

Summary and Analysis

Lydia and George Hadley live in a Happy-life Home, a technological marvel that automatically tends to their every need. It dresses them, cooks the food, brushes their teeth, and even rocks them to sleep. The house also contains a high-tech nursery. Lydia tells George that she thinks something might be wrong with the nursery, and she wants him to take a look at it. They go to the nursery, and as they stand in the center of the room, the nursery's previously blank walls and ceiling come to life. The room is transformed into a genuine African veldt, complete with a blazing hot sun and all the authentic sensory experiences that would accompany such a setting. The couple stands and watches the antelopes and vultures that roam the plains. There are also lions off in the distance that seem to be feeding upon a recent kill. Suddenly the lions turn and run toward George and Lydia. The two run out of the nursery and slam the door.

Lydia is still terrified that something has gone wrong and that the nursery settings are becoming too real. George assures her, however, that it is just the machinery of the room creating a realistic environment. The machine works through telepathy. It reads a person's thoughts and then projects them onto the walls to create the environment. George tells Lydia that the children have been reading a lot about Africa and that is why they have created the veldt. Lydia is still not convinced, and she insists that George lock the nursery for a few days. George is hesitant at first because he remembers the tantrums the children threw the last time he locked the nursery as a punishment. He relents, however, and locks the door. Lydia then suggests that they turn off the entire house for a few days. She is worried that she is becoming unnecessary because the house can perform the duties of wife, mother, and nursemaid. She notes that George seems to feel unnecessary too. As the two are talking in the hallway, the door of the nursery trembles as if something has jumped against it from the other side. Lydia is frightened, but George reassures her that the lions in the nursery are not real and therefore they cannot pose any real danger.

Later that day, George and Lydia are eating dinner at their automated table. George is

still thinking about the events in the nursery. Because the nursery creates its environments by telepathically reading the children's thoughts, he is concerned about the images of death that seem to pervade the African veldt that they have created. George and Lydia both wonder why the children no longer want to create beautiful fantasy scenes like they used to. George decides to go and double-check the nursery once again. He walks in and finds himself in the middle of the veldt. Knowing that the room is programmed to react to thoughts, he attempts to change the room into a scene from Aladdin and his magic lamp. The room will not change, however. George returns to the table and tells Lydia about his inability to change the setting in the room.

Wendy and Peter return home and their father questions them about the African scene in the nursery. They deny that there is an African veldt. They take their parents to the nursery and show them that it contains a lovely green forest. George suspects that they are lying, however, and he sends them to bed. Before George and Lydia leave the room, they find a wallet lying on the floor. It is one of George's old wallets. It has been chewed and has blood smears on each side. George and Lydia leave the nursery and lock the door.

That night the couple are lying awake in bed discussing the nursery problem. They believe that it has caused Wendy and Peter to become spoiled and rather cold towards them. George decides that he will invite the children's psychologist, David McClean, over to take a look at the nursery to see what he thinks. A moment later, George and Lydia hear screams and the roar of lions coming from the nursery. The screams sound familiar, but the couple is not exactly sure why.

The next day Peter asks his father if he is going to lock up the nursery permanently. George says that he is considering turning off the entire house for a while. Peter threatens his father that he had better not do that. Soon, David McClean arrives. George takes him to the nursery where the children are playing. It has once again been turned into an African veldt. George and David can see the lions feeding off in the distance. They send the children out. After studying the African scene for a moment, David admits that he has a very bad feeling about what is taking place. He says that

the children seem to care more about the room than they do about their parents and that the situation has become quite dangerous. He suggests tearing down the nursery. As David and George leave, George asks whether there is any way that the lions in the nursery environment could become real. David says he does not think so. The two then find a bloody scarf belonging to Lydia on the floor.

George begins switching off the house while the children cry and beg him to stop. George says that it is time they all went on a little vacation together and that he has asked David McClean to come over to take care of the house. The children plead for just one more moment in the nursery before George continues switching it off. Lydia urges her husband to let them have a few more minutes, and he relents. The children go to the nursery while Lydia and George go upstairs to change clothes. They suddenly hear the children calling them from the nursery. They rush in, but the children are not there. The nursery is once again the veldt, and the lions are approaching from the distance. Suddenly, the door of the nursery slams. George and Lydia run to escape but discover the children have locked the door from the outside. The lions approach as George and Lydia scream. Suddenly they realize why the screams coming from the nursery had always sounded so familiar. They had been their own screams.

The children calmly greet David McClean at the nursery doorway. He enters and sees the lions again off feeding in the distance. Then, Wendy politely offers David a cup of tea.

The Veldt (Classic Stories of Ray Bradbury)
by [Ray Bradbury](#)

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