

The Illustrated Man Study Guide

The Illustrated Man by Ray Bradbury

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Prologue: The Illustrated Man

Prologue: The Illustrated Man Summary

The narrator meets a man while walking one afternoon. The unemployed carnival worker with tattoos all over his body has been unable to keep a job for forty years. He asks if the narrator knows where he can find a job, but the narrator does not know. The Illustrated Man then joins the narrator for the night.

The Illustrated Man wishes the hated images off his body. They predict the future. At night, the pictures move. He tells the narrator an old woman, a time traveler who returned to the future made the tattoos. He wants to find her and kill her for tattooing him.

The sun goes down. The Illustrated Man says that at night his tattoos tell a story, with one special tattoo that tells the future of the person watching it. The Illustrated Man lies down, and the narrator watches him. After a while, the pictures begin to move.

Prologue: The Illustrated Man Analysis

The prologue provides a framework for the series of short stories that follow. Each tattoo on the Illustrated Man's body will tell a story. The narrator counts them: eighteen, the same number of stories that are in the book. The stories, the Illustrated Man says, tell the future.

The incident with the Illustrated Man meeting the first person narrator (ostensibly the author) creates a bridge between the fictional tales of the future and the reality of the author's life. The reader is asked, through this magical opening, to suspend disbelief and for a moment accept that somewhere in Wisconsin there is an Illustrated Man, and that his tattoos tell the following stories about the future.

The prologue establishes the tone of the stories to come. The illustrations are beautiful works of art, but they are also sinister. They can foretell deaths, and sometimes violent happenings occur in them. This contrast of magical beauty and violence will continue through the stories that follow.



The Veldt

The Veldt Summary

The Hadley's house is completely automated. Lydia and George notice that there's something wrong with the wall-to-wall holographic images in the nursery. It is now filled with a realistic African veldt. George closes up the nursery for a few days, although the last time they did, the children had temper tantrums.

After dinner, George sees that the disturbing image of African death won't shut off. The children, Wendy and Peter, deny that the room only been showing Africa. George does not believe them and sends them to bed, then finds a chewed-up wallet of his on the nursery floor. He locks up the nursery.

George and Lydia discuss the children's cool behavior toward them. Later, the parents hear a scream and the roar of lions from the nursery. The children have broken into the locked room. The screams sound somehow familiar. Peter argues with his father in a threatening manner, angry that George is thinking of shutting up the whole house for a while.

David McClean, a psychiatrist, is disturbed at the images of death he sees in the nursery. The children have become too dependent on the house and disconnected from their parents. George asks if the lions could become real, but McClean doesn't think so.

When George turns off the nursery and the rest of the automated house, the children are hysterical and lash out at their parents, wishing them dead. George relents, letting them into the nursery for a few more minutes. The children trick their parents into entering the nursery, then lock them inside. The lions begin to close in on George and Lydia, who scream, and then realize why the screams they've been hearing from the nursery sounded familiar.

David McClean comes to the nursery where Wendy and Peter are having a picnic in the African veldt, where lions are feeding on something and vultures circle overhead.

The Veldt Analysis

The opening description of the Hadleys' automated house is like a description of a mother caring for an infant. The house feeds the Hadleys and clothes them. It rocks them to sleep at night. In other words, it makes them eternal children, dependent on the house for all their needs.

The dependence created by the house has made the children transfer their love and affection from the Hadleys to the house, and specifically to the nursery. The children's names, Wendy and Peter, are from Peter Pan, the story of children who never grow up. Peter and Wendy are eternal children, living in dependence on their mechanical



"mother". The children don't want to grow up. They don't want to do things themselves. Peter becomes angry and complains when his father tries to take away the luxuries of the house, such as the automatic painter that saves Peter the trouble of learning to paint himself. The house is stifling the children's development, and the children become enraged when they can't depend on the house.

The house represents the threat of ever increasing technology. As more and more tasks are taken over by machines, what is left for human beings to do? Even the task of being a parent is taken over by machines in the story. Wendy and Peter don't need their parents. They only need their machines. Ultimately, they kill their parents, permanently replacing George and Lydia with the "loving" nursery.



Kaleidoscope

Kaleidoscope Summary

The crew of a rocket ship are ejected into space after an explosion and begin to drift away from each other. Stone says he's headed for the moon, Hollis floats toward Earth and will burn up in the atmosphere. Stimson can't control his fear, and Hollis tries to calm him down, with Applegate joining the conversation. Hollis is overcome with helpless anger.

Hollis kills a panicked man. The Captain wants to make a plan but Applegate says the Captain has no power anymore. Applegate taunts Hollis, saying he once blackballed him. Hollis replies that nothing seems important anymore. Another crew member, Lespere, tells Hollis that memories matter, and later accuses Hollis of becoming mean, to which Hollis agrees.

Applegate confesses that he lied about blackballing Hollis in order to hurt him. Hollis thanks him. Stone reports that he's caught in a beautiful swarm of meteors, looking like a kaleidoscope.

The voices fade away, they say their last goodbyes. Hollis longs to repent. He thinks about burning up in Earth's atmosphere and becoming ashes, useful to Earth's land. He wonders if anyone will see him fall through the sky.

On Earth, a boy looks up to the sky and sees a falling star. His mother tells him to make a wish.

Kaleidoscope Analysis

"Kaleidoscope" tracks the last hours in the lives of a space crew, set loose to die in outer space after their space ship has blown up. In the end of their lives, does it matter how they lived? Does it matter how they act now, in their last moments? They are completely helpless. There is nothing more they can do for redemption or salvation.

The story is told from Hollis's point of view. He says that he's been as good as dead for a long time. He has not really been living his life or participating in the world. His first reaction to impending death is a shocked calm. There is nothing he can do, and his lack of participation in life continues even after his fate is sealed.

However, Hollis's emotions are riled by the other astronauts. Applegate merely riles Hollis, much as he's riled Hollis in life. He underscores Hollis's helplessness in the current situation and creates a minor annoyance. However, Lespere's happy reminiscences of a full life really get to Hollis. Hollis is jealous of Lespere for living his life and having no regrets. He lashes out with meanness, and then he finds that



Applegate's been doing the same thing. Hollis's meanness reflects his own lack of self-satisfaction, so Applegate's meanness probably means that Applegate is also unhappy.

Even though Hollis is powerless, he is able to find peace by thinking of his role in the physical universe. He will fall to Earth and become part of the soil. As part of the soil, Hollis will be a part of life, something he hasn't been for a long time. By joining with the Earth, he is rejoining the human race.



The Other Foot

The Other Foot Summary

A white man is coming in a rocket to a town on Mars, populated by black people from Earth, who had once fled Earth. Hattie Johnson remembers and tells the children how black people left Earth for Mars years ago, how Earth had a terrible war, and how the people on Earth have only recently rebuilt rockets.

Hattie's husband Willie hates the white men, remembering everything white people did to their parents. At the landing site, he riles up the crowd, claiming that the white people will become the new segregated slave race of Mars.

Finally, the rocket ship lands and a tired-looking white man comes out. He tells the people about the war on Earth, how the humans on Earth were fools. There is nothing left. He begs to be allowed to come to Mars to live, that the remaining people could work the land, or be servants or slaves. The places and people involved in the torture and oppression are all gone.

Willie drops the noose, telling the white man that he will not have to be a slave. Hattie says that it's a new start. Later, the children question them, and Willie says that it seems like the first time he's ever clearly seen a white man.

The Other Foot Analysis

"The Other Foot" is a story about a cycle of violence. The people of Earth are violent and cruel. When the white people are in charge, they take advantage of the blacks. They murder them, segregate them, and oppress them. The black people only find peace by leaving Earth and establishing a colony on Mars.

Because the people of Earth are locked in a cycle of violence, Earth is utterly destroyed in a nuclear war. The soil is no good, and the cities are razed. The violence is only ended by total destruction, and only a small number of humans remain on Earth.

When Willie learns that a white man is coming to Mars, his first instinct is to continue the cycle of violence. He has been damaged by the trauma of oppression and hatred. He longs for revenge. Instead of abolishing hatred, he carries it with him. Willie was oppressed, and therefore he longs to oppress. Willie was injured, and therefore he longs to injure. If Willie's faction wins, then the cycle of violence will continue on Mars. The implication is that, ultimately, this will lead to the destruction of the whole human race.

The humble nature of the white man when he arrives and his description of the total destruction of humanity leads to the salvation of Mars. All Earth has been ruined. The

last vestiges of cruelty are destroyed. Willie is finally able to let go of hatred and offer humanity a new beginning, breaking the cycle of violence.

The Highway

The Highway Summary

Hernando stands by the side of the highway, waiting for the rain to let up so that he can go back to his farm work. He's wearing shoes made with grass and rubber off a tire that crashed on the highway. A car stops and the driver asks Hernando for water for his radiator. The driver and passengers are clearly afraid. Hernando gets the water in a hubcap that flew off a passing car that he and his wife use as a bowl.

Hernando asks the driver what has happened. The driver says there's been a nuclear war, and calls it the end of the world. After the car drives away, the rain stops. Hernando looks around at the jungle and his farm, and heads back to plow the fields. His wife asks him what's the matter, and he responds that it's nothing. He says to himself, "What do they mean, 'the world'?"

The Highway Analysis

Hernando is a simple farmer. The shoes made of tire rubber and the bowl made of a cast-off hubcap show that Hernando is used to picking up the pieces of destruction and reusing them. The world to Hernando is not the big cities, the government, the houses, or the machines. The world is the land and the farm. Hernando can see in front of him the world, and so it is unreal to Hernando that the world could be destroyed. The world of the passersby is not Hernando's world; it's an artificial world of "civilization". Hernando is ready to pick up the pieces and make use of them, to continue to work with the land to survive. However untouched the jungle seems, though, Hernando may still find his world impacted by the aftereffects of nuclear war: fallout and nuclear winter.



The Man

The Man Summary

Captain Hart is annoyed that, after landing his spaceship on a new planet, no one greets him, expecting the local people to be excited. Martin, his lieutenant, wonders if they travel in space searching for peace.

They learn that something more important happened to the town the previous day. A man the people had waited for a long time walked into town, a kind and gentle man. Hart realizes that the people think it's Christ, but insists that it must be one of the other space travelers, pretending. Hart questions the people, who are vague about the man's description, but all say he was kind and gentle and cured the sick. Hart asks for proof but receives nothing he considers valid. Martin, however, believes the man was Christ.

After two rockets crash land and a severely wounded man tells Martin and Hart that the rival captains were killed, Hart is now convinced that the man could not be one of his rivals. The mayor and townspeople insist that the man is gone, but Hart does not believe them. He shoots the mayor, who says he should just let himself believe. The captain declares he will head off to other planets to find the man. Martin refuses to leave.

After the captain is gone, the mayor says that Hart will always miss the man by a narrow margin, then tells Martin that they should go back to the town, since the man will be waiting for them there.

The Man Analysis

"The Man" contrasts mankind's desire to explore the external universe with mankind's need to explore his own spirituality and find peace. The captain represents the desire to explore. He demands logical proof of events, and he is constantly in search of truth. The mayor represents spirituality and peace. He has met the Christ figure and fully accepts him; the mayor has faith.

