



The Veldt

by Ray Bradbury

1. In "The Veldt," author Ray Bradbury repeatedly uses personification to give human traits to the Happylife Home operating system. Find and write down two lines (yes, I want you to write the full sentences) where personification is used.

2. We're told that the Happylife Home system cost "thirty thousand dollars installed." Bradbury published this story in 1951 and, due to inflation, it turns out that \$1 in 1951 is worth about \$9 today. Given this, how much would the Happylife Home system cost in today's dollars? Would there be a market today for such a system? Why or why not?

3. Early in the story, what evidence are we given that the Happylife Home system has not made either of the adults particularly happy? What message might Bradbury be trying to deliver here?

4. Early in the story, Bradbury skillfully raises two important points about modern life in a single sentence. Look closely at this sentence and then explain the two points Bradbury is attempting to plant in the reader's mind: "At dinner they ate alone, for Wendy and Peter were at a special plastic carnival across town and had televised home to say they'd be late, to go ahead eating."

5. Bradbury calls the children's virtual reality room their "nursery" rather than their "play room" or "game room." What's interesting about his use of the word "nursery" in this story?

6. Bradbury uses two interesting similes when he described the children, Peter and Wendy. First, write down the two similes he uses to describe the children's physical traits. Then, explain what's ironic about these simile choices.

7. Look at the passage that includes this line: "...I'm beginning to be sorry we bought that room for the children. If children are neurotic at all, a room like that—" First, based solely on the context of the line, write down your guess about the meaning of the word, "neurotic." It's okay if you're wrong; I just want you to take a guess. Then, look up the word, "neurotic," in a dictionary and write down the actual definition. How close were you to correctly guessing the word's true meaning?

8. Of all the worlds, both real and imaginary, that would appeal to children, why do you suppose Wendy and Peter chose to focus their attention on the African veldt? What's the appeal?

9. In the story, George muses that "children are carpets; they should be stepped on occasionally." What does this mean? Do you agree with this idea or not? Give a real-life example to support your stance.

10. George and Lydia Hadley think they're good parents, but it's clear that they are both flawed. For each parent, describe a moment or cite a line that shows a time when each failed as a parent. Paraphrasing is fine, but be sure to include enough detail about the specific incident so it is clear to me that you spotted specific moments when each parent failed to do the right thing.

11. The ending of the story is intentionally vague. Explain what you think happened to Mr. and Mrs. Hadley. What do you think will happen to Mr. McClean? To Wendy and Peter?

12. Thinking back over the story, what do you suppose is Bradbury's opinion of children? Of humanity? Provide at least one line of text that supports your stance.

