

Something Wicked This Way Comes

Author: Ken Catran

Synopsis

Brad Foster is looking forward to the next three months. His parents are overseas and he is a free agent, with only nominal housekeeper supervision. All he has to do is pass an important Maths test and then he can play in the hockey final, and hopefully score with the beautiful Eithne.

Then strange things begin to happen in the town of Crossing. Two evil entities called Yi and Izu take on the physical form of Magpies and begin to create mischief. People familiar to Brad begin to behave in strange ways, strangers appear and Brad can no longer distinguish his dreams from reality.

Realising that there is something wicked afoot in Crossing Brad enlists the help of Gentle who runs the town's local second-hand shop. Gentle gives Brad some books on Satanism that belonged to Crazy Davey, the local odd-ball who disappeared a year earlier. Gentle believes that Davey knew about a threshold in the town. Brad sets out to search Davey's home with Eithne and they both find more than they bargained for. The house is literally falling apart. It is cold, dark and smells of damp. Someone has torn the house apart searching for something. When Brad and Eithne enter the house they unwittingly awaken an evil presence which they soon learn caused Davey's death. The pair discovers a secret door to the basement and inside a pentacle drawn on the floor they discover the old man's body. What follows is the most terrifying night of their lives. The basement door slams shut and the malevolent presence tries everything it can to lure the pair out of the protective confines of the pentacle, including taking on identities of people that they know. Brad and Eithne have to call upon all of their resources and their faith in order to survive the night.

Brad knows that no one will believe him if he goes to them for help. He must somehow figure out a solution himself. During his research Brad discovers that the powers of good are called the Pure Force and there is someone in Crossing who is a White Adept – God's representative on earth and the leader of the Pure Force. There is also a Black Adept, the Devil's representative on earth. Time is running out for Brad who knows he must uncover the identities of the two Adepts and protect Eithne – who is somehow going to play an important part in the fiery showdown between good and evil that Brad is certain will take place at the Apron, the town's spooky old gold-mine.

Text Type

Something wicked this way comes is a gripping novel that deals with the supernatural. It is ideally suited to a teenage audience and as it has strong male and female protagonists will appeal equally to readers of both genders. *Something wicked this way comes* is the story of Brad Foster, an ordinary teenage boy, who is looking forward to 3 months of freedom while his parents holiday overseas. Brad is a realistic and likeable character. He faces such typical teenage dilemmas that the story is entirely credible and readers can easily make the leap of imagination necessary to accept the supernatural elements in the story.

Brad enjoys sport and has a healthy interest in sex – especially with his girlfriend Eithne. Unfortunately for him, before the pair can consummate their relationship strange things start to happen in Crossing. Brad unintentionally makes a pact with the devil and now needs to focus on what is going on, why these things are happening and how he can prevent a catastrophe from occurring. Brad's strange experiences force him to search deep within himself to try and find the faith that he needs to defeat evil. In order to win the battle and protect Eithne he needs to employ all of his wits and resources. Brad learns the valuable lessons that not everyone is what they seem and that help can come from the unlikeliest of places.

Something wicked this way comes is a classic story about Good versus Evil. Brad's research uncovers disturbing information about Satanism and how to defeat it. Students will find the aspects of Satanism, such as the power of the pentacle, discussed in the novel fascinating. The legend of the Apron gold-mine is gradually uncovered as the story progresses and leads the reader to wonder if some places are inherently evil. The reader is left to question if evil can truly be defeated or whether it just lies dormant, waiting until the time is right for it to reek havoc on the world.

Sharing the Novel

The Novel has been divided up as follows: Chapter 1 (pp. 7-16), Chapters 2-11 (pp. 17-111) and Chapters 12-20 (pp. 112-198).

During the shared sessions encourage students to discuss their ideas and ask questions to clarify their understanding of words and issues presented in the story. Have them make inferences and predict what is going to happen next in the story. Wherever possible, have students relate Brad's adventures to their own experiences and broader knowledge. Students should analyse the main character and look at his actions, motivations and how he develops and changes as the story progresses. They should be able to identify important themes and ideas raised in the story – especially the idea of Good versus Evil. Encourage students to study the supernatural elements in the novel and how these influence the action.

Introducing the Novel

Discussion

Study the front cover of the novel and read the blurb.

