
THE TALE OF THE TERRIBLE TYPER
by Ray Bradbury

"God, what an idea!" Colossal! Stupendous! Hideous!" Wade Shurp gleated over the clicking keys of his typewriter. "Why this story will be so good that Street and Smith will pay me five cents a word!"

"Take it easy!" I told him. "You haven't sold anything yet."

"Bah!" He spat the word out like a maggoted olive. "Who gives a damn!"

"You'll unsip your operation if you don't take it careful," I went on, secretly edging toward the door. Shurp turned one blood veined eye to me. "I'm putting," he gibbered, "everything I have in this story. It's me, and I'm it! I'm putting myself into it! It'll be classed in the science-fiction hall of fame!"

"I wouldn't trust that typewriter of yours if it were the last one on earth," I said. "You're meddling in things that shouldn't be meddled with."

"As if I hadn't warned you about Hedy," he snarled into the keys.

"You're speaking of the heroine I love," I cried. "Why, she is beautiful. She has hair like a god..."

"A god-blasted ostrich," he replied, large tears of laughter welling in his eyes. "Now get out of here while I write! Send in some chemicals! I want them bubbling in my ears! Turn on the juice, turn the lights off and on! I need atmosphere!"

Well, I got out quick! I stood in the hall, listening. The typewriter keys clicked on and on, madly, rising and falling. Clickety-clickety-click! Clunk! Gbang! Zing! Clickety. (Well, you get what I mean.)

"What an idea!" I heard Shurp say in a high bellow. The chandelier overhead gave off a faint tinkling sound and fell clattering to the floor. Shurp said: "The locale's Mars, with hot and cold running rays, prisons with upholstered gutters and - WHAT A YARN! This is swell!" Keys clicking on, monotonously, endlessly. I grew tired waiting.

And then - an ominous note. Something had happened. There came a dull, grinding noise, a weird screeching, a thick, wet sound. Shurp was mumbling, mumbling, cursing! "Martians invade Earth!" Clickety clickety-click! Bong. Zing.

"Ogh!" said Shurp.

Scrumble, mumble scrunch - slurp!

"Ugh!" he repeated.

"What's going on in there?" I asked. "Hey, open up!" I knocked on the door. Growing frantic at the greedy sounds I fell to hammering on the panels. The door groaned inward.

"Ugh - ugh - ohhh! Gurgle! The door fell in and I stood gasping at what I saw. then I must have screamed!

"Wade! Wade Shurp! Ohmigawd!" The room was empty!

(contd. on next page)

