

FAHRENHEIT 451

by Ray Bradbury



THE AUTHOR

Ray Bradbury (b.1920) was one of the leading writers of science fiction of the twentieth century. Born in Waukegan, Illinois, he had no formal education beyond high school, but evidenced an interest in writing from an early age. He began publishing stories in science fiction magazines in his late teens, and gained a nationwide reputation with the publication of *The Martian Chronicles* in 1950. His most popular novel, *Fahrenheit 451*, was published in 1953. Bradbury also wrote television scripts for shows like *The Twilight Zone* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, and screenplays for movies, including the classic 1953 version of *Moby Dick*. Recently, he became publically incensed at Michael Moore for coopting his title for the film *Fahrenheit 911*. He continues to live and write in California.

PLOT SUMMARY

“The Hearth and the Salamander”

The story begins with Guy Montag, the protagonist, carrying out his job as a fireman - burning books and the houses that contain them. He loves his job, at least on the surface. On the way home, he meets a neighbor, a teenage girl named Clarisse McClellan. She asks him all kinds of questions about himself and his job, which makes him uncomfortable. She talks about her love of nature and her unusual family, which enjoys talking to one another in the evening and taking long walks (also outlawed by the society, along with reading or even possessing books). He is strangely attracted to her, and is struck by her parting question: “Are you happy?” No matter how hard he tries to convince himself that he is, he realizes that his life is empty. When he arrives home, he finds his wife in bed listening to a “Seashell” earplug radio. He notices an empty bottle of sleeping pills and quickly calls emergency technicians, who arrive and pump out Mildred’s stomach and replace her blood with a transfusion. When she awakes in the morning, she remembers nothing and refuses to believe Montag when he tells her about the crisis. She then returns to watching her “family” on the three-full-wall interactive TV screen in their living room. Montag, disgusted, goes outside, where he meets Clarisse again. She is catching raindrops in her mouth and rubbing a dandelion on her chin to see if she is in love. When she insists on applying the dandelion to him, Montag is embarrassed that no yellow residue appears. After she leaves to go to her state-mandated psychologist, he catches raindrops in his mouth.

When Montag arrives at the firehouse, he attempts to touch the Mechanical Hound that is used to sniff out books and criminals who conceal them, and the Hound snaps at him. Fearing that some unknown enemy has set the Hound to detect his chemical components, Montag consults his chief, Beatty, who assures him that no one could have done such a thing. During the following week, Montag sees Clarisse every day and they continue to talk. After seven days, she ceases to appear. Soon after, the firemen are called to the house of an old woman who has saved hundreds of books. As they prepared to burn the house, a hidden book falls into Montag's hands and he unthinkingly conceals it under his coat (it later turns out to be a Bible). The woman refuses to leave the house despite their entreaties, quoting Hugh Latimer's final words to Nicholas Ridley as they were about to be burned at the stake in 1555, and as the firemen prepare to light the blaze, she ignites it herself and perishes with the house and its contents. This leaves an indelible impression on Montag. When he gets home, he hides the book under his pillow and tries to engage Mildred in conversation, but gets nowhere, though he does find out from her that Clarisse was killed by a car and the family has moved away. When he wakes up the next morning, he feels sick and decides not to go to work. He still cannot engage his wife in any meaningful conversation, but then Captain Beatty arrives. Beatty talks about the history of firemen, in the process giving a variety of reasons for the banning of books - everything from the insipidity of public opinion to the availability of other forms of entertainment to the role of books in distinguishing people from one another and thus promoting unhappiness to the pressure of censorship applied by aggrieved minorities of all sorts (note that this section of the novel provides one of the most fertile opportunities for Bradbury's social criticism). Mildred gets bored and almost exposes the hidden book, but under Montag's questioning, Beatty assures him that if a fireman accidentally brings a book home, he can keep it for a day or two and then destroy it with no penalty. Beatty also tells Montag that Clarisse and her family had been under the eyes of the authorities for a long time because of their unorthodox ways, and that the strange girl was better off dead. He reminds Montag that the true role of the firemen is to promote happiness by eliminating sources of discontent and differentiation among people. After he leaves, Montag tells his wife about the hidden book, along with about twenty others he has concealed in an air duct. She wants to destroy them immediately, but he insists that they look through them to try to find some answers about life. As they begin to read, he hears noises outside, but decides not to answer the door (it turns out to be the Mechanical Hound). He swears that he will never return to his job again.

