

Wahlert High School
Dubuque, Iowa

Dear Ray Bradbury,

I never thought it was possible for someone to see into the future. That is, until I read your book Fahrenheit 451. No, this book didn't help me battle a horrible addiction or fight depression, but it did help me understand that I shouldn't take education for granted. Sometimes we don't understand how much literature and justice mean in our society today, and your book was a mini wake-up call for me.

In the beginning of the book, the world seems so perfect. Everyone has nice houses, electronics, jobs, and a family. Although everything seems so perfect, it is really so fake. The only relationships people have are with their televisions, and the "babysitter" is really just a television or boarding school. Parents have children and then don't care about them, and kids have nothing to do all day but put themselves and others in danger. For example, kids have fun by getting in car accidents and shootings. And what is the root of all of this danger and corruption? Reading is against the law.

At this point in the book, I had to check the year it was published. 1953. Wait, what? 1953? Are you kidding me? It's so much like our society today. Illiteracy is one of the biggest problems in our culture. Many Americans are turning away from literature, and turning towards other things like video games, television, drugs, alcohol, guns, and war. In the book, Guy discovers that his society is corrupt, and wants to know what he's missing out on. He wants to read these books and see if he can change for the better.

This book made me wonder if only more people in my generation would read and appreciate literature, that we would be even more successful, driven towards justice and not hate, and more aware of the world around us. Instead, a lot of people my age are drinking, playing war on their Playstation, and wondering whether Jen and Brad are ever going to get back together. There are more important things in the world! Your book helped me realize that. It's as if I, in a way, became Guy Montag, and your book, became my very own Clarisse.

In the end of the book, Guy walks away from his community, consumed by war and injustice. He's ready to move on. He was punished for standing up for what he believes in, which is also happening in our government today. I can help lead my generation to becoming self aware again, and we can lead our country, and our world. I'm ready to turn back on this corrupt, illiterate path we have taken. I'll be my own Guy Montag.

Sincerely,

Elise Goodmann