

Becoming Ray Bradbury

Jonathan R. Eller

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Becoming Ray Bradbury chronicles the making of an iconic American writer by exploring Ray Bradbury's childhood and early years of his long life in fiction, film, television, radio, and theater. Jonathan R. Eller measures the impact of the authors, artists, illustrators, and filmmakers who stimulated Bradbury's imagination throughout his first three decades. Unprecedented access to Bradbury's personal papers and other private collections provides insight into his emerging talent through his unpublished correspondence, his rare but often insightful notes on writing, and his interactions with those who mentored him during those early years.

Beginning with his childhood in Waukegan, Illinois, and Los Angeles, this biography follows Bradbury's development from avid reader to maturing author, making a living writing for pulp magazines. Eller illuminates the sources of Bradbury's growing interest in the human mind, the human condition, and the ambiguities of life and death--themes that became increasingly apparent in his early fiction. Bradbury's correspondence documents his frustrating encounters with the major trade publishing houses and his earliest unpublished reflections on the nature of authorship. Eller traces the sources of Bradbury's very conscious decisions, following the sudden success of <u>The Martian Chronicles</u> and <u>The Illustrated Man</u>, to voice controversial political statements in his fiction, and he highlights the private motivations behind the burst of creative energy that transformed his novella "The Fireman" into the classic novel <u>Fahrenheit 451</u>.

Becoming Ray Bradbury reveals Bradbury's emotional world as it matured through his explorations of cinema and art, his interactions with agents and editors, his reading discoveries, and the invaluable reading suggestions of older writers. These largely unexplored elements of his life pave the way to a deeper understanding of his more public achievements, providing a biography of the mind, the story of Bradbury's self-education and the emerging sense of authorship at the heart of his boundless creativity.



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