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Dramatic Publishing

TEN STORIES FROM THE WORLD'S GREATEST WRITER OF FANTASY
AND SCIENCE FICTION.

THE ILLUSTRATED BRADBURY

WRITTEN AND ADAPTED BY

RAY BRADBURY

WITH

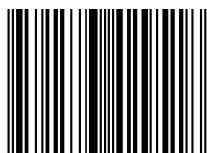
TOBIAS ANDERSEN

THE ILLUSTRATED BRADBURY

Drama/Comedy/Fantasy. Written and adapted by Ray Bradbury with Tobias Andersen. Cast: 1 to 8m., 6 either gender. Ten stories—some famous, some lesser-known—created by Ray Bradbury, the world's greatest writer of fantasy and science fiction, have been adapted to be played by a flexible cast utilizing only a few simple props and costume pieces. The stories use the device of the character "The Illustrated Man," one of Bradbury's most familiar creations, as a narrator. Among the selections that are dramatized are such classic Bradbury tales as *The Fog Horn*: a monster rises out of the "deeps" in answer to the plaintive call of the foghorn; *The Murderer*: a man confesses to killing his telephone; *There Was an Old Woman*: an elderly woman dies and confronts the mortician, threatening to haunt him for 200 years if she isn't given back her body; and *The Anthem Sprinters*: an Irishman creates a game out of who can exit the cinema fastest after the final scene. The play was created as a one-man play but may be easily adapted to be performed by as many as 14 actors. *Bare stage w/ props. Approximate running time: 2 hours. Code: ID8.*

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In addition, all producers of the play must include the following acknowledgment on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“*The Illustrated Bradbury* received its world premiere (then titled *The Illustrated Man*) by Clackamas Repertory Theatre at the Osterman Theatre, Oregon City, Ore., on Sept. 27, 2007. It was directed by David Smith-English. Set and light designs were by Chris Whitten. Sound design was by Rodolfo Ortega. The stage manager was Autumn Trapani. Under the title *The Illustrated Bradbury* the play was produced by The Rubicon Theatre Company, Ventura, Calif., on Oct. 26, 2007. It was again directed by David Smith-English with set and lights by Chris Whitten and sound by Rodolfo Ortega. The cast for both productions was as follows: *The Illustrated Man* and *Others*—Tobias Andersen.”

The Illustrated Bradbury was produced (as *The Illustrated Man*) by Clackamas Repertory Theatre, Oregon City, Ore., on Sept. 27, 2007.

DirectorDavid Smith-English
Set and Lighting Design..... Chris Whitten
Sound DesignRody Ortega
Stage Manager Autumn Trapani
The Illustrated Man and Others Tobias Andersen

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Set and Lighting Design..... Chris Whitten
Sound DesignRody Ortega
The Illustrated Man and Others Tobias Andersen

The Illustrated Bradbury

CHARACTERS

NARRATOR

ILLUSTRATED MAN

Storytellers:

The Murderer:

ALBERT BROCK

The Foghorn:

MCDUNN

The Inspired Chicken Motel:

DOUG

The Anthem Sprinters:

DOONE

There Was an Old Woman:

AUNT TILDY

A Graveyard for Lunatics:

J.C.

The Parrot Who Met Papa:

RAY

BARTENDER

SHELLEY

PARROT (V.O.)

Fahrenheit 451:

FIRE CAPTAIN BEATTY

PROFESSOR FABER

The Toynbee Convector:

CRAIG BENNETT STILES

The Illustrated Bradbury was created as a one-man play but may be easily adapted to be performed by multiple actors.

The Illustrated Bradbury

AT RISE: *The set consists of an October Country tree and matching (practical) stump.*

(Solo spot on NARRATOR.)

NARRATOR. It was a warm afternoon in early September when I first met the Illustrated Man. I was walking along an asphalt road, the final leg of a walking tour. Late in the afternoon, I stopped, ate some pork and beans and was preparing to stretch out when the Illustrated Man walked over the hill and stood a moment against the sky.

I didn't know he was Illustrated then. I recall that his arms were long, and the hands thick, but that his face was like a child's set upon a massive body. Though it was a hot late afternoon, he wore his wool shirt buttoned tight about the neck. His sleeves were rolled and buttoned down. Perspiration was streaming from his face, yet he made no move to open his shirt.