Lieutenant Martin is torn between the captain and the mayor. He wants to believe in Christ. He has come to space searching for peace, and he sees peace in the people of the town. However, Martin also realizes that Burton would not stop at pretending to be Christ in order to take advantage of the local people. Martin has doubts. Ultimately, his faith wins over his doubts, and Martin is able to find the peace he has been seeking.

The mayor indicates at the end of the story that "the man" is still with them and has been the whole time. However, the Christ figure is not just a physical man. That's why Hart's search for the physical man will be futile. The Christ figure is a spiritual being. He exists in the town and in its people. He is the peace that Martin finds on the planet.



The Long Rain

The Long Rain Summary

After their ship crashed, four astronauts hike through the never-ending rain of the jungles of Venus, looking for one of the Sun Domes, which are large shelters with food and clothing, and with a large, warm artificial sun shining down. The never-ending rain is like torture. After crossing a river, they continue their march, only to see their spaceship ahead. They have walked around in a circle.

An electrical storm that shoots down blue lightning comes across the jungle like a monster, interfering with their compasses. The men try to avoid the lightning but one man tries to run and gets completely burnt by a lightning hit. The jungle begins growing up around the body as they watch.

Venus has only one continent, surrounded by a large ocean called the Single Sea. After walking on it's edge for a while, Simmons sees the Sun Dome. They find it destroyed and deserted, with holes in the ceiling. The Venusians, who live in the sea, must have attacked it, trying to drive the humans off their planet.

The men are running out of rations so they head south again, looking for another Sun Dome. They cannot sleep as the jungle begins to grow over them as they lay on the ground. Pickard goes insane, standing with his face to the rain. Simmons shoots Pickard instead of letting him drown.

Simmons and the lieutenant walk on, but the rain is driving Simmons mad. He has a bullet left, and as soon as the lieutenant is out of sight, he'll shoot himself. Unable to argue with him, the lieutenant leaves him behind. Finally, he sees the yellow building in the distance. He runs toward it and then slows, afraid of what he'll find. He walks in and sees clean towels, hot chocolate, coffee, food and a place to lay and dry off in the light and heat. Best of all, there is the artificial sun, beating down on him. He peels off his wet clothing.

The Long Rain Analysis

Venus is a completely alien planet. The Venusians live in the ocean, which covers most of the planet. The Earth men are aliens there. Physically, they are not meant to survive in the constant rain of Venus and its living-dead white jungle, a jungle that survives without sunlight and thrives on a constant stream of water. Though teeming with life and constant growth, the jungle means death to humans, and its paleness, caused by a lack of sunlight, symbolizes death.

The Sun Domes represent hope. The men lost in a deadly, alien world are searching for salvation. Their worst enemy is their own lack of faith. They must survive through the torture of the constant downpour and remain in control of their senses in order to attain



the paradise of the Sun Dome. The first man to fall loses his head when faced with the monstrous thunderstorm. The second man is Pickard. He loses his mind when he lies down to sleep in the invasive jungle. The third man is Simmons. He merely gives up hope. He cannot stand the thought of another disappointment.

All of the men who fall on the way to the Sun Dome give in to their mental failings. They are not defeated physically by the jungle. Instead, the jungle of Venus is a mental opponent. Its torturous rain bears down on men's minds and hearts. The struggle of the journey is a struggle of faith and hope. Once the men can no longer maintain faith and hope in the absent sunlight of the Sun Domes, they die. In this way, the story can be seen as an allegory for spiritual faith: through even the most severe trials, men must maintain hope.

The lieutenant is the only one who maintains hope, even after numerous let-downs. He is led around in a circle by his compass. He sees his men lose their heads and die one by one. Still, he marches on, ever looking for the paradise that he believes in. In the end, he is rewarded with the warmth and light of the Sun Dome.



The Rocket Man

The Rocket Man Summary

The narrator's mother asks him help her, not wanting "him" to leave again. The narrator says it won't do any good, then goes to bed but doesn't want to fall asleep.

The boy's father returns home that night in his rocket ship. That morning his father acts as if he's never been gone. That afternoon, the father works in the garden with his family. In the evening, they sit on the porch swing, but the father is drawn to the sky.

On the first night, the father isn't too obsessed with the sky, and family goes to a television carnival. Doug asks his father what space is like, and his father says it's the best thing of all but that Doug wouldn't like it.

When the father is away, his mother does not talk about him, does not sleep, and saves everything up for when her husband comes home. When he is home, sometimes the mother is distant from him, but on other days, they are happy being together, like newlyweds.

The next morning, the father takes them on vacation to California and Mexico. The father makes Doug promise not to be a rocket man, because he can never be fully happy either on Earth or in space. Some time later, the mother, Lily, makes the family a huge Thanksgiving dinner because the father will be away at Thanksgiving. The father is drawn to the stars, and the mother is hurt, running from the room.

That night, Doug can't sleep. His father is on the porch, watching the stars. The father tells his son that the next time he comes home, he'll stay. He asks Doug to tell his mother, and then he leaves. After the father is gone, the mother explains that she tells herself that he's as good as dead, so when he comes back, it doesn't seem real. It hurts less that way.

The next day, Doug and Lily get a message that the father's ship has fallen into the sun. Lily sleeps all day for a long time, staying up all night and only going out in the daytime when the sun is hidden by rain.

The Rocket Man Analysis

The Rocket Man is torn between two worlds. His desire to travel to space is mankind's desire to constantly explore and find new things. He is drawn to the elegance of the universe, but at the same time, he is drawn to the love and warmth of his family. He can't ever be completely satisfied with both.

Lily, the wife of the Rocket Man, does not understand the pull of outer space. She hates the stars because they take her husband away from her. When her husband plants



sunflowers from one of his trips into space, she tears them down while he is gone. She cannot stand the reminder of his need to travel away from home and family. Lily represents the love of family and home that exists in contrast to mankind's need to explore.

Doug, the son, is like his father. He is fascinated with his father's job. He collects rocks and dust from space, even though his father does not bring any home for him. He sneaks into his father's room to take space dust off his uniform. He begs his father to put on the uniform for him, and he always wants to talk to his father about outer space.

However, Doug is also part of the home life that his father ultimately leaves behind. His father chooses death and adventure over stability and love. He is driven, like mankind is driven, by an innate desire. He cannot seem to control it. Even though the father promises to come home to stay after one last trip, this is likely to be an empty promise.

The father has no name in the story. He is only named by the title: the Rocket Man. His identity is not in his humanity, in his name, but in his occupation. His identity, or even his soul, belongs to space even before his death.



The Fire Balloons

The Fire Balloons Summary

The Very Reverend Father Joseph Daniel Peregrine is concerned about a trip to Mars he'll take with other Episcopal Fathers. He questions whether sin will have new and different meanings on different worlds. Father Stone says that sin would be clear to him on any world, but Father Peregrine explains that with new human abilities or senses, there are new potential sins. The bishop chose Father Peregrine to lead the mission because he feels Peregrine can deal with the unexpected. Father Stone is the second in command.

When they arrive, Father Peregrine asks the mayor of First Town about the Martians so that he can plan the church for them. There are two races of Martians, one that has almost died out and the other that are potentially intelligent balls of light that live in the hills. Father Peregrine decides to take the missionaries into the hills.

The two Fathers find the glowing orbs, although Father Stone is afraid and wants to leave. Father Peregrine remembers his family and the Fourth of July fireworks he used to wish to set off as a child. He tries to make contact. The spheres vanish. An avalanche is triggered by Father Peregrine's voice, but the priests are transported away from the danger. Father Peregrine believes the blue lights saved them, but Father Stone does not.

The priests spend the night in the hills, and the next morning the spheres are gathered around the camp site. Father Peregrine cannot communicate with them but believes they have intelligence and morality. Father Stone doesn't believe Father Peregrine, who attempts to prove his theory by shooting himself with a gun and showing Father Stone how the blue lights stop the bullets.

Father Peregrine says that on Mars Christ should be represented as a circle, and instructs the building of an altar with a glowing orb. The priests are reluctant, and still consider the blue lights as animals, despite the stories. Father Peregrine wants a Christ the aliens can identify with.

The priests clear an area in the hills and build an altar with a glowing orb. On Sunday, the priests gather, and Father Peregrine plays the music. The Martians do not appear until the priests pray.

One of the Martians speaks psychically, saying that they were once men. They chose to live without bodies, in peace, without sin, in God's grace. They need no church, since each is his own temple. They grant Father Peregrine the chance to come again someday to learn from them. Father Stone expresses how moved he is by the aliens. The sphere of light, he says, is Christ after all.



The Fire Balloons Analysis

Father Peregrine sees that sin is a result of the flesh. Without arms there can be no strangulation, and without women there could be no lust. He wonders if on an alien world, there will be alien sins and whether the human priests will be able to recognize sin in outer space.

The bishop chooses Father Peregrine to lead the missionaries because of Father Peregrine's writings about sins on other planets, but also because Father Peregrine has an active mind and does not always take things at their face value. He sees things that other men might not see. Another man would have ignored the spherical aliens, which most people think are probably animals. The rest of the priests all want to go tend to the humans living on Mars. Only Father Peregrine sees beyond the alienness of the Martian natives.

The aliens prove Father Peregrine's ideas about sin. They have left their bodies and exist without arms or legs or sex. They are disembodied souls, spheres of light that have no material possessions or needs. Without their physical bodies, they have "subtracted" all the sins from their lives: jealousy, strife, need. Instead of new sins, Father Peregrine has found on Mars a state of living without sin. All sin, therefore, is bound to a physical condition. By removing the physical condition for sin, the sin is removed.

When Father Peregrine discusses the orb, he talks about the body as a mere container to hold the soul. The outer form of Christ does not matter. It is merely a convenience to allow acceptance among human beings. The Martians themselves have shed the container that holds their souls, and so the orb that the priests make, in the end, represents the pure soul, with all its physical awkwardness and sins shed.



The Last Night of the World

The Last Night of the World Summary

A man asks his wife what she would do on the last night on Earth. She doesn't know. Their two little girls play in the other room. The man tells the woman that the world is ending, not in any spectacular way, but just going away during the night, as the nighttime travels around the world. A few days ago, he had a realistic dream, in which a voice told him it was the end of the world. Everyone at the office had the same dream.

The wife and all the women on the block have had the same dream. They wonder what people are doing that night, October 19, 1969, and decide that everyone is doing what they would normally do. The man says he won't miss anything except his wife and children. The man and wife do the dishes and put the girls to bed. Then, they go upstairs to sleep. The woman realizes she's left the water running, and she runs downstairs to shut it off. They laugh afterwards, realizing that turning off the water is meaningless tonight. Happily, they lie in bed together, heads together, holding hands, and wish each other good night.

The Last Night of the World Analysis

"The Last Night of the World" is a story of the world ending, naturally, without fanfare, and without cause. A voice announces the end of the world in a dream to all of the people, and everyone accepts the upcoming ending without screams or horror. Instead, the people calmly continue about their business. One of the reasons why people are able to react peacefully and contently is that there is no reason for the end of the world. The mechanism for it is a disembodied dream voice. There is nothing to fight and nothing the people can do. They relish their everyday, normal lives, and so they spend the last night of the world living those everyday, normal lives.



