

Sequel to Fahrenheit 451

Literature, Russian Literature



Burning Bright, Burning Right

It was that time of day when the afternoon barely gave away to the glorious wonders of the night. The birds had stopped chirping and the many creatures that stirred in the ruins of the city, those that found it livable, had retreated to their underground homes. It had been a decade, a lifetime since the city had been reduced to rubble. The radiation still lingered in the air. It added a new taste, similar to the taste of an orange or a lemon. The crater from the bomb had been filled with rainwater to form a lagoon. The river's natural current carried away the radioactive debris to the forest where, undoubtedly, the creatures of the forest would drink the contaminated water. There had been an occasional drizzle now and then soaking most of the wood in the area. Montag had managed though. He had come prepared with an essay writer helper. It took him three full hours to build the raft and funeral pyre in which Faber's body now rested on. He looked at the horizon just in time to catch the everlasting rays of the sun fade to the night and began. "Faber, my dear friend; it has been a while since we talked. Almost three months.

I heard that you were shooting propaganda somewhere by the Eastern Battle; probably condemning the unworthy fools that fought against us. Remember when we first met? You called yourself a coward for not standing up to stop the madness when it was beginning. I always found it ironic that you would become the symbol of rebirth, that you would be dubbed the phoenix. A coward really, but that was not my decision to make," he stopped and took a breath. "You were my mentor. When I was blind to the knowledge of books, you educated me; you showed me what I was missing.

You were everything I could ever ask for. Granger was there for me, but you were there for me to the, I mean your, bitter end. I can remember when you were approached about the face of the phoenix. That bright day in St. Louis. "Faber, tell me what happened yesterday? I thought all was going well with your friend. He had printed books for us before..." Montag stopped. "Why won't he do it now?" "I'm afraid that he is no longer on our side of the battle," Faber said. "Not on our side of the battle? That's absurd! One doesn't just simply stop being a savior," Montag said. Well, he isn't trustworthy anymore. He had tricked us. Pulled the wool over our eyes. We were only seeing what we wanted to see." It was at that moment that Montag noticed the man standing in the corner of the room. He had his face turned away from us, but it was obvious he was listening to them. "You there, who are you?" "Nobody. I heard that the almighty Guy Montag and the wise Faber were in town, I simply couldn't resist the opportunity of meeting them," said the strange man. Montag took a good look at him. He was well dressed. He was very well dressed.

It was obvious that he knew who we were and it was also obvious that he was there for a reason. His fingernails were clean; an indicator that he was no fighter. Either he was a very good ally to have, or a powerful enemy to dispose of. When he noticed Montag looking at him he gave a wry smile. He decided it was best to trample through the bush. "Why are you here and what do you want? And this time don't be shy to tell us your real name." Montag asked. "My oh my, the rumors about you are true. You see Mr. Montag I want to help you. You could say that I have friends in high places, places that can help you. While you have been fighting your wars silently,

and rather immaturely, some of us,” he paused, “ have been thinking of the bigger picture,” he stopped as he met Montag’s cool but deadly gaze. “ What are you implying? ” “ Nothing at all. Just an offer to, how do I put this? Just an offer to help move things along. We want to take the war public,” the man said. Montag raised his eyebrows until they almost became part of his receding hairline. “ I don’t know what rock you have been living under but it is obvious that you have lived a very luxurious life up until now.

The war was thrown out of the shadows three years ago. ” “ I know that,” the man replied, “ but there was never a reason. ” “ What? ” Montag said. “ For the past three years, we have been fighting a war about nothing. Some say it’s about money. Others? They say the world is hungry. It’s a blind man’s game. You may be thinking about what I think. I think that the world is hungry. It’s hungry for knowledge, for books. Some of us believe it is time to throw it out in the open to light the flames under the fire. To throw something out in the open, we need a face. Somebody that will inspire and mock every policy and rule that the government symbolizes. We need a phoenix. ” “ I’m not interested,” Montag replied. “ I was expecting that,” he answered, “ That’s why I wasn’t going to ask you. ” He turned to Faber and said, “ We need a face but we think Montag has too much baggage attached to it. It may scare some, to see a dead man come to life. You on the other hand are somebody that became a nobody. Your wounds have healed, have they not? Why not find the strength to rise from the ashes? Faber, why won’t you join me? ” Montag stood stunned in silence.

He had been rejected. Faber was sitting there looking at his damn, shaking hands. He had been offered to be the face of a rebellion, to lead a revolution;

yet he sat there, solemn as a statue. Finally, he spoke: " I am not a phoenix. I, at the very best, can be compared to a humble field mouse. I was a coward when it all began. I watched books burn in front of me but did nothing of it because I was too afraid to change anything. I decline your offer. " " I was also expecting that. " A sudden flash of emotion passed through his eyes, like a fox that knew his prey would be his. I haven't even introduced myself yet. Here I am, trying to convince you to start a revolution with me, yet you do not even know my name. My name is Hubert Hoag. " He looked nothing like the man Montag had seen on the parlor walls. Albeit he was short like him, but he must have lost weight. A quick glance at Faber showed that he wasn't the least bit surprised. " Faber I know that you failed when it began. I also know that you aren't exactly the bravest but this is your chance at redemption. You can finally fix the mistakes you made when it was all beginning," Hubert said.

Montag was back in the forest with Granger. He remembered what he had said. That it was the right kind of mistakes to be where they are now. Montag opened his mouth to protest but was interrupted by Faber. " I'll do it," Faber said in a sharp whisper. " I'll do it," he said with more confidence. I'll start a rebellion. " Hoag gave a smile like he knew that the stars would align for him. He stood up and said, " Excellent. I'll be in contact with you soon. " We didn't see Hoag for three months. When we were contacted; things changed. Things changed fast. Faber was soon an international icon. He looked younger and radiated power. Hoag and his friends dressed him in the image of the revolution and soon there were ads and posters everywhere. That was then. Now things had changed. Montag was back in the ashes of the city. The

scurrying of various animals in the bones of the dead brought back his fond memories of Faber. The sun was nowhere to be seen. It was behind the mountains, hiding, like Faber. He turned to the one animate body of Faber. "How does it feel Faber? To start a revolution. When they look back in history, whether or not we won the war, you will be remembered.

But your arrogance got the best of you. You were no humble field mouse. You looked at yourself as the new phoenix. You had risen from the ashes of the old and were ready to guide mankind to this new age. Spending time with Hoag got the best of you. Soon you were thinking like them. Your words were weak and empty. You became the image that you were trying to fight. You became a problem," Montag said. He looked around. It was around midnight. Not even the moon showered him with its pale glowing light. He lit a match. A match that he had used such a long time ago to burn others, to burn his problems. And then he was somewhere else, thinking about how a decade ago he had the same problem with another. The wise words of Beatty rang in his head: "Don't face a problem, burn it" "Beatty, I've done just that." He looked on to see the body of Faber leaning against the funeral pyre in such a way that it would collapse into a beautiful red flower once the match had engulfed the small raft. He thought of the phoenix. "Faber, you were to be the phoenix. The rebirth of the man rising from the ashes. You were a failure. Maybe all we need to do is burn the ashes one more time."