

Milton High School 9th Grade Honors Literature and Composition 2024 Summer Reading

(insert your names)

*Please contact (insert contact info) if you have any questions over the summer.

To begin, you will read a short story. The short story is part of a packet which is several pages long because each page of the short story has a special column to the right that will accommodate part of the assignment. **You will print out and complete this packet before the first day of school and turn it in ON the first day of school.**

The Rules of Engagement:

During the first week of school, I will use these assignments to assess your writing, your work ethic, your ability to work with a piece of literature, your understanding of literary terms, your ability to follow directions, your ability to take pride in your work and to dedicate the time necessary to complete the reading and accompanying assignments well. **You only get one chance to make a first impression**, and summer reading work completion is your opportunity to introduce yourself and make that good impression.

An Overview of the Packet:

- A. Pre-reading Activities:** These activities should be completed before you read. Please complete the section which asks you to agree or disagree with some statements.
- B. Suggested Resources for Reference Purposes:** These resources will help you complete all of the elements of the assignment but are **not** required. If any links no longer work, don't worry.
- C. While Reading Activities:**
1. While Reading Part One: Pay attention to Vocabulary –**Circle words**
 2. While Reading Part Two: Literary and Stylistic Choices Annotation Assignment—**Highlight words, phrases, or passages**
 3. While Reading Part Three: **Complete Sentence Annotation Assignment**
- D. The Text of the Story** This format includes two columns for space to annotate.

A. Pre-reading Activities:

- Read some background information: Bradbury wrote this story during the 1950s and during a time of racial segregation in the United States. Technology was quickly developing, and televisions were becoming common place entertainment for children.
- Understand the title: Veldt (also spelled veld) is a term used to refer to certain wide open rural spaces of Southern Africa.
- Answer these quick questions: **Agree (A) or Disagree (D)**
 1. ___ Parents should control all of their children's choices.
 2. ___ Technology is a threat to humanity.
 3. ___ Freedom over structure is better for children.
 4. ___ Technology makes people lazy or disconnected.
 5. ___ Children are naturally more savage than adults.
- Review pertinent literary elements/author's stylistic choices: **setting, methods of characterization (indirect and direct), conflict (internal and external), figurative language, symbolism, simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, irony, foreshadowing, allusion, and suspense. See link below.**

B1: Suggested Resources (YOU DO NOT HAVE TO DO THESE, they are here to help you:

Listen to Stephen Colbert read the short story:

<http://www.openculture.com/2014/10/stephen-colbert-reads-ray-bradbury-classic-sci-fi-story-the-veldt.html>

Questions to guide reading and listening:

<http://www.ylhs.org/apps/download/Y5tDSR9VUC7AtrzyPtJ4FRvT4RTYxtK3ewiw0d7IAFIiTEW0.pdf/VeldtTB%20Questions.pdf>

Review of Literary Devices:

<http://literary-devices.com/>

B. 2: List of appropriate subjects for your annotations: The Author (Ray Bradbury) or any character by name or group. Examples Ray Bradbury compares... The parents tell...The kids lack respect for...

B. 3: List of Good Present Tense Active Verbs (Each one of your sentences will have one of these verbs as the main verb:

suggests, hints, intimates, implies, questions, casts, sheds light, notes, observes, asserts, concedes, qualifies, affirms, criticizes, admonishes, challenges, emphasizes, minimizes, demonstrates, explores, lists, supports, establishes, evokes, draws attention to, calls attention to, describes, persuades, explains, exemplifies, illustrates, opens, begins, adds, connects, juxtaposes, draws a parallel between, foreshadows, turns to, shifts to, concludes, finishes, closes, ends, compares, contrasts, defines, narrates, chooses, quotes, reveals, refers to, hyperbolizes, foreshadows.

