you cannot sell, you can buy a good laugh.” The price of admission was 40 cents or the equivalent in produce, the concept of trading “ham for Hamlet” caught on quickly. At the end of the first season, the Barter Company cleared $4.35 in cash, two barrels of jelly and enjoyed a collective weight gain of over 300 pounds.

Playwrights including Noel Coward, Tennessee Williams and Thornton Wilder accepted Virginia ham as payment for royalties. An exception was George Bernard Shaw, a vegetarian, who bartered the rights to his plays for spinach.

Today, Barter Theatre has a reputation as a theatre where many actors performed before going on to achieve fame and fortune. The most recognized of these alumni include Gregory Peck, Patricia Neal, Ernest Borgnine, Hume Cronyn, Ned Beatty, Gary Collins, Larry Linville and Frances Fisher. The list also included James Burrows, creator of Cheers, Barry Corbin, and the late Jim Varney.

Robert Porterfield passed away in 1971. His successor, Rex Partington, had been at Barter in the 1950s as an actor and in the 1970s as stage manager. Rex returned as chief administrator from 1972 until his retirement in 1992. In March 2006, he passed away.

Richard Rose was named the producing artistic director in October 1992. In that time, attendance has grown from 42,000 annual patrons to more than 163,000 annual patrons. Significant capital improvements have also been made. Including maintenance to both theatres, and in 2006, the addition of The Barter Café at Stage II and dramatic improvements to Porterfield Square.

Barter represents three distinct venues of live theatre: Barter Theatre Main Stage, Barter Theatre Stage II and The Barter Players. Barter Theatre, with over 500 seats, features traditional theatre in a luxurious setting. Barter Stage II, across the street from Barter Main Stage and beyond Porterfield Square, offers seating for 167 around a thrust stage in an intimate setting and is perfect for more adventurous productions. The Barter Players is a talented ensemble of actors, producing plays for young audiences throughout the year.

History is always in the making at Barter Theatre, building on legends of the past; Barter looks forward to the challenge of growth in the future.
From the Page to the Stage!

How does a book become a stage play? Here are some of the elements that went into Barter Theatre’s production of *Something Wicked This Way Comes*…

1. **Script**
   It all starts here. A playwright (in this case, the book’s author Ray Bradbury) turns the prose of literature into dialogue and dramatic action. This is called “adapting”. Sound easy?
   **Try it yourself!**
   Pick a scene from your favorite story and adapt it into a scene for the stage. Try not to use the narrative voice – focus instead on creating “dialogue” between the characters.

2. **Director/Actors**
   The director and actors begin the rehearsal process. The director “blocks” the play, which means he tells the actors where to move and stand and sit. The actors work on learning their lines, finding their character’s motivation and creating the world of the play. The length of a rehearsal process for a Barter Theatre production ranges from 100 – 120 hours spread out over 4-6 weeks, depending on the play.

3. **Set Design**
   The set designer designs a set that will not only serve the aesthetic needs of the production by creating beautiful visuals that represent the various locations in the story (i.e. Will’s bedroom, the carnival, outside Mrs. Foley’s house) but also function as a safe environment upon which the actors will move (or be moved). A good set design will also allow the action to flow from one scene to another smoothly, with seamless transitions.
   **Try it yourself!**
   Using the scene you adapted, design a set that will both visually serve the story and function effectively for the actors.

4. **Costumes/Wigs**
   The costume designer is responsible for creating a different look for each character while maintaining the overall aesthetic of the production. Each actor’s costume must be tailored to fit and be built to take the wear-and-tear of 8 shows a week! Also, in a show where the actor is required to play more than one character, the design must incorporate a method to facilitate “quick changes”. The wig designer is responsible for designing, building and styling the wigs that will appear in the show. Like the costumes, wigs are necessary to help distinguish characters.
   **Try it yourself!**
   Design a costume/wig for the character in your scene. Make sure your costume includes a mechanism to make “quick changes” possible.

5. **Props**
   A lightning rod! Handbills for the carnival! Mr. Electrico’s electric chair! These are a few examples of the props designed and built by Barter’s props department for this production. A **prop** is defined as an object used on stage by actors for use in the plot or story line of a theatrical production.
   **Try it yourself!**
   Design and build the props you will need for your scene.

6. **Lights/Sound**
   Lights not only illuminate the actors and pull focus to various spots on the stage but, together with sound, help create a mood. Lights and sound can also, along with the set, help establish location. The sound of calliope music, thunder and lightning, and presto! We are on the midway of a haunted and dangerous carnival!
   **Try it yourself!**
   Put together a soundtrack for your scene that establishes place and mood. Feel free to use recorded music/sound effects or perform it live!

7. **Stage Manager/Crew**
   The Stage Manager attends all the rehearsals and once the show goes into production, is “in charge”, calling all the sound and light cues and maintaining the integrity of the piece during its run. The SM is aided in these endeavors by the Crew, the unsung heroes who work backstage moving sets, changing wardrobe, placing props – whatever is necessary for the show to go on!
Word Search

Find the following words in the puzzle below:
Jim Nightshade, Will Halloway, carnival, Mr. Dark, October, library, Mr. Cooger, Dust Witch, carousel, Illustrated Man, Halloween, Barter Theatre, Mirror Maze, Electrico, Miss Foley, calliope, pandemonium, lightning rod, tattoos, freaks
True and False

Write T if the statement is True and F if the statement is False.

