

451

Pilot

By

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Based on the book

"Fahrenheit 451"

by

Ray Bradbury

How well he's read, to reason  
against reading!

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DUSK

LEONARD MEAD(70s) dressed in a brown tweed suit stands in the middle of an intersection of a suburban neighborhood. He looks down one deserted street then another.

Sun-burnt leaves blow through the intersection on a gust of wind and MEAD follows.

He strolls.

His breath, mist in the cool air.

Blue flicker of televisions illuminate the windows of the houses he passes.

He stops to consider one of the homes.

MEAD

What world have you escaped to in there?

The house stares back.

Mead strolls on.

Houses, streets, a super-highway 20 stories overhead, silent.

A sound BUILDS overhead ROARING filling the sky.

Mead looks skyward.

Dozens of bombers in formation, their contrails glow red in the last of the sun.

SILENCE slowly returns.

Mead returns to his walk but...

A POLICE VAN has stopped in the street.

POLICE VAN

(from a hidden speaker)

Stay where you are.

Mead looks around, certain the van could not be addressing him.

POLICE VAN  
Yes. You. Approach the console.

A hidden touchscreen illuminates.

POLICE VAN  
Submit yourself for bio-dent.

Mead places his hand on the screen a laser flashes his retina. Clearly he has done before.

A long beat as the van processes.

MEAD  
My name is...

POLICE VAN  
Quiet!

Another beat.

POLICE VAN  
Leonard Mead. Citizen. Born  
oh-two-oh-five-seventy-three?

MEAD  
Yes that's me.

POLICE VAN  
Profession is blank?

MEAD  
I guess you'd call me a writer.

POLICE VAN  
No profession.

Mead tries to peer through the van's tinted windows.

MEAD  
I'm not sure I would agree with  
that assessment.

POLICE VAN  
What are you doing out of your home  
at this hour?

MEAD  
It's 8pm?

POLICE VAN  
We are aware of the time. Answer  
the question.

MEAD  
I'm out for a walk.

POLICE VAN  
A walk? Walking where?

MEAD  
Just walking...

A long uncomfortable beat as the police van tries to compute this response.

MEAD  
...taking in the air. Going for a stroll.

POLICE VAN  
Vagrancy.

A door HISSES and slides open on the side of the van.

Mead tentatively pokes his head inside.

The van is not just empty it is hollow.

POLICE VAN  
Step into the vehicle.

MEAD  
What for?

A flexible metallic arm pops from the side of the van and delivers an electric shock to Mead's arm.

POLICE VAN  
Step into the vehicle.

Mead enters the van. The door HISSES shut.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

MEAD  
Where are you taking me?

POLICE VAN  
Assessment.

MEAD  
Again? We just went through this.

There is no response from the police van. Nor will there be.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS - LIGHT RAIN

The police van makes its way down the suburban streets past the houses towards the highway.

SIRENS fade in approaching.

The van stops at an intersection waiting for whatever the siren is attached to, to pass.

A FIRETRUCK RACES through the intersection and...

We follow the firetruck, our view over the shoulder of the fireman on the back, leaving Leonard Mead behind.

MAIN TITLES FINISH

"451" appears in red on the screen as we follow the firetruck on its journey. Fade to black under "451" in bold black letters that fill the screen.

EXT./INT. SUBURBAN STREET - HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The firetruck stops in front of a house.

Multiple H.O.U.N.D. (from here stylized Hound) units patrol a perimeter warning away onlookers.

FIREMEN in black exosuits exit the truck. Fast. Precise. Ordered.

A CROWD is gathering to bear witness to the cleansing.

The firetruck extends barricades, spotlights, drones rise from its top to document the event.

Inside the firemen are searching the house.

Upstairs one fireman, early 30s, slim, tall, wearing a black exo-suit -- sleek, carbon fiber, matte black aluminium, hydraulics at the joints, the entire suit is scribed in red-gold, religious in its adornment.

He checks his wrist mounted display screen.

"UPSTAIRS. REAR OF HOME. BOOKCASES."

Up the stairs.

The fireman tries the door. Locked.

He KICKS at the door. Barricaded.

Pushing a button on his suit motors wind up, hydraulics hum.

KICKS at the door again. It budes.

One. Two. Three. Four kicks.

The fireman enters.

BOOKS SPILL from shelves, books piled high on the floor, blocking the door.

A lone chair, on it an overturned book awaits its reader's return.

Pressing a button on his neck a helmet materializes over his head and face.

The fireman removes a small CAPSULE from his belt and-

-tosses the capsule towards the middle of the room. It floats for a moment then BURSTS filling the room with a fine mist.

He keys his communicator.

FIREMAN  
Ignition imminent.

Quick cuts to the other firemen who stop their work and exit.

Our fireman places two fingers to a SILVER BADGE embedded in his chest plate. The badge is oddly out of place it seems old, antique even. The outside of the badge begins to glow red.

COMPUTER VOICE  
Ignition requested. Please provide voice i-dent.

FIREMAN  
Montag, Guy.

COMPUTER VOICE  
Confirmed. Pass code required.

MONTAG  
Four. Five. One.

COMPUTER VOICE  
Confirmed. Ignition in...

Montag smiles fiercely.

COMPUTER VOICE

FIVE...

The scribing on his suit begins to glow red.

COMPUTER VOICE

FOUR...

The scribing now brighter.

COMPUTER VOICE

THREE...

Montag takes a knee in the center of the room.

COMPUTER VOICE

TWO...

Montag braces himself palms on the floor he looks to be in prayer.

COMPUTER VOICE

ONE...

The suit scribing glows hot white.

COMPUTER VOICE

IGNITION...

SLOW MOTION we see the mist from the capsule ignite rolling away from Montag's suit into the rest of the room.

He is the nova.

Titles of books fill the screen as they burn.

Famous books.

Important books.

Ideas/Beliefs/Philosophies/Religions.

Independent thought.

Montag stands in the center of it all.

His eyes wild behind the flames that dance reflected in his mask.

Pleasure.

Unadulterated.

INT. FIRE HALL LOCKER ROOM - LATER

The firetruck pulls into the garage.

The firemen exit, each heading to separate cubicles.

Montag steps into a cubicle, grabs hold of two handles on the wall.

The exo-suit is removed piece by piece by machine arms.

He is naked underneath; tattoos on his body.

The unit closes, a glass tube.

He is blasted with foam, high pressure water and finally air.

The unit rises up through the ceiling above.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Putting on the blue dress uniform of the fireman one of Montag's tattoos becomes clear. Beginning at his shoulder, a brightly colored salamander ends with its head on his forearm, sneaking half its body out the short sleeve.

