

Before You Read

This selection also
appears in *Elements
of Literature*.

There Will Come Soft Rains

by Ray Bradbury

LITERARY FOCUS: SETTING AS CHARACTER

Usually **setting** is in the background of a story, while characters—people and animals—take care of the action. But what if the setting demands a bigger role? Or even a starring part? In some stories the setting moves out of the background and becomes a character. For example, in a story about a woman lost in the desert, the main **conflict** could be between the person and the setting. The desert may seem to act against the woman like a character—by pounding her with hot sun, threatening her with rattlesnakes, and hiding water from her.

Read on to find out where and when “There Will Come Soft Rains” is set. It’s a setting you probably won’t forget soon.

READING SKILLS: TEXT STRUCTURES (CHRONOLOGY)

Most stories are told in **chronological order**—the events are presented in the order in which they occur. In other words, you learn what happens first, then you learn what happens next, and so on.

In “There Will Come Soft Rains,” the story that follows, the events are told in chronological order. In fact, we learn what happens from one hour to the next.



Literary Skills

Understand the role of setting.

Reading Skills

Understand chronological order.

Vocabulary Skills

Use context clues.

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