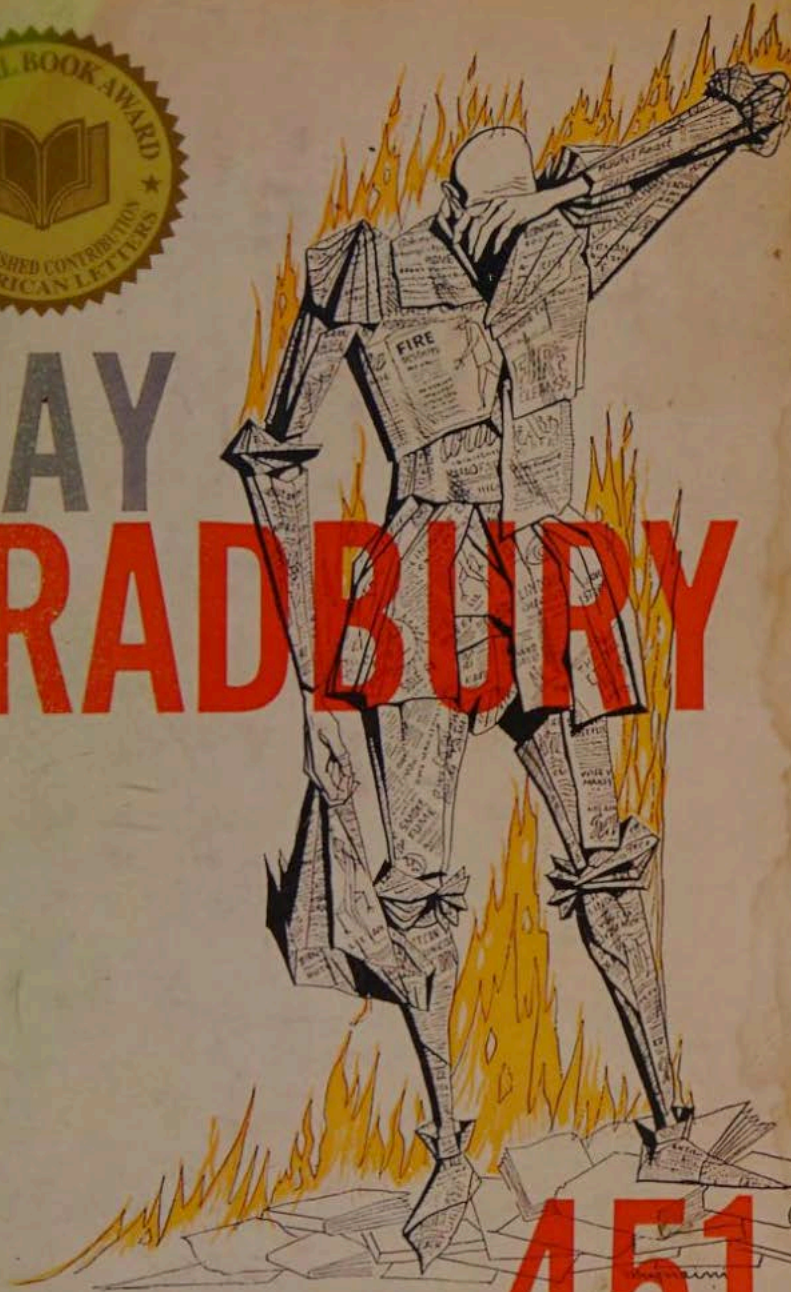


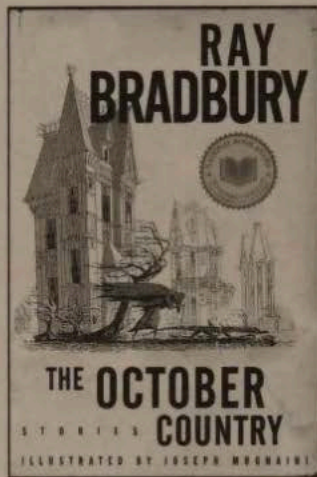
RAY
BRADBURY



FAHRENHEIT 451

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

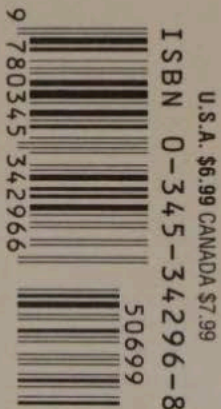
LOOK FOR THIS ACCLAIMED STORY COLLECTION
BY RAY BRADBURY




"An author whose fanciful imagination, poetic prose, and mature understanding of human character have won him an international reputation." —*The New York Times*



Ballantine / Del Rey /
Fawcett / Ivy /
Presidio Press



 EAN

In The Beginning . . .

Books bombarded Montag's shoulders, his arms, his upturned face. A book landed, almost obediently, like a white pigeon, in his hands, wings fluttering. In the dim wavering light a page hung open and it was like a snowy feather, the words delicately painted thereon. In all the rush and fervor, Montag had only an instant to read a line, but it blazed as if stamped there with fiery steel.

And then Montag's hand closed like a mouth, crushed the book with wild devotion, with an insanity of mindlessness to his chest. Montag had done nothing. His hand had done it all . . . his hand, with a brain of its own, with a conscience and a curiosity in each trembling finger, had turned thief.

Montag knew it was madness, suicide—but it was also a beginning!

By Ray Bradbury

Published by Del Rey Books:

FAHRENHEIT 451

THE OCTOBER COUNTRY

Fahrenheit 451

Ray Bradbury

**Fahrenheit 451 —
the temperature at which book paper
catches fire, and burns . . .**

Books published by The Random House Publishing Group are available at quantity discounts on bulk purchases for premium, educational, fund-raising, and special sales use. For details, please call 1-800-733-3000.



A Del Rey Book

BALLANTINE BOOKS • NEW YORK

Sale of this book without a front cover may be unauthorized. If this book is coverless, it may have been reported to the publisher as "unsold or destroyed" and neither the author nor the publisher may have received payment for it.

A Del Rey® Book