The silver badge worn with pride on his chest.

Sizing himself up in a mirror Montag likes what he sees and his reflection gives him a wink.

Montag strolls out of the locker room through the fire hall.

He drops down the fireman's hole grabbing the pole at the last second.

EXT. CITY - FIRE HALL GARAGE/STREET

Montag walks through the garage, stopping to pet an orange tabby cat that lounges just outside the garage entrance.

MONTAG

Ya. Stay on the outside.

Whistling, Montag walks the deserted city streets.

A police van slows, scans his retina, and moves on.

Montag enters a subway station.



INT. SUBWAY STATION - CONTINUOUS

Like the streets above, the subway is deserted, clean, perfect.

Soon enough a hyper-loop train arrives, hissing to a stop.

Montag enters.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - LATER

Montag rises into the street, floated up by an escalator, the city now far behind him, a jagged crystal on a hill.

We recognize this street as the one from our prelude.

Montag is a man without a care in the world, hands in pockets, leaves under feet, his tailored uniform with its badge.

Montag is confused to suddenly finds a girl in the sidewalk.

MONTAG

Where did you come from?

The girl examines Montag. Her eyes stop on his badge. A round disk, two salamanders wrap around either side the open mouths with forked tongues that meet at the top without touching. MONTAG is printed across the bottom and 451 across the center.

GIRL

You're the fireman.

MONTAG

(proudly)

That's right.

GIRL

The wind told me you were coming.

MONTAG

Ahh yes. The chemicals get into your skin even with the suit. You can never really get the smoke smell out either.

The Girl circles Montag. Considering. Examining. Judging.

GIRL

Your badge, it looks old.

MONTAG  
It is. Made from an original  
igniter.

Montag removes the badge.

MONTAG  
Would you like to try it?

GIRL  
No. I don't think so.

Montag CLICKS the igniter, blue electricity jumps across the  
outstretched tongues of the salamanders.

Montag then places his index finger between the tongues,  
CLICKS the lighter again, and quickly pulls his finger away.

CLARISSE  
Does it hurt?

MONTAG  
Its just a small spark.

CLARISSE  
That's all it takes sometimes.

MONTAG  
(oblivious)  
Why are you out so late?

GIRL  
I'm walking.

MONTAG  
(laughing)  
Walking? Walking where?

GIRL  
Nowhere, just...walking.

MONTAG  
Well it might be safer if you  
walked with me.

GIRL  
Why? Because you're a fireman.

MONTAG  
Yes.

GIRL  
I'll walk with you but not because  
you're a fireman.

GIRL  
My name's Clarisse by the way.

CLARISSE  
(tapping Montag's badge)  
What kind of name is Montag  
anyways?

MONTAG  
It's a last name. Guy is my first.  
But I just go by Montag.

CLARISSE  
Really? Why?

MONTAG  
Well. I'm not sure. Because it's  
what people call me.

Clarisse runs through a pile of leaves at the side of the  
road.

CLARISSE  
Don't you just love the fall? The  
smell of the dead leaves, warm  
nights, light breeze.

MONTAG  
I guess.

CLARISSE  
You guess?

MONTAG  
(a bit perplexed by this girl)  
How old are you?

CLARISSE  
Twenty one. Twenty one and crazy!  
That's what my uncle says.

MONTAG  
Your uncle sounds like a smart man.

CLARISSE  
I'm not afraid of you.

MONTAG  
(disappointed by this)  
Why would you be?

CLARISSE  
Most people are. Afraid of firemen.  
But you look just like a man to me.  
Even more so up close.

MONTAG  
It's not fear, it's respect.

Clarisse has stopped face to face with Montag in a stare down.

Clarisse breaks the silence with a laugh and a smile.

CLARISSE  
Have you been a fireman long?

MONTAG  
I joined the day I turned nineteen.  
Fifteen years ago.

CLARISSE  
Was it hard? To become a fireman?

MONTAG  
Back then there were still lots of  
books to burn. Lots of hidden  
stashs. Two, three sometimes four  
in a day. Now two in a week if  
we're lucky.

CLARISSE  
You sound disappointed.

MONTAG  
A little.

CLARISSE  
What will you do Montag, when  
there's no books left to burn?

MONTAG  
(distantly sincerely)  
They'll always need firemen.

CLARISSE  
Have you ever read any of the books  
you've burnt?

MONTAG  
That would be against the law.

CLARISSE  
Not one?

MONTAG  
No.

CLARISSE  
Not a sentence, a word?

MONTAG  
No and no.

CLARISSE  
A passage? A paragraph? A poem? A  
play?

MONTAG  
Why would I want to?

CLARISSE  
Are you sure?

Montag does not enjoy this line of questioning.

CLARISSE  
My uncle says Firemen used to put  
fires out?

MONTAG  
Maybe you're uncle isn't so smart.

CLARISSE  
My uncle said that houses used to  
catch on fire by accident and  
Firemen would come and put the  
fires out.

MONTAG  
Houses have always been fireproof.  
That's why we use the chemicals  
that you smell. Otherwise the  
houses wouldn't burn. In fact they  
don't really burn only the contents  
do. The building stays good as new.  
We only want the books.

CLARISSE  
(pointing to a fire hydrant)  
Explain that then.

MONTAG

(Laughing)

Those used to feed the trucks  
kerosene, before the suits and  
chemicals.

CLARISSE

You are strange. You laugh when  
I've said nothing funny. You answer  
without thinking.

MONTAG

Everyone asks the same questions  
when they find out I'm a fireman.  
They're old stories, myths.

CLARISSE

I'm not so sure.

MONTAG

You are crazy.

CLARISSE

Twenty-one *and* crazy! But you don't  
know everything.

MONTAG

No?

CLARISSE

Did you know there is dew on the  
grass at night?

Montag suddenly cannot be sure if he knew this or not and it  
irritates him.

Clarisse points to the full moon rising in the sky.

CLARISSE

And there's a man in the moon if  
you look.

Montag examines the moon.

When Montag looks back Clarisse is halfway up a walkway to a  
house.

Curtains blow gently in and out of open windows. Real, warm  
light, conversation and laughter illuminate the house.

MONTAG

Sounds like a party in there?  
What's the occasion?

CLARISSE

Nothing. Just my parents and my  
uncle. Talking, drinking, playing  
cards and...smoking.

MONTAG

(smiling at the house  
intrigued)

That's...odd.

CLARISSE

Fireman Montag, can I ask you a  
question?

MONTAG

Last one though.

CLARISSE

Are you happy?

MONTAG

Am I...

She's gone up the walkway slipping through the door of her  
home.