The Exiles

The Exiles Summary

The three witches from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* perform a spell with a wax figure, pushing a needle through its heart. It's the year 2120, and a rocket ship from Earth hurtles through space toward Mars, with sick and dying men on board. The doctor reports that there's no physical reason for a man's death, but reports that the man said he felt like melting wax and as if needles were piercing him.

The ship will land on Mars in an hour. Before leaving Earth, the men all had nightmares, which the captain believes are caused by Martians trying to prevent the Earth men from coming to Mars. The captain has on board two hundred ancient books, all of which have been banned for a hundred years. The captain does not know why, but he thinks the books will be important for them.

The witches watch the captain and Smith through their crystal ball. They are alarmed and head to the Emerald City to warn the others. Edgar Allan Poe is in the city's great tower, watching. Shakespeare's creations have been busy. He tells Ambrose Bierce that they must tell Dickens what's going on. Perhaps, he says, they'll need to flee to another planet if they can't defeat the Earth men. Perhaps they'll be another nuclear war, and they will be able to return to Earth when superstition returns.

Poe and Bierce go with Blackwood to see Charles Dickens, who lives in a Christmas-y town full of his characters. Dickens refuses to help the others fight the Earth men. He doesn't believe he belongs with the other banned authors, even though he wrote a few stories about ghosts. He sends them away.

Poe leads the characters in preparing all the horrors of imagination to fight them the Earth men. Coppard wonders about his existence. Perhaps, when the last books are destroyed for good, they will all be destroyed. Santa Claus is there, too, and he is now skinny and fading away. The humans have expunged Christmas from Earth. Bierce disappears into dust. His last book has been destroyed. The witches attempt one last chant against the rocket as it comes in for landing. Blackwood suggests running to another planet, but Poe wants to stay and fight. He orders the masses of imaginary characters and authors to rush the newly landed rocket.

The Earth men come out of their rocket ship. They see nothing. They start a fire and burn all of the books they've brought as a symbolic start to a new world. From somewhere in the air, they hear screams. Smith thinks he sees a wave coming toward them, and a green city in the distance, falling. The captain orders him into psychoanalysis.



The Exiles Analysis

"The Exiles" chronicles a future where mankind's science and technology have overpowered man's creativity and imagination. The great imaginations of the ages have been exiled from Earth, and their books have all been burned. Science has become the center of man's life, and there is no room for horrors or flights of fancy.

The authors and characters are beings of the mind. They are able to reach into the astronauts minds and create hallucinations and dreams. However, they have no physical form. When the Earth men reach Mars, the reader expects to witness a war, filled with the writhing minions of the authors. The Earth men, however, lack the imagination to see these ethereal beings.

Poe believes that the Earth men's lack of imagination will be a benefit, ill preparing them to deal with the authors' minions. However, the Earth men's lack of imagination, caused from living in a society where creativity is stifled, makes them unable to see the attackers. Only Smith, who once read *The Wizard of Oz* as a child, vaguely sees the attackers and the end of the Emerald City. His imagination is stifled again by science, as the captain sends him to psychoanalysis.



No Particular Night or Morning

No Particular Night or Morning Summary

Hitchcock and Clemens are on a deep space voyage. Hitchcock says he doesn't believe in Earth anymore, and that memories make him unhappy. Clemens revels in memories of Earth. Hitchcock came to space to be immersed in nothingness.

Hitchcock says sometimes he doesn't believe in anything, and rushes off to make sure the second floor exists. Clemens goes upstairs. Hitchcock asks him to prove the existence of things he can't see at the moment.

Hitchcock tells Clemens about how he lost his job, his wife died, and then his son had to go live with an aunt. Doing anything in his past life began to seem unreal to him, so he'd decided to go into space. Clemens urges him to see a psychiatrist, but Hitchcock refuses. He wonders if Clemens himself is real. Clemens hits him, and Hitchcock says Clemens was real for a moment.

A meteor crashes into the ship, breaching the hull and almost killing Hitchcock. Hitchcock goes into a catatonic state Clemens can't pull him out of. The psychiatrist prescribes shock treatment.

Twelve hours later, Hitchcock wakes from his state, gets a space suit, and lets himself out of the spaceship. He babbles to himself that the ship, the people, the stars, his hands, his feet, and his body never existed, as he drifts off into the void.

No Particular Night or Morning Analysis

Hitchcock lets go of the memories that hurt him, but those memories are also what connects him to the world and what makes him human. The more he is hurt, the more Hitchcock lets go of the things around him. Finally, Hitchcock lets go of reality entirely. He goes out into space, where he surrounds himself with nothingness.

Clemens contrasts with Hitchcock. Even though he misses Earth, he surrounds himself with the memory of it. He wants to make contact with other human beings and be a part of the world. By rejecting memory and human contact, Hitchcock drives himself crazy and ultimately self-destructs.

Hitchcock is distanced from the world not only by the bad things that happen to him, but also by the good things that happen to him. He sees his younger self as a fool, and his father was drunk. He loses his job and his wife and his son. However, Hitchcock is also driven from reality by finally getting his story published. He sees his name in the magazine, and it seems unreal and impossible. His hardships have driven him so far from life that when something good happens he cannot accept it and just drifts father into himself.



The Fox and the Forest

The Fox and the Forest Summary

In 1938 Mexico, William Travis assures his wife Susan that their vacation will last forever. Susan is alarmed when she spots a man, thinking that he's one of the Searchers. Their real names are Ann and Roger Kristen, born in 2155 A.D. in a world absorbed in war. They saw a chance for escape by taking a time travel vacation, and ran off to Mexico.

The man comes up to them and calls William by his real name, but Williams denies it's him. As William and his wife leave, the man, Simms, says to him: 2155 A.D.

Simms is the Chief of the Searchers. William and Susan know Simms must have them alone in order to bring them back, so they plan to hide in groups. The next day, they meet Joe Melton, the director of a film company in town. When Mr. Simms joins them and says they have no choice but to come back, William arranges for his wife's freedom if he returns, and agrees to meet Simms in ten minutes.

William drives up on the plaza and hits Simms. The police believe the event was an accident. William and Susan then go to watch the filming. They join the film crew for drinks, and Melton offers to give Susan a screen test.

Melton tells Susan a story he'd like to put her in. He retells her own story of coming from the future and being tracked down, ending it with a film crew who are really Searchers locating the couple. William pulls a gun and shoots, but by the time the hotel manager arrives, all the occupants are gone, back to the future.

The Fox and the Forest Analysis

"The Fox and the Forest" is an adventure tale of fugitives trying to get away from their pursuers. Susan and William are happy living in the world of the past because, in the future, war has overtaken the world. All effort is directed toward making weapons and killing countless numbers of people. Although they have time travel and advanced technology, the future that Bradbury envisions lacks simple luxuries like liquor and cigarettes. Susan and William long for the simple pleasures of celebration.

The future also lacks churches. Science and war have overtaken religion, as well as simple human pleasures. Susan never gets her chance to visit the church before she is whisked back to her own time.

William and Susan would rather kill than return to the future, but their jobs in the future represent even more massive death. William is a key scientist working on a bomb, and Susan works on biological warfare. The choice to kill Simms is a choice to avoid killing countless others back in the world of the future.



The Visitor

The Visitor Summary

Saul Williams is dying of an incurable disease. Saul and all other victims of the disease are exiled to Mars. He tries to conjure up New York City in his thoughts but fails.

Another victim of the disease, Mark, arrives on Mars. Saul asks about New York and suddenly is on the city's streets. Mark is a mentalist with psychic powers and had created the illusion. Saul envisions all that Mark can give him with the illusions, but does not want to share Mark. When Saul tries to convince Mark to run away, he refuses, saying that Saul is being possessive. Saul knocks Mark out and takes him to a cave.

Mark finds himself tied up in the cave and tries to escape by tricking Saul, but Saul finds him. Saul wants to kill Mark but can't - he'll lose Mark's illusions.

When the other men find Mark and Saul in the cave, Mark offers to provide each with illusions, but his suggestion is rejected. Mark predicts that the men will turn on each other, and notes that one of them has a gun.

Johnson pulls out the gun and begins shooting. Even with Mark conjuring up a hallucination of New York to confuse him, Johnson continues shooting, and Saul rushes him. In the struggle, the gun goes off. New York disappears. Mark is dead.

Saul tries to conjure New York again, but he cannot. He cries all night.

The Visitor Analysis

The men who are living out a death sentence quarantined on Mars all hunger for Earth, and Leonard Mark can grant them their wish. They are not satisfied, though, with a few hours of Earth once a week to break up the monotony and loneliness of the red planet. They want more. Each man wants Mark to himself. Without regard for Mark's humanity or each other's needs, each man exhibits childish greed. Perhaps the severity of these men's punishment, destined to live out a last year of life in pain and sickness, alone on a desolate planet, makes them unable to be satisfied by a small oasis of pleasure.

Because the men want too much and let their greed overtake them, they lose the one chance of happiness and relief that's available to them. Leonard Mark dies, but Saul, Johnson, and the others are the ones who will suffer because of his death. The men only punish themselves by their avarice.

Saul longs for a human connection. He wants to talk about philosophers and literature and art, but he doesn't have anyone to talk to. However, Saul does not live by philosophy or by the lessons found in literature and art. Instead, Saul lets his baser nature overtake him.



The Concrete Mixer

The Concrete Mixer Summary

Etil is the only Martian opposed to the Martian invasion of Earth. He is arrested for having contraband, Earth books, in his house. Etil explains that because how Martians are depicted in Earth pulp literature, the Earth morale will be too great for the Martian forces. Etil is sentenced to death, but repents at the last minute and agrees to join the invading forces.

The Earthlings do not fight, and instead welcome the Martians. The next day Etil realizes that Earth will defeat the Martians with its culture. The coy, gum-chewing girls are already pouncing on Martian men and luring them into the cave-like cinemas. When he tries to write a letter to his wife, he's interrupted by an Earth girl trying to pick him up and then another woman tries convert him to her religion.

A producer named R.R. Van Plank tries to convince Etil to join his film crew as a consultant. Van Plank is planning a movie about the invasion, but it is clear he has wrong ideas of Mars. R.R. explains that the relationship between Earth and Mars is a wonderful opportunity for Earth businessmen to make money. Etil finds out the man's name is "Richard Robert", with the nickname "Rick", just like the name of the person in the Earth pulp novels who defeats the Martians to save Earth.

Etil is considering the choice become joining the machine that will absorb the Martians, or stealing a rocket and going home for a year or two of peace before the Earth men begin to arrive when a car full of kids runs him down.

The Concrete Mixer Analysis

In "The Concrete Mixer," Ray Bradbury takes the standard story of a Martian invasion and turns it on its head. Instead of telling the story from the point of view of Earth, he tells the story from the point of view of a Martian. Instead of wanting to invade, the Martian is a reluctant invader. Instead of a battle for Earth, the invading Martians face a welcoming ceremony with Miss California and the man who grew the largest grapefruit.