Published by The Random House Publishing Group

A shorter version of "Fahrenheit 451" appeared in *Galaxy Science Fiction*, under the title "The Fireman," copyright © 1950 by World Editions, Inc. Copyright renewed 1978 by Ray Bradbury.

Copyright © 1953 by Ray Bradbury
Copyright renewed 1981 by Ray Bradbury
Afterword Copyright © 1982 by Ray Bradbury
Coda Copyright © 1979 by Ray Bradbury

All rights reserved.

Published in the United States by Del Rey Books, an imprint of The Random House Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc., New York, and simultaneously in Canada by Random House of Canada Limited, Toronto.

Del Rey is a registered trademark and the Del Rey colophon is a trademark of Random House, Inc.

www.delreybooks.com

ISBN 0-345-34296-8

Manufactured in the United States of America

U.S. Printing History
First Edition: October 1953
Second Printing: April 1991

Canadian Printing History
First Edition: October 1953
Seventh Printing: October 1972

Special Editions
Asbestos Edition: October 1953
Revised Bal-Hi Editions
First Printing: January 1967
Special Book Club Edition: March 1976

OPM 69 68 67 66 65

This one, with gratitude,
is for
Don Congdon

everything now. And while none of it will be me when it goes in, after a while it'll all gather together inside and it'll be me. Look at the world out there, my God, my God, look at it out there, outside me, out there beyond my face and the only way to really touch it is to put it where it's finally me, where it's in the blood, where it pumps around a thousand times ten thousand a day. I get hold of it so it'll never run off. I'll hold onto the world tight someday. I've got one finger on it now; that's a beginning.

The wind died.

The other men lay awhile, on the dawn edge of sleep, not yet ready to rise up and begin the day's obligations, its fires and foods, its thousand details of putting foot after foot and hand after hand. They lay blinking their dusty eyelids. You could hear them breathing fast, then slower, then slow...