Montag is left staring, wondering as the door whispers  
closed.

MONTAG

...happy?

INT. MONTAG'S HOME - HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

Montag stands in the front hallway of his house staring in a  
mirror as he takes off his boots.

MONTAG

Crazy girl. Happy?

He considers himself in the mirror.

His reflection is not laughing.

Montag moves to the kitchen.

Pours himself a drink.

MONTAG

(to his reflection in the  
kitchen window)

Why would she not think I was  
happy?

His reflection shrugs.

He pours another drink without looking away from the window.

MONTAG  
(again to his reflection)  
What?

As he tips his head back to finish the drink his eye finds the vent above the cupboards.

His eye lingers on the vent one moment too long.

His reflection in the window smirks at him.

Montag flips the light switch. The kitchen goes dark and the reflected Montag is gone.

INT. MONTAG'S HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The bedroom, with en suite bathroom, one wall mirrored closets, and vanity.

MUSIC leaks from HEADPHONES somewhere in the dark.

Light seeps from the bottom of a bathroom door.

As Montag heads for the bathroom his foot kicks something across the floor.

He stops dead in his tracks.

He listens.

Leaky music.

CLICK his igniter flame breaks the night with color.

On the bed, his wife, music pumping into her ears, her eyes open nonreactive to the flame.

Dead?

MONTAG  
Mildred? Mildred!

A sound is BUILDING now overhead the ROAR of BOMBER JETS. It drowns out Montag's desperate cries trying to wake his wife.

Montag moves panicked, shakes his wife. Nothing.

On the floor a glint in the carpet.

A PILL BOTTLE.



The IGNITER goes out.

Blackness.

Then a vid screen built into the vanity mirror illuminates the room.

Montag pushes the EMERGENCY button on the screen.

An operator appears.

The BOMBER JETS and their ROAR are just abating.

OPERATOR

Please state the nature of your emergency.

Montag speaks but the last of the bomber jets drowns out his words.

OPERATOR

Could you please repeat your query.

MONTAG

My wife. She needs to get to the hospital.

OPERATOR

Please select from an option on the screen.

The vid screen displays a number of choices in symbol form.

Montag finds the pill bottle with skull and cross bones.

OPERATOR

Thank you. You have selected overdose. Is this correct?

MONTAG

Yes! Jesus please hurry. She needs to get to a hospital.

OPERATOR

A hospital visit is not required.

MONTAG

What?!

OPERATOR

I have dispatched technicians to your location.

MONTAG

How long?

OPERATOR

Based on current conditions their arrival will be within standard deviations.

MONTAG

What does that mean?

OPERATOR

Please remember to disengage any security measures on your home so our technicians can make a quick entry.

MONTAG

Is she going to be ok?

OPERATOR

Current med-info-stream has not provided enough data to be quantitative.

MONTAG

What the fuck does that mean?

OPERATOR

Thank you for your emergency patronage. We look forward to serving you again.

The screen now shows a readout of Mildred's vitals...not good.

Montag sits, rocking his wife in his arms.

Montag's reflection in the sliding glass door, walks towards Clarisse's house of laughter, light, and life across the street.

INT. MONTAG'S HOME - BEDROOM - LATER

Montag, waiting, his wife in his arms.

Two men enter the house, chatting idly.

TECHNICIAN ONE

(OS)

Hello? Medical Technicians.  
Helllloooo.

TECH TWO  
They said this was a single not a  
double right.

TECHNICIAN ONE  
Hello?

MONTAG  
In the bedroom! Hurry.

The Techs do *not* hurry. They look at each other with a "ya  
OK" eye raise.

As they enter Montag hands them the pill bottle.

Tech One takes it but doesn't even look at it before  
slipping it into his pocket.

TECH ONE  
Ok Mr. Montag we're gonna need you  
to stand back while we work.

TECH TWO  
I'll start the dialysis.

TECH ONE  
I had to vac last time.

TECH TWO  
We were gonna switch days not every  
call.

TECH ONE  
We never agreed to that. You  
suggested it but I never agreed.

TECH TWO  
This is why no one wants to work  
with you. Cause you whine.

TECH ONE  
Who said I whine? Was it Mike? I  
bet it was...

MONTAG  
(clearly upset)  
Please!

The Techs look at each other, shrug and get to work.

Positioning Mildred.

As Tech Two leans over Mildred and starts to put a tube down  
her throat Tech One lights up a cigarette.

MONTAG

Do you mind?

The Tech stretches back Mildreds eye lids.

TECH ONE

She'll never know.

Tech One finds a vein and fires up a dialysis machine.

TECH TWO

Got to clean em out both ways.

TECH ONE

Blood and Guts.

The Techs snicker, an inside joke.

MONTAG

That's my wife.

TECH ONE

(he's not)

Sorry.

MONTAG

Is she going to be all right?

TECH TWO

Better than new. Fresh blood and an empty stomach. Takes ten years off.

TECH ONE

Works wonders for a hangover.

TECH TWO

And miracles for a marriage.

TECH ONE

We can do you. Get all that poison out.

MONTAG

I don't think so.

TECH ONE

Suit yourself.

MONTAG

Why didn't they send a doctor?

The Techs look at each other in a "is this guy crazy" way.

TECH TWO

You don't need a doctor for this. Used to, but, these cases started to increase to the point where it just made more sense fiscally to build a machine, train an operator.

MONTAG

There's a lot of...this kind of thing going on?

TECH ONE

Figured in your line of work you'd see this kind of thing.

MONTAG

The police empty the houses before we get there. Or they run because of the Hounds.

TECH ONE

Well it happens more than you can imagine.

TECH TWO

Soon as we're done here we got five more in the queue.

TECH ONE

Consider yourself lucky. Anyone else would have been waiting at least a couple hours.

MONTAG

Anyone else?

TECH TWO

Firemen go to the front of the line.

MONTAG

So someone else is waiting because I'm a fireman?

TECH TWO

Well... Yeah.

Montag feels something building in him. Guilt? Pity?

The Techs start packing up.

Tech One looks around for someplace to put his cigarette that's burned down to the butt.

He pulls the pill bottle from his pocket removes the cap puts the but in it and returns the cap. The cigarette smoke fills the bottle as he sets it on the bedside table.

TECH ONE

She's good to go.

TECH TWO

Mr. Montag your wife is gonna be out for a while. I've placed a "monitor order" on her ear shell that will alert med services if there are any complications.

MONTAG

What do I owe you?

TECH ONE

For you, nothing.

With that the Techs are gone out the door.

Montag can hear them as they leave the house.

TECH ONE

Can you fucking believe that guy?