Ultimately, Earth conquers Mars, but it's not because of the ingenuity of a clever and heroic Earth boy. Instead, the Earth culture insinuates itself into the Martians, defeating them through poisonous elements: movies, women, cars, gum, alcohol, food, and commercialism. Etil is a thoughtful man who prefers to read a book in peace and quiet. He is appalled at the unthinking commercialism of the American "average joes" that he meets. The cars are dangerous, and the women are even more dangerous. Etil sees the capitalist R.R. as the man behind the destruction of the Martians. He plans to initiate Mars into a commercial culture in order to make a buck. This capitalist individualism takes the place of the selfless individualism of the heroes in pulp Martian invasion stories.



Marionettes, Inc.

Marionettes, Inc. Summary

Smith wonders how his friend Braling managed to get out for the night as his wife keeps him under her thumb. Braling even has a ticket to go to Rio, but without his wife. Smith loves his wife, but she is very possessive.

Braling shows Smith his secret: an identical robot. This is the first time he's used the robot, and he's planning on leaving the robot with his wife while he escapes to Rio for a month. Smith gets the company's card from Braling, and reads that the robots are illegal and cost between \$7,600 and \$15,000 dollars. Smith plans to take \$8,000 from his joint bank account to get his own robot.

When he comes home and sees his sleeping wife, he feels a pang of remorse. Then he realizes his wife has taken \$10,000 from their bankbook. At first he is incensed, wondering what she bought, then he listens to her chest and hears tick-tick-tick.

Meanwhile, Braling's robot objects to being put in a toolbox. He says that he has feelings and doesn't like getting shut in a box and that he's falling in love with Braling's wife. Braling tries to get away to call the company, but the robot stuffs Braling in the toolbox and then goes to join his wife, waking her with a kiss on her cheek.

Marionettes, Inc. Analysis

In "Marionettes, Inc.," men try to use technology irresponsibly, in ways it shouldn't be used, and ultimately this leads to their self-destruction. Braling uses a robot to try to get away from his wife instead of facing the reality of his marriage and either fixing it or ending it. Because he chooses an easy, technological way out of his human problems, he ends up replaced by technology. Braling is destroyed.

Smith starts down the same path as Braling, and to his horror, he realizes that his real wife has been replaced by a robot. Smith feels that his wife is clingy, and she most likely recognizes that Smith does not fully return her affections. Instead of facing the issues of their marriage, she, too, has resorted to technology to hide from her human problems. The end of the story implies that Smith's wife, like Braling, has been replaced by her robot double.



The City

The City Summary

For twenty thousand years the city waits, dormant. Jensen and Hutchinson arrive in a rocket, and go out in front of the others. The city detects the odors and deduces that a rocket from another world has landed.

The city's listening devices awake, but the men see nothing - the city seems dead. The city's eyes open. Smith is nervous and finally runs back toward the ship, with the other men running after him.

The city removes the Captain, unnoticed. It dissects him, examining his insides, and reaches its final conclusion. The astronauts are Earth men, enemies of Taollan from twenty thousand years ago.

The city fills the captain with mechanical insides and sends him back. The captain shoots Smith. The captain talks to them, saying that he is the city, built by the race killed off by a plague brought by Earth men long ago. The astronauts are the first Earth men to land there. The street opens, and the men fall into razors.

Smith and the others board return to Earth. Their mechanical insides are nearly undetectable. They carry bombs filled with disease to drop on Earth. Now content, the city dies.

The City Analysis

The main character of "The City" is the city itself. It is the legacy of a civilization long gone, but it reaches from beyond the grave to carry out the will of its creators. The city has a human purpose and reason for existence: revenge. The people of its planet were destroyed by a plague brought by Earth men, and the city's only purpose is to pay back Earth with an eye for an eye.

The human nature of the city is emphasized by the writer through personification. The city has a nose, ears, and eyes. It sees with its windows. It smells with "nostrils". It feels with the streets. Everything about the city is human. In the end of the story, the city dies, and this death makes the city human. Technology, in the form of the city, becomes an extension of people. In this case, the city is an extension of an entire alien race.

In "The City" Earth has sinned by causing the destruction of an entire race. Even though this sin is far in the past, it lives on. With infinite patience, the city waits for Earth men to return. Even though the original perpetrators are long gone, the sin must be punished.



Zero Hour

Zero Hour Summary

Seven-year-old Mink Morris tells her mother that they're playing "invasion". All the children under ten join the game, while the rest of the street's residents go on with their normal lives. Mink directs activities.

Mink tells her mother that Drill is waiting for her. Drill is one of the invaders, maybe not from Mars but from another planet. He's having trouble invading Earth, and thought of contacting children using the fourth dimension. Drill promised no more baths and that kids can stay up until 10:00 and watch two shows on Saturday.

The older kids make fun of the game, and Mink says they'll kill those kids first. Drill promises to let the young kids rule the world. Mrs. Morris hears from a friend in Scranton, that children there are also playing invasion.

Mink says that zero hour is five o'clock. Mr. Morris returns home. He and his wife hear a buzzing from outside, then an explosion. Mrs. Morris locks her and her husband in the attic. Her husband does not believe her suspicions that had built during the day. They hear the television phone and footsteps in the house, as well as a humming sound and children. Mink calls to them, but Mr. Morris remains silent. Then, the lock melts. The door opens, and Mink peeks in at her parents.

Zero Hour Analysis

In "Zero Hour", Mrs. Morris has all of the clues that she needs to understand what is going on. She realizes that children can hate their parents, and Mink tells her mother everything that she and the neighborhood children are doing. Mrs. Morris even knows that this "game" is going on all over the country. What Mrs. Morris lacks is the imagination of childhood. Because Mrs. Morris is an adult with adult sensibilities, she cannot believe the impossible, that aliens are communicating with the children using a fourth dimension. Mrs. Morris's lack of imagination, her lack of ability to take a leap of faith, leads to her doom.

Mink acts out of a lack of adult understanding as well as out of childish desires and emotions. She does not understand the consequences of her actions, and so she is able to do something too horrible for adults to contemplate. Along with having imagination, children are impressionable, as Drill notes, and so Mink can be manipulated. Drill plays on her petty hatreds of her parents and bullying older children. He plays on her petty desires to be powerful instead of powerless.

Children are essentially powerless, and that makes Mink both vulnerable to manipulation and easily ignored by her parents. Even if there is no other oppression in

the world, by her nature as a child, Mink is oppressed. In other words, Mink's powerlessness positions her to lead the invasion of Earth.



The Rocket

The Rocket Summary

Fiorello Bodoni wants to travel in a rocket. He's saved three thousand dollars, and can send one family member to Mars. They all draw straws and Paolo wins. His family supports him, but he refuses to go because of school. The family decides that it's best that no one goes.

Bodoni goes to his job in the junk yard, and decides to buy a rocket shell being sold for scrap with \$2,000 of the money he's saved. He sits inside and examines it in the moonlight, making a humming noise, imagining taking off and flying into space. Although disappointed, he stops himself from destroying the rocket shell. He starts to laugh on his walk home. When he gets home, he tells Maria to pack. The family is going to Mars.

The children are thrilled. Bodoni assures a skeptical Maria that the rocket will work, and sends his family away so he can work on the rocket. He spends the rest of his money and installs nine car motors in the rocket's empty guts, making Maria angry.

That night, Bodoni calls his children to go on the trip. Maria refuses to come but finally allows the others. The trip will take a week, after which the rocket will be dead.

Bodoni straps the children into hammocks, turns on the switches, and the rocket roars to life. Through the window, they see the moon and meteors, Earth and Mars. The hammocks swing in the rocket's ragged action, and the dials spin.

That night, after the children fall to sleep, Bodoni opens the airlock and steps out, then waves to his wife. He hopes that all the tricks, the films and mirrors, work, and that nothing spoils the illusion in the next week.

After a week, he lets out the children, bubbling over with the thrills of their trip they will remember forever.

The Rocket Analysis

"The Rocket" is a story of the romantic attraction of outer space for men, and it is also a story of family. Bodoni wants more than anything to see the wonders of space, something that's only reserved for the people who can afford it. Bramante is the voice of cynicism. Bodoni and his children, and his children's children, will always be poor and can never enjoy the fantasy of space travel.

However, ultimately "The Rocket" celebrates human imagination. Through imagination, even the poorest man can travel to the farthest reaches of the universe. When Bodoni fixes up the rocket ride, he is creating an illusion and allowing his children to experience something they will probably never experience otherwise in their lives. Bodoni is doing



what the science fiction writer does: creating a world of wonder and space travel that anyone can visit, without ever leaving home.

Bodoni craves the fulfillment of his dreams, but he loves his family more than he loves his dream. He could simply go on a trip to Mars himself, but he does not want to hurt his wife and children. His family life is more important to him than experiencing outer space. Bodoni uses creativity instead of money to create an irreplaceable experience for himself and for his children. Although Bodoni knows that the rocket trip is an illusion, it fulfills his desires as well as his children's.

Bodoni's wife misses out on the trip to Mars. By staying home, she earns the knowledge that comes with adulthood but loses the wonder that comes with childhood. Maria lacks something the children have without even thinking: total and complete faith in their father. The children never doubt that the rocket will fly or that their father can pilot it. Faith works hand and hand with imagination to create an incredible, impossible experience.



Epilogue

Epilogue Summary

At midnight, the Illustrated Man is still sleeping, but the narrator has seen all of the stories. He looks at the one jumbled tattoo and sees his own face, then jumps up and runs away. He saw the Illustrated Man strangling him.

Epilogue Analysis

The Illustrated Man reveals himself through his final tattoo as a murderer. Perhaps life with his tattoos has driven him insane. The narrator barely escapes, heading off into the nighttime with the knowledge of the Illustrated Man's stories.



Characters

The Illustrated Man appears in Prologue: The Illustrated Man and Epilogue

The Illustrated Man is a carnival worker who noticed a sign outside an old lady's house offering exquisite tattoos. She worked on him for a whole night, covering his body with beautiful pictures. However, at night, the pictures come to life and tell stories about the future. The Illustrated Man provides a framework for the stories that follow, melding them all into one tale that shows different pieces and parts of a single future.

The Illustrated Man is cursed by his beautiful and magical tattoos. He is out of work. People fear him, and children follow him around. He searches through rural Wisconsin for the woman who tattooed him so that he can kill her in revenge. However, he believes that she came from the future and that she has left his time, so ultimately, he believes that his own quest is futile.

In the epilogue at the end of the book, the narrator sees his own future in one of the Illustrated Man's tattoos. He sees the Illustrated Man strangling him, and he flees in fear. The Illustrated Man, if his tattoo is accurate, is a murderer. The narrator has not given the Illustrated Man any reason to kill him. Perhaps the living tattoos have driven the Illustrated Man insane.

George Hadley appears in The Veldt

George Hadley is a well-off man who spoils his children. He concentrates on giving his family material possessions in order to give them a good life. He buys an expensive automated house that does everything for his wife and children. Unfortunately, the automation of the house leaves George feeling useless and without purpose.

George does not give his family the attention that they need. He's not the one who notices a problem with the nursery; his wife is. George is an absent father, caring for his children with material goods instead of with time and attention. When he begins to try to exercise authority, he finds that his children are spoiled and used to getting everything that they want. Peter and Wendy rebel against their mystified father.

George's fatal flaw is that he caters to his children's needs. Even when he knows that his children have serious problems, George cannot resist giving them one last "gift". He allows the children access to the nursery one last time, falling into his old patterns. Giving the children this permission leads directly to George's death. He has realized the danger of their dependence on the house too late.



