

Name _____

Date _____

Directions:

Answer the “Guided-Reading Questions” as you read the short story. After reading, the short story, read and annotate the poem by Sara Teasdale then, answer the “Post-Reading Questions.”

GUIDED-READING QUESTIONS.

1. To whom is the house speaking? Who is in the house?

2. What is the weather like on August 4, 2026? What does the house recommend?

3. Which conveniences in this passage already exist in today’s society?



4. What is unusual about the way the house speaks? What is significant about its use of language?

5. What has happened to the other houses in the city?

6. What record is left of the family? How was the record created?

7. What happens to the dog?

8. What is *ironic* about the lifelike images in the nursery?

9. What effect has the death of the family had on the house? What effect do you think the end of humankind has had on the world?

10. What part of the house does the fire attack? What consequence will this attack have for the house?

11. People have often claimed that at death a person's life "flashes before his or her eyes." In what way is the death of the house similar to the death of a person?

POST-READING QUESTIONS

Recall

1. Who is talking in the house on the morning of August 4, 2026? In what ways does the house prepare for people who do not appear?

2. What happens just after nine o'clock? Which poem does the house select?

3. What happens at ten o'clock? How does the house react?



Interpret

1. What is ominous about the house at the beginning of the story?

2. Why is the action just after nine o'clock somewhat more personal than the others of the day? How does the house choose the poem? Why is it an appropriate poem for the situation?

3. Describe the scene of the destruction of the house. How is the house left in the end? How does the action of the house in the last line compare to its action in the first line?

Analyze

1. Based on Bradbury's descriptions in the story, how do you think the city and its inhabitants were

destroyed?

Synthesize

1. Why do you think Bradbury waited until paragraph 10 to explain what had happened to the city? Why do you think he waited to show what had happened to the family?

Evaluate


1. What makes the actions of the house senseless? Might it be dangerous to put too much of our lives in the hands of machines? Why, or why not?

Extend

1. What comment is Bradbury making about the essential stupidity of machines? Of mankind? Contrast this with Sara Teasdale's view of nature in her poem "There Will Come Soft Rains."

LITERARY ELEMENTS

Theme. What do you think the theme of Sara Teasdale's poem is? Why do you think Bradbury chose to use the name of this poem for the title of his story as well as to incorporate the poem into the story? How are the themes of the poem and the story similar?



Personification. What is special about this house that makes it different from other houses? What specific lines, especially in the fire scene, describe the house in human terms? What is ironic about the survival of the house?

Answer Key:

GUIDED-READING QUESTIONS

1. The house is speaking to its former inhabitants, but no one is actually present. The house is empty.
 2. The weather is rainy and it is suggested to have an umbrella with rain boots.
 3. Voice-activated appliances, robotic cleaners, and automated scheduling systems exist in today's society.
 4. The house speaks in a mechanical and emotionless manner, showing how technology continues without humans.
 5. The other houses have been destroyed, likely due to a nuclear event.
 6. The family's silhouettes are burned into the side of the house by an atomic explosion.
 7. The dog, which appears weak and sickly, dies and is disposed of by the house's cleaning system.
 8. The nursery shows lifelike images of animals and nature, yet no real life remains in the house or the world.
 9. The house continues functioning despite the family's absence. The end of humankind has left nature unchanged, indifferent to human extinction.
 10. The fire attacks the kitchen and spreads through the house, causing its eventual destruction.
 11. The house's final moments resemble a human's death, as it "fights" for survival before collapsing.
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POST-READING QUESTIONS

Recall

1. The house itself is talking, carrying out its programmed routines despite no humans being present.
2. A tree branch crashes through a window, causing a fire. The house selects "*There Will Come Soft Rains*" by Sara Teasdale.
3. By ten o'clock, the fire spreads, destroying the house as it futilely tries to extinguish the flames.

Interpret

1. The house continuing its daily routine despite the absence of humans feels eerie and unsettling.
2. The poem reflects nature's indifference to human extinction, reinforcing the story's theme.
3. The fire destroys the house piece by piece. In the end, only one wall remains, and the final actions of the house mirror its beginning, emphasizing a cycle of automation

even in destruction.

Analyze

1. The city and its inhabitants were likely destroyed by a nuclear explosion, inferred from the burned silhouettes on the wall.

Synthesize

1. Bradbury delays revealing the fate of the city and family to build suspense and gradually immerse the reader in the eerie, automated world.

Evaluate

1. The house's actions are senseless because they continue without purpose. Over-reliance on technology can be dangerous if machines function without human oversight.

Extend

1. Bradbury critiques both human reliance on machines and human self-destruction, while Teasdale's poem suggests nature will outlive humanity, indifferent to its fate.

LITERARY ELEMENTS

- Theme: Teasdale's poem suggests nature will persist without humans. Bradbury uses the poem to emphasize the inevitability of nature's endurance over human creations.
- Personification: The house is given human-like traits, such as "dying" in the fire. It continues operating as if it were alive, yet its efforts are ultimately meaningless.