Montag sat up.

He did not move any farther, however. The other men did likewise. The sun was touching the black horizon with a faint red tip. The air was cold and smelled of a coming rain.

Silently, Granger arose, felt of his arms and legs, swearing, swearing incessantly under his breath, tears dripping from his face. He shuffled down to the river to look upstream.

"It's flat," he said, a long time later. "City looks like a heap of baking powder. It's gone." And a long time after that: "I wonder how many knew it was coming? I wonder how many were surprised?"

And across the world, thought Montag, how many other cities dead? And here in our country, how many? A hundred, a thousand?

Someone struck a match and touched it to a piece of dry paper taken from his pocket, and shoved this under a bit of grass and leaves, and after a while

added tiny twigs which were wet and sputtered but finally caught, and the fire grew larger in the early morning as the sun came up and the men slowly turned from looking upriver and were drawn to the fire, awkwardly, with nothing to say, and the sun colored the back of their necks as they bent down.

Granger unfolded an oilskin with some bacon in it. "We'll have a bite. Then we'll turn around and walk upstream. They'll be needing us up that way."

Someone produced a small frying pan and the bacon went into it and the frying pan was set on the fire. After a moment the bacon began to flutter and dance in the pan and the sputter of it filled the morning air with its aroma. The men watched this ritual silently.

Granger looked into the fire. "Phoenix."

"What?"

"There was a silly damn bird called a phoenix back before Christ, every few hundred years he built a pyre and burnt himself up. He must have been first cousin to Man. But every time he burnt himself up he sprang out of the ashes, he got himself born all over again. And it looks like we're doing the same thing, over and over, but we've got one damn thing the phoenix never had. We know the damn silly thing we just did. We know all the damn silly things we've done for a thousand years and as long as we know that and always have it around where we can see it, someday we'll stop making the goddamn funeral pyres and jumping in the middle of them. We pick up a few more people that remember every generation."

He took the pan off the fire and let the bacon cool and they ate it, slowly, thoughtfully.

"Now, let's get on upstream," said Granger. "And hold onto one thought: You're not important. You're not anything. Someday the load we're carrying with

us may help someone. But even when we had the books on hand, a long time ago, we didn't use what we got out of them. We went right on insulting the dead. We went right on spitting in the graves of all the poor ones who died before us. We're going to meet a lot of lonely people in the next week and the next month and the next year. And when they ask us what we're doing, you can say, We're remembering. That's where we'll win out in the long run. And someday we'll remember so much that we'll build the biggest goddamn steamshovel in history and dig the biggest grave of all time and shove war in and cover it up. Come on now, we're going to go build a mirror factory first and put out nothing but mirrors for the next year and take a long look in them."

They finished eating and put out the fire. The day was brightening all about them as if a pink lamp had been given more wick. In the trees, the birds that had flown away quickly now came back and settled down.

Montag began walking and after a moment found that the others had fallen in behind him, going north. He was surprised, and moved aside to let Granger pass, but Granger looked at him and nodded him on. Montag went ahead. He looked at the river and the sky and the rusting track going back down to where the farms lay, where the barns stood full of hay, where a lot of people had walked by in the night on their way from the city. Later, in a month or six months, and certainly not more than a year, he would walk along here again, alone, and keep right on going until he caught up with the people.

But now there was a long morning's walk until noon, and if the men were silent it was because there was everything to think about and much to remember. Perhaps later in the morning, when the sun was up and had warmed them, they would begin to

talk, or just say the things they remembered, to be sure they were there, to be absolutely certain that things were safe in them. Montag felt the slow stir of words, the slow simmer. And when it came his turn, what could he say, what could he offer on a day like this, to make the trip a little easier? To everything there is a season. Yes. A time to break down, and a time to build up. Yes. A time to keep silence, and a time to speak. Yes, all that. But what else. What else? Something, something...

And on either side of the river was there a tree of life, which bore twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Yes, thought Montag, that's the one I'll save for noon. For noon...

When we reach the city.