

Answers for Fahrenheit 451 Part I-Study Guide Questions

“The Hearth and the Salamander”

Study Guide Questions: These questions help you stay on track with the plot as well as build your reading comprehension. Answer these questions in complete sentences as you read.

“Part I-A: The Hearth and the Salamander”

1. What do the “firemen” do for a living?
a. The firemen burn books for a living.
2. In the opening scene, how are books compared to birds?
a. The books are compared to birds because like birds who fly in freedom, books give us freedom of knowledge and allow our minds to “fly away.”
3. Who does Montag meet on the way home?
a. Montag meets 17 year old Clarisse McClellan.
4. During his conversation, Montag says that, “You never wash it off completely” referring to the kerosene. What could this mean symbolically?
a. Montag means that the smell and work (guilt) of burning the books stays with you forever.
5. Why do you think that Bradbury would introduce Clarisse before Montag’s wife, Mildred?
a. Clarisse is introduced first because she is more important than his wife because she does not follow the societal norms and is free thinking.
6. Why does Mildred need help when Montag gets home?
a. Mildred needs help because she has overdosed on sleeping pills.
7. Describe the help that she receives.
a. She has her stomach pumped.
8. Is there anything unusual about the way the two men go about helping Mildred? How is it unusual?
a. Two men come in to help her as if they were fixing a common household problem, versus a human. They treated this as just a common routine call.

“Part I-B: The Hearth and the Salamander”

9. How is life in Montag’s house very different from that of Clarisse’s house?
a. Montag’s house is dark and still except for the TVs. Clarisse’s house is full of laughter and life.
10. How does Mildred react after she wakes up from her previous night’s experience?
a. She wakes up extremely hungry and doesn’t remember anything that happened. She suspects she was at a party and is hungover.
11. What does Mildred do all day?
a. Mildred does nothing but watch her three large televisions and interacts with a storyline she knows nothing about.
12. Describe the setup of Montag’s TV room.
a. The TV room has a large TV on each wall except for one.
13. How is Clarisse different than Mildred?
a. Clarisse questions things and thinks for herself whereas Mildred relies on the TV for her few thoughts.

14. What is the mechanical hound and what is its purpose?
 - a. The mechanical hound is the firehouse dog; it is programmed to hunt and kill those that are violating the law of keeping books.
15. What is the hound's reaction to Montag?
 - a. The hound seems to not like Montag, as if he knows Montag's secret.
16. What is ironic about society considering Clarisse "anti-social"?
 - a. It is ironic that they deem Clarisse anti-social because she wants true human interaction.
17. Why does society provide activities for teens to "run [teens] ragged"?
 - a. Society provides activities to make the kids not think; however, it causes them to get anxious and become violent.

"Part I-C: The Hearth and the Salamander"

18. Why does the woman refuse to leave her books? What effect does this have on the firemen, particularly Montag?
 - a. The woman refuses to leave her books because they are all she has, and she would rather die with them than live without them. Montag is effected because he sees the woman burn alive and he is filled with guilt.
19. Why does Beatty refer to the old woman's books as the Tower of Babel?
 - a. Beatty says this because the books are full of gibberish language; books say nothing. This is a biblical allusion to the Tower of Babylon and the origin of different languages from Genesis.
20. Why is it surprising that Beatty knows the Master Ridley quote?
 - a. It is surprising because it shows he has "read" and knows some knowledge. As a leader, he should follow the rules and set an example.
21. Why does Beatty visit? What does he tell Montag?
 - a. Beatty visits Montag because Montag did not show up to work. He suspects that Montag is questioning their purpose, something many firefighters go through. He tells Montag the history of fireman and how they once put out fires.
22. What purpose does shrinking classics to brief synopsis serve?
 - a. Shrinking the classics to brief synopsis helps them become equally available to everyone. No one is smarter than another.
23. What literature is allowable?
 - a. Comics are allowable because they are primarily for entertaining, not gaining knowledge.
24. Who are the "custodians of our peace of mind"? In what way have they failed Montag?
 - a. The firemen have been given the job of being the "custodians of our peace of mind" because they keep people from gaining knowledge and free thinking. They have failed Montag because he has not peace of mind.
25. Montag asks, "How do people like Clarisse come to exist in our world?" How does Beatty reply?
 - a. People like Clarisse exist because they can't get them all; genetics plays a part too.
26. What happens to firemen who have books?
 - a. A fireman is allowed to keep a book for 24 hours and then he must burn it, or it will be burned for him.