

MILDRED. It's back again, Montag.

MONTAG. It hasn't been here for a week...!

MILDRED. It knows what we're doing!

MONTAG. It knows nothing but what it's programmed to know. It can't.

MILDRED. Montag, I'm frightened. I want to understand, but I don't!

MONTAG. *You don't? What about me? I've sat here, too. I've bored myself to tears! I'm tired, I'm blind and... Get off! Get away! (He hurls a book at the door.) Go bring the Chief! Tell him to come do his own job! Go on! Get! (He throws two more books at the door. The HOUND fades away.) Good. Stupid hound, stupid books! (He picks up one book and holds it against his brow as if it might transfer by osmosis.)* How do you get this stuff inside your head? How do you understand it?

MILDRED. It's too late!

MONTAG. Is it?

MILDRED. You're too old, it's too late. Montag, burn them! If you won't, let me! It's like, like you've been trying to give me a baby every night for a week...

MONTAG (*wearily*). You're not a mother, and I am most certainly not a father. As for our children? (*Picks up more books.*) They do misbehave.

MILDRED. Let me...punish them. (*She takes the books from him.*)

MONTAG. No, no, punish *me!* I'm the student and I've failed. Christ, where are the schools, the teachers!?

MILDRED. There aren't any!

MONTAG (*musings, remembers*). She could have taught me...

MILDRED. That crazy girl?

MONTAG. Crazy and dead. I guess they go together.

I guess the Captain was right. No help. No solace. Just confusion. (*He hands her some books and stands over her, looking at them.*)

MILDRED. Burn them...?

MONTAG (*a beat, nods*). Now.

MILDRED. Oh, good! (*The TV-phone buzzes, rings. MONTAG reaches up to "print" the air near the front of the stage. A bell rings. A light comes on. MONTAG looks to the air above his head.*)

MONTAG. Yes?

FABER'S VOICE. I wish to speak to...is this Mr. Montag?

MONTAG. Yes, who is this?

FABER'S VOICE. Faber's the name...C.R. Faber...

MONTAG. Professor Faber!? Clarisse...?

FABER'S VOICE. ...she was my granddaughter, yes. I called because rumor has it...you might have...sorry I troubled you. Good-bye.

MONTAG. Wait!

FABER'S VOICE. I'm afraid I've made a mistake. No...I'm just afraid.

MONTAG. Don't be!

FABER'S VOICE. If they find me, they'll come! They'll take me.

MONTAG. I'll protect you.

FABER'S VOICE. I'm sorry I troubled you...

MONTAG. I'm a Fireman! I give you my word.

FABER'S VOICE. Why should I trust you?

MONTAG (*trying to find a reason*). Because...

FABER'S VOICE. Why?

MONTAG (*remembering Clarisse's naive words*). I say so, so you must.

FABER'S VOICE (*recognizing an echo of Clarisse's talk*). Yes, yes...well...rumor has it...you have the Garden of Eden...and the Ark of Noah...the Miracle of the Fish and...the ghost of Christ.

MONTAG. Yes...all that. Mildred, don't. (*MILDRED, about to exit with the books, freezes.*)

MONTAG. Old man...?

FABER'S VOICE. All that, you have?

MONTAG. Yes! It's yours if you wish! I'll *bring* it to you.

FABER'S VOICE. No, no, please don't, promise me...

MONTAG. If you help me, it's yours.

FABER'S VOICE. Please understand...I *must* have it!

MONTAG. Where are you?

FABER'S VOICE. We'll be taking a great risk.

(*Sighs.*) I'm hiding out at...449 Pennywell Terrace. Upper 5.

MONTAG. I'm on my way!

FABER'S VOICE. You'll not *bring* anyone else? Promise?

MONTAG. Only the ghost. From Galilee.

FABER'S VOICE (*broken*). Thank you, thank you.

(*His joyful/sad voice cuts off. The light extinguishes. MONTAG rummages among the books, finds one, tucks it into his tunic, runs for the door.*)

MILDRED. Where are you going? Who was that?

MONTAG (*turning, thinks*). Noah, I think. No...Job, maybe. I won't be long.

MILDRED. Where are you going?

MONTAG. Touch nothing while I'm gone!

MILDRED. I--

MONTAG. Nothing! (*He whirls and runs.*) (*MILDRED looks down at a book, picks it up. She stares and reads.*)

MILDRED. ...beneath the planking of the floor...the beating of the old man's...heart! (*A crescendo of heartbeats. BLACKOUT.*)

(*MONTAG comes out of darkness. He reaches*

up to "print" his hand on an imaginary door. There is an audio beat, lights come up. MONTAG waits. He "prints" the air again. The light rises even more. A RADIO VOICE speaks up.)

FABER'S VOICE. Yes, yes?

MONTAG. It's Guy Montag.

FABER'S VOICE. I...I've changed my mind. Please, go away...

MONTAG. I've brought you a gift.

FABER'S VOICE. I was a fool! Go back. Forget I called you.

MONTAG. I'm a Fireman. You *can't* send me away. I want to talk about your granddaughter.

FABER'S VOICE. All right. (*Sighs.*) Come in.

(*There is a bell sound. Further lights come on. There is a sound of a door sliding. MONTAG steps into an empty room which further illuminates itself for him.*)

FABER'S VOICE. I'm sorry. One has to be careful...

MONTAG (*looking around*). Where are you?

FABER'S VOICE. I prefer not to show my face.

MONTAG. Mr. Faber...

FABER'S VOICE. I fear you've been misled. Faber's not my real name. It was Smith, it was Foley...Samuels...

MONTAG. It was *Professor*.

FABER'S VOICE. It was the great and wonderful Wizard of...

(*FABER steps suddenly out of the shadows, an inconsequential old man. The RADIO VOICE ceases. He finishes the last word with his normal speaking voice.*)