
Fahrenheit 451 By Ray Bradbury: Short Description

In Fahrenheit 451 Captain Beatty describes education as useless unless it is teaching someone something that they actually need. The people in their society no longer have use for English, math, and other subjects so he sees it as useless to know them. This is proven when he says, "Why to learn anything saves pressing buttons, pulling switches, fitting nuts and bolts?" (Bradbury 54). This proves his point of view of education is very different from what we learn and is, I think, not virtuous. I feel that learning is crucial to the development and is what helps make your personality. On page 55, Beatty talks about how learning makes people unhappy and rather knowing all is what makes people feel smart. While I do not agree with what he thinks should be taught, I do think that there is some truth to this statement. In our society, students strive to get good grades because that is what pleases them. They often become unhappy when they receive bad grades and stress about the work required to get good grades. Students feel happy and accomplished when they "know all" that is required for them to know in order to get an A. This relates greatly to what Beatty was saying, students are happy when they feel they know all and are frustrated when in the learning process.

After his conversation with Beatty, Montag begins to think about things differently about his recent thoughts. He tells Mildred that he's got to know what is in the books, and says, "I'm so mad and I don't know why. I feel like I'm putting on weight. I feel fat" (Bradbury 62). I think by saying he feels fat he means that he is feeling guilty for thinking and acting outside the social norm. He is saying that he feels as though his thoughts are weighing down his mind. His questions about books and society are consuming his mind and after his conversation with Beatty, he finally feels like he should do something about his questions. All throughout part one of the story we see a struggle with Montag and his inner problems and thoughts at the end of part one, however, we see him finally doing something about the issue.

Captain Beatty tells Montag that happiness and fun are the only things that people care about and that those two things are the only way people can be truly happy. He very strongly suggests to Montag the simple idea, "ignorance is bliss." However, this idea is proved to be wrong in the story. Throughout part one Bradbury hints at people's unhappiness many times. After Mildred's suicide attempt when the worker men are pumping her blood and stomach, they say to Montag, "Hell! We get these cases nine or ten a night" (Bradbury 13). Beatty also explains that most firemen get the "itch" to know what's in the thousands of books they burn without really knowing why. This goes to show that Montag is not the only one who experiences negative thoughts about his society and his way of thinking. People in society are obviously not happy if they are continuously attempting suicide or yearning to read a book. Montag specifically feels this way because he has the fireman's itch and has befriended Clarisse. Through talking to Clarisse he learns to think about things and question things, this leads to him deciding that he is not happy. He begins to question more about his out-of-the-norm behaviors and feels even worse about himself until Beatty lectures him. Beatty's ideas about happiness do not work for Montag at the time of the lecture because he has already thought and been social and seen someone die for their books, he does not understand Beatty's view at this point because of the amount of thought he has put into the topic.

Clarisse is very different from the rest of society, she is social, intelligent, studies, and questions

things. The firemen and Beatty are scared of her because of these traits. They think that she could pose a threat because of the fact that she thinks about things outside of the box. Clarisse is the opposite of what their society is going for and that scares them. This is proven when Beatty tells Montag, "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" (Bradbury 57). The quote shows that they were scared of her mind, they say that the family was feeding her mind and that they had been watching her just because of this. Montag says that he doesn't like himself or the firemen because he realizes that he is trying too hard to fit in and that the way he is acting isn't really himself. He doesn't like the other firemen because he feels that they are against standing out and are the reason that people are not allowed to read or think or do anything using their brains for a good cause. Montag realizes that he is a part of all this and hates himself and the others for doing it. After Montag expresses his hatred towards the firemen and himself he says, "And I thought maybe it would be best if the firemen themselves were burnt" (Bradbury 64). I think that he suggests this because he is feeling so guilty for all they have done to people and he doesn't even know why. He is beginning to think that there is not a reason for the burning of books and diminishing of thought.

The quote that Montag reads out loud is from the book *Gulliver's Travels*, which is about rebellion. Fahrenheit has a lot of rebellion in it at the time that this quote is delivered. Bradbury chose it because it relates to Montag in that he is rebelling against his society. He is going against their wishes and rules. Montag had been stockpiling books for a year and has been constantly thinking about them. It is ironic that he is a fireman, who burns books and still does such a thing. The quote is significant because it foreshadows that something even more rebellious could happen in the next few parts of the story. It also tells us how much Montag values his books without having read them. The egg quote references the king in *Gulliver's Travels* telling the citizens to crack their eggs the small way rather than the large, this angered citizen and they rebel against, continuing to crack their eggs how they wish. Montag considers death with his books like the people considered death over the egg.