"The Sieve and the Sand"

Montag and his wife begin to read the books he has stolen, but she quickly becomes bored and return to the television, while he is unable to understand what he is reading. He then remembers an old English professor he had met in a park, and recalls that he has the man's name and phone number. He contacts the professor, named Faber, and goes to visit him. On the way, he tries to memorize verses from the Bible, but is prevented by the blaring commercial messages on the train. When arrives at Faber's home, the old man is initially reluctant to trust him, but is convinced when Montag produces the book. Faber admits his cowardice in failing to do anything to protest the book-burning. However, when Montag suggests planting books in the homes of firemen so that the burners would themselves be burned, Faber notes that such a harebrained scheme would accomplish nothing, since people would not read books anyway. Faber finally

agrees to help Montag, first by finding a printer to duplicate the Bible, and then by giving Montag a small transmitter to put into his ear so the two can communicate when Montag returns to the firehouse to confront Beatty. Faber also suggests that the coming war might destroy the system thoroughly enough that books could be reintroduced.

When Montag returns home, he finds his wife with two of her friends enjoying their “family” in the TV parlor. He turns the machine off and tries to engage them in serious conversation, but they mouth inanities about their “family” while speaking with no emotion about their own divorces, deaths of spouses, and alienated children. He finally gets so angry that he pulls out a book and reads Matthew Arnold’s poem *Dover Beach*. They hate it because it is so sad, and, at the prompting of both Mildred and Faber, he incinerates the book. After the women leave, Montag discovers that his wife has been burning his books, and he takes the remaining ones and hides them in the back yard. When he returns to the firehouse, Beatty welcomes him back and then launches into a tirade attempting to justify book-burning by using quotations from great literature. The fire alarm then goes off and the firemen mount the truck and go to the designated address, which turns out to be Montag’s own home - he had been turned in by his own wife.

“Burning Bright”

Beatty orders Montag to burn the house with his flamethrower and warns him that the Mechanical Hound will kill him if he tries to escape. Montag does so, then Beatty arrests him. In the struggle that follows, Beatty discovers the transmitter in Montag’s ear and threatens to trace it and arrest whoever gave it to him. Montag then turns the flamethrower on Beatty and burns him to a crisp. When the Mechanical Hound attacks him, he burns it, too, but not before it injects his leg with anaesthetic. After knocking the other firemen out, Montag flees, limping, to Faber’s home. Faber tells Montag to follow the railroad tracks into the country, where he will find a group of hobos who will help him. Faber himself intends to go to St. Louis to his printer friend; before he goes, he uses sprays and the sprinkler system to conceal Montag’s scent from the Mechanical Hound. By this time, Montag realizes he is being pursued by the police, who have called in a new Mechanical Hound to find him. He flees toward the river, reaching it just in time to avoid detection. He floats down the river for hours to get away from the sensory detectors of the Mechanical Hound. In the morning, he goes to shore on the far side, discovers that he feels peace and wholeness in the midst of nature, and finds the railroad tracks, which he follows until he discovers a group of men around a fire. Led by a man named Granger, they are all scholars who have lost their jobs since the book-burning. They know who he is, and offer him a liquid that will change the chemical composition of his perspiration so the Hound cannot track him. Using a portable TV, they see the police trap and kill a man that the newscasters then identify as Montag, giving the audience their cheap thrills and officially bringing the case to a close. Granger then explains that the men around the fire have developed a way of remembering what they have read verbatim after a single reading, and that there are thousands of such people out in the countryside who have committed parts of books to memory, awaiting the day when books will again be accepted, and prepared to pass their knowledge on for generations if necessary. As they speak, they see jets fly overhead and drop their bombs, vaporizing the city that Montag had just left. As the group walks away from the rubble of the destroyed city, Granger compares mankind to the mythical phoenix, and expresses his confidence that man, too, will rise from the ashes of his own self-immolation.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Guy Montag - The protagonist, a fireman (in the society of the novel, one who starts fires rather than putting them out) who becomes disillusioned with his job and rebels against it and the strictures of his empty society (note that the name Montag is actually the name of a company that manufactures paper).
- Mildred Montag - Guy's wife, she spends her life watching television on screens that cover three full walls of a room in their home (she craves a fourth wall). She is alienated from Guy and from the world at large. The depth of her alienation appears when she tries to commit suicide, then reports her husband to the authorities for hiding books in their home.
- Clarisse McClellan - A seventeen-year-old girl whose questions and interest in the world around her bring out Montag's dissatisfaction. She is the only person Montag has met who is genuinely happy, though her interest in nature makes her an outcast. She is killed by a speeding car early in the novel.
- Captain Beatty - The chief at Montag's fire station, he knows all about books, but still has no qualms about destroying them, considering them to be dangerous to the well-being of society. He entraps Montag and tries to arrest him after burning his house, but Montag kills him.
- Professor Faber - A retired professor of English who is too cowardly to speak out against the policies of the society in which he lives, he encourages Montag and puts his own life in jeopardy as a result. He manages to flee the city before the final devastation occurs. *Faber*, too, is a borrowed name, taken from a company that manufactures pencils.
- Granger - A former college professor who introduces Montag to a network of people who have committed parts of books to memory, and hope to keep human knowledge alive following the holocaust of nuclear destruction with which the book ends.
- Mrs. Phelps and Mrs. Bowles - Mildred's friends, who are just as empty-headed as she is. They have lost multiple husbands to death and divorce, but care little for human relationships and spend their time watching and discussing their "families" on the giant TV screens.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

