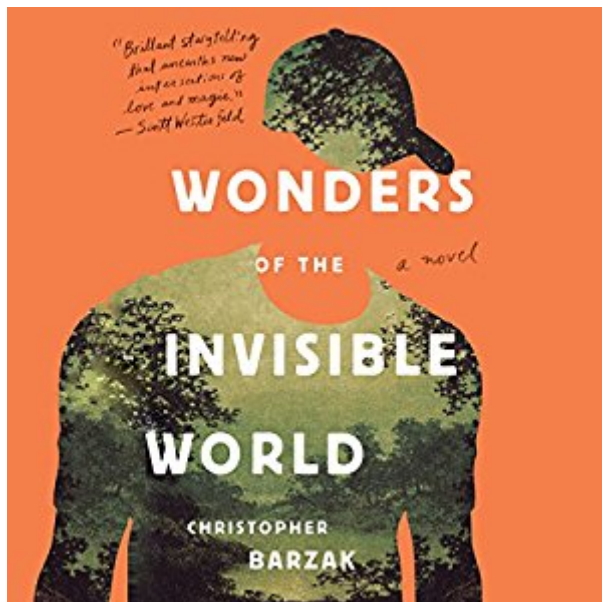


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# Wonders Of The Invisible World



## Synopsis

Seventeen-year-old Aidan Lockwood lives in the sleepy farming community of Temperance, Ohio - known for its cattle ranches and not much else. That is until Jarrod, a friend he hasn't seen in five years, moves back to town and opens Aidan's eyes in startling ways: to Aidan's ability to see the spirit world; to the red-bearded specter of Death; to a family curse that has claimed the lives of the Lockwood men one by one...and to the new feelings he has developed for Jarrod.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When I settle in to read a book, I want to be taken away and entertained. I want to enjoy the language and rhythm. But most of all I want to feel the story well after I have closed the book. And this book had all of what I look for: This story continues to return to my mind often, as it brought up interesting ideas about our place in the interwoven supernatural and natural worlds, the legacy of sin, love, and the dynamic between mother and son. *Wonders of the Invisible World* is an intricate, many-layered tale told in well-crafted, plainspoken language about a boy on the cusp of manhood in search of the real story of his family, which turns out to be a story of long-rooted and gnarled sins that bind Aiden Lockwood's family together more than the blood they share. As Aiden falls into the haunted center of the blackened apple tree in his family's dead orchard, I thought about my own haunted journey of self-knowledge, and how that journey spins you through unexpected landscapes. I enjoyed the seamless supernatural and natural world that Aiden learns to see in the story, and it made sense to me. In particular, a highlight of the book was the psychic

dynamic between Aiden and his mother. It is not often that I have read about a mother and son battling it out within the pages of a novel. Great book!

Imagine you had the opportunity and the gift to "see", to find out who you really are and how your family history came together by the vicissitudes of life to construct your unique place in the world. Such a gift does not come without costs. The history of every family must be ripe with secrets. Some secrets are perhaps best left unstirred. But there is a strength that come with knowing if your able to survive the revelations. Perhaps because I am a southerner Mr. Barzac brings to my mind the worlds of William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, and Cormac McCarthy. I am deeply moved by this story. I will share it with friends and read it again. There is a power here to help me uncover my own past as well. Read this book slowly. It's like a very fine meal with some shots of white lightning on the side.

A high school senior struggles with the discovery that he's somewhat of a medium, and the mystery of how this may affect the well being of himself and his family. I found the story to be fast paced and I was just as eager to find out what was really going on as the main character. There's lots to wonder about love, homosexuality, fear, loyalty, and strength

YA tropes are used to excellent effect in this journey of self-discovery, hard won understanding and love. A world of wonder and fear lies all around us just outside the range of normal human perception. Only a gifted psychic can view the Invisible World. Aiden Lockwood is a high school kid living in a kind of fog. His old best friend Jarrod moves back to their small town and is shocked at how little Aiden remembers of his own childhood. His memory has been frozen, his curiosity shut down by a powerful presence, which is also the one person on earth he should have been able to trust most. As the chains that hold him break, the Invisible World flows in. He unlocks family secrets: A woman who once died saving her son from the then Lockwood patriarch has caused the family to be cursed. An entity in a rotten tree calls Aiden to her. A white stag leads the family's men to their death. An unending blizzard is caused by a single, bitter man. Death himself wears a tall black hat and has a chilling fascination for each person's story. A town of psychics holds answers but only if the right questions are asked. It feels like Barzak has done for Eastern Ohio, what Washington Irving with his tales of Ichabod Crane and Rip Van Winkle did for the Hudson River Valley. He's begun the creation of a local folk lore.

This is a beautiful story about inheritance and identity. Barzak is a master at the art of defining the unseen without destroying its wonder.

Christopher Barzak's strength is in bringing the trappings of fantasy and horror into familiar modern urban, suburban and rural settings. He grounds his work in the here-and-now, letting the fantastic/horrific bleed in through the edges to subtly work on the characters', and the readers', forgotten hind-brain. His new novel, an excellent follow-up to *One For Sorrow* (recently made into the movie "Jamie Marks Is Dead"), delves into the world of family secrets and long-held grudges that is so familiar across all genres of fiction, but his spin on these tried-and-true character points breathes new life into them. Aidan Lockwood thinks his life and family are normal, that there's so much unremarkable about him he can't remember the last time he was invited to a party by his peers. I immediately connected with Aidan's self-effacing first-person narration, his feeling of being lost in a crowd and not knowing why he's lost. As the book jacket blurb tells us, it turns out that some of Aidan's memories have been erased, including the complete loss of a childhood friend whose return sparks a journey of discovery for Aidan -- self-discovery but also discovery of his family's secrets and tragic history. That's a lot of mystery to be revealed, and Barzak's pacing throughout the book is damned near perfect: we as readers, and Aidan as a confused teenager, don't spend too long lost in the fog of missing memories and tight-lipped relatives before things start to be revealed. Aidan and Jarrod are the focus of the story, and watching them navigate their way back into friendship, back to the level of connection they had up until Jarrod's departure before seventh grade, and then watching them figure out where their relationship is going, is both endearing and awkward. Aidan's angry encounters with his secretive mother, his uncomfortable distance from his father and older brother thanks partially to having completely different interests, add to the familiar emotional roller-coaster. There were moments in the first half of the book when I almost forgot there was a supernatural element to be concerned about; that's a tribute to Barzak's ability to capture the awkwardness, anger, and misunderstandings that come along with any interpersonal relationship. When the supernatural element comes to the fore, when secrets start to be revealed (revealing deeper secrets in turn), Barzak still doesn't skimp on the awkwardness, anger, and frayed lines of communication being repaired. The supernatural threat is possibly even more frightening as it moves from the background to the forefront of the story, testing Aidan's loyalties, threatening to pull him out of himself and of the world (perhaps permanently). Engaging, engrossing, with just the right level of detail to immerse us in Aidan's world while still feeling a bit dream-like, *Wonders of the Invisible World* is Christopher Barzak at the top of his

already-impressive game.

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