TECH TWO

Wonder how many times we'll be back here?

TECH ONE

I put the over under at 5 before she gets it right.

TECH TWO

I'll put 20 on the under.

TECH ONE

I'll take that action.

The sound of the front door sealing shut fills the silent house.

Montag sits on the bed.

MONTAG

Mildred?

Montag eyes a package of cigarettes left behind by one of the Techs.

Pulls one from the pack; lights it with his igniter.

Montag slides open the glass doors, traces the path of his reflection across the lawn to Clarisse's house. Full of life shining in the darkness.

EXT. CLARISSE'S HOUSE

Voices and laughter, drinking, eating.

Montag listens.

Smoking.

Tears fill his eyes.

Montag turns back towards his dark house. Sees the shimmering dew on the grass.

MONTAG

There it is.

Montag sits in the dewy grass and removes his shoes and socks. Lies down, lights another cigarette, and stares at the moon.

MONTAG

Where is he?

INT. MONTAG'S HOME - KITCHEN - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Mildred is cooking food. Eating. Music playing.

Alive.

Montag enters, he's slept in his uniform outside.

MILDRED

Busy night at work?

MONTAG

What?

MILDRED

You've been gone since yesterday morning.

MONTAG

I've been home.

MILDRED

Dressed for work early then?

MONTAG  
Are you feeling OK?

MILDRED  
I feel great. But I am hungry as hell.

MONTAG  
Last night...

MILDRED  
I feel like I didn't sleep very well. The windows and curtains were left open. You know I can't stand the fresh air. If you hadn't lost your pay gambling I'd have that fourth vid-wall up by now and there'd be no windows to worry about.

MONTAG  
Last night...

MILDRED  
Did we have a party? I feel hungover but I don't *feel* hung over.

MONTAG  
Yes. Just the guys from work.

MILDRED  
That explains it then. It also explains that uniform you're still wearing. And that five o'clock shadow.

Montag scratches up-hand at his stubbly neck.

MILDRED  
Jesus Montag you really do need to do something about yourself.

MONTAG  
Yeah...

As Montag stares up at the vent in the kitchen he absentmindedly lights a cigarette.

MILDRED  
Guy! Take that thing outside. Guy!



MONTAG  
(coming back to the world)  
Right.

MILDRED  
Idiot.

MONTAG  
Yeah.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS - LIGHT RAIN

Montag on the lawn.

Bare feet.

Clarisse in the middle of the street trying to catch rain drops in her mouth.

MONTAG  
You were right. There is dew on the grass in the morning.

CLARISSE  
(looking down surprised but unconcerned)  
Montag the Fireman.

MONTAG  
Just Guy.

CLARISSE  
(smiling at him now)  
Guy.

MONTAG  
What are you doing?

CLARISSE  
Catching raindrops. Gathering dandelions.

MONTAG  
What for?

CLARISSE  
Fun.

MONTAG  
No, the dandelions?

CLARISSE

It's the end of their season. I gather as many as I can and my uncle makes wine.

MONTAG

Wine from dandelions?

CLARISSE

They're good for all kinds of stuff.

MONTAG

Name another?

CLARISSE

Well you can have them in salads, make wine and....

MONTAG

And?

CLARISSE

They can tell you if you're in love.

Clarisse takes one of the dandelions and rubs it under her chin. She shows it to Montag.

CLARISSE

Is it yellow?

Montag can do nothing but look.

MONTAG

It is.

CLARISSE

That means I'm in love.

MONTAG

Isn't that something you would know?

CLARISSE

You can never be sure. But the dandelion knows. You try.

Before Montag can move Clarisse rubs his chin with the dandelion.

MONTAG

Well?

CLARISSE

(disappointed)

It seems you're not in love.

MONTAG

I am! I'm married.

CLARISSE

Dandelions do not lie.

MONTAG

You used it all up on your own chin.

CLARISSE

Maybe.

Montag is pissed now. This girl. So irritating with her bullshit craziness and her ideas and questions. But somehow still so...

MONTAG

What *is* it, exactly, that is wrong with you?

CLARISSE

That *is* a good question. I would say nothing. My psychiatrist "begs to differ". I'm going to see him this afternoon.

MONTAG

You need a psychiatrist.

CLARISSE

Don't we all?

MONTAG

(glancing at his own house)

I'm beginning to wonder.

CLARISSE

Would you like to come along?

MONTAG

No. I don't think so.

CLARISSE

You never know what you might learn about yourself.

MONTAG

You better not be late.

CLARISSE

I've upset you. Please forgive me  
Guy. Some people... Most people...  
don't know how to take me.

MONTAG

How should I take you?

CLARISSE

With a grain of salt. That's what  
my uncle says.

MONTAG

Your uncle again.

CLARISSE

He's full of sayings.

MONTAG

I have to meet this uncle of yours.

CLARISSE

What with you being a fireman I  
don't think he'd want to.

MONTAG

Does he have books?

CLARISSE

Have you forgiven me?

MONTAG

What? Yes of course.

CLARISSE

Good. Now. Did you give any thought  
to whether you're happy? About why  
you're a fireman? Or any of the  
other questions I've asked you?

MONTAG

Has your uncle told you how  
annoying you are?

CLARISSE

I'm surprised you still talk to me.  
No one else puts up with me at all  
other than my family. Most people  
just walk away shaking their heads.  
I'm not sure you're really a  
fireman. Not really anyways.

MONTAG

What am I then?

CLARISSE

I guess we'll find out when there's no more books.

MONTAG

You don't want to be late for your psychiatrist.

CLARISSE

I'll have to ask him what to make of you.

MONTAG

Go ahead.

CLARISSE

I might. You're definitely interesting enough. Maybe more than me. I'm just cray-Zee.

Clarisse spins around Montag and plants a quick kiss on his cheek and puts a dandelion in his shirt pocket.

She is gone down the street in a blur; disappearing around the corner.

Montag is left smiling, quizzical.

He pulls the dandelion from his pocket.

Rubs it on his chin and checks in the reflections of his front door.

Yellow.

INT. FIRE HALL - GARAGE - EVENING

Montag strolls through the open garage doors of the fire hall again stopping to let the orange tabby rub up against his leg.

A fireman is giving a tour to a grade 5 class. They've stopped in a corner of the garage area.

The fireman is showing the class the H.O.U.N.D resting in his area.

FIREMAN

Can anyone tell me what this is?

CHILD ONE

It's a Hound.

FIREMAN

That's right. He's in low power mode. But when we need to find someone he boots up. Should we wake him up?

CHILDREN

(in unison)

Yes!