He didn't look directly at me when he spoke his first words:

"Do you know where I can find a job?"

"I'm afraid not."

"I haven't had a job that's lasted in 40 years. I should be making money hand over fist at any small town side show celebration, but here I am with no prospects."

"I have some extra food you'd be welcome to."

"Well, this is as good a place as any to spend the night. *(Pause.)* You'll be sorry you asked me to stay. Everyone always is."

"What seems to be the trouble?"

For answer, he unbuttoned the tight collar, slowly. With his eyes shut, he put a slow hand to the task of unbuttoning his shirt all the way down. He slipped his fingers in to feel his chest.

“Funny. You can’t feel them, but they’re there. I always hope that someday I’ll look and they’ll be gone. Are they still there now?”

“Yes. They’re still there.”

He took off his shirt and wadded it in his hands.

The Illustrations. (A pool of light appears on the floor, representing the ILLUSTRATED MAN.)

I can’t say how long I stared, for he was a riot of rockets and fountains and people, in such intricate detail and color that you could hear the voices murmuring small and muted, from the crowds that inhabited his body. There were yellow meadows and blue rivers and mountains and stars and suns and planets spread in a Milky Way across his chest. The people themselves were in groups upon his arms, shoulders, back, sides and wrists, as well as on the flat of the stomach. You found them in forests of hair; lurking among a constellation of freckles, or peering from armpit caves, diamond eyes aglitter. Each was a separate gallery portrait ...

(Fade. In the black, soft sounds of the hospital, doctor being paged, etc.)

ILLUSTRATION ONE

The Murderer (1953) **Albert Brock**

(Lights up on BROCK, ingratiating, reasonable and gently mad, seated. Straightjacket.)

BROCK. Yes, doctor, that's correct. Albert Brock. The murderer. One of my first victims was my telephone. Murder most foul. I shoved it into the kitchen Insinkerator. Stopped the disposal in mid-swallow. Poor thing strangled to death. I felt sorry for it—the Insinkerator, an innocent bystander, which never said a word and digested our leftovers.

The telephone? I was never comfortable with it ... an impersonal instrument. If it felt like it, it let your personality go through the wires. If it didn't, it just drained your personality away, until what slipped through at the other end was some cold fish of a voice—all steel, copper, plastic—no warmth, no reality. It's easy to say the wrong thing on telephones. The telephone changes the meaning on you. First thing you know, you've made an enemy. Then, of course, the telephone's such a convenient thing; it just sits there and demands you call someone who doesn't want to be called. Friends were calling, calling, calling me. I hadn't any time of my own.

When it wasn't the telephone, it was the TV or radio or stereo—or motion pictures with commercials. When it wasn't advertisements, it was music by Muzok in every restaurant. When it wasn't music, it was interoffice communications on my horror chamber of a radio wristwatch on which my wife and friends phone every five minutes. Hello, hello, hello, hello!

I love my wife, my friends, humanity. But when one minute my wife calls to say, "Where are you now, dear?" and a friend calls and says, "Got the best joke to tell you ... " and then a stranger calls, without asking, "This is the Find-A-Fax Poll. What gum are you chewing at this very instant!" Well!

That morning I did what I did at the office. I poured water into the intercom system. The Fourth of July on wheels! Everyone running around looking lost, faced with having to converse with each other. What an uproar! I felt fine.

Then, at noon, I got the idea of stomping on my wrist radio on the sidewalk. Did it, too, just when a voice out of it was yelling at me, “This is the People’s Poll Number Nine. What did you eat for lunch?” I stomped the be-Jesus out of it. I felt even better.

And then it grew on me. Why didn’t I start a revolution, deliver man from “conveniences.” Conveniences! Convenient for whom? Convenient for my office, so when I’m in the field there is no moment when I’m not “in touch.” “In touch.” There’s a slimy phrase. Touch, hell—gripped! “Checking in.” There’s another! “Have stopped to visit gas-station men’s room.” “OK, Brock, step on it!” “Brock, what took you so long?” “Sorry, sir!” “Watch it next time, Brock.” “Yes, sir!”