B. 4: List of literary terms you should know, definition of the terms you should know, and examples of good annotations for each literary term written with proper subject and verb combinations—**learn from these examples.**

Literary Element	Definition	Example of good sentence starters with proper subject and verbs and an advanced example with quote integration from <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> , a book you will read this year.
Setting	The time (hour, day, month, year, era, etc.) and place (location, country, region, etc.) in which a story takes place.	Bradbury creates... or Bradbury refers to the country having been through two atomic wars “since 2022”, placing the events of the novel beyond the contemporary era of both author and reader (69).
Direct Characterization	Something about the character is directly stated, usually using an adjective.	Bradbury directly characterizes Clarisse... or Bradbury characterizes Clarisse through her uncle’s adage that she is “seventeen and insane” as the two go hand in hand (5).
Indirect Characterization	Something about a character is established through clues about appearance, words, actions, and the reactions of other characters. The	Bradbury indirectly characterizes Clarisse... or Bradbury notes that Montag feels Clarisse was “walking in a circle about him, turning

	reader must draw conclusions about the character based on this information.	him end for end” through her visual examination of him alone to establish her curious nature (4).
Conflict	A problem or issue within a literary work. Every story will have one main conflict and may have other minor conflicts. Two types of conflict: Internal occurring within one character (man vs self) and External occurring between one character and the outside world (man vs man, society, technology, nature, or supernatural).	Clarisse struggles with society... or Bradbury reveals Montag’s ongoing internal struggle with the ideals he upholds as a fireman when he informs us of what Montag has been hiding in his vents (62-63).
Figurative Language	When a word or phrase is not used by its literal definition or realistic meaning.	Bradbury figuratively expresses... or Bradbury evokes the qualities of an earthquake which was “shaking and falling and shivering” within Montag to represent the instability he feels as his comfortable life crumbles around him (112).
Symbolism	The use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities within a literary work.	Bradbury includes the phoenix as a symbol of... Or Bradbury invokes the myth of the phoenix as an icon for the firemen, representing their belief that criminals can be “reborn” through use of destructive fire (2).
Simile	A direct comparison between two different things using “like” or “as”.	Bradbury directly compares...to...in order to... or Bradbury refers to the appearance of the burning books as being “like roasted birds” to represent how their pages, like wings, flap wildly while being destroyed (110).
Metaphor	A direct comparison between two different things which does not use “like” or “as”.	Bradbury compares... or Bradbury compares the way the dying ashes of the burning books drift in the air to “a swarm of fireflies” as Montag completes his first book burning of the novel (1).
Personification	When a non-human subject is given human characteristics (not applied to animals).	Bradbury personifies... or Bradbury personifies the books as living things, describing how they “died on the porch and lawn” to call attention to their natural quality in Montag’s eyes (1-2).
Onomatopoeia	The use of words that imitate	Bradbury mimics the sound of...

	sounds.	or Bradbury emphasizes Montag's discomfort and overstimulation as he is "turning in a... roar and buzz and hum" while torn between Mildred and her friends in the parlor room, Faber in his ear, and his own inner thoughts (94).
Hyperbole	The use of extreme exaggeration to make a point or show emphasis.	Bradbury exaggerates... or Bradbury describes the sound of the wind in the trees as "dry rain" to emphasize the loud and rain-like sound of leaves rattling against one another above Montag and Clarisse (3).
Irony	A pronounced difference between expectations or appearance of things and reality in a literary work. Three types: Dramatic (when the audience knows something the character does not), Verbal (when the speaker says something different from what they mean, i.e. sarcasm), and Situational (when the opposite of the expected outcome occurs).	Bradbury creates irony by... or Though Mildred seems like she may come around and have an awakening like her husband, Bradbury subverts these hopes as he reveals that Mildred was the one who placed the final fire call (108).
Foreshadowing	The use of clues in a literary work which suggest events that have yet to occur.	Bradbury hints at... Or Bradbury foreshadows Montag's secret illegal behaviors when he notes that Montag "stood looking up at the air-conditioning vent... for a long time" to suggest there is something significant about this spot in his house (17).
Allusion	An implied reference to a well-known person, event, or thing, or to another text.	Bradbury alludes to... or Bradbury alludes to the loss of human faith and spirit by having Montag coincidentally read "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold to Mildred's friends (96).
Suspense	A feeling of uncertainty about the outcome of events in a literary work (suspense is a type of mood).	Bradbury creates suspense by... Or When Montag is shocked by the presence of the old woman on the fire call, Bradbury implies that in all other cases the criminals have already been arrested and removed by the time the firemen arrive to suggest something about this situation will be different (34).

