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## The veldt audio reading

I rarely think back to memories from that busywork-intensive containment unit known as American elementary school, but when I do, I usually arrive at listening to a Ray Bradbury story — something about a faraway planet, something about monsoons, I can never remember which one — during read-aloud time. Even then, on some level, I understood that the author of Fahrenheit 451 and The Martian Chronicles (not that I yet had any idea at the time about books like Fahrenheit 451 and The Martian Chronicles) wrote with the human voice in mind. Not necessarily the momentarily defamiliarized voice of a teacher reading to a post-lunch classroom of ten-year-olds, and not necessarily the flawlessly pronouncing and pausing, many-takes-recorded-per-sentence voice of the professional audiobook narrator (though Bradbury’s work did provide material for a few proto-audiobooks), but, perhaps, the voice of the mind. Of all Bradbury’s tales we love to read aloud, few seem quite so effective in this way as “The Veldt.” The story first appeared, according to the web site of public radio station WNYC, in a 1950 Saturday Evening Post “with the title ‘The World the Children Made,’ which is a good description of what goes on in this eerie tale. It imagines the ‘model home’ of the future, including a programmable nursery that becomes the site of a power struggle. [Fellow speculative writer Neil] Gaiman says that Bradbury’s tale raises complex questions: ‘Are our children our own?,’ and ‘What does technology do to them?’” Public Radio International commissioned no less a speaker than Colbert Report and future Late Show host Stephen Colbert — a satirist highly attuned to the ironies inherent in mankind’s visions of its own future — to read it for their “Selected Shorts” series, and you can hear the whole thing above. Given how much progress our pursuit of total automation and virtual stimulation (and our parallel desire to escape those conditions) has made in the past 64 years, “The Veldt” has grown only more relevant. Pair it with “There Will Come Soft Rains,” Bradbury’s other famously read-aloudable story of the home of the 1950 future, for a richly funny and troubling double-feature of the mind. For another sonic angle on the material, see also our previously-featured radio adaptations of “There Will Come Soft Rains” on Dimension X and “The Veldt” on X Minus One — or you can hear Leonard Nimoy read both of them in the 1970s.) Some of the readings listed above appear in our collection, 1,000 Free Audio Books: Download Great Books for Free. 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Part 1 of 3: Part 2 of 3: Part 3 of 3: Posted by Jesse Willis I rarely think back to memories from that busywork-intensive containment unit known as American elementary school, but when I do, I usually arrive at listening to a Ray Bradbury story — something about a faraway planet, something about monsoons, I can never remember which one — during read-aloud time. Even then, on some level, I understood that the author of Fahrenheit 451 and The Martian Chronicles (not that I yet had any idea at the time about books like Fahrenheit 451 and The Martian Chronicles) wrote with the human voice in mind. Not necessarily the momentarily defamiliarized voice of a teacher reading to a post-lunch classroom of ten-year-olds, and not necessarily the flawlessly pronouncing and pausing, many-takes-recorded-per-sentence voice of the professional audiobook narrator (though Bradbury’s work did provide material for a few proto-audiobooks), but, perhaps, the voice of the mind. 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