You know what I did, doctor? I bought a quart of French chocolate ice cream and spooned it into my company car’s transmitter. Why? Because it’s my favorite flavor. I figure what’s good enough for me is good enough for the transmitter. God, it was beautiful! Silence. A whole hour of it. That silence was like putting French chocolate ice cream in my ears.

That night, I laid plans to murder my house.

You may write that down, doctor. That is semantically accurate. Kill it dead. My house is one of those talking, singing, humming, weather-reporting, poetry-reading, novel-reciting, jingle-jangling, rock-a-bye-crooning-when-you-go-to-bed-houses. A house that screams opera to you in the shower and teaches you Spanish in your sleep—with beds that rock you to sleep at night and shake you awake. A house that barely tolerates humans, I tell you. A front door that barks: “You’ve mud on your feet, sir!” And an electronic vacuum hound that snuffles around after you from room to room, inhaling every fingernail or ash you drop. Jesus God, I say. Jesus, God.

Doctor, do you remember that Gilbert and Sullivan song, "I've Got It on My List, It Never Will Be Missed?" All that night, I listed my grievances. Next morning, I bought a pistol. I purposely muddied my feet. I stood at our front door. The front door shrieked, "Dirty feet, muddy feet. Wipe your feet. Please be neat!" I shot the damn thing right in the keyhole! Then I ran to the kitchen, where the stove was whining, "Turn me over, turn me over, turn me over ... " I did the stove to death in the middle of an omelet. Then the telephone rang, like a spoiled brat. I shoved it down the Insinkerator.

Then I went in the living room and shot the television, that insidious beast, that Medusa which freezes a billion people to stone every night. That siren which called and sang and promised so much and gave, after all, so very little. Bang! (*Bang, bang, bang, bang ...*) Six shots-right through the cathode. Then the police came. And here I am.

But you see, this is only the beginning. I got worldwide coverage on TV and radio; there's an irony for you. Billions of people know about me. I'm the vanguard of the public which is tired of noise and every moment, music, and every moment, "in touch" somewhere ... do this, do that, quick, quick, now here, now there. You'll see. Any day now. Check your financial columns. Watch for a sudden rise in the sale of French chocolate ice cream.

(He smiles knowingly. Fade to black, a cacophony of sound: traffic, air hammers, sirens, heavy metal music.

Lights up on the ILLUSTRATED MAN special.)

NARRATOR (*V.O.*). How can I explain about his Illustrations? If El Greco, in his prime, had painted miniatures, no bigger than your hand, infinitely detailed, with all his sulphurous color, elongation and anatomy, perhaps he might have used this man's body for his art. Here, gathered on

one wall were all the finest scenes in the universe, the man was a walking treasure gallery. This wasn't the work of a cheap carnival tattoo man with three colors and whisky on his breath. This was the accomplishment of a living genius, vibrant, clear and beautiful.

(Fade spot.)

ILLUSTRATION TWO

The Foghorn (1951)

McDunn

(Sound of crashing waves. Then the beam of a lighthouse. Light up on MCDUNN looking through a telescope.)

MCDUNN. Ready for anything? Ready! Ah, I do love this. Damn me eye, as the sailor poets say. I'm really alone out here. No town for two hundred long miles—just the empty coast, the empty roads, the empty land, the empty water (*Seagull cries.*) and one lone seagull, crying. All this considered, can I refuse the sea, my love? I cannot. Because I am the Bored Animal! I need change. And the sea, the ocean, beats all. More original than clouds, stranger than all hell's furnaces. It prowls a thousand shapes and colors, and no repeats in the billion years since the first tides rolled.

Go, you ocean tides, entertain me! (*Loud crashing wave.*) Ah ... the ocean speaks and what does it say? That we came out of that sea a billion years ago, lost our gills and put on manners ... but ... other things are still in that water which do rise up from time to time ... to frighten some ... and delight others.

Ah, God, McDunn! You drink too much. The sea's full and you're full. Still ... God help you ... chances are you might see tonight what I've seen and told no one.

Now ... since there's night and fog, there's need of something else. So!

(Presses an imaginary button. Foghorn sounds.)

Ah ... Now, listen! The foghorn calls and the Deeps ... they do answer. Because ... one day, years back, a man stood in the sound of the ocean on a cold sunless shore and said, "We need a voice to call across waters to warn ships. I'll make one!

(Foghorn.)