FIREMAN

Alright. Let's program him to catch something. How about this basketball?

The fireman picks up a basketball from beside the Hound.

He enters some information into his arm readout.

FIREMAN

So what I've done is to program the Hound to treat this basketball as if it were a book hoarder.

The children and boo and hiss in unison.

FIREMAN

Everyone please just move against the wall.

The fireman pushes some more buttons on his wrist readout and the Hound springs to life. Eyes squarely targeting the ball.

FIREMAN

Now the Hound will track this ball until I let him loose.

The fireman tosses the ball up and down into the air. The Hound like a normal dog never takes his eyes off it.

FIREMAN

Ready?

The children all start to cheer.

The fireman throws the ball in a high arc across the garage.

## FIREMAN

Go!

In a split second the Hound is moving tracking the ball through the air.

If you blink you'll miss it.

As the ball starts its downward arc the Hound has launched itself into the air.

It takes the ball out of the air in one fluid motion continuing the same arc as the ball landing. It cocoons the ball.

From it's tail a sharp probe appears.

The tail snaps around and embeds the sharp probe into the ball.

BOOM! The ball explodes.

The Hound inspects the destroyed ball quizzically as the children all hoot and holler and cheer.

The fireman pushes a button "kennel" on his wrist readout and the Hound turns and walks towards its base.

Montag is not laughing. He is not enjoying what he is seeing.

As the Hound passes Montag it stops for a brief second, scans him, eyes him.

MONTAG  
(to the Hound)  
Kennel.

The Hound just stares.

MONTAG  
Kennel! Now!

The Hound gives a LOW GROWL then obeys.

As it moves to its kennel it gives Montag a last glance over its shoulder.

Montag grabs the fireman's pole and it whisks him up through the ceiling-

INT. FIRE HALL - UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

-through the hole with a slight hop he lands on the floor.  
He turns to look back down the hole checking for the Hound.  
Nothing.

Across the room firemen STONEMAN and BLACK play cards with  
CAPTAIN BEATTY.

Beatty notices Montag staring down the hole.

BEATTY  
Drop something Montag?

MONTAG  
He doesn't like me.

BEATTY  
Who doesn't?

MONTAG  
The Hound. He growled at me. Just  
now.

Stoneman and Black give each other an eye roll and go back  
to their cards.

BEATTY  
The best safety lies in fear. It  
doesn't think about you one way or  
another.

MONTAG  
I'm not so sure. It seems to enjoy  
its job.

BEATTY  
Doing your job well makes everyone  
happy.

MONTAG  
I guess. Still, it growled at me.  
And it's not the first time.

BEATTY  
Come, play cards Montag. You're  
safe up here. I'll call technical  
in the morning have them give the  
Hound a good going over.



Beatty drops his last card to the chagrin of Stoneman and Black and hauls in the chips. Gets up and walks over to the hole.

BEATTY  
Seems to be sleeping.

MONTAG  
I know that but...

BEATTY  
But what?

MONTAG  
What if someone, I don't know,  
somehow changed my recorded  
bio-sign, just enough so it doesn't  
like me.

BEATTY  
Why would anyone do that?

INSERT: Quick shot of the vent from Montag's home.

MONTAG  
You know what these guys are like  
always joking around.

BEATTY  
Maybe, but they wouldn't go that  
far.

MONTAG  
What do you think it thinks about  
down there waiting for its next  
target?

BEATTY  
It doesn't think Montag.

MONTAG  
It has A.I. That's what makes it  
such a perfect machine.

BEATTY  
A ruse that appears intelligent.  
It's less smart than the regular  
dogs we used to have before the  
culling.

MONTAG  
Exactly they seemed so obedient and  
they turned.

BEATTY

They were starving we were all  
starving at the beginning of the  
war. They had to go. They couldn't  
be trusted any more.

MONTAG

What will we do when these ones  
turn? Why do we even keep them  
around? No one runs any more.

BEATTY

If I didn't know you better Montag  
I would say you're sounding  
paranoid.

MONTAG

Sorry Captain. It was a rough  
night. Mildred she...

BEATTY

It was in the morning reports.  
She'll be fine.

MONTAG

I just... It just feels like  
something's changing.

BEATTY

Play some cards, have a drink,  
you'll feel better.

MONTAG

Stoneman, deal me in.

BEATTY

(with a smirk)

Unless you do have something to be  
paranoid about.

INT. FIRE HALL - MUCH LATER

Montag sleeping on a bunk.

A commotion downstairs.

Montag raises his head through the Fire hall down the hole.

Firemen are gathered around the Hound's kennel.

They smoke and cheer and make bets.

One of them pulls the large orange tabby cat from a box.

BLACK

You are a sick son of a bitch  
Stoneman.

STONEMAN

Time for Thom here to earn his  
keep.

BLACK

I'll give you twenty to one on the  
cat.

Montag stands disconcerted.

MONTAG

Not Thom *again*.

STONEMAN

The rats are boring, too easy.

BLACK

I'll take the Hound. He just got a  
fresh tune up.

MONTAG

I'll put a week's pay on the cat.

BEATTY

(disapprovingly)  
*Montag*.

STONEMAN

Mrs. Montag would not be happy if I  
took your money again, remember  
last time.

MONTAG

*My* money is on the cat.

Stoneman looks to Beatty who gives a disapproving glance.

STONEMAN

Sorry Montag can't do it.

MONTAG

Two weeks pay.

Stoneman looks to the captain who now gives him a "fuck it  
if he won't listen" look.

STONEMAN

Easy money.

BLACK  
I'll take that action.

MONTAG  
Done.

Stoneman and Black ready the cat in a cage they've mocked up from stuff around the hall.

The Hound is booted up and set to the ready.

BLACK  
All ready Captain.

BEATTY  
Very good. When the whistle blows.

Beatty pulls a whistle attached to a string from his breast pocket.

Thom knows exactly what is about to happen. He's no dummy.

Beatty pushes some buttons on his wrist readout the Hound stands, eyes the cat.

BEATTY  
Ready.

Stoneman stands ready to pull the door on the cat's cage.

STONEMAN  
Ready.

BLEET! Beatty blows the whistle.

Thom and the Hound are let loose.

The chase is on.

Thom slips in and out of the firetrucks and other apparatus about the garage.

The Hound uses its tail to try to pin the cat. Closer each time.

Thom makes it to the top of one of the fire trucks.

The Hound ever closer.

Thom leaps off the front of the truck towards the open garage door.

The Hound makes a leap that it seems will intersect the cat.

As the Hound passes through the threshold of the door his eyes lose their glow. System shutdown.

Thom lands knowing he's free.