- Which famous Shakespearean play does the novel's title come from? Have you read the play or seen the movie adaptation? If so, what do you remember about the storyline?
- What kind of novel do you think this is? What sort of atmosphere does the front cover evoke? What do you expect from a novel of this genre?
- Who is the main character in the novel? Who is Eithne? Why is the main character alone in the house?
- Where is the story set?
- What strange things begin to happen that make it difficult for the main character to tell what is real and what isn't?
- What do you think is causing the strange energy that the main character can sense?

Teacher reads Chapter 1 (pp. 7-16) aloud to the class. Students follow along in their books.

Comprehension Chapter 1 (pp. 7-16)

- Who is the narrator of the story? What information do we learn about him in chapter 1?
- Why has the Apron gold-mine always had a spooky reputation?
- Why is it so important that Brad pass the Maths test?
- What happens during the netball game between Melissa and Brad? Who does Brad believe is responsible for the incident? Why does Brad lose his footing?
- What does Brad dream about the night before the test? What can he taste in his mouth when he wakes up?
- Describe the woman who calls Brad downstairs. Why isn't he afraid of her? What does Brad tell the woman that he wishes for? What does the woman add to Brad's wish list? How does Brad feel when he touches the woman's hand?

Discussion

- What situation have we been presented with at the start of the novel? What event occurs in this chapter that is the catalyst for all the action that is to follow?
- Who do you think Yi and Izu are? What physical form have they adopted? Why are they interested in Brad?
- How do you know that Brad is telling the story in retrospect?
- Brad makes a pact with the strange woman. What is a pact? What do you think is going to happen if Brad doesn't fulfil his end of the bargain?
- Predict what is going to happen in the story next.

Students read Chapters 2-11 (pp. 17-111) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 2-11 (pp. 17-111)

- Who is Kate Mather? What is she like?
- How does Brad do on the test? Why does Mr Holloway suspect him of cheating? What does Brad suddenly remember after the test?
- How much does Brad's team win the hockey game by? Why is Brad "hero of the hour"?
- How is the hall decorated for the after game party? Why does this make Brad feel uneasy?
- In what ways does Eithne's behaviour after the dance seem out of character to Brad? What strange words come out of Brad's mouth before Eithne pushes him back into the bushes? Who interrupts the couple? How does Eithne react after the old lady disappears? What does Brad notice moving around him when he begins to follow Eithne?
- Who is Gentle? What does he do for a job? Why does Brad like talking to him?
- What does Gentle point out to Brad about the pact? What advice does he offer Brad? Why doesn't he take Brad's concerns seriously?
- Describe Brad's strange dream. Who is lying on the platform? What does Brad do with the knife in his dream? Why does the robed figure tell Brad he has failed?
- What strange scene does Brad see played out when he visits The Apron with Eithne? What do you think is significant about this scene?
- What does Eithne reveal to Brad about the Apron and Mrs Makepeace? What is the name of the dance that she and the group are practising?
- Why does Brad decide to confide in Eithne on the way home from the Apron? How does Eithne react to his story?
- What does Gentle say that makes Eithne storm out of the shop?
- Who does Brad see outside the old picture theatre? Why does he follow her? Where does she lead Brad to?
- What convinces Brad to talk to Vicar Preston? How does the Vicar react to Brad's story?
- What happens to Brad in the graveyard? What does he discuss with the man in the black robe? What advice does the man give Brad about faith? What does Brad discover about the man he was talking to as he leaves the graveyard?
- What makes Brad decide to take control of the situation rather than let things happen to him?
- Why does Brad go back to Gentle's shop even though he is still angry with him?
- What is the name of the book that Brad starts looking through in Gentle's shop? What image is embossed on the front cover of the book? Where has Brad seen this image before? What illustration does

- Brad recognise in the book? How does Brad feel as he turns the pages? Who did the books belong to?
- Who was Crazy Davey? What happened to him?
 - What did Davey reveal to Gentle during his talks with him? Why does Brad decide to go to Crazy Davey's house?
 - Describe what Brad sees and hears when he arrives at Davey's house.
 - What strange thing happens when Brad steps over the gate? Who does Brad bump into at the house? What connection does she have to Davey Markham? How did she know where to find Brad?
 - Why are Brad and Eithne so surprised when they enter the house? What do they see in the book room?
 - What makes Brad suspect that there might be a cellar in the house? Where does he find the door to the room? Why do Eithne and Brad hesitate before they descend the stairs? What can they sense around them as they enter the basement?
 - What macabre discovery does the pair make in the cellar? What is significant about the symbol drawn on the floor? How do Brad and Eithne get stuck in the basement? How does Eithne know that the voice they can hear doesn't belong to her father? How does Brad know that if they want to remain safe they must stay within the circle?
 - Describe what happens to Brad and Eithne as they stand in the circle during their horrible night in the basement. What does Brad realise about belief during the night? Why do you think the evil presence retreats when dawn arrives?
 - Where does Uncle Davey's "voice" come from?
 - Who meets the pair outside Davey's house? Who tipped him off about where to find them? What does he think Brad and Eithne have been doing?
 - What do Brad and Eithne do with Davey's body? Why does Eithne decide not to call the police?
 - What do Eithne's dad's mates do to her great-uncle's house?
 - What dire prediction does Yi make to Izu about Brad?