"It was a pleasure to burn." (Part I, p.3)

"I sometimes think drivers don't know what grass is, or flowers, because they never see them slowly. If you showed a driver a green blur, Oh, yes! he'd say, that's grass! A pink blur? That's a rose-garden! White blurs are houses. Brown blurs are cows. My uncle drove slowly on the highway once. He drove forty miles an hour and they jailed him for two days. Isn't that funny, and sad, too?" (Clarisse, Part I, p.8)

“Are you happy?” (Clarisse, Part I, p.9)

“Well, after all, this is the age of the disposable tissue. Blow your nose on a person, wad them, flush them away, reach for another, blow, wad, flush. Everyone using everyone else’s coattails. How are you supposed to root for the home team when you don’t even have a program or know the names? For that matter, what color jerseys are they wearing as they trot out on the field?” (Clarisse’s uncle, Part I, p.16)

“Let you alone! That’s all very well, but how can I leave myself alone? We need not to be let alone. We need to be really bothered once in a while. How long is it since you were *really* bothered? About something important, about something real? (Montag, Part I, p.47)

“School is shortened, discipline relaxed, philosophies, histories, languages dropped, English and spelling gradually gradually neglected, finally almost completely ignored. Life is immediate, the job counts, pleasure lies all about after work. Why learn anything save pressing buttons, pulling switches, fitting nuts and bolts?” (Beatty, Part I, p.51)

“More sports for everyone, group spirit, fun, and you don’t have to think, eh? Organize and organize and super-organize super-super sports. More cartoons in books. More pictures. The mind drinks less and less. Impatience. Highways full of crowds going somewhere, somewhere, somewhere, nowhere. The gasoline refugee. Towns turned into motels, people in nomadic surges from place to place, following the moon tides, living tonight in the room where you slept this noon and I the night before.” (Beatty, Part I, p.52)

“Now let’s take up the minorities in our civilization, shall we? Bigger the population, the more minorities. Don’t step on the toes of the dog-lovers, the cat-lovers, doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs, Mormons, Baptists, Unitarians, second-generation Chinese, Swedes, Italians, Germans, Texans, Brooklynites, Irishmen, people from Oregon or Mexico. The people in this book, this play, this TV serial are not meant to represent any actual painters, cartographers, mechanics anywhere. The bigger your market, Montag, the less you handle controversy, remember that! All the minor minor minorities with their ears to be kept clean. Authors, full of evil thoughts, lock up your typewriters. They *did*. Magazines became a nice blend of vanilla tapioca. Books, so the snobbish critics said, were dishwater. No *wonder* books stopped selling, the critics said. But the public, knowing what it wanted, spinning happily, let the comic-books survive. And the three-dimensional sex-magazines, of course. There you have it, Montag. It didn’t come from the Government down. There was no dictum, no declaration, no censorship, to start with, no! Technology, mass exploitation, and minority pressure carried the trick. Today, thanks to them, you can stay happy all the time, you are allowed to read comics, the good old confessions, or trade-journals.” (Beatty, Part I, p.52-53)