1. ____ Will Halloway is one day older than Jim Nightshade.
2. ____ This story is set in June, around the summer solstice.
3. ____ Mr. Halloway owns the cigar store in town.
4. ____ Will’s father wishes he were young again.
5. ____ Jim Nightshade was born on Halloween.
6. ____ The lightning rod salesman gives Will Halloway a free lightning rod.
7. ____ Mr. Cooger is also the Illustrated Man.
8. ____ Mr. Dark rides the carousel backwards in order to pose as Robert.
9. ____ Miss Foley is the town librarian.
10. ____ Something Wicked This Way Comes was written by Ray Bradbury.
11. ____ Jim shoots down the Dust Witch’s balloon with a bow and arrow.
12. ____ Mr. Halloway chases the Dust Witch away with cigar smoke.
13. ____ Will and Jim help Miss Foley escape the Mirror Maze.
14. ____ Jim Nightshade yearns to be older than he is.
15. ____ At the end, Mr. Halloway destroys Mr. Dark with Love and Goodness.

Matching

Draw a line connecting the person in the 1st column with his/her corresponding description in the 2nd.

1. Robert                           a. becomes Mr. Electrico
2. Mr. Cooger                       b. Miss Foley’s nephew
3. Mr. Halloway                     c. school teacher
4. Miss Foley                       d. is covered in tattoos
5. Tom Fury                         e. lightning rod salesman
6. Mr. Dark                         f. works at the library
Questions/Activities

1. Read *Something Wicked This Way Comes* by Ray Bradbury then attend a performance of Barter’s production. How are they similar? How are they different?

   **Write a paper that compares and contrasts the book with Barter’s production!**

2. In this story, Mr. Dark is covered in tattoos. Using the internet, **research the history of tattoos**. Where did the practice originate and when? Culturally speaking, how has the practice changed over the years? How has the technique changed? **Present your findings to the class.**

3. Ray Bradbury grew up in Waukegan, Illinois. Using the internet, **research the history and culture of Waukegan**. Where is it located? What is the basis for its economy? How did it get its name? What other famous people are associated with this town? How has it changed since Ray Bradbury grew up there? **Present your findings to the class.**

“*By the pricking of my thumbs,*

*Something wicked this way comes*…”

Which character in *Macbeth* is being quoted here? Who or what is approaching? What is the situation? Why do you think Ray Bradbury picked this quote for the title of his book? **Discuss.**

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** Allegorically speaking… **

An allegory is a work of art, such as a story or painting, in which the characters, images, and/or events act as symbols. The symbolism in an allegory can be interpreted to have a deeper meaning. An author may use allegory to illustrate a moral or spiritual truth, or political or historical situation.

*Is Something Wicked This Way Comes* an allegory? If so, an allegory for what? **Discuss.**

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5. What is the role of magic in this story? Who has magical powers and how do they use them? Is magic good or evil? **Discuss.**

6. What role do the freaks play in this story? How does one become a freak in Mr. Dark’s carnival? What did the lightning rod salesman become?

7. Ray Bradbury considered himself a fantasy writer, not a sci-fi writer. What is the difference? **Discuss.** What is your favorite fantasy novel? How does it compare to *Something Wicked This Way Comes*?
8. Using pictures from magazines or newspapers, construct a collage representing one of the characters from *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. Display the collages around the room and see if the other students are able to match the collage to the character.

**Write it!**

Select your favorite character from the play, pick an important day in their life that influences this play then write a journal entry about that day as that character. For example, you might pick the character of Dust Witch and write about the night will shot down your balloon, or you might pick the character of Miss Foley and write about the day you were turned back into a little girl. Be as specific as possible and write as that character would.

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**Write a critique of Barter Theatre’s production of *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. Be sure to include what you liked, didn’t like and what you would have done differently.**
Comedy vs. Tragedy

**comedy:** a dramatic work that is light and often humorous or satirical in tone and that usually contains a happy resolution of the thematic conflict.

**tragedy:** A drama or literary work in which the main character is brought to ruin or suffers extreme sorrow, especially as a consequence of a tragic flaw, moral weakness, or inability to cope with unfavorable circumstances.

Given these definitions, would you categorize *Something Wicked This Way Comes* as a comedy or a tragedy? **Cite three samples from the play to support your position.** Does a character’s point-of-view influence your findings? **Discuss.**

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**Extra Credit - PERSUADE ME!**

As Jim Nightshade, write a paper persuading Will to join him on the carousel in order to become older.
Suggested Further Reading

Other books by Ray Bradbury:

Fahrenheit 451
The Martian Chronicles
Dandelion Wine
The Illustrated Man
Dark Carnival

Books written about Ray Bradbury

Searching for Ray Bradbury: Writings about the Writer and the Man by Steven Paul Leiva
Nolan on Bradbury: Sixty Years of Writing about the Master of Science Fiction by William F. Nolan and S.T. Joshi