C. 1 While you Read the Story Part One: Pay attention to vocabulary: recognizing words and phrases that you do not know or understand is an important piece of reading, comprehension, and literary analysis. Please locate these vocabulary words in the short story. **Carefully CIRCLE each of these words.** You will be responsible for understanding these words/phrases in context. In 9th Grade, you will be expected to look up words with which you are unfamiliar as you read.

Vocabulary Word	Definition	Word Used in Context
veldt	grassland	The deer live on the African veldt.
thatched	straw covered	Old cottages in Ireland had thatched roofs.
glade	an open space in the middle of a forest.	They found the lost hiker in a wooded glade.
"two dimensional"	having height and width	The characters in the comic book seemed two dimensional.
recede into crystalline distance	become transparent	The face of the ghost receded into crystalline distance.
"three dimensions"	having height, width, and depth.	We live in a three dimensional world.
jaunt	pleasure trip	His jaunt through Yosemite National Park left him refreshed and inspired.
tapestry	a heavy cloth woven with designs	Tapestries were used in castles to decorate and to help keep the rooms warm.
bolted	jerked, moved suddenly	She bolted from the party when she saw her ex-husband.
appalled	shocked	She was appalled to find out that someone had broken into her apartment.
bemused	lost in thought	The setback did not disappoint him, rather it left him bemused.
telepathic emanations	thoughts	He believed that the machine could record his telepathic emanations.
subsided	stopped or grew less.	The headache subsided after he took the aspirin.
contraptions	inventions, esp. unwieldy machines	The Model-T automobiles were noisy contraptions.
Pegasus	a winged horse in Greek mythology	Hercules was reputed to ride Pegasus on his trips to Olympus.
agate	a type of rock in the quartz family	Some colored agates are prized for decorative purposes.
ozone	a molecule of oxygen found in the upper atmosphere and in smog.	The ozone layer in the atmosphere protects the earth from dangerous radiation.
joviality	being jolly	Joviality is one of the characteristics of Santa Claus.
Tom Swift	a character in a series of books written for young boys by the author Victor Appleton	All the boys wanted to be brave and smart like Tom Swift.
lurking	hiding	A cat was lurking in the back of the garage.
animated	moving, living	An animated feature was shown before the main movie.
flue	passageway	The volcano vented through a flue in the side of the mountain.

neurotic

mentally unstable

They suspected that the children were growing neurotic.

insufferable

intolerable

The children are often insufferable.

intersperse

mix

The images were interspersed between small films.

paranoia

unreasonable suspicion or distrust

Were my feelings justified fear or paranoia?

rapping

knocking

We heard a quiet rapping at the door.

spoor

trail or droppings of a wild animal

He could tell from the spoor that the trash had been torn apart by coyotes.

wailed

cried

The wailing and gnashing of teeth was heard blocks away.

engrossed

deeply involved with

He seems engrossed with surfing the internet.

C. 2 While You Read the Story Part Two: Read the text carefully and highlight words, phrases and/or passages that reflect Ray Bradbury's literary and stylistic choices: setting, both methods of characterization (direct and indirect), conflict, figurative language, symbolism, simile, metaphor, allusion, personification, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, irony, foreshadowing, and suspense. Your work/notes in the text should lead you to your complete sentence, analytical annotation. Refer to the example below.

C. 3 While You Read the Story Part Three: Complete Sentence Annotations: (2 PER PAGE). Each sentence must begin with the author, the narrator, or a character as the subject of your sentence. The main verb in your sentence must be a present tense, action verb. Refer to the list of appropriate present tense action verbs included on page 2 of this packet.

D. The Short Story: Read, circle, highlight and underline

The Veldt * (example of circling the vocabulary word)

By Ray Bradbury

"George, I wish you'd look at the nursery."

"What's wrong with it?"

"I don't know."

"Well, then."

"I just want you to look at it, is all, or call a psychologist in to look at it."

"What would a psychologist want with a nursery?"

"You know very well what he'd want." His wife paused in the middle of the kitchen and watched the stove busy humming to itself, making supper for four.

"It's just that the nursery is different now than it was."

"All right, let's have a look."

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.