“With school turning out more runners, jumpers, racers, tinkers, grabbers, snatchers, fliers, and swimmers instead of examiners, critics, knowers, and imaginative creators, the word ‘intellectual,’ of course, became the swear word it deserved to be. You always dread the unfamiliar. Surely you remember the boy in your own school class who was exceptionally ‘bright,’ did most of the reciting and answering while the others sat like so many leaden idols,

hating him. And wasn't it this bright boy you selected for beatings and tortures after hours? Of course it was. We must all be alike. Not everyone born free and equal, like the Constitution says, but everyone *made* equal. Each man the image of every other; then all are happy, for there are no mountains to make them cower, to judge them against." (Beatty, Part I, p.53)

"You must understand that our civilization is so vast that we can't have our minorities upset and stirred. Ask yourself, What do we want in this country, above all? People want to be happy, isn't that right? Haven't you heard it all your life? I want to be happy, people say. Well, aren't they? Don't we keep them moving, don't we give them fun? That's all we live for, isn't it? For pleasure, for titillation? And you must admit our culture provides plenty of those." (Beatty, Part I, p.54)

"Heredity and environment are funny things. You can't rid yourselves of all the odd dicks in just a few years. The home environment can undo a lot you try to do in school. That's why we've lowered the kindergarten age year after year until now we're almost snatching them from the cradle." (Beatty, Part I, p.55)

"The girl? She was a time bomb. The family had been feeding her subconscious, I'm sure, from what I saw of her school record. She didn't want to know *how* a thing was done, but *why*. That can be embarrassing. You ask Why to a lot of things and you wind up very unhappy indeed, if you keep at it. The poor girl's better off dead." (Beatty, Part I, p.55)

"It's as good as I remember. Lord, how they've changed it in our 'parlors' these days. Christ is one of the 'family' now. I often wonder if God recognizes His own son the way we've dressed him up, or is it dressed him down? He's a regular peppermint stick now, all sugar-crystal and saccharine when he isn't making veiled references to certain commercial products that every worshiper *absolutely* needs." (Faber, Part II, p.72)

"Those who don't build must burn. It's as old as history and juvenile delinquents." (Faber, Part II, p.80)

"What a dreadful surprise. For everyone nowadays knows, absolutely is *certain*, that nothing will ever happen to *me*. Others die, *I* go on. There are no consequences and no responsibilities. Except that there *are*. But let's not talk about them, eh? By the time the consequences catch up with you, it's too late, isn't it, Montag?" (Beatty, Part III, p.101)

"There was a silly bird called a Phoenix back before Christ, every few hundred years he built a pyre and burned himself up. He must have been first cousin to Man. But every time he burnt himself up he sprang out of the ashes, he got himself born all over again. And it looks like we're doing the same thing, over and over, but we've got one thing the Phoenix never had. We know the silly thing we just did. We know all the silly things we've done for a thousand years and as long as we know that and always have it around where we can see it, some day we'll stop making the funeral pyres and jumping in the middle of them. We pick up a few more people that remember, every generation." (Granger, Part III, p.146)