Lydia Hadley appears in The Veldt

Lydia Hadley is the mother of Peter and Wendy and the wife of George Hadley. She realizes before her husband that there is something wrong about the nursery, which is acting out the angry, hateful fantasies of their children. Lydia Hadley feels useless since all of her jobs as a wife and mother have been usurped by the family's expensive, automated house. However, she is a passive woman, dependent on her husband. When George gives the children permission to use the nursery one last time, Lydia does not object. In fact, she leaves them alone in the nursery. Her passivity contributes to her death.

Peter appears in The Veldt

Peter is the spoiled son of George and Lydia Hadley. His parents have been replaced in his affections by the automated machines of their house, and particularly the nursery. Peter becomes angry whenever his father tries to control him or threatens to take away one of his toys. Peter is also very intelligent. Somehow, Peter learns how to make the lions in the nursery real, and he engineers his parents' death when they try to shut down the automated house.

Wendy appears in The Veldt

Wendy is the spoiled daughter of George and Lydia Hadley. She joins her brother in conspiring against her parents when they threaten to take the automated house and holographic nursery away.

David McLean appears in The Veldt

David McLean is a psychiatrist who is concerned about the images of death present in the nursery. He recommends shutting down the nursery and sending the children to daily therapy sessions.

Hollis appears in Kaleidoscope

Hollis is an astronaut whose ship blows up. He is left helplessly floating toward Earth as his shipmates float away from him in different directions. Hollis realizes that he has not been participating in his life. Instead, he has merely been disconnectedly going through the motions. Now, as he floats away into isolation and death, he regrets his life.

Hollis's first thought is that all of the astronauts' lives were meaningless. Now that they are going to die, what does it matter how they've lived their lives? He does not seem to care, at first, that he's going to die.



However, Hollis lashes out at his shipmate, Lespere, who has joyous memories of three wives, drunken revels, gambling binges, and partying. Hollis is jealous of Lespere's full life. After he's lost contact with all of his fellow astronauts, Hollis regrets how he's lived his life, but it's too late for him to change. Hollis finds solace only in the idea that his ashes will rejoin the Earth and become part of the cycle of life.

Lespere appears in Kaleidoscope

Lespere is an astronaut whose ship blows up. He reviews his happy memories of his full life as he floats off helplessly through space to his death.

Applegate appears in Kaleidoscope

Applegate is bitter and angry as he floats off into space after his spaceship is blown up. He tells Hollis that he blackballed Hollis in his former job, but this is just a lie. Later, Applegate apologizes for his meanness.

The Captain appears in Kaleidoscope

The captain, who is left helplessly floating in space along with his men after his spaceship blows up, tries to maintain authority, but he can do nothing about the situation.

Hattie Johnson appears in The Other Foot

When Hattie Johnson hears that a white man is coming to Mars in a rocket, she is concerned about what will happen. She remembers the pain that white people caused black people when they were on Earth, and she fears the reaction of the Martians to their visitor.

Hattie's husband Willie becomes the ringleader of the angry mob of Martians that plan to meet the white man's rocket ship. Willie harbors resentment against white men for lynchings, persecution, segregation, and murders. He plans to revenge himself with an eye for an eye. Hattie is helpless against Willie's hatred.

After the white man comes out of his rocket ship and explains humbly his situation, Hattie sees an opportunity to prevent Willie and the mob from exacting revenge on the white people. She quizzes the white man about all of the places and people who have been destroyed by war. The trees where black men and women were lynched are gone. The people who persecuted blacks are dead. The hometowns full of memories of segregation are destroyed. Hattie brings home this destruction to Willie and the other Martians, soothing their anger and trauma.



Willie Johnson appears in The Other Foot

Willie Johnson is a victim of trauma. He has been so hurt by white people and injustice that even after twenty years of life on Mars he cannot forget or forgive. When Willie learns that a white man will be arriving on a rocket ship from Earth, he incites the people to form a mob. Willie gets together his guns, makes a noose for lynching, and brings paint to the landing area. He paints a sign on the trolley indicating that whites are only able to ride in the back. He organizes groups to go through the town, blocking off back rows of the theaters for whites and preparing for segregation and persecution.

Willie does not understand that by persecuting the whites who are coming he is starting another cycle of violence that is just as bad as what he left. He is too obsessed with his own hurt to see the bigger picture, that violence begets violence and that Mars can become another Earth.

When the white man arrives, Willie is halted by his humbleness and his description of all of the destruction on Earth. When Willie realizes that all of the remnants of the injustice that wounded him are gone, he can finally let go of his anger and hatred. The cycle of violence is broken by the total destruction of Earth, and Willie is able to finally see a white man as another human being.

The Johnson Children appears in The Other Foot

The children of Mars have never seen white people, and they are thrilled at the unusual prospect of seeing a white man. The Johnson's unnamed children excitedly ask questions and chatter about the upcoming event, unaware of the bad feelings between blacks and whites.

The White Man appears in The Other Foot

An unnamed white man comes out of the rocket ship from Earth and asks for permission for the survivors of Earth's nuclear holocaust to come live on Mars. He explains to the Martian citizens how completely Earth has been destroyed, and he humbly offers to till the fields and act as slaves or second-class citizens for the right to start over on an unspoiled planet. His humble attitude earns the pity and empathy of the angry Martians.

Hernando appears in The Highway

Hernando is a farmer living in a remote jungle area. A highway passes by his farm, and Hernando often allows tourists to take his picture as he tills his fields. Hernando lives off of the land. He is used to reusing what others would term trash. He has made shoes out of tire rubber from a car crash and a bowl out of a hubcap that flew off a passing car. Hernando seems to have little interest in civilization.



When Hernando learns of the nuclear war, he is unaffected. The jungle is the same jungle that it's always been. His farm sits on the same land where it's always been. He goes off to till his field, unconcerned about what's happened to "civilization". The Earth is still whole to Hernando. However, Hernando may not understand the wide-spread effects of a nuclear war. His land could be contaminated by fallout, and his jungle could die from nuclear winter.

Hernando's Wife appears in The Highway

Hernando's wife works while Hernando helps the travelers and tills the field.

The Travelers appear in The Highway

A man and three young women stop at Hernando's farm to get water for their overheated radiator. They tell Hernando that there's been a nuclear war. The travelers are devastated because of the nuclear war, and they are fearful about their homes and families.

Lieutenant Martin appears in The Man

Martin is Captain Hart's lieutenant. He is a thoughtful man, and even before he learns that the stranger recently visited the planet, he considers whether his journey through space is really a quest for peace. Martin immediately believes the townspeople's reports of a Christ figure who visited their town. Fundamentally, he has faith.

Although Martin has faith and wants to believe in the Christ-like stranger who has visited the town, he is also a reasonable man. At first, he accuses the captain of being angry at being shown up. He realizes that the captain is the kind of man who would be jealous of someone else taking center stage, even if the other person is not a rival captain but a divine figure. However, when the captain makes a reasonable argument that it's exactly the kind of trick someone like Burton would pull, Martin experiences doubts. His faith is not so strong that he's immune to logical argument.

Martin's faith is immediately restored when the other ships crash land, bringing the news that the rival captains are dead. Martin realizes that the captain is a lost cause. He has found the peace he's searched for in this small town.

Captain Hart appears in The Man

Captain Hart is a driven, ambitious man. He exhausts himself in his drive to do more: make more money, go deeper into space, and explore more. The captain does not even seem to know what he's searching for. He's too caught up in the search himself.



The captain is a man of science and technology. He represents human beings' drive to create and explore, without a deep or conscious understanding of the ultimate purpose of creation and exploration. Martin is searching for peace, but what is the captain searching for?

The captain is unwilling to accept the idea of a Christ figure visiting the planet he's on. He uses all his effort to knock down the testimony of the local people. Finally, when he cannot fight against the evidence, he turns violent. He can't let go and simply have faith in a miraculous occurrence. He is driven on in search of the Christ figure. This drive to search for the physical Christ leaves the captain without the spiritual Christ, something the captain will never be able to find out in the universe because it must be found within himself.

The Mayor appears in The Man

The mayor of the town is a calm and spiritual man. He believes in the Christ figure who has visited his town.

The Lieutenant appears in The Long Rain

The lieutenant is the only one of the shipwrecked men who can maintain hope and continue his journey to find the Sun Dome. The lieutenant shows himself to be a kind and caring man throughout the men's journey through the Venusian jungles. He is the leader of the four men who survive the shipwreck. He tries to keep the men's spirits up by telling them that the Sun Dome is only an hour or two away, even though he admits it's a lie for himself as well as for the men.

The lieutenant has the presence of mind to order the men to get down on the ground to avoid the lightning of the dangerous thunderstorm. He does not want to leave Pickard behind or kill him; the lieutenant's idea is to carry Pickard with them to find the Sun Dome. However, when Simmons shoots Pickard, the lieutenant understands and does not condemn Simmons. The lieutenant's good nature may be the reason why he can maintain hope and ultimately find the salvation of the Sun Dome.

Simmons appears in The Long Rain

Simmons cannot stand the thought of marching on through the torturous Venusian rains just to be disappointed by another destroyed Sun Dome. Instead of continuing on to salvation, Simmons gives up. He plans to wait until the lieutenant is out of sight and then shoot himself.



Pickard appears in The Long Rain

Pickard loses his mind in the jungles of Venus. He shoots his gun at the air, as if trying to kill the rain itself. Then, he becomes comatose, staring up into the rain. Simmons shoots Pickard instead of leaving him to drown or trying to carry him with them.

Doug appears in The Rocket Man

Fourteen-year-old Doug is torn between admiration for his father, the Rocket Man, and sorrow because every time his father goes away on another trip to outer space, he is abandoned. Doug feels the same romantic draw to outer space that his father feels. However, he also sees how his mother is tortured by his father's constant absence. Doug promises his father that he will not become a rocket man, but Doug's obsession with outer space indicates that perhaps he is irrevocably headed on the same path as his father.

Doug is a secretive boy, as illustrated when he steals his father's uniform in order to take the space dust off of it. He is also intelligent. He has built a centrifuge in order to clean the dust off the uniform, and he can examine it through his microscope. Doug is also responsible and older than his years. He tries to do chores around the house while his father is away, in a way taking the place of the absent Rocket Man. His mother, however, will not let Doug take on this role, stepping into his father's footsteps.

Even though Doug does not take on the household chores, he becomes his mother's caretaker while his father is gone. He buys her shades to put over her windows so that she can try to sleep. He becomes her confidant when she tells him why she's distant toward his father. When Doug's father dies, he is left to care for his grieving mother, who can no longer stand the sight of the sun.

Lily (Mother) appears in The Rocket Man

Lily is deeply injured by her husband's need to go into space for months at a time and leave her alone with only their fourteen-year-old son. She does not sleep when he's away, and she puts her life on hold until he returns. She tries to convince herself that he's already dead so that she won't be injured by the inevitable. Then, when he's home, she is distant from him because he doesn't seem real to her. She has developed a defense mechanism to stop the pain of his constant departures and to deal with the fear that he may never return.