***Sample annotations: please note, an annotation is not a retelling of the story but analytical in nature and contains an appropriate subject and present tense action verb.**

In this passage, Bradbury hints at an internal conflict as well as foreshadows that what is wrong with the nursery may be psychological in nature and will be significant.

Note: the subject of this sentence is Bradbury and the verb is actually a compound verb: hints and foreshadows.

When Bradbury hints at the conflict and foreshadows future events, he creates suspense.

Note: This sentence begins with a DEPENDENT CLAUSE that has the same subject and verbs as the sentence above and is set off by a comma, BUT the subject of the main clause is he and the verb is creates.

"Well," said George Hadley.

They stood on the thatched floor of the nursery. It was forty feet across by forty feet long and thirty feet high; it had cost half again as much as the rest of the house. "But nothing's too good for our children," George had said.

The nursery was silent. It was empty as a jungle glade at hot high noon. The walls were blank and two dimensional. Now, as George and Lydia Hadley stood in the center of the room, the walls began to purr and recede into crystalline distance, it seemed, and presently an African veldt appeared, in three dimensions, on all sides, in color reproduced to the final pebble and bit of straw. The ceiling above them became a deep sky with a hot yellow sun.

George Hadley felt the perspiration start on his brow.

"Let's get out of this sun," he said. "This is a little too real. But I don't see anything wrong."

"Wait a moment, you'll see," said his wife.

Now the hidden odorophonics were beginning to blow a wind of odor at the two people in the middle of the baked veldtland. The hot straw smell of lion grass, the cool green smell of the hidden water hole, the great rusty smell of animals, the smell of dust like a red paprika in the hot air. And now the sounds: the thump of distant antelope feet on grassy sod, the papery rustling of vultures. A shadow passed through the sky. The shadow flickered on George Hadley's upturned, sweating face.

"Filthy creatures," he heard his wife say.

"The vultures."

"You see, there are the lions, far over, that way. Now they're on their way to the water hole. They've just been eating," said Lydia. "I don't know what."

"Some animal." George Hadley put his hand up to shield off the burning light from his squinted eyes. "A zebra or a baby giraffe, maybe."

"Are you sure?" His wife sounded peculiarly tense.

"No, it's a little late to be sure," he said, amused.

"Nothing over there I can see but cleaned bone, and the vultures dropping for what's left."

"Did you hear that scream?" she asked.

"No."

"About a minute ago?"

"Sorry, no."

The lions were coming. And again George Hadley was filled with admiration for the mechanical genius who had conceived this room. A miracle of efficiency selling for an absurdly low price. Every home should have one. Oh, occasionally they frightened you with their clinical

Write your annotation here:

Horizontal lines for writing annotations.

accuracy, they startled you, gave you a twinge, but most of the time what fun for everyone, not only your own son and daughter, but for yourself when you felt like a quick jaunt to a foreign land, a quick change of scenery. Well, here it was!

And here were the lions now, fifteen feet away, so real, so feverishly and startlingly real that you could feel the prickling fur on your hand, and your mouth was stuffed with the dusty upholstery smell of their heated pelts, and the yellow of them was in your eyes like the yellow of an exquisite French tapestry, the yellows of lions and summer grass, and the sound of the matted lion lungs exhaling on the silent noontide, and the smell of meat from the panting, dripping mouths.

The lions stood looking at George and Lydia Hadley with terrible green-yellow eyes.

"Watch out!" screamed Lydia.

The lions came running at them.

Lydia bolted and ran. Instinctively, George sprang after her. Outside, in the hall, with the door slammed he was laughing and she was crying, and they both stood appalled at the other's reaction.

"George!"

"Lydia! Oh, my dear poor sweet Lydia!"

"They almost got us!"

"Walls, Lydia, remember; crystal walls, that's all they are. Oh, they look real, I must admit - Africa in your parlor-but it's all dimensional, super reactionary, supersensitive color film and mental tape film behind glass screens. It's all odorophonics and sonics, Lydia. Here's my handkerchief."

"I'm afraid." She came to him and put her body against him and cried steadily. "Did you see? Did you feel? It's too real."

"Now, Lydia..."

"You've got to tell Wendy and Peter not to read any more on Africa."

"Of course - of course." He patted her.

"Promise?"

