

The book begins: Montag loves to burn things; he is intensely into it. "Later, going to sleep, he would feel the fiery smile still gripped by his face muscles...that smile, it never ever went away as long as he remembered". The reader does not know yet, but Montag is harboring a secret

That night something significant happens: Montag meets Clarisse; he had vague premonitions lately that something was "just around the corner". Clarisse fascinates Montag, from her milk-white appearance to her fearless way of speaking to him. She observes things he has not seen for years, even though they are right there all the time. She makes him wonder if he is really happy. He thinks about what's hidden behind the ventilator grill in his house.

When Montag arrives home, he finds Mildred in their bedroom, comatose, because she swallowed a whole bottle of pills. "It was like coming into the cold marble room of a mausoleum..." Her condition upsets Montag a lot.

The technicians come and their machine replaces Mildred's blood. Montag sits with her, but is distracted by the voices from Clarisse's house. He crosses the lawn and listens, hidden in the shadows, to the voices in the dark. He reflects on his day and comes to the realization that "I don't know anything anymore".

The next morning Mildred says she remembers nothing about last night and scoffs at Montag's claim that she swallowed a bottle of pills. She tells him how fun it is being with her parlor wall family. Montag heads out for work and meets Clarisse; they talk. When they split up he does something he hasn't done in ages: he lets the raindrops fall in his mouth.

When Montag arrives at work, the reader learns that the mechanical hound sort of threatens him; it is a bit disconcerting to Montag. He then goes upstairs and talks with Captain Beatty. When he mentions that the hound "doesn't like me", Beatty asks him "you got a guilty conscience about something?"

For the next seven days, it seems as if every time he leaves his house, Clarisse is there to meet him. They form a bond; she opens up to him. Then one day, she is gone.

At the firehouse, Montag is reminded of the Firemen's rulebook, which includes a history of firemen in America. Established 1790 - first fireman: Benjamin Franklin.

The fire station gets a call about a house with books. When they arrive, an old woman stands in the home. She says something that no one (except Beatty) understands. She won't leave, even as they pour kerosene over her books. She takes out a match and lights the books on fire; she burns with her books.

Montag is upset that the old woman was there. She shouldn't have been there, he thinks. The people whose homes they burn are supposed to be taken away before the firemen get there. Montag returns home to his life of monotony. "Silly empty man near a silly empty woman... How do you get so empty?"

The next morning, Montag stays in bed. He can't get the image of the old woman out of his head. "There must be something in books...to make a woman stay in a burning house", Montag says. Mildred could care less.

Captain Beatty drops by. He tells Montag his reasons why firemen are important: it's all about what people want. "We are the Happiness Boys..." (says Beatty).

Beatty tries to convince Montag that they are important; here are some reasons why:

A] people don't want to think

B] they burn books because books have unnecessary ideas

C] people just want to have fun.

Montag doesn't buy it.

The whole time Montag has a book beneath his pillow.

After Beatty leaves, Montag says "I've got an awful feeling I want to smash things and kill things". Then he says "I don't even know what yet, but I'm going to do something big". Then he shows Mildred the books he has stashed behind the vent grill. He wants them to read together; she is scared. Montag tries to get Mildred to take the words in the books seriously, but she wants no part of it. Mildred can't take it: "you're ruining [my world]!" She says.

**(end part one)**

Montag thinks to himself "poor Millie...poor [me], it's mud to [me]... Where do [I] get help, where do I find a teacher...?" Clarisse is gone, he cannot talk to Mildred about this, he cannot let Beatty know about it; he has no one to talk to. Then he remembers meeting professor Faber in the park, a year ago. Montag still has professor Faber's phone number, so he calls then he decides to go see him in person. Before Montag leaves, he asks Millie "does the White Clown love you... Does your 'family' love you?" Millie asks him why he'd ask a "silly question like that".

Montag gets on the train to go to Faber's home. He has the Bible, he brought it with him. He decides that he wants to memorize what's in the Bible, so he starts to read it, but before that, he recalls an incident when he was young and his mean cousin told him at the beach that if he were to fill a sieve with sand, that his cousin would give him a dime. So he tries to fill the sieve with sand, but the faster he pours it into the sieve the faster it is sifted out, which is very frustrating, and this is what it is like for him to read the Bible on the train and remember the words. It seems as if every word he tries to remember goes in one part of his brain and out the other. Plus, that crazy Denham's Dentifrice commercial blasting on the train keeps on getting in his way until he gets so frustrated he screams out loud "shut up!" The people on the train think he is a little crazy, so he jumps off the train.