“And hold onto one thought: You’re not important. You’re not anything. Some day the load we’re carrying with us may help someone. But even when we had the books on hand, a long time ago, we didn’t use what we got out of them. We went right on insulting the dead. We went right on spitting in the graves of all the poor ones who dies before us. We’re going to meet a lot of lonely people in the next week and the next month and the next year. And when they ask us what we’re doing, you can say, We’re remembering. That’s where we’ll win out in the long run. And some day we’ll remember so much that we’ll build the biggest steamshovel in history and dig the biggest grave of all time and shove war in and cover it up. 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.” (Granger, Part III, p.146)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* may be read as a parable about censorship. The author, for instance, responded with anger when correspondents criticized his *Martian Chronicles* for their portrayal of women and minorities. What does the book suggest about the consequences of censorship? Do you agree with Bradbury’s message? Is censorship always destructive, or are certain ideas, or ways of expressing those ideas, so harmful that society should be protected from them?
2. Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, like other dystopian fantasies such as *Brave New World* and *1984*, is viewed by some as prophetic in its insights. Near the end of the first part of the novel, Bradbury puts the following words in the mouth of the fire chief, Captain Beatty: “Now let’s take up the minorities in our civilization, shall we? Bigger the population, the more minorities. Don’t step on the toes of the dog-lovers, the cat-lovers, doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs, Mormons, Baptists, Unitarians, second-generation Chinese, Swedes, Italians, Germans, Texans, Brooklynites, Irishmen, people from Oregon or Mexico.... The bigger your market, Montag, the less you handle controversy, remember that! All the minor minor minorities with their ears to be kept clean.” Discuss the novel as a critique of political correctness and its consequences for American society. To what extent has Bradbury’s assessment proved to be accurate?
3. Analyze the character of Captain Beatty in Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*. He is a book-burner, yet he has a broad and deep knowledge of books. To what extent do you believe that he himself is convinced by the arguments he presents to Montag? What underlying beliefs drive the actions of such a man? Did he want to die, as Montag believed? You will need to do some speculating here, but support your speculations with specific incidents and quotations from the novel.
4. Analyze the character of Professor Faber in Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*. He loves books, but is unwilling to act to preserve them, though he is more than willing to instigate Montag to act on his behalf. To what extent is he a coward, and to what extent does he show courage? Does he change as the story progresses, or does his character remain stagnant?

5. In Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, Guy Montag only sees Clarisse McClellan a few times, Yet she has a profound impact on his character and on the action of the story. Why is this the case? What about Clarisse makes such an impression on the protagonist? What comments about modern society is Bradbury making through this pivotal character in the novel?
6. Why were books banned by the society pictured in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*? Bradbury cites many factors in the course of the novel. Choose three that you think most important, and relate them to the world in which we live more than fifty years later. Is the picture he paints still an accurate one? Are these same factors still at work in reducing the amount of reading people do today? Is this a serious problem in our society? Why or why not?
7. One of the topics addressed by the author in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* is the "dumbing down" of education. Evaluate his assessment of the reasons for the decline in education and the results of this decline. Are his criticisms as true today as they were when the novel was published in 1953?
8. Discuss the images of the salamander, the phoenix, and the mirror in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. What are these images intended to communicate? How do they relate to the leading themes of the novel? Use specifics to support your arguments.
9. Discuss the significance of the Mechanical Hound in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. What does the creature say about the character of the society in which the story takes place? Pay careful attention to the comments made in the story about the relationship between man and machine, and how this relationship endangers the very essence of humanity.
10. Discuss the significance of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* for those who live in the age of the Internet. Contrary to the fears expressed in the novel, our world is not one where knowledge is restricted, but one in which more knowledge is readily available than anyone could possibly hope to absorb. How might Bradbury have written the story differently had he written it in the first decade of the twenty-first century?
11. Is all knowledge by definition good? Use Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and the Bible to answer the question, being sure to consider its implications for our interaction with the society in which we live.
12. Compare and contrast the two major settings of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, the city and the country. How do these two locations communicate the major themes of the story? To what extent is the distinction made by the author valid in our contemporary world?

13. Discuss the use of biblical allusions in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Choose three specific allusions to Scripture and discuss the ways they are used in the novel. Are Bradbury's uses of the images faithful to their meanings in Scripture? How are they used to communicate leading themes in the novel?
14. In Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, the image of fire is a very rich one, used in a variety of ways to communicate all sorts of different ideas. Choose three principle uses of the image in the story and show how they cohere and how they illuminate different themes important to the author.
15. "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Discuss the extent to which Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* is a commentary on this famous quotation.
16. To what extent is Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* a commentary on modern forms of entertainment? What is his view of the way in which people today spend their leisure time? Do you think his assessment would have changed had the novel been written fifty years later than its publication date of 1953?
17. To what extent is Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* a commentary on modern forms of entertainment? What is his view of the way in which people today spend their leisure time? Evaluate his assessment of the profitable use of leisure from the Bible. Be sure to be specific in your use of both sources.
18. In Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, discuss the significance of the giant television screens and the fact that the actors are repeatedly referred to as "family." What is Bradbury saying about television and its impact on society? Are his concerns legitimate ones? Since the publication of the novel in 1953, when television was in its infancy, have matters gotten better or worse? Why do you think so?
19. Many science fiction books focus on the evils of technology. To what extent is this the case with Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*? Does the author view technology as inevitably evil or only potentially evil? To what extent is his vision of the role of technology in society a valid one?
20. Discuss the critique of hedonism found in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. The society described in the book views pleasure as an unadulterated good, though Bradbury obviously disagrees. Why does Bradbury fear hedonism? Is he right to do so? Support his conclusions from the book, from contemporary society, and from the Bible.
21. Most dystopian fantasies, such as George Orwell's *1984*, are totalitarian in nature. This is not true of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, which is tyrannical without being dictatorial. In Bradbury's America of the future, the government has enforced what the people demand. Why is democracy not a safeguard against tyranny? Discuss the implied weaknesses of a democratic form of government as presented in Bradbury's novel.

