

# Grain of sand

Business



Being an individual is like being a grain of sand in a pile of ashes. It is made differently, it is a different substance, and it sticks out from its surroundings. People are usually scared to be that grain of sand, they'd rather be along the ashes, hidden and unnoticed. Many authors use motifs and symbolism to portray characteristics. In this book many motifs that exhibit the symbol of individualism are used, and along with individualism, conformity.

Ray Bradbury does precisely this in his novel, " Fahrenheit 451". Bradbury uses three specific motifs including bad fire, hands, and good fire to the changes Montag undergoes on his journey of becoming an individual out of a conformed society. Bad fire symbolizes the harm, danger, and evil of life and of conformity. A moment in the novel that exhibits this motif is when Montag is incinerating the books, watching them crinkle within the flames. Montag, brainwashed into conformity, thinks it is, " a pleasure to burn". He liked to see the books, " blacken and [change]" (1).

He has been taught by his occupation that literature is meant to be burned.

He was taught that they were items that caused nothing but trouble.

Montag's society has made him believe that being knowledgeable and aware of his environment is a disturbance to civilization. What he ended up noticing is that fire not only burnt books, but it also burnt away many good aspects of life. In his society there are no funerals, prejudice books, or any conversation or events that can inflict any other feeling than happiness. In fact, to stray away from funerals people who die are immediately taken to the, " Big Flue, the Incinerators".

Within “ ten minutes after death a man’s a speck of black dust” (60). If people are taken away right after their death, how do people in Montag’s society grieve? Is there even such thing as a grieving process anymore by that time? How do people say good-bye to their loved ones and have closure? Fire took away people who are supposed to be able to matter and be acknowledged as someone who once lived on Earth. This all ends up causing depression and not the intended happiness this quote on quote “ utopia” strives for. But, the people of this society try not to think about what they truly want. Hands are an amazing part of evolution, and sometimes they have a mind of their own. As the woman lights her own house on fire, Montag does something unexpected even for himself.

Montag looked at all the books, strewn everywhere on the woman’s floor, and he “ had done nothing”, yet “ his hands had done it all” (37). They had grabbed a book. Montag had not done this on purpose, with his mind that is. His heart and his hands took over, proving what Montag truly yearned for. This explains that Montag’s curiosity was far more extreme than even he wanted to believe.

He knew, deep inside, he had to know, he had to read, he had to pertain knowledge of the world. Montag knew how to get what he wanted and what he had to do, pursue his fate. Once Montage decides he wants to stand up for what he believes in he decides to go to Faber for help. Since Faber denies his plead Montag started tearing up a book, Montag “ warded [Faber] off and let his hands continue”. He kept ripping as Faber asked him to stop, and once Faber agreed to help, Montag “ began to unward the crumpled paper

and flatten it out” (88). Montag did not want to rip the book but he knew it would bother Faber enough to help him since he is a fan of literature as well.

Montag and his hands had gotten precisely what they wanted, and that was to carry on with their destiny to change their conformed society for the better. Montag, his hands, and Faber are the light, the good fire. In a novel of darkness and depression there is a spark of goodness. With the bad fire, just like with evil, there is the light at the end of the tunnel, the good side of the flames. Because of the fire the woman set on her own house and herself it caused something miraculous. When she “ struck the kitchen match against the railing”, it took something away and it was “ too late” (40), for the fireman to get their power back.

The woman had already disturbed the ritual of the fire men; she had made her handprint in history by standing up to the conformed. She created the chain reaction towards the beginning of the novel for Montag to follow in her footsteps. Speaking of following in her own footsteps, Montag takes her and her good fire quite literally. Montag ended up being forced to burn his own house by Beatty after Mildred turned him in for reading books. The flames were a “ great simmering whisper”, and it was burnt “ with more heat and passion and light” (116), than he expected. By burning his house he created a restart for his life.

He is compassionate about his cause and this helped him get started with his destiny. He has found his purpose and can now go achieve his goal, burning his old life was just the start. After killing Beatty and doing what he had to do to be able to leave his old society, Montag will now go to Granger and the

other Book People. He will then wait until the war is over, and then together they will recreate the world in a better way, where everyone can be themselves. Bad fire, hands, and good fire are all symbols of Montag coming out of conformity and into being himself, the real Montag, the one buried deep inside himself. Montag is now the bright, grain of sand among the dark ashes of his conformity from the past.

People are afraid to be their own personal selves and stand up for what they believe in. All people should take some knowledge and helpful advice from the novel “ Fahrenheit 451”; make sure to do whatever truly creates legitimate happiness, and follow the path of destiny, and not be afraid.