"Sure."

"And lock the nursery for a few days until I get my nerves settled."

"You know how difficult Peter is about that. When I punished him a month ago by locking the nursery for even a few hours - the tantrum he threw! And Wendy too. They live for the nursery."

"It's got to be locked, that's all there is to it."

"All right." Reluctantly he locked the huge door.

Write your annotation here:

Horizontal lines for writing annotations.

blood. Remarkable how the nursery caught the telepathic emanations of the children's minds and created life to fill their every desire. The children thought lions, and there were lions. The children thought zebras, and there were zebras. Sun - sun. Giraffes - giraffes. Death and death.

That last. He chewed tastelessly on the meat that the table had cut for him. Death thoughts. They were awfully young, Wendy and Peter, for death thoughts. Or, no, you were never too young, really. Long before you knew what death was you were wishing it on someone else. When you were two years old you were shooting people with cap pistols.

But this - the long, hot African veldt-the awful death in the jaws of a lion. And repeated again and again.

"Where are you going?"

He didn't answer Lydia. Preoccupied, he let the lights glow softly on ahead of him, extinguish behind him as he padded to the nursery door. He listened against it. Far away, a lion roared.

He unlocked the door and opened it. Just before he stepped inside, he heard a faraway scream. And then another roar from the lions, which subsided quickly.

He stepped into Africa. How many times in the last year had he opened this door and found Wonderland, Alice, the Mock Turtle, or Aladdin and his Magical Lamp, or Jack Pumpkinhead of Oz, or Dr. Doolittle, or the cow jumping over a very real-appearing moon-all the delightful contraptions of a make-believe world. How often had he seen Pegasus flying in the sky ceiling, or seen fountains of red fireworks, or heard angel voices singing. But now, this yellow hot Africa, this bake oven with murder in the heat. Perhaps Lydia was right. Perhaps they needed a little vacation from the fantasy which was growing a bit too real for ten-year-old children. It was all right to exercise one's mind with gymnastic fantasies, but when the lively child mind settled on one pattern...? It seemed that, at a distance, for the past month, he had heard lions roaring, and smelled their strong odor seeping as far away as his study door. But, being busy, he had paid it no attention.

George Hadley stood on the African grassland alone. The lions looked up from their feeding, watching him. The only flaw to the illusion was the open door through which he could see his wife, far down the dark hall, like a framed picture, eating her dinner abstractedly.

"Go away," he said to the lions.

They did not go.

He knew the principle of the room exactly. You sent

Write your annotation here:

Horizontal lines for writing annotations.

out your thoughts. Whatever you thought would appear.
"Let's have Aladdin and his lamp," he snapped. The veldtland remained; the lions remained.

"Come on, room! I demand Aladdin!" he said.

Nothing happened. The lions mumbled in their baked pelts.

"Aladdin!"

He went back to dinner. "The fool room's out of order," he said. "It won't respond."

"Or--"

"Or what?"

"Or it can't respond," said Lydia, "because the children have thought about Africa and lions and killing so many days that the room's in a rut."

"Could be."

"Or Peter's set it to remain that way."

"Set it?"

"He may have got into the machinery and fixed something."

"Peter doesn't know machinery."

"He's a wise one for ten. That I.Q. of his -"

"Nevertheless -"

"Hello, Mom. Hello, Dad."

The Hadleys turned. Wendy and Peter were coming in the front door, cheeks like peppermint candy, eyes like bright blue agate marbles, a smell of ozone on their jumpers from their trip in the helicopter.

"You're just in time for supper," said both parents.

"We're full of strawberry ice cream and hot dogs," said the children, holding hands. "But we'll sit and watch."

"Yes, come tell us about the nursery," said George Hadley.

The brother and sister blinked at him and then at each other. "Nursery?"

"All about Africa and everything," said the father with false joviality.

"I don't understand," said Peter.

"Your mother and I were just traveling through Africa with rod and reel; Tom Swift and his Electric Lion," said George Hadley.

"There's no Africa in the nursery," said Peter simply.

"Oh, come now, Peter. We know better."

"I don't remember any Africa," said Peter to Wendy.
"Do you?"

"No."

"Run see and come tell."

