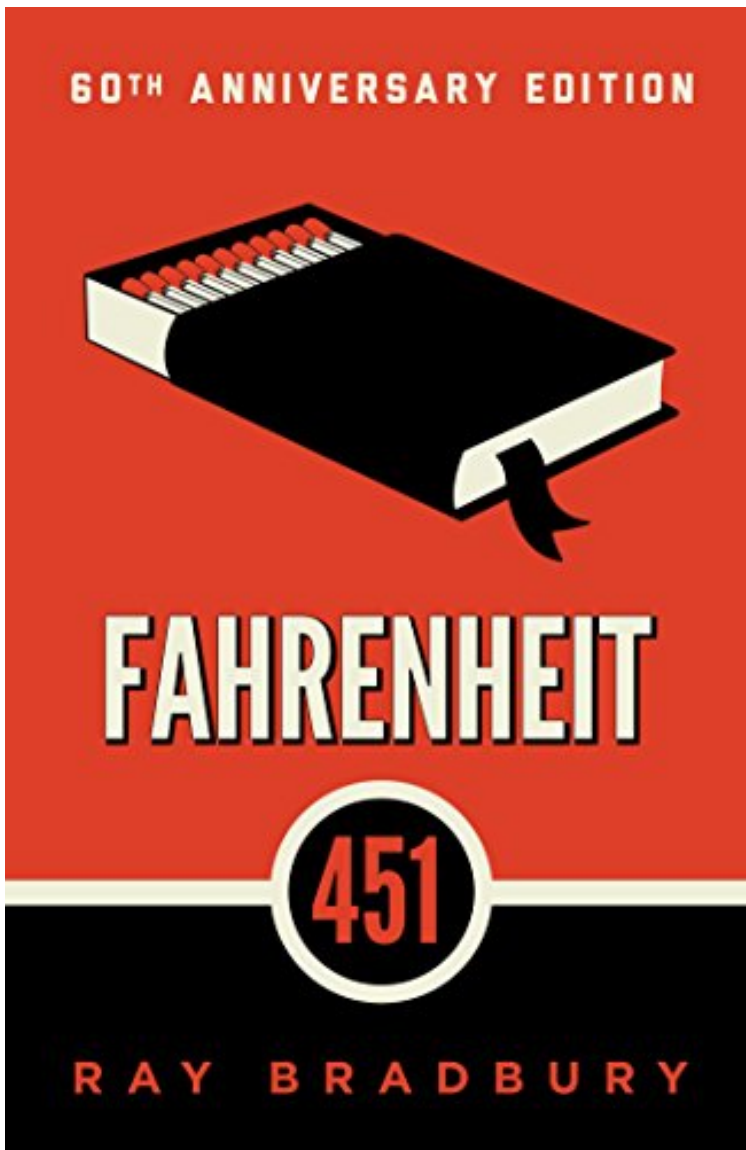


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# Fahrenheit 451: A Novel (English Edition)



*Par Ray Bradbury*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurRay Bradburys internationally acclaimed novel Fahrenheit 451 is a masterwork of twentieth-century literature set in a bleak, dystopian future. Ray Bradburys internationally acclaimed novel Fahrenheit 451 is a masterwork of twentieth-century literature set in a bleak, dystopian future. Guy Montag is a fireman. In his world, where television rules and literature is on the brink of extinction, firemen start fires rather than put them out. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden. Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television family. But then he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people