The Hound crashes down beside him.

Thom stops, turns, walks back to where the Hound has landed gives it a sniff, takes a few steps, then lays down in that "I'm just gonna stop right here as if it was on my schedule" kind of way cats do.

BEATTY

Thom is the victor. The spoils go to Montag.

Montag stands with a shit eating grin on his face, left arm extended waiting for Stoneman and Black to pay up.

Montag is now on their shit list and will be for a while.

Stoneman and Black head up through the hole.

BEATTY

Lucky night for you Montag.

MONTAG

No. I knew there was no way.

BEATTY

I've never seen a cat win in all my years.

MONTAG

Thom's got something special. I can see it in his eye.

BEATTY

Wisdom.

MONTAG

Maybe, ya. A glimmer, Clarisse has it.

BEATTY

Clarisse?

MONTAG

A girl, lives across the street from me. Crazy.

Beatty punches in some instructions on his wrist readout the Hound awakens. Presses the kennel command.

As the Hound returns to his kennel he passes right by Montag without giving him a second thought.

BEATTY

Didn't growl at you this time?

MONTAG

I swear...

BEATTY

You can head home early, the next shift will be in soon enough. Get your wife that fourth screen she wants with your winnings.

MONTAG

I think I'll buy the cat a fish.

Beatty heads up to the pole and disappears.

Montag walks through the garage door and kneels down to pet the cat.

MONTAG

Nice work. They won't fuck with you again. Too expensive. But avoid them just the same.

The cat pays no attention to anything Montag has to say just rubs himself over and around Montag.

HISS!

The cat is doing that back arch freak out sideways stance that cats do.

Montag turns-

-the Hound has edged itself to the threshold of the door inches from Montag scanning him taking him in.

It pushes its mechanical snout outside the garage pushing against the invisible boundary like a dog trying to stretch a metal chain.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - SUBWAY EXIT - LATER

Clarisse waits for Montag who floats up the subway escalator.

MONTAG

You should be in school.

CLARISSE

I should be. But here I am all the same.

MONTAG

That doesn't answer my question.

CLARISSE

You didn't ask me a question.

MONTAG

*Why* aren't you in school?

CLARISSE

I ask too many questions. So they thought it might be a good idea if I just didn't go any more.

MONTAG

I can't imagine.

CLARISSE

Well I have lots of questions.

MONTAG

I've noticed.

CLARISSE

They say I'm anti social. Which is strange because I just want to *be* social. They don't like it that I have no friends.

MONTAG

Aren't we friends?

CLARISSE

*Appropriate* friends.

MONTAG

So what do you do all day when you're not waiting for me?

CLARISSE

Mostly I ride the subway, listen to people, take their pictures.

MONTAG

Take their pictures?

CLARISSE

My uncle gave me this.

MONTAG

That doesn't look like a camera.

CLARISSE

It has a camera but does other things too, or at least it used to. My uncle said you used to be able to talk to people on it and connect to other phones or computers or something. He said these things are what started all the trouble. It does video too. There's some music on it that my Uncle listened to when he was younger than me.

MONTAG

Be careful with that. Portable devices are contraband.

CLARISSE

You have a portable device. I never see you without it.

MONTAG

Firemen are an exception, the wrist readout is required.

CLARISSE

Can I be an exception?

MONTAG

You've got that covered I think.

CLARISSE

You won't tell on me?

MONTAG

It can be our secret.

CLARISSE

Can you keep a secret?

INSERT: shot of the vent

MONTAG

Yes.

CLARISSE

Now you tell me a secret so we're even.

Montag leans close to Clarisse and whispers in her ear. Her eyes grow wide.



INT. MONTAG'S HOME - VID ROOM - LATER

The house is the same as it always is. Mildred in her vid room.

MONTAG

I'm home.

Mildred takes no notice. She's conversing with people on the screens.

MONTAG

I have good news.

MILDRED

That's nice dear.

One of the persons on the screens seems upset about this off script conversation.

MILDRED

(to the other participants)

I apologize for my husband's rudeness. Can we take a break for 5 minutes while I deal with him?

A break is agreed to....

MONTAG

Big news.

MILDRED

Well I hope so. We were rehearsing for the big show tomorrow night.

MONTAG

You can get that fourth screen that you wanted.

MILDRED

Did you finally get promoted to captain? Did that horrible Beatty finally burn himself up?

MONTAG

No. Beatty's fine.

MILDRED

Then how?

MONTAG

Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

MILDRED

What's that supposed to mean?

MONTAG

Forget it. Check our account. Get your fourth wall.

MILDRED

Well it's about time. It's been so embarrassing having to work with the three wall crowd it's really limited the vid-plays I can participate in. Not to mention *the people...*

MONTAG

Well now you've got it so you should be happy.

MILDRED

Happy? *Happy?* What is that supposed to mean?

MONTAG

Nothing. Never mind.

MILDRED

Sometimes Montag I really wonder what goes through your head.

Montag walks away defeated, deflated.

INT. MONTAG'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Montag pours himself a drink.

In the window his reflection stands shaking his head.

MONTAG

(to his reflection)

What?

Montag's reflection holds up a book Shakespeare's Tragedies.

Puts a finger to his lips in a shhhh motion.

Montag glances around, his wife won't be out of that room for hours.

He reaches up to the vent and twists the screw.

The vent swings down.

Montag's hand searches.

He pulls out a book. Shakespeare's Tragedies.

Page upon page is earmarked.

Scraps of paper book mark endless pages.

He flips through finding the spot he wants.

He recites for his reflection.

MONTAG

Into what dangers would you lead me  
That you would have me seek into  
myself for that which is not in me.

Reflected Montag follows along. Smiling.

MONTAG

Therefore, good Brutus, be prepared  
to hear. And since you cannot see  
yourself so well as by reflection,  
I, your glass will modestly  
discover to yourself that of  
yourself which you yet know not of.

Montag puts the book back.

Pours another drink.

MONTAG

(to his reflection)

You know it all ends badly for  
Brutus and the rest of those  
*honorable men?*

Montag's reflection starts searching furiously through his text.

MONTAG

I know who I am.

As Montag's hand moves towards the light switch-

MONTAG

Fireman; Montag, Guy. Four. Five.  
One.

-his reflection shakes his head vigorously the lights switch off extinguishing the reflected world.

EXT. MONTAG'S STREET - NEXT MORNING

Montag exits the house. Heading to work.

Clarisse is outside shaking a tree.

CLARISSE

Montag!

She's heading his direction-

MONTAG

Good morning.

CLARISSE

Isn't it though, the warm breeze,  
Indian summer my uncle says.