She obeyed

"Wendy, come back here!" said George Hadley, but

Write your annotation here:

Horizontal lines for writing annotations.

she was gone. The house lights followed her like a flock of fireflies. Too late, he realized he had forgotten to lock the nursery door after his last inspection.

"Wendy'll look and come tell us," said Peter.

"She doesn't have to tell me. I've seen it."

"I'm sure you're mistaken, Father."

"I'm not, Peter. Come along now."

But Wendy was back. "It's not Africa," she said breathlessly.

"We'll see about this," said George Hadley, and they all walked down the hall together and opened the nursery door.

There was a green, lovely forest, a lovely river, a purple mountain, high voices singing, and Rima, lovely and mysterious, lurking in the trees with colorful flights of butterflies, like animated bouquets, lingering in her long hair. The African veldtland was gone. The lions were gone. Only Rima was here now, singing a song so beautiful that it brought tears to your eyes.

George Hadley looked in at the changed scene. "Go to bed," he said to the children.

They opened their mouths.

"You heard me," he said.

They went off to the air closet, where a wind sucked them like brown leaves up the flue to their slumber rooms.

George Hadley walked through the singing glade and picked up something that lay in the corner near where the lions had been. He walked slowly back to his wife.

"What is that?" she asked.

"An old wallet of mine," he said.

He showed it to her. The smell of hot grass was on it and the smell of a lion. There were drops of saliva on it, it had been chewed, and there were blood smears on both sides.

He closed the nursery door and locked it, tight.

In the middle of the night he was still awake and he knew his wife was awake. "Do you think Wendy changed it?" she said at last, in the dark room.

"Of course."

"Made it from a veldt into a forest and put Rima there instead of lions?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I don't know. But it's staying locked until I find out."

"How did your wallet get there?"

"I don't know anything," he said, "except that I'm beginning to be sorry we bought that room for the

Write your annotation here:

Horizontal lines for writing annotations.

children. If children are neurotic at all, a room like that -"
"It's supposed to help them work off their neuroses in a healthful way."

"I'm starting to wonder." He stared at the ceiling.

"We've given the children everything they ever wanted. Is this our reward-secrecy, disobedience?"

"Who was it said, 'Children are carpets, they should be stepped on occasionally'? We've never lifted a hand. They're insufferable - let's admit it. They come and go when they like; they treat us as if we were offspring. They're spoiled and we're spoiled."

"They've been acting funny ever since you forbade them to take the rocket to New York a few months ago."

"They're not old enough to do that alone, I explained."

"Nevertheless, I've noticed they've been decidedly cool toward us since."

"I think I'll have David McClean come tomorrow morning to have a look at Africa."

"But it's not Africa now, it's Green Mansions country and Rima."

"I have a feeling it'll be Africa again before then."

A moment later they heard the screams.

Two screams. Two people screaming from downstairs. And then a roar of lions.

"Wendy and Peter aren't in their rooms," said his wife.

He lay in his bed with his beating heart. "No," he said.

"They've broken into the nursery."

"Those screams - they sound familiar."

"Do they?"

"Yes, awfully."

And although their beds tried very hard, the two adults couldn't be rocked to sleep for another hour. A smell of cats was in the night air.

"Father?" said Peter.

"Yes."

Peter looked at his shoes. He never looked at his father any more, nor at his mother. "You aren't going to lock up the nursery for good, are you?"

"That all depends."

"On what?" snapped Peter.

"On you and your sister. If you intersperse this Africa with a little variety - oh, Sweden perhaps, or Denmark or China -"

"I thought we were free to play as we wished."

"You are, within reasonable bounds."

"What's wrong with Africa, Father?"

"Oh, so now you admit you have been conjuring up Africa, do you?"

Write your annotation here:

Horizontal lines for writing annotations.

"I wouldn't want the nursery locked up," said Peter coldly. "Ever."

"Matter of fact, we're thinking of turning the whole house off for about a month. Live sort of a carefree one-for-all existence."

"That sounds dreadful! Would I have to tie my own shoes instead of letting the shoe tier do it? And brush my own teeth and comb my hair and give myself a bath?"

"It would be fun for a change, don't you think?"

"No, it would be horrid. I didn't like it when you took out the picture painter last month."