Discussion

- Describe Brad. What characteristics and qualities does he possess? How does he choose to deal with the strange situation that he finds himself in? What would you do in his position?
- What do you think the Forces of Light are? What is a White Adept? What is a Black Adept? In what ways do the Forces of Light intervene in the action? Why do they do this?
- Why is The Apron Crossings' notorious claim to fame? What strange and evil things have occurred there? Why is the Apron important to the story? Why is Brad constantly drawn there? Do you believe that some places are inherently evil? Explain your answer.
- What is faith? What does the man in the black robe mean when he says "But you must believe. In peril of your life, try it. But not in fear, Brad, only in faith"?

- What do you think Eithne has to do with what is going on? From the characters introduced by the author in the story so far can you predict who the Black Adept will be? Who is the White Adept? Explain your answers.

Students read Chapters 12-20 (pp. 112-198) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 12-20 (pp. 112-198)

- Why does Brad hide at the back of the school gym when Eithne is at dance practise? Who discovers him hiding there? Why does he agree to get in the car with her? Where does she take him?
- Why does Brad suspect that he has been drugged? How does Melissa change when she gets out of the car?
- What is the price that Brad must pay for not holding up his end of the pact?
- Who does Melissa say will kill Brad? Why do you think she encourages him to run? Describe the creature that emerges from the entrance to the Apron. What emotions does Brad feel as he tries to escape from the creature? Who does Brad call for as he is running away? Who answers his call?
- What is a night-gaunt? How do Jeremy and Abigail destroy it? What do you think might have happened if Brad didn't call on his faith?
- What information do Jeremy and Abigail give Brad about Izu and Yi? What advice do they offer him?
- How does Brad know what Izu and Yi are? How does Abigail reveal the pairs' disguise?
- What surprising information does Melissa give Brad about the previous night when he sees her in Charlie's car? Why does Brad decide that he needs to be really careful who he talks to?
- What does Abigail mean when she says "returning to a physical form imposes physical limitations"? What else do physical limitations apply to? What special powers does Abigail possess?
- Why does Abigail tell Brad to be home before dark? What information does she give him about what is happening? Why won't she tell him everything that she knows?
- Why does Abigail believe that "Satanism, good and evil, God" are words that are trivialised on the surface?
- What does Brad need to find urgently?
- Why does Brad confide in Gentle and enlist his help?
- What book does Gentle show Brad? Who did it belong to? What information is contained in the extract that Gentle reads aloud? Why does Gentle mention Rosalind Makepeace's name?
- Why does Brad ask Eithne to join him at the library?
- Why can't Crystal Soames perform with the rest of the dance group? How does Rosalind Makepeace react when she hears the news? How many dancers does Makepeace need to perform the Pure Force?