didn't live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television. When Mildred attempts suicide and Clarisse suddenly disappears, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known. He starts hiding books in his home, and when his pilfering is discovered, the fireman has to run for his life. In Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury's classic, frightening vision of the future, firemen don't put out fires--they start them in order to burn books. Bradbury's vividly painted society holds up the appearance of happiness as the highest goal--a place where trivial information is good, and knowledge and ideas are bad. Fire Captain Beatty explains it this way, "Give the people contests they win by remembering the words to more popular songs.... Don't give them slippery stuff like philosophy or sociology to tie things up with. That way lies melancholy." Guy Montag is a book-burning fireman undergoing a crisis of faith. His wife spends all day with her television "family," imploring Montag to work harder so that they can afford a fourth TV wall. Their dull, empty life sharply contrasts with that of his next-door neighbor Clarisse, a young girl thrilled by the ideas in books, and more interested in what she can see in the world around her than in the mindless chatter of the tube. When Clarisse disappears mysteriously, Montag is moved to make some changes, and starts hiding books in his home. Eventually, his wife turns him in, and he must answer the call to burn his secret cache of books. After fleeing to avoid arrest, Montag winds up joining an outlaw band of scholars who keep the contents of books in their heads, waiting for the time society will once again need the wisdom of literature. Bradbury--the author of more than 500 short stories, novels, plays, and poems, including *The Martian Chronicles* and *The Illustrated Man*--is the winner of many awards, including the Grand Master Award from the Science Fiction Writers of America. Readers ages 13 to 93 will be swept up in the harrowing suspense of *Fahrenheit 451*, and no doubt will join the hordes of Bradbury fans worldwide. --Neil Roseman

Extrait It was a pleasure to burn. It was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and changed. With the brass nozzle in his fists, with this great python spitting its venomous kerosene upon the world, the blood pounded in his head, and his hands were the hands of some amazing conductor playing all the symphonies of blazing and burning to bring down the tatters and charcoal ruins of history. With his symbolic helmet numbered 451 on his stolid head, and his eyes all orange flame with the thought of what came next, he flicked the igniter and the house jumped up in a gorging fire that burned the evening sky red and yellow and black. He strode in a swarm of fireflies. He wanted above all, like the old joke, to shove a marshmallow on a stick in the furnace, while the flapping pigeon-winged books died on the porch and lawn of the house. While the books went up in sparkling whirls and blew away on a wind turned dark with burning. Montag grinned the fierce grin of all men singed and driven back by flame. He knew that when he returned to the firehouse, he might wink at himself, a minstrel man, burnt-corked, in the mirror. Later, going to sleep, he would feel the fiery smile still gripped by his face muscles, in the dark. It never went away, that smile, it never ever went away, as long as he remembered. He hung up his black beetle-colored helmet and shined it; he hung his flameproof jacket neatly; he showered luxuriously, and then, whistling, hands in pockets, walked across the upper floor of the fire station and fell down the hole. At the last moment, when disaster seemed positive, he pulled his hands from his pockets and broke his fall by grasping the golden pole. He slid to a squeaking halt, the heels one inch from the concrete floor downstairs. He walked out of the fire station and along the midnight street toward the subway where the silent air-propelled train slid soundlessly down its lubricated flue in the earth and let him out with a great puff of warm air onto the cream-tiled escalator rising to the suburb. Whistling, he let the escalator waft him into the still night air. He walked toward the corner, thinking little at all about nothing in particular. Before he reached the corner, however, he slowed as if a wind had sprung up from nowhere, as if someone had called his name. The last few nights he had had the most uncertain feelings about the sidewalk just around the corner here, moving in the starlight toward his house. He had felt that a moment prior to his making the turn, someone had been there. The air seemed charged with a special calm as if someone had waited there, quietly, and only a moment before he came, simply turned to a shadow and let him through. Perhaps his nose detected a faint perfume, perhaps the skin on the backs of his hands, on his face, felt the temperature rise at this one spot where a person's standing might raise the immediate atmosphere ten degrees for an instant.

There was no understanding it. Each time he made the turn, he saw only the white, unused, buckling sidewalk, with perhaps, on one night, something vanishing swiftly across a lawn before he could focus his eyes or speak. But now tonight, he slowed almost to a stop. His inner mind, reaching out to turn the corner for him, had heard the faintest whisper. Breathing? Or was the atmosphere compressed merely by someone standing very quietly there, waiting? He turned the corner. The autumn leaves blew over the moonlit pavement in such a way as to make the girl who was moving there seem fixed to a sliding walk, letting the