22. Discuss the changes that occur in the protagonist of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. What are the most important causes of the changes that occur in Montag throughout the novel? Choose what you consider the three most important factors in the changes that occur in Montag's life and elaborate on what alterations they cause and why these changes are important to the themes Bradbury is trying to communicate in the story.
23. Discuss the use of Matthew Arnold's poem *Dover Beach* in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Why is the poem particularly appropriate to the story Bradbury is trying to tell? How does it bring out the major themes of the novel?
24. In Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, to what extent are Beatty and Faber intended to be foils? Discuss how the contrasts in their characters help to bring out each in a clearer light as well as illuminating the themes of the novel.
25. In Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, to what extent are Clarisse and Mildred intended to be foils? Discuss how the contrasts in their characters help to bring out each in a clearer light as well as illuminating the themes of the novel.
26. Discuss the relationships between the major dystopian fantasies of the twentieth century - George Orwell's *1984* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* - and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. To which of the other famous novels is Bradbury's work most similar? Why do you think so? Be specific in the similarities you cite, using both incidents and quotations from the works involved.
27. Discuss the use of foreshadowing in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Choose three specific examples that illustrate the technique, and consider why Bradbury chooses to anticipate later action in the story in those particular ways.
28. In Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, when Montag first meets Clarisse, she asks him if he is happy. The question troubles him, and in many ways begins his transformation. Discuss the idea of the pursuit of happiness in the novel. What does Bradbury believe about the nature of true happiness? Of what does happiness *not* consist? Be sure to use specific incidents and quotations from the book to support your analysis.
29. The title of the third section of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* involves an allusion to William Blake's poem *The Tiger*. Discuss the relationship between the poem and the themes of the novel, giving particular attention to the third section.
30. Discuss the titles of the three sections of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Why are these titles appropriate? In what ways do they fit the sections of the novel that they introduce? How do they bring out the major themes of the story?

31. During the persecution of Christians in the early third century, the Church Father Tertullian said that “the blood of the martyrs is seed.” Apply this idea to Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, giving special attention to those who die opposing the dictatorial regime of the society in which they live. Do their deaths bear fruit? Why or why not? Support your conclusion with specifics from the novel.
32. In fifteenth-century Florence, a monk named Girolamo Savonarola presided over the Bonfire of the Vanities, in which books of magic and immoral artworks were destroyed. Ray Bradbury, the author of *Fahrenheit 451*, clearly would not have approved of this event. Do you? Use the novel and your knowledge of history and contemporary society to support your conclusion.
33. In Part II of Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, Faber says, “Those who don’t build, burn.” Compare this statement to that made by Jesus in Matthew 12:30, where He says, “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.” Why, in the most important matters of life, does neutrality not exist? In answering the question, use specifics from both the novel and Scripture.
34. Do you consider Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* to be optimistic or pessimistic? Why? Support your conclusion with specifics from the novel.
35. When asked about his novel *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury declined the role of prophet, saying, “I was not trying to predict the future, I was trying to prevent it.” Over fifty years after the publication of the novel, has he succeeded? Why or why not? Support your answer with details from the story and from contemporary society.
36. Ray Bradbury, the author of *Fahrenheit 451*, never drove a car, never owned a computer, and refused to fly in an airplane until he was in his sixties. In what ways do these rather unusual lifestyle choices fit the content of his most famous novel? Be sure to use specifics from the novel to support your answer.
37. Discuss the treatment of the idea of conformity in Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*. Why does the author believe that conformity is dangerous, even evil? Is he right? To what extent? Be sure to support your answer from Scripture as well as from the novel.