- What do Eithne and Brad do at the Apron to try and get the magpies interested?
- Describe what Izu transforms into when Brad talks to him. How does Brad manipulate Izu into speaking with him? What deal does he put to the creature? How does he trick Izu?
- What happens to Izu after he catches the egg?
- How do Eithne and Brad react when they realise that Izu and Yi have disappeared?
- What does Brad believe that Davey's last words were?
- Why does Brad suspect that Roz Makepeace only chose virgins to be in the dance troupe? What little things does he remember about the teacher that make him believe she is involved in what is going on?
- What clue does Yi inadvertently give Brad when he appears to him?
- Why does the Master of Evil need to rely on human followers?
- What information do Jeremy and Abigail give Brad in the library? What book do they suggest that he ask Ms Heckler to find for him? What does Brad learn about Shakri from the book?
- What is significant about Halloween?
- Why does Roz Makepeace call a sudden meeting of the dance troupe? What does Brad believe is the real reason for the meeting? What makes Brad believe that time is running out?
- Who does Brad talk to at school? What excuse does the teacher give for being there? Why doesn't Brad believe him?
- Who does Brad convince to accompany him back to school? What do the pair see when they look through the window? How many people are present in the room? Who is Brad most surprised to see there?
- Why does Brad leave the school and go to Roz Makepeace's house? Who does he bump into outside the teacher's house? What does Brad do when Roz comes out of her house? What shocking admission does she make to Brad? How does she prove her claim?
- Describe the confrontation between Roz Makepeace and the Black Adept. Why does Brad believe that good is losing the battle? Who steps into the fight and provides more White Energy?
- Who is the Black Adept? How does Brad feel when the hooded figure's identity is revealed?
- What task does Kate Mather give Brad after Gentle loses consciousness? Why is it so important that it be completed immediately?
- What do Brad and the girls see as they approach the Apron mine entrance? Describe the "force" that emerges from the Apron entrance. What does Brad call the creature? What else returns at that moment determined to destroy Brad and the others? Who turns up to help Brad?
- How does Brad convince Eithne to perform the dance? Describe what happens as the girls complete the Shakri. What does Brad believe that the Shakri dance is a detonator for? How does Brad know that the evil forces are being defeated? How long does it take for good to triumph over evil?

- What happened to all of the townspeople involved in the dark forces? Where did Roz Makepeace go? Who does Brad believe that she was hunting? What happened to Kate Mather?
- Why does Eithne believe that people will always have to fight? When will the next battle take place?

Discussion

- Abigail tells Brad that the evil forces chose Brad specifically because they needed him. Why do you think Brad was targeted? What do you think he is meant to learn from this experience? Do you agree with Abigail when she says that Brad is good? What evidence is there in the novel to suggest that Brad is inherently good?
- In what ways would the story have been different if Brad's parents had been home rather than overseas?
- How is the theme of good versus evil developed in the story?
- What message do you think the author of the story was trying to teach the reader?
- Identify the climax of the story. Why is this event important in the story?

Activities

Language Features – The author of this story uses many figurative language features to create imagery. Complete the following table. Identify the language feature from the following list: metaphor, simile, personification, alliteration or onomatopoeia. Once the language feature is identified explain what the effect is (what image does the figurative language create in your mind? Does it build atmosphere? Create a sense of sound?)

Page No.	Example	Language Feature	Effect
122	Mist clung to it like pale ragged garments		
54	And that rang a tiny bell of memory		
51	Fingers like a bony white spider, clutching		
51	The sunlight had become glassy		
51	The distant sound of magpies like cackling laughter		
50	the gravestones leaning towards each other like old mates having a chat		
7	across this high hillside white mist fingered the bare sides		
8	with gold veins, thick as your arm		
10	the shock went through me like voltage strike		
12	Like a thousand beating points of hate		
15/16	as though I was sucked deep into black ocean currents, pulling me down		

21	I was zooming as high as a space shuttle		
145	the china gnomes nodded and nudged in solemn agreement		
85	Our lamp flame flickered like a mad wing-beat		
88	While the thing swirled and gibbered, while the house creaked and moaned		
88	While red rotten dust patterned from the ceiling like flecks of dried blood		
89	Then, as the light grew stronger, it gathered itself in to the darkness by the stairs, where it hulked, almost taking shape, drawing the last darkness around itself like a horrible cloak		

Storyboard – Read Shakespeare’s play *Macbeth* or watch a movie adaptation (Roman Polanski’s version is good). Complete a storyboard for the play that depicts 10 important events that occur in the play. Under each illustration write a brief description about what is happening.

Board game – Design a board game based on the novel. Illustrate the board with symbols and scenes from the story. For every positive event that occurs reward the player. For every negative event penalise them.

Writing – Imagine that you are Brad Foster. Write a diary entry for him on the night after he and the dance troupe defeat the evil forces. Remember to include information about what happened and Brad’s thoughts and feelings about it.

Static Image – Design a web page advertising the novel. Include a brief plot summary, scenes and illustrations from the novel and your personal opinion about the book. You may want to include links such as information about the author. Remember to combine verbal and visual features to convey your ideas.

Soundtrack – *Something Wicked This Way Comes* is being made into a movie. Your job is to choose 5 songs for the soundtrack. List your 5 songs and the artists along with when they will be played in the film and why they are appropriate.

Static Image – Design an alternative book cover for the novel. Explain why your book cover is appropriate for the novel.

Character – Write 5 questions with answers for one of the characters in the novel.

Writing – Write a poem about an aspect of the story. Remember to include figurative and descriptive language to create imagery and atmosphere.