

Definition: **Fahrenheit 451** from *Brewer's Dictionary of Modern Phrase and Fable*

A fantasy of the near future by Ray Bradbury (b.1920), it was the author's first published novel, appearing in 1953. The theme is the triumph of the imagination under the threat of obliteration, and in particular the destruction by fire of all books. The title represents the temperature at which book paper is said to ignite and burn. Dissidents respond by memorizing the texts. A suitably futuristic film version (1966) was directed by François Truffaut.

Summary Article: **Fahrenheit 451**

From *American Literature on Stage and Screen: 525 Works and Their Adaptations*

A novel by Ray Bradbury (1953)

**FILM:** *Fahrenheit 451* (Rank/Universal 1966). Adaptation by François Truffaut, Jean-Louis Richard. *Director:* François Truffaut. *Cast:* Oskar Werner (Guy Montag), Julie Christie (Clarisse/Linda Montag), Cyril Cusack (Captain), Anton Diffring.

The science fiction novel *Fahrenheit 451* was Ray Bradbury's first literary success and secured his reputation as a writer more interested in ideas rather sci-fi action stories. In a future with the planet Earth recovering from nuclear battles, books have been outlawed as dangerous and an unhealthy promotion of individual thought. Guy Montag is a fireman whose job is to burn books rather than put out fires. As he goes on his rounds destroying illegal books, he starts to question his job and the burning of books. Montag gets in touch with underground book preservationists and starts hiding books in his own home. When his wife Linda turns him in, Montage attacks the firemen and incinerates one of them. A fugitive from justice, he finds refuge in a forest community where each member has memorized one book and passes it on to the next generation. Montage joins them and is committing the Bible's *Book of Ecclesiastes* to memory as bombs fall on his former home town. Released during the McCarthy witch hunts of the early 1950s, *Fahrenheit 451* was a potent depiction of a society afraid of free thought. The parallels between the novel and the powerful anti-Communist crusaders were so strong that Hollywood was not willing to make a movie version. The 1966 film was a Britain-France production with French film director-writer François Truffaut directing a British cast. (While the book was set in the States, the movie takes place in Great Britain.) Neither Trauffaut or co-writer Jean-Louis Richard were very fluent in English so the screenplay has very stiff and stilted dialogue which some felt added to the dispassionate tone of the film. The movie also has an odd futuristic look which is not totally convincing. Oskar Werner plays the difficult role of Montag who is emotionally empty. Julie Christie plays both his shallow wife and the radical Clarisse who helps Montag escape; both roles are underwritten and Christie's performances are unconvincing. The film only comes to life at the end when Montag joins the "book people" and there is a touch of the Trauffaut whimsey. Bradbury wrote a stage version of *Fahrenheit 451* which has been produced regionally in the U. S. and Great Britain.

**APA**

Chicago

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## MLA

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Fahrenheit 451. (2012). In T. S. Hischak, *American literature on stage and screen: 525 works and their adaptations*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland. Retrieved from [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fahrenheit\\_451](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fahrenheit_451)

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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"Fahrenheit 451." *American Literature on Stage and Screen: 525 Works and Their Adaptations*, Thomas S. Hischak, McFarland, 1st edition, 2012. *Credo Reference*, [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fahrenheit\\_451](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fahrenheit_451). Accessed 16 Oct. 2019.