A voice like all of time and all the fog that ever was! I'll make a voice that is like an empty bed beside you all night long, and like an empty house when you open the door, and like trees in the autumn the first night the leaves have gone away.

(Foghorn.)

I'll make a sound that's so alone that whoever hears it will weep in their souls. I'll build an apparatus to weep it with and call it ... a foghorn ... and whoever hears it will know the sadness and the briefness of life.

(Foghorn. A faint echo of something else.)

And ... ah ... yes. Soon we shall have a visitor! Soon ... hist! Ah, yes!

(Sound of the surf increases in intensity.)

There! Something swimming toward our lighthouse. Something big? No! No! Tremendous!

(Foghorn.)

A tide ... now ... a motion ... now rising. A head! A dark head! Eyes? Two! Two! And a neck ... and more neck ... and more neck after that! Ten, 20, 30 feet! And a body like an island of black coral and shells and crayfish. Ninety, 100 feet in all!

(Sound of the monster breaching, pounding surf.)

It breaches!

(Foghorn. The monster answers!)

You hear? Impossible? No, we are impossible! It is merely fantastic! It's like it was ten million years ago. It's us that have changed and gone impossible.

What is it then? A dinosaur? One of the tribe? But they are dead!

(Foghorn. Monster.)

No ... only hid away in ... the Deeps. Deep, deep down in the deepest Deeps. The Deeps. Oh, hear the sound of that: all the coldness and darkness in words. Deeps! What now? Why ... enjoy the spectacle! It's circling around. Why has it come?

(Foghorn. Monster.)

The foghorn blows. The beast answers ... with a cry across a million years of sea and mist, with an anguish that shudders the soul.

Maybe the last of its kind, waiting till men build a lighthouse and sound a horn that cries out ... that recall a world where once you were young, with thousands like you, all terrible beauties ...

(Foghorn. Monster.)

... but now you're all alone and no part of the world much changed. But the foghorn cries and you stir from the muddy midnight Deeps, and your eyes open like the lenses of 5 foot cameras, and the furnace stokes in your belly, and you begin to rise ... slow ... slow. It might take you years to surface, and then at last here you are ... the biggest damn monster in creation ...

(Foghorn. Monster.)

... and here's this lighthouse calling out with a long neck like your neck, sticking way up out of the seas and a body like your body and voice like your voice. Oh, the poor lost thing. Has it waited that long? A million years—for someone who left and never came back? Last time that creature swam 'round and 'round all night puzzled ... afraid, too, maybe. But the next day the fog lifted and the beast swam away. I suppose it's been brooding. Maybe it only rises up once a year or so. But here it is!

(Foghorn. Monster answers, very close!)

And coming closer! Blast if it isn't!

(Monster cries even louder. Sound of breaching.)

It's rising up! Rising! Stand back, McDunn! It's going to hit us! The light, McDunn! The light!

(Blackout!)

The horn! The horn!

(Monster screams, foghorn blares, a crashing sound of crumpling metal. Foghorn stops in mid-blast.

Silence. Pounding surf returns. Lights slowly fade up.)

Ah, God ... alive. I live.

(The monster, further away, cries plaintively.)

Yes. I live. But ... will he? Listen ... the lament.

(Monster.)

Oh ... wasn't that ... wonderful! And ... wasn't it sad? Going back to the Deeps. Having learned ... what? That it doesn't pay to love anything too much in this wild, strange world.

Or ... maybe love, anyway. Even if it turns out to be no more than a lighthouse and a foghorn in the mist.

(Fade.

Lights up on the ILLUSTRATED MAN special.)

NARRATOR (*V.O.*). “Who tattooed you? What happened to the artist?”

“She was an old woman ... a little old witch who looked a thousand years old one moment and 20 years old the next, but she said she could travel in time. I laughed. Now, I know better.

Sometimes at night, I can feel them, like ants, crawling on my skin. I never look at them any more. I just try to rest. Don't you look at them either, I warn you. They can predict the future. Turn the other way when you sleep.”

(But) he didn't seem violent, and the pictures were beautiful. I could hear the Illustrated Man's breathing in the moonlight. I lay with my body sidewise so I could watch the Illustrations. Suddenly, I heard him whisper, “They're moving, aren't they?”

“Yes.”

(Fade.)