The Pedestrian
by Ray Bradbury

Feature Menu

- Introducing the Story
- Literary Focus: Setting and Mood
- Reading Skills: Writer’s Purpose
Technology . . . the knack of so arranging the world that we don’t have to experience it.

Max Frisch, 1957
“The Pedestrian” is a chilling portrayal of a society in which people are so isolated in their homes that a lone pedestrian is seen as a threat to the social order.
Setting and Mood

- **Setting** establishes the time and place of the action in the story.

The time is an evening in the future—November 2053. The place is a silent city.
The Pedestrian
Literary Focus: Setting and Mood

- Setting can create a mood, or atmosphere—a subtle emotional overtone that can strongly affect our feelings.

- What mood does this setting create?

On a dark, cold night in November 2053, the pedestrian—Leonard Mead—walks alone through the city. The streets and freeways are deserted. Dark, tomblike homes line the streets.
When you finish the story, pause to consider the writer’s purpose. It may be to:

- share a feeling or experience
- re-create a world of the writer’s own making
- persuade the reader to accept the writer’s view on some issue
Bradbury’s purpose is to persuade readers to accept his views on the isolating effect of technology.

- **Look for key passages** that directly express opinions.
- **Watch for loaded words**—words that carry emotional overtones and go beyond their literal meanings.
Note the words Bradbury uses to describe the main character’s house. 

- brightly
- illumination
- square
- warm

The words suggest warmth, hope, and solidarity. This is how Bradbury wants you to see Mead, the man who lives in the house.
Take note of how Bradbury uses setting to express his opinions.

Mead walks through a landscape in which the houses are compared to dark tombs. The people sit like the dead. The light from their TVs flickers over the viewers’ gray and untouchable faces.

Bradbury’s setting suggests a mood of death and despair. This is the way he wants the reader to see a future in which people have no interests beyond their TVs.