Montag arrives at Faber's home. "I want you to teach me to understand what I read" says Montag to Faber. Faber explains to him about the three things missing in life.

1. quality of information
2. the right kind of leisure time to digest the information.
3. the right to act based on what we learn from the interaction of one and two.

Faber is reluctant to join Montag in any action, until Montag begins to tear up the Bible in front of him. Faber gives Montag an earbud that acts like our modern-day Bluetooth phone. Montag goes home.

At home Mildred's friends come for a visit. Montag can't help himself: he messes with the women psychologically. First, he shuts off the parlor walls. Then, he gets them into a conversation about the upcoming war and the presidential election. The ladies talk about how they vote by how good-looking the candidate is compared to his opponent.

Montag decides to pull out a book and read a poem. The ladies get noticeably upset by the poem. Faber (in Montag's ear) isn't too happy with Montag, either. The ladies leave, promising never to enter "this fireman's crazy house again".

Montag goes into work. Beatty and the boys are playing cards. Montag gives Beatty a book, and joins the game. Beatty tells Montag about a dream he had where he and Montag were arguing over the value of books. A call comes in; Beatty gets everyone into the truck and drives to the address. He never drives, but this time he does. They stop in front of Montag's home.

**(end part two)**

Everyone in the neighborhood steps out "to watch the carnival..." Beatty makes an allusion to the story of Icarus. He also reveals that they had a file on Clarisse. Mildred comes running out the front door with a suitcase, mumbling "poor family... everything gone..." Montag realizes Mildred made the call to the firehouse.

Beatty wants Montag to "do this job all by your lonesome" with a flamethrower. In his ear, Faber tells him to run, but he can't because the hound will chase him down. So he burns it all down. For a moment, it feels like it used to. "When you're quite finished," Beatty says, "you're under arrest".

Beatty discovers Montag's earbud, and tells Montag they will trace the signal and arrest "your friend" (Faber). Montag will not let that happen: "he could never decide whether his hands or Beatty's reaction... gave him the final push toward murder." Montag turns the flamethrower on Beatty.

The hound arrives; Montag melts it down with the flamethrower, but not before it numbs his leg with its needle.

Montag drags himself away. "Beatty wanted to die" he says to himself. During his escape attempt, Montag has to cross a wide street. While crossing, a car bears down on him. Montag desperately tries to reach the other side; he falls, and that is what saves him. He comes to the house of a fireman named Black. He hides some books in Black's kitchen, then calls in an anonymous tip.

From there, Montag goes to Faber's house. Faber tells Montag he feels "alive for the first time in years". Faber tells him to go to the hobo camps in the country: "there's lots of old Harvard degrees on the tracks..." The hound has Montag's scent, so he takes some of Faber's old clothes and a bottle of whiskey, both to confuse the hound and hopefully lose his scent.

Montag leaves Faber. The Mechanical Hound tracking Montag is on TV; Montag sees it on every wall in every house. The announcer tells everyone to open their doors and look out for Montag "At the count of ten". The announcer counts up to 10, and at 10, Montag dives down the slope to the riverbank, just in time.

Montag floats down the river until "the river had moved him toward shore". He has left his old world far behind. It is dark, but he finds the train tracks. He eventually comes to a campfire. Granger invites him to join everyone. "He hadn't known fire could look this way. He had never thought in his life that it could give as well as take. Even its smell was different". Granger invites Montag to join him and the rest of the hobos. He gives Montag an elixir that will mask his scent from the Hound. Granger introduces Montag to the others; they are all former educators. They also all hold the memory of a specific book. These facts make Montag feel out of place. Granger makes him feel better. They gather around a small TV to watch as the cameras show the Hound attack an innocent man, all the time claiming it is Montag: "they're sniffing for a scapegoat to end things with a bang." They decide to move downstream, so "the men all moved their hands, putting out the fire together."

It is 5 o'clock in the morning, they are on the move. Montag thinks about Millie. "Everyone must leave something behind", says Granger, "stuff your eyes with wonder, live as if you'd drop dead in ten seconds." Montag says "look!" The Jets dropped their nuclear bombs; the city rose into the air, then plummeted down as a pile of dust..."And the war began and ended in an instant." Montag remembers where he and Millie first met. Then, he remembers the words he read from the book of Ecclesiastes. After the dust settles, Granger tells Montag about the Phoenix bird springing up out of the ashes. The group heads upstream: "we are going to build a mirror factory first and put out nothing but mirrors for the next year and take a long look in them," says Granger. Montag continues to remember more from the book of Ecclesiastes.

THE END