Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Duffy English 10

*Fahrenheit 451* Reading Guide

Key

# Part 1: The Hearth and the Salamander

# Questions for pages 3 - 20

1. What do the “firemen” do for a living?

**Firemen *start* fires in order to burn books that have been illegally harbored.**

1. In the opening scene, why are the books compared to birds?  
   **Books are compared to birds as a symbol of enlightenment through reading. Birds are free to fly wherever they want; readers do that while reading books! Also, pigeons were historically used to carry messages, and like the birds, so do the books.**
2. According to pages 3 – 4, what does Montag think of his job?  
   **He really loves all aspects of it, and he feels that he is a very important man with a very important job. He gets a lot of pleasure out of his line of work.**
3. Who does Montag meet on the way home?

**Clarisse McClellan, his teenage neighbor.**

1. During his conversation, Montag says that “You never wash it off completely” referring to the kerosene. What could this mean symbolically?

**Symbolically, this could mean that once you do something, you can’t turn back in time and take it back. If you run away from something, you can’t escape your problems completely. Whatever you do, you can never fully take it back.**

1. Why do you think that Bradbury would introduce Clarisse before Montag’s wife, Mildred?  
   **Most likely, this means that Clarisse plays a much larger role than Montag’s wife, Mildred. Usually the characters introduced at the main start of a novel play a significant role as the protagonist or the antagonist.**
2. Why does Mildred need help when Montag gets home?  
   **When Montag gets home, Mildred needs his help because he had found the once-full sleeping pills now emptied because of her (presumably, she had taken all of them).**
3. Describe the help that she receives.

**Two doctors help Mildred by using a machine to suck out her blood, and replace it with fresh new blood and serum.**

1. Is there anything unusual about the way the two men go about helping Mildred? How is it unusual?  
   **The thing that’s unusual is that they don’t seem to really care if Mildred lives or not. The way they’re talking about the medical effects seem really heartless, and with no heavy meaning to them when relating it to Mildred (Montag’s wife). They’re busy smoking and rudely asking for money while Montag is worried about his wife. Also, the men tell Montag that this is a very common occurrence, and so they treat it like it is no big deal.**
2. How is life in Montag’s house very different from that of Clarisse’s house?

**In Clarisse’s home, there’s more laughter and happiness between each other. In Montag’s house, he describes it as a mausoleum, where it was cold and dark.**

1. How does Mildred react after she wakes up from her previous night’s experience?

**She doesn’t seem to take things so seriously. When she wakes up, she realizes that she is very hungry and assumes that she has a hangover (or something along those lines) because of a wild party. She has no clue about what happened the previous night, and was in denial after Montag had told her the truth.**