The Rocket Man (Father) appears in The Rocket Man

The Rocket Man is drawn to go into space. He loves his family, and when he's in space, he misses them. He refuses to phone his wife because he will miss her too much and be unhappy. When he's at home, he misses outer space. He looks up at the stars and



feels drawn to them. The Rocket Man is a tragic figure because he can never resolve his conflicting desires to be with his family and to be in outer space.

The Very Reverend Father Joseph Daniel Peregrine appears in The Fire Balloons

Father Peregrine is an intellectual and creative priest. He can imagine things beyond the normal world, and this makes him suited to dealing with an alien world. He can imagine that a being which seems completely alien may have intelligence and morality, unlike the other missionaries in his party. Father Peregrine also is a man of faith, not only in God but also in his own instincts and abilities. While Father Stone cannot accept the seemingly impossible, that the aliens saved them from the avalanche, Father Peregrine's mind is open enough to accept the event.

Father Peregrine is so convinced that he is right that he's willing to put his life on the line. He jumps off a cliff in the faith that the aliens will save him and in his fervor to prove that they are sentient beings worthy of salvation. To prove his story to Father Stone, he shoots himself not once but three times.

The priest's leap of faith proves not only Father Peregrine's faithfulness but also his dedication. While it would have been easy for Father Peregrine to take the missionaries into the city to tend to the Earth men, Father Peregrine rejects the easy path. He prefers the difficult road, and as a result, he is contacted by the aliens. Contact with the aliens is a spiritual gift. He learns spiritual truths: that the body can be shed; that without the body the sin has no soul; and that there is eternal life.

Father Stone appears in The Fire Balloons

Father Stone is the second in command of the Episcopal mission to Mars. He is not as imaginative as Father Peregrine.

The Martians appears in The Fire Balloons

The Martians are glowing spheres of blue light. They seem totally alien to the humans, but Father Peregrine believes they need salvation. The aliens communicate with the priests psychically, explaining that they have transcended to a spiritual form and live without sin.

The Man and His Wife appears in The Last Night of the World

The man and his wife are unnamed, and so they are everymen. They are average people. The man works in an office doing unnamed work. The woman raises their two



daughters. The children, also unnamed, play like other children. The greatness of this couple lies in their everyday lives. They aren't doing anything wonderful or horrible, but instead, they drink coffee, wash the dishes, put the children to bed, and go to bed themselves. They live quietly, and they are content.

Edgar Allan Poe appears in The Exiles

Edgar Allan Poe is the leader of the authors whose books have been banned on Earth. When the authors of supernatural works are banned, they appear on Mars along with their creations, characters, and other elements from their work. Edgar Allan Poe is particularly angry and active in wreaking revenge on the Earth men. He plans to unleash the horrors from his works, such as the Red Death plague and being buried alive, on the Earth men. He even asks Dickens to meet the men and keep them busy talking while the others kill them. Poe shows no pity toward the unsuspecting Earth men.

Poe's character is overcome with anger and fear when the Earth men finally land. He organizes one final rush of writhing bodies toward the rocket ship. Ultimately, though, Poe only exists in the imagination of the Earth men. When the rocket lands, the Earth men see nothing. Poe is helpless without the cooperation of the Earth men's imagination, as any author relies on the imagination of the reader in order to communicate.

The Captain appears in The Exiles

The unnamed captain of the Earth men's rocket is a product of his civilization. He is clean, crisp, and perfect. He deals with problems in a straightforward and rational manner. His instincts tell him to bring the banned books from Earth, since he senses some connection between his strange dreams and the banned author. By burning the banned books when he reaches Mars, the captain destroys the authors and their characters.

Smith appears in The Exiles

Smith is the captain's right-hand man and one of the Earth men on their way to Mars. Smith shows that he has some imagination when he can see in the distance the crumbling Emerald City. However, the captain immediately moves to squelch Smith's imagination by sending him to a psychoanalyst.

Ambrose Bierce appears in The Exiles

Ambrose Bierce is an exiled author whose books have been banned on Earth. He finds their predicament amusing, and he even seems amused at his own death, commenting that the initial sensations of being destroyed are "interesting".



Charles Dickens appears in The Exiles

The author Charles Dickens does not want to have anything to do with Edgar Allan Poe or the other writers. He is mortified at being included with their horrors. Dickens lives in seclusion with characters from *A Christmas Carol*, *The Pickwick Papers*, and his other works. He refuses to do harm to the rocket men.

Joseph Hitchcock appears in No Particular Night or Morning

Joseph Hitchcock has had a difficult life. He had an unhappy childhood and he lost his job, his wife, and his son. He wanted to be a writer, and finally he published a short story. However, his success seems unreal to him. Hitchcock travels into space, constantly increasing the distance between himself and the rest of the world.

Clemens accuses Hitchcock of having no imagination, but Hitchcock actively lets go of the world around him. He does not try to recapture the lost things. He believes that memories are painful, and he pushes them further away. When he decides to go into space, he is aggressively separating himself from reality.

What Hitchcock loses is faith. He demands over and over that Clemens prove things. At first, he won't believe in anything if he can't see it. Then, he stops believing in things he can't see. Even physical evidence is not enough. He must have logical proof that exists in his mind that things outside himself are real. He has lost his ability to have faith, even in things other people take for granted.

Clemens appears in No Particular Night or Morning

Clemens is Hitchcock's friend. He warns Hitchcock to stop cutting himself off from reality and tries to bring Hitchcock out of his catatonic state after the meteor hits him.

William Travis/Roger Kristen appears in The Fox and the Forest

Roger Kristen is an important scientist working on a more powerful bomb in the war-ridden world of the future. He hates his job, and he hates the war that is engulfing his society. He conspires with his wife to go on a time-travel vacation to 1938 New York and then disappear to Mexico.

Roger takes on the name William Travis to hide from the time travel Searchers who want to take him back to the future to complete his work. Roger is fleeing from war and death. His society is one overcome with technology, and Roger is part of the machinery that creates more technology, which causes more war and misery. It's a vicious cycle,



and Roger is willing to kill to escape it. Coming from a world of death, killing Simms seems a small price to pay for freedom. Roger cannot escape, though. The Searchers cannot let Roger and his wife escape. They know that others would soon follow, and the war-torn society would lose its workers. Roger is deceived by the film crew, a fatal mistake.

Susan Travis/Ann Kristen appears in The Fox and the Forest

Ann Kristen is less important than her husband, but she also works as a scientist in the future world. She works creating biological weapons that spread disease throughout the world. Like her husband, she hates the future world and its wars. When Susan finds out about the time travel company that's offering vacations in the past, her first thought is of escape from her present life.

Ann takes on the name Susan Travis to hide from the time travel Searchers who want to take her and her husband back to their "duty" in the future. When she is in Mexico, Susan craves going to the church that she sees across the street from her hotel, indicating that she craves a spiritual life. Susan seems more afraid that William. She nearly faints when she detects Simms watching her. However, she is completely willing to conspire with her husband to kill Simms in order to remain free and not return to the many deaths of her future world.

Mr. Simms appears in The Fox and the Forest

Simms is the Chief of the Searchers, the organization that is trying to track down Susan and William to bring them back to the future. Simms says it is William's duty to come back to the war-torn future and continue his work on a bigger bomb.

Joe Melton appears in The Fox and the Forest

Melton is a Searcher who disguises himself as a film director in order to make friends with Susan and William. Melton ultimately captures Susan and William and brings them back to the future.

Saul Williams appears in The Visitor

Saul Williams is an intellectual man who enjoys talking about philosophers. He has contracted an incurable, contagious disease called blood rust, which causes him to excrete blood. The disease will kill him in a year. Saul has been quarantined with the other victims of blood rust on the desolate planet of Mars so that the disease does not spread on Earth. Saul is lonely and craves companionship, but many of the diseased men are too tired to talk.



When Saul is offered salvation in the form of Leonard Mark, he becomes jealous and greedy. Saul refuses to share Mark with others and instead carts him off bodily to a cave. Saul is completely overcome by the possibility of respite from his Martian prison. Mark offers Saul paradise, at no cost. Saul, however, cannot be satisfied with a gift. He craves more and more.

Although Saul is right that the other men are not trustworthy, Saul also finds himself with his hands unreasoningly around Mark's throat. The only reason Saul does not kill Mark, it seems, is that he would be killing the goose who lays the golden eggs. The other men's violent struggle to get Mark to himself ultimately leads to all of them losing what they most dearly want.

Leonard Mark appears in The Visitor

Leonard Mark is a psychic who can conjure completely believable hallucinations. He has incredible power, and he uses it freely to give a little joy to his fellows in his confinement on Mars. Mark only asks one thing: to be allowed his freedom to live his life. The men, however, cannot grant Mark that one simple wish. Mark is the casualty of the men's fight to control him.

Ettil Vyre appears in The Concrete Mixer

Ettil is a thoughtful, intellectual Martian man. He has read Earth popular literature, and he believes that a Martian invasion of Earth will fail. The idea of a Martian invasion of Earth is ingrained in Earth men's minds through literature, as is the idea that ultimately Earth will conquer the Martians. Ettil is staunch in his conviction, and the only thing that makes him join the invasion is the threat of being burned alive as punishment.

When Ettil reaches Earth, he learns that his ideas from the Earth pulp literature are wrong. He does not find confident, heroic fighters. Instead, he finds a horrifyingly materialist Earth culture. The women flirt horribly with the Martians. They find books boring and prefer spending their time strapped to cinema seats. Ettil finds Earth devoid of all meaningful culture and believes that Earth's commercialism will chew up the Martians and spit them out, like a cement mixer. He seems to be the only member of the Martian army who is not drawn in by the Earth attractions of women and entertainment.

Tylla Vyre appears in The Concrete Mixer

Tylla is Ettil's wife. She is distressed at his attitude toward the Martian invasion of Earth.

R.R. Van Plank appears in The Concrete Mixer

R.R. Van Plank is a capitalist and movie producer. He plans to take full advantage of the Martian invasion by marketing Martian themed movies and goods to Earth people and



also by selling goods to Martians. When he learns that Martians don't wear shoes, he comments that he'll teach them to wear shoes and then sell them shoe shine. Etil credits Van Plank as being the "Rick" who ultimately destroys the invading Martians in popular literature.

Bralingappears in Marionettes, Inc.

Braling hates his wife and his marriage, but he feels trapped in the relationship. He cannot bring himself to break up the marriage, and he shows no interest in resolving his issues with his wife. Instead, he uses avoidance to get away from the woman he's bound to. Braling uses technology, in the form of a robot he calls Braling Two, to escape his life.

By using a robot as an escape mechanism, evading his problems instead of facing them, Braling dooms himself. He makes himself replaceable by demanding a robot that can take his place. He doesn't like his life, and so he gives it away. Braling thinks that he's found a clever way to make himself independent, but instead, he's made himself obsolete. The robot easily replaces Braling, and no one will know.

Ultimately, Braling is a selfish man. He does not think of things from other people's points of view. Braling does not consider his wife's feelings. He does not consider Braling Two's feelings when he locks the robot inside a box in his basement. It never occurs to Braling that his bad actions will come back to haunt him, and this comes from his self-centered point of view.

Smithappears in Marionettes, Inc.