MONTAG

(being short now)  
Sorry I don't have time this  
morning.

CLARISSE

(disappointed)  
Oh. OK. I'll see you at the subway  
tonight.

MONTAG

I may have to work late.

CLARISSE

That's OK. I like waiting. Feeling  
the wind blow up the stairs as the  
trains fly through below.

MONTAG

You shouldn't wait I don't know how  
long I might be.

CLARISSE

Well I'll just wait later.

MONTAG

(turning now angry)  
Don't wait for me. Why is that so  
hard to understand? I don't want  
you to wait for me. I don't want to  
hear any more of your questions.  
Your Uncle's sayings. I just want  
to be left alone.

CLARISSE

Well I'll see you tomorrow then.  
Hope you feel better.

Montag shakes his head. This girl just does not get it.

INT. FIRE HALL - UPSTAIRS - LATER

The men sit playing cards smoking, drinking, the room full of smoke.

The game grinds to a halt; it's Montag's turn but he's lost somewhere.

STONEMAN

Your play Montag.

Montag sits and stares.

BLACK

Montag, earth to Montag.

MONTAG

Sorry. Is it my turn?

BEATTY

Something bothering you Montag? Not thinking about the Hound again are you?

MONTAG

I've been thinking about the man last month, whose library we burned. What happened to him?

STONEMAN

They took him away, obviously.

MONTAG

Is it?

BLACK

Is it what?

MONTAG

Obvious. It's not obvious to me.

BEATTY

They all go to the same place.

MONTAG

What place is that?

BEATTY

It makes no difference.

MONTAG

But he had so many books, clearly on display, just out in the open.

BEATTY

Unfortunately the rich can still buy certain allowances.

MONTAG

But why now, why did we get sent there now? Clearly he's been hoarding for a long time.

BEATTY

Perhaps the man failed to fulfill his *obligations*, perhaps he got too big for his britches. Our betters are filthy animals Montag, to take on their thinking is useless.

MONTAG

But everyone is equal. That's fundamental.

BEATTY

Do you believe that Montag? Are you equal? You're a fireman you get things that others don't get, special treatment. You can walk the street any time of day, you can act with impunity, you have the power to burn without warrant any home, house, domicile, boathouse and or shithouse. You could burn Stoneman or Black's house or they could burn yours just on suspicion.

MONTAG

I've tried to imagine that. What it would be like to have our homes burned out.

BLACK

Why would we burn our own homes? We don't have any books.

MONTAG

But what if we did?

STONEMAN  
You got some?

MONTAG  
No.

BEATTY  
Then you have nothing to worry  
about. Now play your card.

They play a few hands of card in silence.

MONTAG  
Captain. Was it always like this?

BEATTY  
Like what, Stoneman losing at  
cards? As long as I can remember.

STONEMAN  
Can't remember it any other way  
myself.

MONTAG  
No. Our work. The Firemen. The  
Burning. I mean once upon a time...

BEATTY  
Montag. What kind of talk is that?

Stoneman and Black are oblivious to the *kind* of talk Beatty  
is referring.

MONTAG  
In the old days, before houses  
where fireproof. Didn't firemen  
used to put out fires, not start  
them?

Stoneman and Black are laughing now at the ridiculousness of  
the words coming out of Montag's mouth.

MONTAG  
(personally offended)  
No it's true. How else do you  
explain why there are all these  
books? They're not making more. So  
there must have been thousands or  
hundreds of thousands at least?  
Maybe millions!

Stoneman and Black have stopped laughing now, they see the  
logic in Montag's argument. Frankly they've never thought  
about it. Beatty sees that they see it.

STONEMAN  
(looking for reassurance)  
Captain?

The Alarm sounds ending the discussion.

The men run through the fire hall, suit up, drop down the pole, and load onto the firetruck.

EXT. CITY - FIRE HALL CONTINUOUS

The truck pulls out of the garage, lights flashing, sirens erupting. Not that there's anyone to warn about their journey. The streets are deserted as they are every night.

We follow the truck as it makes its way through the empty city streets at incredible speed.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

The truck has come to a stop in front of a house that has no business being where it is among low rise factory buildings and refineries. It is a relic of the past, something that refused to move on, a fossil.

The drones rise from the truck to document the scene, the Hounds patrol the area.

MONTAG  
How is this house *here*?

BEATTY  
(Surveying the scene)  
It *is* odd, isn't it?

Stoneman and Black approach.

BEATTY  
Stoneman, Black you take the back, cut me a couple nice ventilation holes will you. Montag inside, vape the entire house I have a bit of a chill tonight. See if you cant help warm me up.

Montag heads towards the house.



INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Inside the house, complete darkness. The windows have been painted over black.

Montag touches his wrist readout and searchlights spring to life on his uniform and helmet.

Stacks of newspapers fill the first floor.

Montag walks the first floor tossing capsules into the center of each room where they float in the air before bursting and filling the rooms with vapor.

Montag moves to the second floor.

Endless stacks of books, magazines, ancient phone books.

Holes in the plaster, water stains on the ceiling and walls.

Montag pulls more capsules from his belt, tossing them into the bedrooms.

BEATTY

(on radio in Montag's helmet)

Montag I need you to come downstairs.

MONTAG

Almost done here captain. Was just going to initiate ignition.

BEATTY

Now! Montag.

Montag starts down the stairs.

EXT./INT. PORCH OF HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

An old woman stands on the porch, wet from the vapor capsules that Montag set loose.

Stoneman, Black and Beatty are standing on the street away from the house.

Two Hounds guard them hunched low ready to spring at the woman, growling their mechanical growl.

Montag steps out of the door past the woman and stops.

He disengages his helmet.

MONTAG

Miss, you need to go stand with the men down there. Your house is to be burned out.

BEATTY

(to the woman)

Miss step down from the house.

WOMAN

(yelling at Beatty)

Play the man, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.

BEATTY

(deflating)

*Shit...*

Beatty knows this will not end well.

The woman turns and walks back into the house.

BEATTY

(to Montag)

Go in and bring her out Montag.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The woman is heading up the stairs she moves faster than Montag whose suit slows him down.

MONTAG

Miss. Please. Everything will be alright. It's just books.

WOMAN

You can't have them.

MONTAG

You can come with me. You'll be safe.

WOMAN

Can I bring my books?

MONTAG

No.

WOMAN

Thank you anyways.

MONTAG

Please just come with me. I have  
books you can read.

The woman reaches to a bookcase and selects a slim volume placing one hand on Montag's shoulder she hands him the book with the other.

*Suddenly* the woman takes two steps back.

Montag sees a silver glint in her hand.

