

# Fahrenheit 451: contrasts between the novel and movie

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



In Ray Bradbury's novel Fahrenheit 451, protagonist Guy Montag questions the rules and teachings of the society in which he lives. Throughout the story, his view of life and books changes. There are numerous differences between the novel Fahrenheit 451 and the movie of the same name, including changes in characters, depiction of details, and plot structure.

The characters in the movie versus the book play an important role in the difference between the two. In the novel, Faber is a character who helps Montag understand books and helps him execute a plan to continue to safety. The character of Faber was not included in the movie. By leaving Faber out of the movie, the screenwriters miss a vital part of the plot.

Instead of being confused by the books and needing interpretations, Montag plays the protagonist role solely and independently. The movie directors may have left Faber out of the movie in an effort to make Montag appear as a hero on his own, or they may have simply left Faber out of the movie as a way to cut it shorter. Another character missing from the movie that was in the book is the Mechanical Hound. The Mechanical Hound plays an important role, as the Hound was the threat to Montag and the one who captured "Montag" when he committed crimes against society. Without the Mechanical Hound in the movie, the audience is not shown the fully advanced future technology and way of control by the leaders of society. The Mechanical Hound may have been left out because it diverted the attention away from the firemen who also had the role of keeping peace and capturing criminals in this society. The Mechanical Hound also may have been left out because at the time the movie was released in 1966, there may not have been technology or effects to justly portray the Mechanical Hound.

In the movie version of Fahrenheit 451, many details from the book are changed. One minor difference is that Montag's wife is named Mildred in the book but is named Linda in the movie. The character's name may have been changed due to a negative association with the name Mildred at the time period in which the movie was made. The screenwriters also may have felt that Linda was a more appropriate or appealing name than Mildred. In the book, it is said that when answering a call, the firemen "crash the front door" and "swing silver hatchets at doors" (Bradbury 17). The scene is described by a "musty blackness" where "books bombarded" and the noise of talking and laughing was heard (Bradbury 17). In the movie, as the firemen go to search for books and burn houses, they are quiet and simply throw the books on a table, then burn only the books with the exception of the lady who burns her own house. Because the burning of books was not exciting or loud in the movie, it loses the effect of the ransacking of houses due to illegality and does not exhibit the importance and majority of the job of the firemen. This aspect may have been changed to maintain focus on the firemen's ability of finding the hidden books, but overall it changes the role of firemen and the severity of owning books. One other difference between the movie and book version of Fahrenheit 451 is that in the movie, Clarisse refers to herself as "20 years old and light in the head," but in the book she describes herself as "17 and crazy" (Bradbury 2). This description may have been changed to portray Clarisse as older and closer in age to Montag and the rest of the characters in the book. It may have also been changed to cause a different perspective towards Clarisse in the movie, as her character is more calm and subtle in the movie than the book.

Another major difference between the novel and movie version of Fahrenheit 451 is between the plot structure and events that occur. In the novel, Montag meets a young girl named Clarisse. She asks questions that cause him to think, but one day suddenly disappears and is said to be dead. In the movie, though, Clarisse does not die but stays with Montag until she is discovered to have been reading books. She then flees to the forest, where she and Montag meet again at the end of the movie. Clarisse may have been kept alive the entire movie to take the place of the missing character, Faber. Clarisse also may have been kept alive to provide a sort of love story between Clarisse and Montag throughout the movie, as people are inclined to enjoy happy endings and reunions of their favorite characters. Another difference between the movie and the book is that in the book, the first time we meet the character Mildred, she has overdosed on pills and attempted suicide. This suicide of Mildred, or Linda as she is known in the movie, does not occur until later in the movie, after we have already met Mildred and seen her personality and lifestyle. The screenwriters may have held off on the suicide of this character as a way to show cause and effect. By showing Mildred's lifestyle before her suicide, the audience is able to infer that the attempted suicide was a result of the brainwashed, uniform lifestyle that Mildred/Linda lives.

The apparent differences between the movie and novel versions of Fahrenheit 451 play a vital role in the conceptions and views of the story. The differences in minor details and portrayal of the written story in the movie cause a different tone and understanding of the message and

meaning of the novel. Although the plots are similar, the missing characters and events in the movie play a major role in breaking the storyline and changing the effect the story has on the audience.