Smith professes to love his wife, but he jumps at the chance to buy a robot double of himself to get away from her once in a while. Smith's wife is clingy and will not give him space. He craves a little leisure time, peace, and separateness. Smith feels that he is being ungrateful, but still, he chooses to sneak away from his wife instead of facing the problem. Smith has a double standard, since he is riled that his wife would take money from their savings without telling him, something that he is planning to do himself.

The Cityappears in The City

The short story "The City" is told from the perspective of a sentient alien city. Although the reader never learns whether the city feels, it certainly thinks. The city has senses and purpose. It reasons and deduces. Its senses are all automated and technological, but it has the ability to see, smell, feel, and hear. These traits humanize the city, and the reader is closer to the city than to the alien men who land in a spaceship and are examined as specimens.

The city is able to take action, as well as gather information. It is ruthless. It performs a detailed dissection and examination of the captain, and it creates automatons out of the



earth men. However, the city's ruthlessness is directed and specific. Its job is to analyze the interplanetary explorers that come into its area. If the explorers are not human, the city sets them free without harm. It has no animus toward anyone but Earth men.

The city's purpose is revenge. It waits patiently for millennia, consumed entirely by one task: the destruction of the human race by disease. When the city accomplishes its purpose, it has no other reason to exist. The city finally dies, and this too humanizes and personifies the city.

Smith appears in The City

Smith is the only Earth astronaut who is afraid of the city. He picks up on the subtle cues that the city is active, even though it seems deserted. The other astronauts chide Smith for his fear. Although Smith is shot by the captain, he becomes an automaton of the city like the other astronauts.

The Astronauts appear in The City

Besides Smith, there are eight astronauts that come to the deserted planet where the Taollan lived twenty thousand years ago. The astronauts function as a group, walking into the city to explore. The reader never learns why the astronauts have come to the planet.

Mink Morris appears in Zero Hour

Mink Morris is a normal and active little girl. She is a leader, and she takes charge of her friends in the game of invasion. Mink is young enough to possess the imagination to communicate with alien beings through a fourth dimension. She is intelligent enough to carry out the aliens' instructions to build a gate that allows them to pass into Earth in order to invade.

Mink also wants freedom from the difficulties and injustices of being a child. She wants the ability to strike back at older children who make fun of her. She wants the freedom to decide whether or not to take a bath. She wants the restrictions on television lifted. She wants to be a queen, ruling over the world.

On the other hand, Mink does not realize the seriousness of what she's doing, also because of her youth. On one level, she wants revenge against seemingly tyrannical parents, and on another level, she wants the normalcy of her life (with television programs on Saturday) to continue. She does not see the horror of an alien invasion of Earth. With all her imagination, she can't imagine the reality of war with an alien species.



Mary Morris appears in Zero Hour

Mrs. Morris does not pay much attention to her daughter Mink's game of invasion. However, Mink is not reticent about the specifics of the game, and Mrs. Morris sees everything her daughter is doing. Mrs. Morris is sensitive enough to suspect what is going on. She knows that parents can appear to be tyrants and that children harbor a desire for revenge. However, she is also an adult. As an adult, she has difficulty accepting the impossible. Mrs. Morris does not accept the impossible until she hears the explosion in her yard, and then it is too late.

Henry Morris appears in Zero Hour

Mr. Morris is a normal father who comes home from work one day to find his daughter playing in the yard. When Mrs. Morris hears the explosion and realizes that her daughter's game of invasion is not just imagination, she tricks Mr. Morris up the stairs. Morris thinks his wife is crazy, but he's open minded or frightened enough to remain silent when he sees the strange, alien glow at the attic door.

Drill appears in Zero Hour

Drill is an alien who communicates with children through a fourth dimension in order to orchestrate an invasion of Earth.

Fiorello Bodoni appears in The Rocket

Fiorello is a man who looks up into the stars at night and sees the rocket ships fly past. He is full of dreams, and he feels the romantic attraction of outer space. However, he is also a poor man. Although Fiorello has saved up \$3,000, a fortune for him, he cannot satisfy his dream to fly into space. The money is only enough for one ticket, and Fiorello has a wife and children.

Fiorello puts his family ahead of his dreams. He is not a selfish man, even though he has personal desires. He tries to give one of his family members the opportunity to travel to another planet, but each of them sees that the person who goes will inspire jealousy. Fiorello does not want to break up his family, and so he gives up his dream of flying into space.

However, Fiorello cannot be happy knowing that his dream will be unfulfilled. When Mr. Matthews offers him the dead husk of a rocket, Fiorello cannot help but buy the useless piece of metal. At first, it tortures him with its tantalizing promise that cannot be fulfilled. Fiorello, however, finds salvation in his family. He uses all of his money to make a fantastical rocket ride, which his children believe is real. The illusion of a rocket ride, the dream made actual, is enough fulfillment for Fiorello and his family.



Bramante appears in The Rocket

Bramante is an old man who is a neighbor of the Bodonis. He tells Fiorello that rocket rides are for the rich and that poor people like Fiorello and his family can't hope to go into outer space.

Maria Bodoni appears in The Rocket

Maria Bodoni is Fiorello's wife. She refuses to go on a trip to Mars, not wanting to be resented by her family for getting the special privilege. When Fiorello tells the family that he's taking them all to Mars in a rocket ship, Maria thinks he is crazy and that he's going to kill them all. Because she doesn't have faith in her husband, she loses out on the illusion of a rocket trip to Mars. However, Maria does find out what her husband has done for their children, and she loves her husband for creating his grand illusion.

Paolo Bodoni appears in The Rocket

Paolo is the Bodoni child who draws the short straw to go on a rocket to Mars, but he refuses the trip on the excuse that he must start school. Paolo is afraid that his family will resent him if he goes to Mars.

Mr. Matthews appears in The Rocket

Mr. Matthews comes to Bodoni's junkyard to sell him the shell of a model rocket ship.



Objects/Places

The Nursery appears in The Veldt

In the Hadley's fully automated home, the nursery is a room that comes to life with realistic looking holograms, reflecting anything the children imagine or think about.

Radios appears in Kaleidoscope

After the spaceship crew is blown out of their spaceship, they maintain contact with each other through the radios in their spacesuits as they float helplessly away from each other toward their deaths.

Mars appears in The Other Foot

Mars has been colonized by black families, who left Earth before it was annihilated by nuclear war. Mars has a blue sky and fertile soil.

Guns, Rope, and Paint appears in The Other Foot

As a spaceship approaches Mars, manned by a white person, the Martians gather guns, rope, and paint. The guns are to overpower the white visitors. The rope is for lynching, and the paint is to establish segregation in the local businesses and public areas.

Hernando's Shoes appears in The Highway

Hernando wears shoes made from old tire rubber from a car that crashed along the highway.

The Hubcap Bowl appears in The Highway

Hernando and his wife use a hubcap that flew off a passing car as a bowl.

The Oil Painting of the Mayor's Son appears in The Man

An oil painting shows the mayor's son with a nonfunctional arm, but the mayor's son now has two good arms. Captain Hart insists that the oil painting is not proof that the stranger healed the mayor's son.



Sun Domes appears in The Long Rain

Humans have created Sun Domes throughout the jungles of Venus. The Sun Domes are bright yellow buildings with an artificial sun inside. They provide comfort, clothing, food, and shelter for men in the constant downpour of Venus.

The Uniform appears in The Rocket Man

Doug takes his father's beautiful, black uniform when the Rocket Man returns from a trip to space. He rescues space dust from the uniform as a souvenir of his father's trips into space.

The Glass Sphere appears in The Fire Balloons

Father Peregrine has the priests make a glowing glass sphere to represent Christ to the aliens. In the end, the sphere comes to truly represent Christ to Father Stone.

The Banned Books appears in The Exiles

The Earth men bring banned books that deal with the fantastical or supernatural on their journey to Mars. By burning these books when they get to Mars, the Earth men destroy the authors and their creations.

The Meteor appears in No Particular Night or Morning

A meteor crashes into the spaceship and hits Hitchcock, sending him into shock.

Liquor, Cigars, and Cigarettes appears in The Fox and the Forest

In the future, people do not have liquor, cigars, and cigarettes, so when they travel to the past, they hoard these simple pleasures and drink and smoke as much as possible.

The Cave appears in The Visitor

Saul carries Leonard Mark away to a Martian cave to keep Mark to himself and keep him away from the other plague victims quarantined on Mars.



Illegal Earth Books appears in The Concrete Mixer

Etil has a collection of illegal books from Earth that contain pulp science fiction stories. Based on these stories, Etil believes that a Martian invasion of Earth is doomed to fail.

Braling Two appears in Marionettes, Inc.

Braling Two is Braling's robot from Marionettes, Inc. Braling Two falls in love with Braling's wife, kills Braling, and takes his place.

Ticket to Rio appears in Marionettes, Inc.

Braling has bought a ticket to Rio so that he can take the vacation he's always dreamed about.

Spoons, Forks, Knives, Hammers, and Wrenches appears in Zero Hour

Mink and other young children around Earth take seemingly harmless objects to "play" invasion with. They are directed by an alien being communicating through a fourth dimension to create a gateway with these implements.

The Rocket appears in The Rocket

Fiorello Bodoni buys a rocket shell that a man is selling for scrap metal. He fixes up the rocket to shake and shiver and installs films of outer space. Then, he takes his children on a trip in the rocket ship. They believe they are traveling through space on the trip of a lifetime, but they are actually in the shaking rocket, safe in their father's junkyard.



Themes

Technology versus Humanity

Many of Bradbury's stories draw a dividing line between scientific and technological impulses of man, and human or creative impulses. In "The Rocket Man", the title character is torn between scientific exploration of the wonders of the physical universe and human connection with his wife and child. This conflict colors his entire existence.

In "The Veldt", the family uses technology as a replacement for human, family connections, and the children become murderous monsters because of it. Likewise, in "Marionettes, Inc.", the characters use technology as a substitute for facing the human problems of their marriage, and in doing so, they ruin themselves.

In "The Man", religion or spirituality represents humanity, which conflicts with the captain's desire to find out about the physical world. He is so concerned with finding the physical evidence of Christ that he misses out on spirituality. "The Fire Balloons" takes this idea to another level: complete rejection of the material world is the ultimate spiritual fulfillment.

In "The Exiles", Bradbury creates a vision of a future world where technology and science have won out over human impulses. Creativity, imagination, and speculation have been exiled to a distant planet, and these forces battle for survival against the onslaught of rationality. Bradbury's sympathies lie with the exiled imagination, as is shown in "The Rocket", where imagination accomplishes something that technology cannot.

In "The Fox and the Forest", Susan and William are fleeing from their government and from their time. They are, in fact, fugitives from "justice". However, in their time, the government, the force of justice, requires people to work creating weapons of mass destruction and war. Susan and William are essentially fleeing from the injustice of their lives, and this injustice drives them to the even greater crime of murder.

Justice and Injustice

Several of Bradbury's stories deal with justice and the trauma caused by injustices. In "The Other Foot", black people flee to Mars to establish a separate colony because of injustice. However, injustice has a long shadow. When white men come to the planet again, the Martians want to inflict an eye for an eye to pay back injustices inflicted upon them. However, this creates more injustice instead of creating justice. Only the total destruction that has occurred on Earth moves the Martians to pity and humanity.