He puts his hand to where his badge mounts into his suit.

Empty!

The woman now is laughing hysterically.

She raises the igniter up clicking it.

Montag moves to activate his helmet.

CLICK! CLICK! BOOM!

*Super bad ass slow motion here...*

We see a close up of the spark arch between the salamander tongues and pull away as the flames roll out through the air from the badge, engulfing Montag and filling the house.

*Slowly come out of slow motion through the next block of text.*

Montag's eyes are wild with fear as his body is blown off the landing of the stairs threshold of the front door.

Outside Stoneman, Black and Beatty, are stunned as the house explodes and crumples in on itself contained within the fireproof wrapping that has held it up all these years.

Beatty laughs maniacally amazed at what he's witnessed.

BEATTY

Go get Montag.

Stoneman and Black tear through the debris their exo-suits make the work easy as they pull away huge parts of the house.

Finally they dig Montag out and drag him away from the burning debris.

Montag lays at the Beatty's feet unconscious. His grip still crushing the book.

Beatty touches Montag's wrist readout and Montag's helmet folds away.

BEATTY  
Montag? Montag!

Montag slowly comes around.

MONTAG  
Captain?

STONEMAN  
Suit saved your ass!

BEATTY  
Get him in the truck.

INT./EXT. FIRE TRUCK - LATER

The firetruck heads back to the station.

The men sit in silence staring out the open windows into the street.

MONTAG  
Master Ridley...

BEATTY  
Play the man.

MONTAG  
What did that mean?

BEATTY  
She was quoting a man named Latimer who was burned alive for heresy in 1555. Another man who wouldn't follow the rules.

The men go back to staring at the rows of houses their windows all flickering blue.

INT. MONTAG'S HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

Montag sits at the kitchen table, in his undershirt revealing his tattooed arms and shoulders. His dress blue shirt hangs on the back of the chair.

Drinking, smoking, the sliding glass door to the yard left open just a crack.

Montag flips through the Shakespeare collection, stopping at each play's fanciful title page.

Montag suddenly becomes aware of a sound outside, hydraulics, whirl of motors. A Hound!

Montag panicked quickly tucks the book in the back of his pants, slips his shirt on, walks to the door, he can see little more than his reflection.

He flicks off the lights.

His reflection is replaced by Beatty, cigar in hand, a Hound on either side.

Montag freezes for a moment before he slides the door open.

BEATTY

I would give all my fame for a shot  
of that whiskey.

MONTAG

Sure.

Beatty touches his wrist readout and the Hounds disappear into the night.

They sit at the table.

BEATTY

Men should be what they seem  
Montag. And you don't seem  
yourself.

MONTAG

(exasperated)  
That woman today.

BEATTY

(trims and lights his cigar)  
You see now why we must burn the  
books?

MONTAG

They're just books.

BEATTY

We used to give the trainees a  
selection of books they were  
required to read to show them how  
easily they can be confused, how  
quickly they would begin arguing  
with one another. It was all the  
convincing they needed. I always  
argued against cancelling it. But  
then Mead happened and that was the

BEATTY

end of that. I know you've been having doubts recently. It took a lot longer than I thought. It happens to all of us. But after what you saw today *surely* you understand.

MONTAG

Books can't do that.

BEATTY

No not the books alone, nor even the words. It's the ideas and unfortunately those don't burn.

MONTAG

But to burn yourself up?

BEATTY

(grows angrier more distant throughout)

Self immolation, that too, is nothing new. The liberals always like to make such a fuss, put on such a show. Hippies, Buddhists, Draft Dodgers, Gandhi, King, always the *victims*. They try to guilt you, to embarrass you, to rob you of your own humanity. So often in the past it worked. Then the wars came, the starvation, the fighting, the dogs, there was nothing left. It was their own guilt you see. The pinkos had given it all away. Everything had to be fair, to be even, to be inclusive and accommodating. Language scrubbed clean, it was double think. You see Montag, only those with too much can be liberal, yet they expect the same charity from all. Pathetic. They try to make you weak, to take your power, with their...*morality*. First they twist the good into the bad then they make you guilty and it rusts out your conscience. They did this with ideas, books, schools, in the universities they infected the youth and turned them into an army of guilt ridden mindless zealots. When *it* started I used to never

BEATTY  
 even bother to clear the houses.  
 You got to go many years without  
 seeing what we used to see every  
 day. Fuck them Montag, let them all  
 burn.

Beatty stares off into the middle distance, taking a few  
 long puffs of his cigar.

Beatty comes back to the here and now.

BEATTY  
 Sorry Montag you were saying?

MONTAG  
 Suicide. It seems like an  
 impossible choice.

BEATTY  
 (nodding towards the back of  
 Montag's chair)  
 Your friend The Prince of Denmark  
 thought so too.

Montag pulls the book from behind his back places it on the  
 table.

Beatty flips through the dog eared pages.

BEATTY  
 Let me guess you picked this up at  
 that fire out in the country that  
 you were asking about. What was the  
 name of that family? DeVille, De...

MONTAG  
 DeVere.

BEATTY  
 Right. He had a good run.

MONTAG  
 Will you turn me in?

BEATTY  
 To whom? Should I sound the alarm?  
 Call the Hounds? Will I have you  
 burn out your own home?

MONTAG  
 I would.

BEATTY  
Of that I have no doubt.

Beatty looks around the room slowly eyeing the open vent.

BEATTY  
There are more I take it?

MONTAG  
Yes.

BEATTY  
Good ones?

MONTAG  
I'm not sure.

BEATTY  
How would you know?

Montag's not sure if he should feel insulted.  
It's alright Montag. Every good  
fireman gets curious. As they  
should. You must know your enemy  
after all. Which reminds me. Watch  
out for Stoneman and Black. They're  
zealots which makes them dangerous.  
So no more talk like the other day  
in the fire hall OK?

MONTAG  
OK.

BEATTY  
If it helps your newfound  
conscience you will find the books  
themselves to be punishment enough.

Beatty rises from his chair, slings back the rest of his  
drink, touches his wrist calling the Hounds which quickly  
appear at the door.

BEATTY  
And Montag.

MONTAG  
Yes.

BEATTY  
Do see that you burn them when  
you're done.



MONTAG

Yes sir.

Beatty reaches into his coat pocket pulls out Montag's badge handing it to him.

BEATTY

Right! The reason I stopped by. I had my Hounds dig through the wreckage to find it.

Montag takes the igniter and stares at it in his hand.

When he looks up Beatty is gone.

He closes the door and collapses, crying.

FADE TO RED WITH BLACK 451 BLOCK LETTERS ON SCREEN