**FAHRENHEIT 451 RAY BRADBURY**

PART I

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-coloured 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 an to the cream-tiled escalator rising to the suburb.

Whistling, he let the escalator waft him into the still night air. He walked toward the comer,

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 before 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.