

# Fahrenheit 451: overview

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What if there was a society where knowledge was feared and looked down upon? A society where someone who is intellectual is absolutely abandoned? In Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451*, a character that depicts the norm of this wrecked humanity would have to be Mildred Montag. Mildred is the brittle, sickly looking wife of the main character, Guy Montag. Mildred, being the status-quo for the broken society in which the novel takes place, has a role necessary to make the novel tie together smoothly. Bradbury must show that society is distant, obsessive and reckless through Mildred.

Mildred is completely distant and obsessed throughout the story. She is absolutely engulfed with her radio or television through the entirety of the novel. " Without turning on the light he imagined what the room would look like...And in her ears the little Seashells, the thimble radios tamped tight, and an electronic ocean of sound, of music and talk and music and talk coming in, coming in on the shore of her unsleeping mind.

The room was indeed empty. Every night the waves came in and bore her off on their great tides of sound, floating her, wide-eyed, toward morning." (p. 12). Before even turning on the light, Montag knows what the room will look like. This shows that Mildred is persistent in her obsession with the radio and that she is lost in the sound waves every night when Montag comes home from work. In conclusion, Mildred's obsession is the cause of her distance.

Another trait that Bradbury must show the reader is selfishness. Mildred displays her selfishness throughout the novel. Her selfishness is shown because Bradbury is making the statement that since Mildred is being portrayed as the status-quo; all of the " normal" citizens must be just as

conceited as she is. " She's nothing to me; she shouldn't have had books. It was her responsibility, she should have thought of that. I hate her. She's got you going and the next thing you know we'll be out, no house, no job, no nothing" (p. 51) Even though Mildred does not know the person she is insulting, she is so ignorant that she simply doesn't care about the women or the values the women was trying to protect. Mildred does not see the value of knowledge because one who lacks knowledge cannot value it.

Mildred's lack of knowledge is not her only quandary; she also has a serious lack of self restraint. Even from the beginning of the novel, when she attempted suicide and then later having no recollection of it ever happening. That was not the only spot in the book where Mildred demonstrated how reckless she was. " The keys to the Beetle are on the night table. I always like to drive fast when I feel that way. You get it up around ninety-five and you feel wonderful. Sometimes I drive all night and come back and you don't know it. It's fun out in the country. You hit rabbits, sometimes you hit dogs. Go take the Beetle." (p. 38) Mildred is so reckless that she has no value for life. She plainly explains how she drives thoughtlessly and will only have intentions of driving to kill harmless animals.

As shown previously, Mildred is a character who is obsessive, reckless, and selfish. Mildred is the character who depicts the everyday inhabitant of the ominous and dark society. She shows the readers that not only are the civilians are orthodox, but some of them are simply mad. I feel that Mildred was one of the most important characters in the book because she let the reader get a firsthand look at one of the country's average pedestrians.

At the end of the novel, Mildred dies with no dent made in the universe. Not even her husband felt bad when the first nuclear bomb struck the city in which she was residing. This shows that if one is completely lost in something, and has no face to face social life, then they will soon be forgotten after death. If something can be taught from Mildred it is that one should never lose communal relations.