

 Guy Montag is a fireman whose job is not to put out fires, it is to burn books. He lives in a closely monitored world where it is dangerous to think and where books are forbidden. Captain Beatty (Montag's boss) talks to Montag about their community.

“**Y**ou must understand that our civilization is so vast that we can't have our minorities upset and stirred<sup>1</sup>.  
5 Ask yourself. What do we want in this country, above all? People want to be happy, isn't that right? Haven't you heard it all your life? Don't we keep them moving, don't we give  
10 them fun? That's all we live for, isn't it? For pleasure, for titillation<sup>2</sup>? And you must admit our culture provides plenty of these.”

“Yes.”

15 Montag could lip-read what Mildred was saying in the doorway. He tried not to look at her mouth, because then Beatty might turn and read what was there too.

20 “Colored people don't like *Little Black Sambo*. Burn it. White people don't feel good about *Uncle Tom's*

*Cabin*. Burn it. Someone's written a book on tobacco and cancer of the lungs<sup>3</sup>? The cigarette people are weeping? Burn the book. Serenity, Montag. Peace, Montag. Take your fight outside. Better yet into the incinerator. Funerals are unhappy  
25 and pagan? Eliminate them too. Five minutes after a person is dead he's on his way to the Big Flue, the Incinerators serviced by helicopters all over the country. Ten minutes after  
30 death a man's a speck<sup>4</sup> of black dust. Let's not quibble<sup>5</sup> over individuals with memoriams<sup>6</sup>. Forget them. Burn all, burn everything. Fire is bright and fire is clean.”

*Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury, 1953 ■

1. stirred: agitated - 2. titillation: excitation

3. lungs: organs in the chest for breathing

4. speck: a very small particle - 5. quibble: argue

6. memoriam: memorial ceremony