

Roll up! Roll up . . .

↪ J.C. Bemis Proudly Presents ↪
**THE MYSTIFYING
MEDICINE SHOW**



Ray Cobb is an orphan. At least, he thinks he is. Eight years ago, his father gave him a magnetic lodestone before he went 'down south for a job of work', never to return.

Now the lodestone is pulling Ray to follow his father and head south. Following where it leads, he finds himself hurtling through the Wild West aboard the Ballyhoo, a rickety old train that is home to Cornelius T. Carter's Mystifying Medicine Show. Here he befriends a selection of fantastical characters, including Si, the Chinese escape artist with a tattoo of the cosmos on her hand, Marisol, the snake dancer who can speak to her snakes, and Redfeather, the fire eater who never gets burned.

For the first time in years, Ray feels at home. But something dark is following the train – the Gog, a stealer of men's souls, who is following the Ballyhoo with his monstrous hoarhound. As Ray is drawn into the entertainers' struggle for survival, he learns about his father's real 'job of work' and discovers his own exceptional talents. Gradually, he comes to realize he must accept his destiny to become part of the ancient community of Ramblers, defenders of the wild, and protectors of the good.





About the story

- The first book in a fantastical trilogy set in nineteenth-century America.
- A fast-paced, magical adventure, involving steamboat pirates, a swamp siren, an alligator called Rosie, and hoodoo conjurers.
- Inspired by the 'tall tales' of Southern folklore and American legends, passed down through songs and stories.
- The second and third books in the trilogy will be published in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

About the author

J. C. Bemis grew up in rural eastern North Carolina by a swampy creek on the Neuse River. As a kid he read a lot, played in tobacco barns, swam in the river when the jellyfish weren't too thick, and learned the violin and the guitar. He was fascinated by trains and by the tales his grandfather told him, from his 'hobo' days criss-crossing America, of the country's lost past.

Bemis began his writing career as a songwriter with the Americana roots band Hooverville. Through old-time country and blues music, he became fascinated with the way America's myths have been passed down through songs. Drawing on these 'tall tales', he began to explore how Southern folklore could be turned into epic fantasy. *The Mystifying Medicine Show* grew out of this passion.

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