

## Fahrenheit 451

### Genre: Science Fiction

Featured Actors: Oscar Werner, Julie Christie, Cyril Cusack, Anton Diffring.  
Director: Francois Truffaut.

### Description

451 degrees Fahrenheit is the temperature at which paper bursts into flame. This adaptation of the classic novel by Ray Bradbury describes a future in which independent thought is discouraged and "firemen" burn books. The population is distracted and sedated by a combination of wall to wall interactive television and mind altering drugs. But one fireman begins to read the books he's supposed to burn....



### Scene by Scene

<https://film-grab.com/2014/06/01/fahrenheit-451/#jp-carousel-35982>

What is happening in these scenes?





## **Discussion Questions:**

What was the role of television in the wife's life?

How would interactive computer games fit into the world of "Fahrenheit 451"?

Why did the society shown in this film supply the wife with drugs?

Compare the role of drugs in Montag's society and alcohol (a mind altering drug) in the former Soviet Union. Did you know that one of the first reforms of Gorbachev, the man responsible for dismantling the Soviet state, was a package of laws designed to discourage the consumption of alcohol?

Did Montag have to kill the captain in order to escape? What is the literary significance of burning the captain?

The German poet Heinrich Heine said, "Where books are burned, they will also ultimately burn human beings." What did he mean by this?

Why was the government shown in this film afraid of people reading books? What do you think of the reason the government gave for eliminating books?

What was the reason that this society gave for eliminating books?

What were the negative effects of the decision by the society shown in the film to eliminate books? What, if any, were the positive effects of that decision?

There is no real threat in modern society that books will be destroyed wholesale. Instead, certain people and organizations would ban certain books or types of books. Do you agree or disagree with the proposition that banning any book is bad?

What would life be like if there were no books? If all of the books that have been written over the centuries suddenly disappeared and all computer memory that had copies of books were destroyed, what would we have lost?

## **The film's aesthetic / look:**

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/sep/29/fahrenheit-451-reading-the-film>

What should we make of that odd fire engine, the striking use of primary colours and the strangely prescient look of the wall-screen TVs?

The architecture in the film is especially striking. Those long panning shots of the [Alton housing estate](#) in Roehampton provide a good shorthand for how wrong things have gone in this conformist future – and the lovely old ramshackle house the firemen burn also says plenty about operating on a human scale. Do you think this might have influenced Stanley Kubrick in the making of 'A Clockwork Orange'?

## **Opinions:**

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/sep/29/fahrenheit-451-reading-the-film>

"Oh, and the film is awful... and I'm a Truffaut fan!"

"There's no accounting for taste – the film is in my top 10 while the book, like a lot of Bradbury, I find over-written and generally hard work."

"If François Truffaut were trying to make literature seem dull and the whole hideous practice of book-burning seem no more shocking than putting a blow-torch to a pile of leaves, he could not have accomplished his purpose much better than he unintentionally has in his first motion picture made in English, [Fahrenheit 451](#)."

Martin Scorsese says the film is underrated, and had a big influence on him.

**What do you think of the film?**

**What do you think of the actors' performances?**

[Oskar Werner](#) as Guy Montag, [Julie Christie](#) as Linda Montag/Clarisse, [Cyril Cusack](#) as Captain, [Anton Diffring](#) as Fabian