

# Fahrenheit 451



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury is a novel dealing with censorship and defiance in a world in which book burning and oppression is commonplace. The book deals with understanding what it truly means to live and realizing what is right.

Guy Montag is a fireman in a futuristic American city. But instead of putting out fires, it is Montags job to start them. People in this society are not allowed to read books, and if someone gets caught, it is the firemens job to burn the books, house, and maybe even the person themselves.

But Montag begins to doubt his happiness. As he develops a friendship with a 17 year-old girl named Clarisse, he soon begins to question the value of his profession and, in turn, his life. One evening when Montag goes to answer an alarm, the owner of the books, an older woman, refuses to leave her home, which is to be burned to the ground. Instead, the woman sets fire to her house herself, and remains there. This deeply troubles Montag and it is here that it is learned that he has secretly been stealing books from the houses he burns. In addition to this, Montag learns that Clarisse has been dead for a week, and his instability worsens.

After a talk with his chief Beatty, Montage sets out to learn to understand the books he has stolen. He employs the help of an old professor name Faber that he once met. Faber agrees to help Montag with his reading, and they devise a risky scheme to overthrow the system. Unfortunately, Montag ends up angering two of his wifes friends and they file a complaint against him.

Now that Montag has been exposed his chief, Beatty, forces Montag to burn his own house. Montag does so, but afterwards, he kills Beatty and the

mechanical hound. Montag becomes a fugitive on the run and manages to escape into a river. He finds a group of rebellious intellectuals and joins them. But then enemy jets appear in the sky and completely obliterate the city with bombs. Montag and his new friends move on to search for survivors and rebuild civilization.

Even though Fahrenheit 451 was the best book I had ever read, I did feel that Bradbury addressed the theme of censorship well and portrayed real, three dimensional characters.

My favorite character in the novel was Clarisse. She was the one character in the book that I really admired. Clarisse is exceptionally inquisitive and thoughtful, and she irritates Montag at first because she challenges his most deeply embedded beliefs with her innocent yet perceptive questioning. Her maturity and wisdom is beyond her years, and her independent thinking is extremely admirable for someone in that kind of society.

Although Fahrenheit 451 wasnt the most thrilling book I had ever read, the subject of censorship interested me because I had never read a book that had it as a main theme before. There is never a direct or clearly stated reason in Fahrenheit 451 as to why books are banned. Instead, it hints that there were many factors that slowly led to the decline and eventual complete outlawing of books. One of the factors includes the popularity of competing forms of entertainment such as television and radio. As the presence of fast cars, TV shows, and instant gratification became more profound, it created a lifestyle with too much stimulation in which no one has the time to concentrate. Another factor was the fact that books supposedly

caused people to become irritated and envious. People don't like to feel inferior to those who have read more than they have or to even the books themselves. But the main factor in the decline of books was the censorship by special interest or minority groups who constantly wanted to ban books that they found offensive.

There were certain things in this book, however, that I thought could have used some improvement. The main one being that I felt Bradbury was too long-winded in his descriptions in the book. For example, His foot, sending vibrations ahead, received back echoes of the small barrier across its path even as the foot swung. (Page 13) All Montag did was stub his toe on a glass bottle; there was no need for such and overly extravagant description. Also, because of these excessive descriptions, I had a lot of trouble keeping track of the basic plotline. I felt that the descriptions somewhat hindered my basic understanding of the book.

#### Bibliography:

Bradbury, Ray. Fahrenheit 451