

Study Questions for Fahrenheit 451

Part I: The Hearth and the Salamander

1. What is the significance of the title of the novel? The title of part 1?
2. When we meet the fireman, what is he doing? What does this signal about the value system of this society? What is ironic about the fireman's job?
3. In the opening scene, why are the books compared to birds?
4. What does Montag think of his job? During his conversation, he says that "You never wash it off completely" referring to the kerosene. What could this mean symbolically?
5. Why is Clarisse introduced before Montag's wife Mildred, and how is she different from Montag? What is different about Clarisse's house? What might this be symbolic of?
6. Explain Clarisse's statement, "You know, I'm not afraid of you at all," and why does she find it surprising that Montag is a fireman? Why do Clarisse's exit questions bother Montag so much?
7. How is life in Montag's house different from that of Clarisse's? Describe the setup of Montag's T.V. room.
8. What is the fireman's official slogan?
9. Describe Mildred as the reader first meets her, and what does Montag discover she has done? What's his reaction? What kind of medical help is given Mildred?
10. Explain the significance of the operator's quote: "We get these cases nine or ten a night." Is there anything unusual about the way the two men go about helping Mildred? How is it unusual?
11. Montag continually gazes at the AC vent. What can the reader presume about the vent?
12. What is Mildred's reaction when Montag tells her about the pills?
13. What purpose is served by the earpieces and talking walls? How do they affect people?
14. Why does Clarisse need to see a psychiatrist?

15. What is the Mechanical Hound and its purpose, how does it interact with Montag, and what is the significance of its attack toward Montag?
16. Why doesn't Montag have any children? What is the significance of this?
17. What is school like? Why doesn't Clarisse attend? Why does society consider Clarisse anti-social?
18. What questions does Montag have about his job and what facts are found in the rule books?
19. What happens during the fire call? At the fire, what does Montag take?
20. What happens when Montag gets home from the fire? What question does Montag ask of Mildred? What does her answer reveal?
21. What technology does Mildred use to go to sleep?
22. Explain Montag's reaction: "...he had begun to cry, not at death, but at the thought of not crying at death."
23. On page 40, Beatty reveals something very important about himself and his knowledge. What is it?
24. What does Mildred reveal about what had happened to Clarisse and her family? How did it happen and what is unusual about the way Mildred told Montag about her?
25. What happens between Montag and Mildred the next morning and what realization does Montag come to? How does Mildred react after she wakes up from her previous night's experience?
26. Who is Mildred's family? What does Montag realize about books?
27. What does Captain Beatty tell Montag about history and the need for firemen? Who does Beatty reveal is responsible for starting book burnings?
28. Explain Beatty's quote: "We must all be alike. Not everyone born free and equal, as the Constitution says, but everyone made equal."
29. Explain Beatty's quote, "You ask why to a lot of things and you wind up very unhappy indeed."
30. Explain Beatty's message when he's talking about Clarisse.
31. Explain Beatty's comment, "We're the Happiness Boys."

32. What happens if a fireman keeps a book?
33. Why did front porches and gardens disappear?
34. Read pages 55-62 carefully. They contain great truths about our world. List three things Beatty talks about in his speech to Montag that are true about our world.
35. What does Montag reveal to Mildred? What has he done?
36. What are three (3) science fiction elements depicted so far?

Part II: "THE SIEVE AND THE SAND"

1. What is Montag's view of the books? How does Mildred see them?
2. What is Montag's reaction to the jets overhead?
3. Who is Faber? Describe Montag's visit with him in the park and why does Faber refuse to answer his question? Why did Professor Faber fear Montag initially? What did Montag want from Faber?
4. According to Faber, why was the public unconcerned with politics and not going to become rebellious against the state?
5. What is the significance of the conversation between Montag and Mildred before he leaves?
6. What happens on the subway?
7. What does Faber say about his own history?
8. Why does Montag think that the books might bring him happiness?
9. Faber says books are not the key to happiness but three factors are. What are they?
10. How does Montag convince Faber to help him?
11. Explain Faber's quote: "Those who don't build must burn," and explain the Queen Bee analogy in relation to Faber.
12. How does Faber equip Montag to deal with Beatty?
13. What two items were exchanged before Montag left the Professor's house?

14. What is the volcano's mouth?
15. Describe the conversation between Montag and the visiting ladies. What prompted Montag's poetry reading, which lady was affected by the original intent of the poetry and what were the consequences of Montag's act of rebellion?
16. What did Montag do to the living room fish bowl?
17. Describe Montag's return to the firehouse. What happens? How was Guy impacted by Captain Beatty's playing the harp? What interrupted the poker game?
18. Where do they go on the alarm? What reasons might explain their visit?

Part III: "BURNING BRIGHT"

1. Who does Beatty say caused Montag to start questioning his life? How has Beatty given Montag hints that he is under suspicion?
2. Who must have brought back the books from the garden, and who turned in an alarm against Montag?
3. What does Beatty direct Montag to do? What is his reaction?
4. What happens to Montag's earpiece and what is his reaction?
5. What happens to the Mechanical Hound?
6. What does Montag manage to recover?
7. What does Montag realize about Beatty and his death? Why did Montag burn Beatty's body?
8. What special capability do the beetles have in their search for Montag? Describe Montag's encounter with the beetle. What does it say about those in this world?
9. What does Montag learn while washing up at the gas station?
10. What does Montag do with the books? Why?
11. What plan does Faber suggest?
12. What does Montag tell Faber to do to protect himself and how does Montag know the Mechanical Hound ignores Faber's house?
13. Why did Montag want Faber to turn on the air conditioning and the sprinklers?

14. Describe the manhunt for Montag. What techniques does the government use to try to find Montag and how does Montag escape?
15. Interpret, "Twenty million Montags running, soon, if the cameras caught him."
16. As he floats, Montag what does he realize as he has the leisure to think, and what vision does he have?
17. What does Montag find when he leaves the river?
18. Explain the significance of Montag's quote: "It was not burning. It was warming. *It gave. It did not take away.*"
19. What does Montag encounter at the campsite, and what do the men do to protect themselves from being with him?
20. What scene unfolds on television?
21. Describe the men he meets and what does Montag tell them he has to offer to the group?
22. What has Mr. Simmons developed while living in the woods for 20 years and what else does Montag learn about the others like him?
23. Explain the old man's quote: "Don't judge a book by its cover."
24. Granger talks of his grandfather. What does he say and why does Wolfe include the story in the book? Why is it important?
25. Explain Granger's quote: "The difference between the man who just cuts lawns and a real gardener is in the touching."
26. What happens when the men see the war come to the city, and what do they do after the sun comes up? Why are their actions significant?
27. What is the story of the Phoenix and how does it relate to Montag? What did Granger mean by "Welcome back from the dead?"
28. Explain the significance of Granger's quote: "Come on now, we're going to go build a mirror factory first and put out nothing but mirrors for the next year and take a long look in them."
29. What does Granger mean by his quote, "You're not important, you're not anything?"
30. Walking to the city, Montag finds himself at the head of the pack. What is the meaning of this scene? He recites several lines to himself as he walks. What is he quoting, and what is the importance of the message?

31. Explain the last implications of the events in the final 4-5 pages of the novel. What kind of ending is it? What is the mood?