motion of the wind and the leaves carry her forward. Her head was half bent to watch her shoes stir the circling leaves. Her face was slender and milk-white, and in it was a kind of gentle hunger that touched over everything with tireless curiosity. It was a look, almost, of pale surprise; the dark eyes were so fixed to the world that no move escaped them. Her dress was white and it whispered. He almost thought he heard the motion of her hands as she walked, and the infinitely small sound now, the white stir of her face turning when she discovered she was a moment away from a man who stood in the middle of the pavement waiting. The trees overhead made a great sound of letting down their dry rain. The girl stopped and looked as if she might pull back in surprise, but instead stood regarding Montag with eyes so dark and shining and alive that he felt he had said something quite wonderful. But he knew his mouth had only moved to say hello, and then when she seemed hypnotized by the salamander on his arm and the phoenix disc on his chest, he spoke again. Of course, he said, you're our new neighbor, aren't you? And you must be she raised her eyes from his professional symbols the fireman. Her voice trailed off. How oddly you say that. I'd have known it with my eyes shut, she said, slowly. What's the smell of kerosene? My wife always complains, he laughed. You never wash it off completely. No, you don't, she said, in awe. He felt she was walking in a circle about him, turning him end for end, shaking him quietly, and emptying his pockets, without once moving herself. Kerosene, he said, because the silence had lengthened, is nothing but perfume to me. Does it seem like that, really? Of course. Why not? She gave herself time to think of it. I don't know. She turned to face the sidewalk going toward their homes. Do you mind if I walk back with you? I'm Clarisse McClellan. Clarisse. Guy Montag. Come along. What are you doing out so late wandering around? How old are you? They walked in the warm-cool blowing night on the silvered pavement and there was the faintest breath of fresh apricots and strawberries in the air, and he looked around and realized this was quite impossible, so late in the year. There was only the girl walking with him now, her face bright as snow in the moonlight, and he knew she was working his questions around, seeking the best answers she could possibly give. Well, she said, I'm seventeen and I'm crazy. My uncle says the two always go together. When people ask your age, he said, always say seventeen and insane. Isn't this a nice time of night to walk? I like to smell things and look at things, and sometimes stay up all night, walking, and watch the sun rise. They walked on again in silence and finally she said, thoughtfully, You know, I'm not afraid of you at all. He was surprised. Why should you be? So many people are. Afraid of firemen, I mean. But you're just a man, after all . . . He saw himself in her eyes, suspended in two shining drops of bright water, himself dark and tiny, in fine detail, the lines about his mouth, everything there, as if her eyes were two miraculous bits of violet amber that might capture and hold him intact. Her face, turned to him now, was fragile milk crystal with a soft and constant light in it. It was not the hysterical light of electricity but what? But the strangely comfortable and rare and gently flattering light of the candle. One time, as a child, in a power failure, his mother had found and lit a last candle and there had been a brief hour of rediscovery, of such illumination that space lost its vast dimensions and grew comfortably around them, and they, mother and son, alone, transformed, hoping that the power might not come on again too soon . . . And then Clarisse McClellan said: Do you mind if I ask? How long've you worked at being a fireman? Since I was twenty, ten years ago. Do you ever read any of the books you burn? He laughed. That's against the law! Oh. Of course. It's fine work. Monday burn Millay, Wednesday Whitman, Friday Faulkner, burn 'em to ashes, then burn the ashes. That's our official slogan. They walked still farther and the girl said, Is it true that long ago firemen put fires out instead of going to start them? No. Houses have always been fireproof, take my word for it. Strange. I heard once that a long time ago houses used to burn by accident and they needed firemen to stop the flames. He laughed. She glanced quickly over. Why are you laughing? I don't know. He started to laugh again and stopped. Why? You laugh when I haven't been funny and you answer right off. You never stop to think what I've asked you. He stopped walking. You are an odd one, he said, looking at her. Haven't you any respect? I don't mean to be insulting. It's just I love to watch people too much, I guess. Well, doesn't this mean anything to you? He tapped the numerals 451 stitched on his char-colored sleeve. Yes, she whispered. She increased her pace. Have you ever watched the jet cars racing on the boulevards down that way? You're changing the subject! I sometimes think drivers don't know what grass is, or flowers, because they never see them slowly, she said. 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 a highway once. He drove forty miles an hour and they jailed him for two days. Isn't that funny, and sad, too?