"The City" depicts a similar situation. The race that built the city has been wiped out. They were moved by a desire for revenge: eye-for-eye justice against Earth. However,



the city has no humanity and no pity. The result is meaningless destruction, set in motion by an injustice twenty-thousand years ago.

In "The Visitor", the people quarantined on Mars are robbed of their freedom through no fault of their own. Although this is done for societal good, it is an injustice, a denial of basic human rights. Because of the trauma of this injustice, the quarantined men become unjust themselves. They cannot work together as a society to share their good fortune, and ultimately, they harm themselves.

Faith

In Bradbury's stories, faith is an important element. People who lose faith lose everything, and people who maintain faith achieve happiness. In "The Man", Martin has faith in the reports of Christ, and ultimately he finds peace because of his willingness to believe. The captain, however, cannot have faith. Even once he believes, he must go out in search of the physical reality of Christ. His journey will find no peace.

In "The Long Rain", the lieutenant survives because he does not lose his faith in the Sun Dome, the symbol of hope, even after many disappointments. In "The Fire Balloons", Father Peregrine has faith in the idea that the blue spheres of light are sentient. He is so certain of himself that he literally takes a leap of faith off a cliff. His faithfulness is rewarded with the revelation that the Martians are transcendent beings.

In contrast, in "No Particular Night or Morning", Hitchcock loses faith in himself and in his connection to other people and the past. He demands proof of everything outside himself, and this leads to his destruction. In "The Rocket", Maria does not have the children's faith in her husband, and so she misses out on a wondrous rocket trip that only faith and imagination can provide.



Style

Point of View

Most of the stories in *The Illustrated Man* are told by a third-person narrator. The exceptions are "The Rocket Man", which is narrated in first person by Doug, the Rocket Man's son, and the prologue and epilogue, which are narrated in first person by an unnamed narrator. The unnamed narrator of the prologue and epilogue evokes the author himself as a character, while Doug gives the personal story of the effect of the pull of space on the son of a rocket man.

Bradbury's third person stories often use a semi-omniscient narrator, following one of the characters as the story is unveiled. This serves a similar function to Doug's first-person narration of "The Rocket Man". In Bradbury's character-driven stories, the reader experiences the world of one character or another.

The reader is inside Hollis's head as he floats off in space, toward Earth's atmosphere, in "Kaleidoscope". Hollis's thoughts about life and death are a core part of the story. Similarly, in "Zero Hour", the reader witnesses Mink's mother's thoughts about children. In "The Concrete Mixer", Etil's point of view reveals an alien's horrified perspective of Earth culture. In "The City", however, the point of view is that of the city itself, as it reaches out to examine the spacemen who have landed on its planet. Whether from an alien perspective or from a human one, Bradbury examines the human condition.

Setting

Bradbury's stories are futuristic, whether they take place in the near future or the far future, and they track the human race's experiences with space. Many of Bradbury's stories take place on Mars, which he imagines as a sister Earth instead of the barren, inhospitable planet scientists know it to be. "The Long Rain" portrays a more alien planet, Venus, a water planet that flows with eternal rain.

One important setting occurring in many of the stories is space itself. The characters often feel a driving desire to go into space, and they find a spiritual communion in the nothingness of the sky. In "Kaleidoscope", as the astronauts float into the vast distance, they are left with nothing but to examine themselves. Space provides the aloneness necessary to turn inward. In "No Particular Night or Morning", space creates isolation. In "The Exiles", "The Other Foot", and "The Visitor", space functions as a quarantine, a place where Earth shovels away those things that are banned from Earth. Space creates division, whether between characters, races, or ideas.

Contrasting with the exotic scenes of outer space and futuristic civilization, Bradbury also uses the family and home as a setting. In "The Rocket Man", the story is told from Doug's point of view. It is a story of family and home more than a story of space. "Zero Hour" is a story of home life and children. "The Last Night of the World" and "The



Highway" tell stories of apocalypse from the small, personal point of view of a single family. This contrast of exotic, futuristic settings with home and family reflects one of Bradbury's main themes, that of technology and progress versus humanity.

Language and Meaning

Bradbury uses poetic language and description to set alien scenes and fantastical landscapes. He describes in detail the eternal rain and living, growing, pale forests of Venus. He describes the fantastical alien living blue orbs of light on Mars. His poetic prose brings to life alien worlds.

Bradbury also creates language to describe futuristic inventions. The nursery in "The Veldt" has "odorophonics". Instead of a telephone, the household in "Zero Hour" has an "audio-televisor". These words combine existing terms, creating descriptions that sound technological or scientific.

At other times, Bradbury uses old words in new ways to describe technology. The robots in "Marionettes, Inc." are marionettes, and in "The Veldt", the spectacular four-walled holographic room is just a nursery. This is a type of metaphor that relates the new creation to an existing thing, and both end up being ironic. The "marionettes" aren't controllable, and the "nursery" is not nurturing.

Often, technology is personified in Bradbury's work. In "The Veldt", the father goes around the house "killing" it by shutting down the electronics. Similarly, in "The City", the city dies after its mission is fulfilled. Technology becomes such an integral part of life that it takes on personality and a kind of inhuman humanity.

Structure

The stories in *The Illustrated Man* are separate tales, but they are loosely held together by the prologue and epilogue, which contain the story of the Illustrated Man, whose tattoos come to life in the night and tell stories of the future. The Illustrated Man serves as a bridge between the reader's world and the fantastical world of Bradbury's futuristic stories.

Most of the tales begin at a moment of activity, in the midst of the action, and then proceed chronologically. In "The Exiles", the reader is immediately thrown into the midst of Shakespeare's witches completing a spell. In "The Fox and the Forest", the reader lands in a thrilling Mexican festival. In "Kaleidoscope", the reader begins the tale at the crucial moment when the astronauts are thrust into space. The setting is immediately established, and the action begins right away.

Bradbury often does not introduce characters' names immediately, letting the reader discover characters and events as the stories proceed. In "The Long Rain", none of the characters is named until a page into the story, when a character calls Simmons by name. The lieutenant is never known by any name but "lieutenant". The reader only

knows what the reader sees and hears unfolding, providing a sense of scene and of realistic interactions.



Quotes

"They walked down the hall of their soundproofed, Happylife Home, which had cost them thirty thousand dollars installed, this house which clothed and fed and rocked them to sleep and played and sang and was good to them. Their approach sensitized a switch somewhere and the nursery light flicked on when they came within ten feet of it. Similarly, behind them, in the halls, lights went on and off as they left them behind, with a soft automaticity." *The Veldt*, p. 7

"I'll burn, he thought, and be scattered in ashes all over the continental lands. I'll be put to use. Just a little bit, but ashes are ashes and they'll add to the land." *Kaleidoscope*, p. 27

"'Yes, sir,' said Willie, sitting behind the wheel, rubbing his face with his slow fingers. 'Seems like for the first time today I really seen the white man—I really seen him clear.'" *The Other Foot*, p. 38

"'What do they mean, 'the world'?' he said.'" *The Highway*, p. 42

"'For one thing,' said Martin steadily, 'he healed the sick and comforted the poor. He fought hypocrisy and dirty politics and sat among the people, talking, through the day.'" *The Man*, p. 45

"The monster was supported by a thousand electric blue legs. It walked swiftly and terribly. It struck down a leg with a driving blow. Everywhere a leg stuck a tree fell and burned." *The Long Rain*, p. 56

"Because when you're out there you want to be here, and when you're here you want to be out there. Don't start that. Don't let it get hold of you." *The Rocket Man*, p. 71

"Adam alone did not sin. Add Eve and you add temptation. Add a second man and you make adultery possible. With the addition of sex or people, you add sin. If men were armless they could not strangle with their hands. You would not have that particular sin of murder. Add arms, and you add the possibility of a new violence. Amoebas cannot sin because they reproduce by fission. They do not covet wives or murder each other. Add sex to amoebas, add arms and legs, and you would have murder and adultery. Add an arm or leg or person, or take away each, and you add or subtract possible evil. On Mars, what if there are five new senses, organs, invisible limbs we can't conceive of—then mightn't there be five new sins?" *The Fire Balloons*, p. 76

"They won't be prepared for us, at least. They haven't the imagination. Those clean young rocket men with their antiseptic bloomers and fish-bowl helmets, with their new religion. About their necks, on gold chains, scalpels. Upon their heads, a diadem of microscopes. In their holy fingers, steaming incense urns which in reality are only germicidal ovens for steaming out superstition." *The Exiles*, p. 99



"Space, thought Clemens. The space that Hitchcock loved so well. Space, with nothing on top, nothing on the bottom, a lot of empty nothings between, and Hitchcock falling in the middle of the nothing, on his way to no particular night and no particular morning. . . ." *No Particular Night or Morning*, p. 114

"'The rabbits may hide in the forest,' said a voice, 'but a fox can always find them.'" *The Fox and the Forest*, p. 120

"'What else do you expect?' cried Mark. 'To be tied up, toted off, made the intellectual bride of a man insane with loneliness—do you think I enjoy this?'" *The Visitor*, p. 134

"He knew just what he would say to Tylla. 'War is a bad thing, but peace can be a living horror.'" *The Concrete Mixer*, p. 155

"'I'll never get to go to Rio,' said the other man. 'Have you thought of that?'" *Marionettes, Inc.*, p. 161

"'I am no longer your captain,' he said. 'Nor am I a man.'" *The City*, p. 167

"Children and love and hate, side by side. Sometimes children loved you, hated you—all in half a second. Strange children, did they ever forget or forgive the whippings and the harsh, strict words of command?" *Zero Hour*, p. 175

"To himself he prayed, Oh let nothing happen to the illusion in the next six days. Let all of space come and go, and red Mars come up under out ship, and the moons of Mars, and let there be no flaws in the color film. Let there be three dimensions; let nothing go wrong with the hidden mirrors and screens that mold the fine illusion. Let time pass without crisis." *The Rocket*, p. 185



Topics for Discussion

Why does Ray Bradbury use the story of the Illustrated Man to tie together this series of short stories into a single framework?

Imagine that the stories in *The Illustrated Man* take place in the same future, as the prologue suggests. Organize the stories on a timeline in the order in which they would occur.

A number of characters in Bradbury's stories are unnamed, including the Rocket Man, the couple in "The Last Night of the World", the Christ figure in "The Man", the white man in "The Other Foot", and the captain in "The Exiles". What is the significance of leaving these characters unnamed?

Compare the father in "The Rocket" to the father in "The Rocket Man".

Many of Bradbury's stories are cautionary tales, warning of dangers to human society. What dangers do the stories "The Veldt", "The Exiles", "The Concrete Mixer", "Marionettes, Inc.", "The Visitor", and "The City" warn of?

How does Bradbury portray religion in "The Man", "The Fire Balloons", and "The Concrete Mixer"?

Discuss the relationships between parents and children in "Zero Hour", "The Rocket", "The Rocket Man", and "The Veldt".

Compare the deaths of the astronauts in "Kaleidoscope" to the death of Hitchcock in "No Particular Night or Morning".

What elements of human nature save humanity in "The Other Foot" and "The Long Rain"?

Compare the portrayal of everyday life in the face of apocalypse in "The Highway" and "The Last Night of the World".

Are the fugitives in "The Fox and the Forest" selfish in their actions?