

Fahrenheit 451: the future isn't bright, it's burning

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Fahrenheit 451: The Future Isn't Bright, It's Burning Censorship happens all around us, even if most don't realize it. People always think of it as some far off concept, something that only happens in dictatorships or in Communism, such as in North Korea, but as Fahrenheit 451 shows us, it is much closer to home than one might think. In it, people have become wonderfully ignorant to the world around them after the government bans books, and all other types of entertainment dissolve into flashes of sound and light, nothing more than a pit stop until the next bit of fun comes along. Guy Montag is a fireman whose job it is to burn books. He loves his job, the brightness and destruction and hunger of the fire that consumes the books. That is, until he meets a teenage girl named Clarisse who is strange to him, a girl who thinks for herself. She and Montag walk home and she talks of everything, her family, how she thinks, how the world is always going to fast, and then at the end, she asks a question that makes Montag question his entire life: " She started up her walk. Then she seemed to remember something and came back to look at him with wonder and curiosity. " Are you happy? " she said. "

(Bradbury, 10) After that, Montag's eyes are suddenly opened far wider than ever before. He starts to see things in a different light, even his wife, Mildred. He starts to see how empty and ignorant she is, and wonders how she got that way and how he never noticed. He wonders how everyone got that way. He sees everyone is as empty as the woman he sleeps next to every night, how no one notices anything anymore except their ' parlor walls' and their Seashell radios. " How did we get so empty? ... Who takes it out of you? "

(Bradbury, 44) he thinks after his wife cannot even remember how they met. That was when he realized he doesn't really know his own wife. Montag

thinks he loves his wife, he believes it with all his heart, or at least he wants to. However, the more he watches her, the more he realizes she is a stranger to him, and he doesn't know how you can love someone you've never truly met. He slowly figures out that his wife isn't his at all, not really, not now that he can see. When he was blind and ignorant, he had indeed loved her, but now that he knew something of the world, she became a strange creature to him. Once Montag realizes this, he becomes slowly detached from Mildred, though he still cares for her in a strange way, and though he knows he doesn't love her in the way he thought he did for so many years, he still wants to believe he does. He still wants to pretend. When he leaves her after burning Beatty and the city is bombed, he still cries for her. He loves her even as he feels nothing. In Fahrenheit 451, Bradbury paints a picture of humanity and society that is far too painstakingly true. Most people are happier in their ignorance than they could ever be with knowledge, even as that ignorance slowly kills them. Slowly, people are caring less and less about books and learning and more and more about the next big thing, zooming from one distraction to the next. Eventually, Bradbury's book will become a reality for us all, and it too will burn in the piles. Works Cited Bradbury, Ray. Fahrenheit 451. New York: Del Rey Books, 1991. Print.