

FAHRENHEIT 451

Fahrenheit 451 is a dystopian novel by Ray Bradbury set in an American city of the future.

Guy Montag is a "fireman" employed to burn the possessions of those who read outlawed books. He is married to Mildred. One night, returning from work, he meets a girl named Clarisse, whose free-thinking ideals cause him to question his life. Montag returns home, and finds his wife has overdosed on sleeping pills. Montag watches over Mildred. Over the next few days, Clarisse faithfully meets Montag. She tells him about how her simple pleasures and interests make her an outcast, how she's forced to go to therapy for her behaviour. Clarisse goes absent. Montag senses something is wrong.

Firemen are ransacking a book-filled house of an old woman before burning it, Montag steals a book. The woman refuses to leave her books, and burns herself alive. Montag is jarred by the suicide. He hides the stolen book. He attempts to make conversation with Mildred, starting by asking her when they first met. Mildred has forgotten. Montag realizes just how much Mildred's sleeping pill addiction, love of interactive entertainment, and fast driving has ruined her mind and their marriage. Mildred reveals Clarisse's family moved away after Clarisse got hit by a speeding car and died four days ago.

Beatty, the fire chief, visits Montag sensing concerns, Beatty recounts how books lost their value, people embraced new media, and a quickening pace of life. Books were ruthlessly degraded yet comics and sex magazines allowed. Beatty adds that all firemen steal, a book out of curiosity; but if the book is burned within 24 hours, the fireman will not get in trouble. Montag reveals to Mildred he has a stash of books. In a panic, Mildred grabs a book. Montag subdues her, tells her that they are going to read the books to see if they have value. If they do not, he promises the books will be burned. A sniffing occurs at the door. Montag recognizes it as The Hound, a robotic dog spying on them. Mildred refuses to go along with it, Montag says books have messages that can save society from its own destruction. Montag concedes Mildred is a lost cause. He remembers Faber, an English professor and makes a trip to him with his copy of the Bible, Montag forces the scared Faber to help him. Montag returns home: Mildred's friends arrive to watch insipid entertainment, Montag tries to engage the women in meaningful conversation, only for them to reveal just how ignorant, and callous they are. Enraged by their idiocy Montag returns with a book of poetry. This confuses the women and alarms Faber, who is listening remotely via an ear-piece. Montag proceeds to recite a poem, Montag eventually is persuaded by Faber and burns the book. Mildred's friend leaves in disgust, Mildred locks herself in the bathroom and takes more sleeping pills.

Montag returns to the firehouse, he finds Beatty, who reveals that he was once an enthusiastic reader. A fire alarm sounds. They drive to the destination. Montag is stunned when they arrive at his own house. Beatty orders Montag to destroy it. Montag watches as Mildred walks out of the house, not even acknowledging him. Montag destroys his home. Beatty discovers Montag's ear-piece and threatens to hunt down Faber. Montag burns his boss alive. The mechanical dog attacks him. He destroys The Hound and limps away. Montag runs. Faber urges him to make his way to the exiled book lovers in the country. After an extended manhunt, he escapes, and meets the exiles. They have each memorized books. While discussing their philosophy they watch bombers annihilate the city with nuclear weapons. Montag and the group manage to survive. Next morning, Montag learns of the legendary Phoenix and its endless cycle of long life, death in flames, and rebirth. The exiles return to the city to try to rebuild society.