"That's because I wanted you to learn to paint all by yourself, son."

"I don't want to do anything but look and listen and smell; what else is there to do?"

"All right, go play in Africa."

"Will you shut off the house sometime soon?"

"We're considering it."

"I don't think you'd better consider it any more, Father."

"I won't have any threats from my son!"

"Very well." And Peter strolled off to the nursery.

"Am I on time?" said David McClean.

"Breakfast?" asked George Hadley.

"Thanks, had some. What's the trouble?"

"David, you're a psychologist."

"I should hope so."

"Well, then, have a look at our nursery. You saw it a year ago when you dropped by; did you notice anything peculiar about it then?"

"Can't say I did; the usual violences, a tendency toward a slight paranoia here or there, usual in children because they feel persecuted by parents constantly, but, oh, really nothing."

They walked down the hall. "I locked the nursery up," explained the father, "and the children broke back into it during the night. I let them stay so they could form the patterns for you to see."

There was a terrible screaming from the nursery.

"There it is," said George Hadley. "See what you make of it."

They walked in on the children without rapping.

The screams had faded. The lions were feeding.

"Run outside a moment, children," said George Hadley.

"No, don't change the mental combination. Leave the walls as they are. Get!"

With the children gone, the two men stood studying the lions clustered at a distance, eating with great relish

Write your annotation here:

Horizontal lines for writing annotations.

whatever it was they had caught.

"I wish I knew what it was," said George Hadley.

"Sometimes I can almost see. Do you think if I brought high-powered binoculars here and -"

David McClean laughed dryly. "Hardly." He turned to study all four walls. "How long has this been going on?"

"A little over a month."

"It certainly doesn't feel good."

"I want facts, not feelings."

"My dear George, a psychologist never saw a fact in his life. He only hears about feelings; vague things. This doesn't feel good, I tell you. Trust my hunches and my instincts. I have a nose for something bad. This is very bad. My advice to you is to have the whole damn room torn down and your children brought to me every day during the next year for treatment."

"Is it that bad?"

"I'm afraid so. One of the original uses of these nurseries was so that we could study the patterns left on the walls by the child's mind, study at our leisure, and help the child. In this case, however, the room has become a channel toward-destructive thoughts, instead of a release away from them."

"Didn't you sense this before?"

"I sensed only that you had spoiled your children more than most. And now you're letting them down in some way. What way?"

"I wouldn't let them go to New York."

"What else?"

"I've taken a few machines from the house and threatened them, a month ago, with closing up the nursery unless they did their homework. I did close it for a few days to show I meant business."

"Ah, ha!"

"Does that mean anything?"

"Everything. Where before they had a Santa Claus now they have a Scrooge. Children prefer Santas. You've let this room and this house replace you and your wife in your children's affections. This room is their mother and father, far more important in their lives than their real parents. And now you come along and want to shut it off. No wonder there's hatred here. You can feel it coming out of the sky. Feel that sun. George, you'll have to change your life. Like too many others, you've built it around creature comforts. Why, you'd starve tomorrow if something went wrong in your kitchen. You wouldn't know how to tap an egg. Nevertheless, turn everything off. Start new. It'll take time. But we'll make good

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children out of bad in a year, wait and see."

"But won't the shock be too much for the children, shutting the room up abruptly, for good?"

"I don't want them going any deeper into this, that's all."

The lions were finished with their red feast.

The lions were standing on the edge of the clearing watching the two men.

"Now I'm feeling persecuted," said McClean. "Let's get out of here. I never have cared for these damned rooms. Make me nervous."

"The lions look real, don't they?" said George Hadley. I don't suppose there's any way -"

"What?"

"- that they could become real?"

"Not that I know."

"Some flaw in the machinery, a tampering or something?"

"No."

They went to the door.

"I don't imagine the room will like being turned off," said the father.

"Nothing ever likes to die - even a room."

"I wonder if it hates me for wanting to switch it off?"

"Paranoia is thick around here today," said David McClean. "You can follow it like a spoor. Hello." He bent and picked up a bloody scarf. "This yours?"

"No." George Hadley's face was rigid. "It belongs to Lydia."

They went to the fuse box together and threw the switch that killed the nursery.

