



Marionettes, Inc.

By Ray Bradbury

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In *Marionettes, Inc.*, Ray Bradbury offers his devoted readers something both special and unexpected: a unified view of one small corner of a varied fictional universe. In five stories (one of them original to this collection, plus a rare, previously unpublished screen treatment), Bradbury explores the concept of Robotics and examines its impact on the day-to-day lives of ordinary people.

Several of these tales, including *Changeling* and *Punishment Without Crime*, are set in a world in which the eponymous company, *Marionettes, Inc.*, has successfully created incredibly detailed replicas of existing men and women. When these surrogate people take their place in the real, often messy realm of human relationships, the results are sometimes tragic, sometimes ironic, and always surprising.

But the true heart of this resonant collection is the classic novella, *I Sing the Body Electric*. In this quintessential Bradbury story, an electric Grandma enters the lives of a grieving, newly motherless family, and slowly restores their capacity for wonder and joy. Like the very best of Bradbury's fiction, it is a magical, deeply felt account of hope, growth, survival, and change, and a moving meditation on what it really means to be human.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This slim collection of Bradbury's classic short works on the subject of substitute people contains little new material: *Wind-Up World* is a vignette of two men complaining about the increasing mechanization of their world, while the screenplay outline *Murder by Facsimile* faithfully reformats the 1950 story *Punishment Without Crime*, in which a man kills a replica of his unfaithful wife. Cherry picking the marionette-themed pieces from Bradbury's extensive oeuvre does create a nicely unified tone, however. Only in the famous *I Sing the Body Electric* is the electronic substitution for humanity truly satisfactory. In contrast, *Marionettes Inc.* and *Changeling* are traditional tales of replacement gone wrong, with the real horror coming from human love in all its stifling insufficiency. The end result is most appealing to Bradbury completists and those who want a good introduction to his work. (*Apr.*)

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dorothy Wild:

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