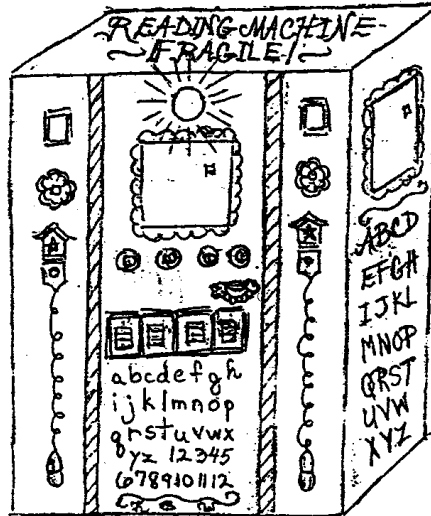


The Reading Machine



"Step right up! Don't be shy. As you can see, we have a huge box, whose contents will amaze you! This box contains the *incredible*, the *astounding*, Reading Machine! You won't believe your eyes! You won't believe your ears! It walks, it talks, and yes! . . . It *really* reads!"

"Yah, right!" a man in the crowd said. "Look at it! It's a hunk o' junk!"

The salesman ignored the heckler and went on. "This miraculous machine is so easy to use! All you have to do is set the open book in its handles, and your reading machine will *automatically* start to read the words on the pages in its view. Then when it's done with those pages, its handles will turn to the next page, all on its own!"

"Admit it!" the heckler interrupted again. "You got the parts from a garbage can and put it together with glue!" He laughed loudly.

"You're wrong, Mister," the salesman answered. "I used parts from my recycle box an' some nails, along with glue." The crowd laughed. The salesman smiled and waited until they were done. "Anyway, as I was saying, you can just sit back, relax, and let your very own machine read exciting adventures to you, or stories that will tickle your funny bone, or ones that will make you feel like you're being hugged by someone you love! You can experience the joys of your wonderful reading machine for hours, for days, for years to come!"

"My computer is the only reading machine I need," a woman in the crowd said. "Besides, I can't afford any more machines."

"Well, ma'am, that's one of the best features of these reading machines - the price! . . . Ladies and gentlemen, you won't believe it, you just won't believe it! The cost of your own, personal, stupendillious reading machine, comes at the phee-nomenal price o-o-of . . . *nothing*!! That's right, you don't need your ears checked. You heard me correctly. The incredible, miraculous reading machines cost absolutely nothing!"

The heckler laughed. "Right! You're charging nothing for your spectacular contraption! What's your angle? Why're you wasting our time?"

"No one's forcing you to stand there and listen. Go ahead, move on to the midway, or take a ride on the roller coaster!"

"I can stay here if I want. It's a free country!"

The salesman chuckled. "Curiosity's got you hooked, huh? . . . Okay, let's open the box and take a looksee. . . . Here they come!! Yes, you *can* trust your eyes. These deluxe models of our modern reading machines . . . are non other than . . .

"Robots! Wow! Look, at those robots!" a boy in the crowd yelled.

"No, Sonny, I'm sorry to disappoint you, but they're *real* . . . *live* . . . human beings! In His limitless wisdom, God created these true miracles! As you know, His breathing machine has eyes that take pictures of printed words. These words are then sent to the brain, which can send them to the mouth to read aloud. So if you don't know how to read yet, you can ask your own personal reading machines, like your mom or dad, grandma or grandpa to read to you."

"I already know how," a little girl said.

"Great! Then you are your *own* miraculous reading machine and can use this great gift every day! However, if anyone here is having trouble learning to read, try to listen more closely at school. If you still don't understand, ask your parents to help you. That's what they're there for. *Everyone* needs help, sometimes! And breaking the code of reading, by learning the written symbols for the sounds that make up words is one of life's most exciting journeys!

"Once the reading machine in you is turned on, you can know and enjoy the *thu-rills* of reading! Besides all the wonderful books written by people, there's the one written by God, called, the Bible, His love-letter to you!"

"I *knew* you had an angle!" the heckler yelled.

"Yup, that's my angle, buddy! I'd like everyone to enjoy the benefits of reading and to find out first-hand what the Bible says, so they don't have to go on watered-down information about the best-seller of all time!"