The two children were in hysterics. They screamed and pranced and threw things. They yelled and sobbed and swore and jumped at the furniture.

"You can't do that to the nursery, you can't!"

"Now, children."

The children flung themselves onto a couch, weeping.

"George," said Lydia Hadley, "turn on the nursery, just for a few moments. You can't be so abrupt."

"No."

"You can't be so cruel..."

"Lydia, it's off, and it stays off. And the whole damn house dies as of here and now. The more I see of the mess we've put ourselves in, the more it sickens me. We've been contemplating our mechanical, electronic navels for too long. My God, how we need a breath of honest air!"

And he marched about the house turning off the

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voice clocks, the stoves, the heaters, the shoe shiners, the shoe lacers, the body scrubbers and swabbers and massagers, and every other machine he could put his hand to.

The house was full of dead bodies, it seemed. It felt like a mechanical cemetery. So silent. None of the humming hidden energy of machines waiting to function at the tap of a button.

"Don't let them do it!" wailed Peter at the ceiling, as if he was talking to the house, the nursery. "Don't let Father kill everything." He turned to his father. "Oh, I hate you!"

"Insults won't get you anywhere."

"I wish you were dead!"

"We were, for a long while. Now we're going to really start living. Instead of being handled and massaged, we're going to live."

Wendy was still crying and Peter joined her again. "Just a moment, just one moment, just another moment of nursery," they wailed.

"Oh, George," said the wife, "it can't hurt."

"All right - all right, if they'll just shut up. One minute, mind you, and then off forever."

"Daddy, Daddy, Daddy!" sang the children, smiling with wet faces.

"And then we're going on a vacation. David McClean is coming back in half an hour to help us move out and get to the airport. I'm going to dress. You turn the nursery on for a minute, Lydia, just a minute, mind you."

And the three of them went babbling off while he let himself be vacuumed upstairs through the air flue and set about dressing himself. A minute later Lydia appeared.

"I'll be glad when we get away," she sighed.

"Did you leave them in the nursery?"

"I wanted to dress too. Oh, that horrid Africa. What can they see in it?"

"Well, in five minutes we'll be on our way to Iowa. Lord, how did we ever get in this house? What prompted us to buy a nightmare?"

"Pride, money, foolishness."

"I think we'd better get downstairs before those kids get engrossed with those damned beasts again."

Just then they heard the children calling, "Daddy, Mommy, come quick - quick!"

They went downstairs in the air flue and ran down the hall. The children were nowhere in sight. "Wendy? Peter!"

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They ran into the nursery. The veldtland was empty save for the lions waiting, looking at them. "Peter, Wendy?"

The door slammed.

"Wendy, Peter!"

George Hadley and his wife whirled and ran back to the door.

"Open the door!" cried George Hadley, trying the knob. "Why, they've locked it from the outside! Peter!" He beat at the door. "Open up!"

He heard Peter's voice outside, against the door.

"Don't let them switch off the nursery and the house," he was saying.

Mr. and Mrs. George Hadley beat at the door. "Now, don't be ridiculous, children. It's time to go. Mr. McClean'll be here in a minute and..."

And then they heard the sounds.

The lions on three sides of them, in the yellow veldt grass, padding through the dry straw, rumbling and roaring in their throats.

The lions.

Mr. Hadley looked at his wife and they turned and looked back at the beasts edging slowly forward crouching, tails stiff.

Mr. and Mrs. Hadley screamed.

And suddenly they realized why those other screams had sounded familiar.

"Well, here I am," said David McClean in the nursery doorway, "Oh, hello." He stared at the two children seated in the center of the open glade eating a little picnic lunch. Beyond them was the water hole and the yellow veldtland; above was the hot sun. He began to perspire. "Where are your father and mother?"

The children looked up and smiled. "Oh, they'll be here directly."

"Good, we must get going." At a distance Mr. McClean saw the lions fighting and clawing and then quieting down to feed in silence under the shady trees.

He squinted at the lions with his hand up to his eyes.

Now the lions were done feeding. They moved to the water hole to drink.

A shadow flickered over Mr. McClean's hot face. Many shadows flickered. The vultures were dropping down the blazing sky.

"A cup of tea?" asked Wendy in the silence.

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