

**Task:** write an alternative ending to the story. The characters, setting and plot should remain true to the storyline apart from the last couple of chapters. You may not introduce new characters. Year 9 student name withheld.

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## Fahrenheit 451

**The story so far.** It is a time in society when books and the reading of books is banned. Guy Montag is a fireman whose job it is to burn books. The ideas they contain are considered to be the source of all disharmony in society but he has come to realize that they are not and seeks to secretly preserve them.

Guy Montag lay on the ground with ash and dust covering his now closed eyes. The ground was hot but not enough to burn, just uncomfortable. All around him was hysteria. Everyone was screaming but their cries did not reach his ears. Fire had licked itself onto the buildings, painting the walls orange. It was unsettling just how silent it really was. It was the type of silence that always seems to follow you when a person walks around in a haunted house. It was a suspenseful silence that always follows the main character of a scary movie. It was the silence of death.

Montag lay there with his eyes closed and he began to think, or more specifically, he began to remember. He remembered a part of a story in a book that he read. He kept on repeating it over and over and over again in his head, as if he were afraid that he would forget it if he didn't. He continued to be there even after he heard the others get up. He couldn't quite explain it but for some reason he found himself feeling a pain in his chest when he thought of his wife, Mildred, and what just happened to her. It was a feeling of pain, tat, and sorrow. It was a feeling that didn't cause physical pain, but emotional pain. The pain that he felt didn't affect his hands or arms or feet. It didn't cause him pain in his arms, legs, knees, or head. No. This pain was a different kind of pain. It was a pain that was unlike anything he had ever experienced before. This pain attacked him on the inside. It went straight to the heart. His heart felt like it was breaking in half. It felt like his whole world was being taken from him. It was as if he was being ripped apart piece by piece. As he thought of his wife's death, he began to feel something wet build up near his eyes. This watery substance seemed to be coming from his eyes. This confused him very much, as this had never happened to him before. Whatever this wet substance was, it continued to build up around his eyes. He felt it go sliding down his cheeks.

He didn't understand why he felt this though. He knew that he shouldn't but he couldn't make it go away. He didn't understand it. He had had family members die before but he had never felt like this. So then why now all of a sudden, when his wife dies, does he feel this pain? After all it had been she who had turned him in to the firemen for having books hidden away in the house. So why did he care about what had happened to her when she obviously didn't care about what happened to him? She didn't even remember where they had met. He knew that he shouldn't care but he couldn't make the feeling go away.

Suddenly he heard a noise, like the breaking of a twig. 'The others must be building a fire,' he thought. He slowly opened his eyes and saw that this wasn't the case. He sat up and looked around him. There were at least forty-five police officers and firemen standing around him, with their shotguns pointed at him. As he looked around him he saw that the other people whom he had been traveling with him had already gotten away before the police and fireman had reached them. 'They must have heard them coming and thought that I was dead and made a break for it' he thought. If only he hadn't been worrying so much about what he was feeling then he would have heard them coming too and he might have been able to get away.

He continued looking around him, trying to find some way of escaping, some small opening between the officers and firemen that he could run through to make a quick escape. But there was none. The officers and firemen had formed a very tight circle around him and had been sure

to cover him from every angle. Montag realized that there was no way out for him. This was the end of the line for him. There was no escape for him this time. No one coaching him through it. No one there to defend him. No one to help him. They were all dead. The officers stood there, still as statues, in a circle around him. 'So this is how it ends,' Montag thought to himself. 'I wonder if anything I did ever made a difference.' If he had changed just one person's method of thinking or one person's point of view then all of this would have been worth it.

Montag turned around so that he had his back to the police captain. He knew that there was no where he could go. There was no where left to go. Even if he could get away he knew that it was pointless. They would just keep hunting him down until he was finally caught. This had to end. He couldn't spend his whole life hiding from society and running away from the things. Like the old woman who torched her own house. He had to make a stand. He had to face the consequences of his actions, even if that meant he was shot and killed or taken back to jail. It didn't matter to Montag anymore. After all, he had nothing left to live for. He had nothing left to fight for. He wasn't even a man anymore. He was just the empty shell of a man, wandering around aimlessly, trying to find something, anything, that he could live and fight for. But there was nothing left to live or to fight for. He had no one left. Clarisse. Mildred. Faber. They were all gone. There was no one left.

Guy Montag heard the shot fired. He felt the hot metal go through his back. "Goodbye cruel world..." he said just loud enough for the people around him to hear. He didn't know exactly where he was going but he knew that it was far away. He knew that wherever he was going, it would be a lot better than where he was now.

The police and firemen walked away from the dying man. 'How short life is' he thought. He thought of Clarisse, and how maybe he would get to see her again after all. Then he thought of that part of the book that he had remembered earlier. And with that, he closed his eyes, took his final breath, and fell to the ground, and remained, motionless.

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