

Audition Cut 1: (MEN)

ACT ONE

SCENE: *Darkness. A great sound of fire and burning, the sounds of buildings falling into ruin. We hear sirens and bells and running feet, voices calling, and then at last just the quiet sound of burning itself, slowly fading during the next few minutes. A wind rises. A last building falls. The light rises, a flickering of flames that show us:*

MONTAG standing, back to us, dressed in his black uniform, a portable brass torch in his left hand. He turns from the quiet sound of the lowering flames and thinks on it.

Start → MONTAG. There is a thing about burning. It is so fine ... complete ... so beautiful. And then there is the power. To know that you own so much beauty, hand it out, as it were, give it a place to ... live. One moment, standing there, the great pumping kerosene hose in your hand and darkness. Then...the merest match, the smallest flint, and ... glory! Answers to everything. Solutions. Waste done away with. Problems solved. Worry eliminated.

↑ END

Audition Cut 2: (Men/Women)

ACT I

FAHRENHEIT 451

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...six o'clock. Seven, seven, eight o'clock!
Nine, nine...breakfast time!

(Alarms go off. Lights up. Enter MILDRED in full-bustle, dishing out food, breakfast for herself and MONTAG.)

MILDRED. You said it! Breakfast! My God, I'm ravenous! Come on, Montag, hit the floor! What's wrong with you?!

(MONTAG has entered, looking somewhat the worse for wear.)

MILDRED. Here it is, come feed your face. *(She moves to turn on the TV wall which is, of course, out in the audience. As she watches it, she stares at the audience from where the TV shadow-lights emanate.)*

MONTAG. Mildred!

MILDRED. How come I'm so hungry!? Starved!

MONTAG. Don't you remember...

MILDRED *(handing him a plate)*. What? Eat, eat. My show's on in *(Checks watch.)* two minutes!

MONTAG. Show?

MILDRED. The Mildred Show. I'm the star. You know, the Family Play. Today it's me; I'm so excited! They called last night. "Mildred," they said, "the Mildred Drama." God, isn't that great?

MONTAG *(picking at his food)*. Mildred, Mildred, there are ten thousand Mildreds in the city. They call them all!

MILDRED. That's not true! *(A beat.)* Well, some maybe.

MONTAG. They put on a different play each day, Mildred. One day they talk to Mary, the next

Start →

Audition Cut 2: (con't)

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ACT I

Helen, and leave air spaces, intervals, for Mary, all ten thousand of her. Or Helen, all forty thousand of her, to make up a line, talk back.

MILDRED. You will ruin everything, won't you? I always wanted to be an actress! Well, here's my chance! Who cares if there are a billion other Mildreds, I'm the one that counts, right? *(The TV music rises.)*

MONTAG *(seeing it's no use)*. God. Right. *(A bell. Swift music from the air above and beyond, in the audience.)*

MILDRED. There! It's time. *(She reaches up to touch an invisible tuner.)*

TV VOICE. And here it is! *The.. Mildred.. Show!* *(Applause and audience clamor.)*

MILDRED. You see. There's my face!

MONTAG. Mildred, that's a computer tape built into our set!

MILDRED. Oh, God, you'll spoil it. It's ready to start. Oh, dear, how I wish we had two TV walls instead of one, or three walls like the Murtrys have, or some day, four. Wouldn't that be grand? Surrounded! *(A fanfare. Before each use of the name "Mildred" we hear a radio hum.)*

TV VOICE. Today, *(Hum.)* ... "Mildred" faces the greatest crisis in her life. Events have come to a head.

MILDRED *(suddenly worried)*. I should have... prepared... I should have thought... *(Music fades. A babble of startled and worried VOICES.)*

THE VOICES *(hum)*. Mildred... Mildred... tell us what happened... poor dear. You'll be all right, but what, what happened... *(MILDRED leans forward, tongue-tied. MONTAG quietly watches the "Wall" also, that is to say, looks out at the*

End →

Audition Cut 3: (MEN)

ACT I

FAHRENHEIT 451

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Start—

BEATTY. Closer to a year.

BLACK. Well, you think that hunk of junk will ever work?

MONTAG. It's almost ready to leave the kennel now.

BEATTY. And then we'll send it hunting to get *you*, Black!

BLACK (*mocking them*). I'm scared. What you gonna call that dumb thing?

MONTAG. Just--the Hound.

BEATTY (*rising to glance at the screen-blue-prints*). The *Mechanical Hound* it'll say on the copyright, though I'm tempted to call him--Baskerville! (*MONTAG and BLACK blink at him. BEATTY laughs drily.*) Learned reference number 977. Old literary dog. Burned circa 1999. (*Sighs.*) Ah, well. Just plain Hound will do. (*BEATTY does things with the control box. There are stirrings of shadow and humming sound below.*) Well, Montag, shall we give him a run?

MONTAG (*nodding*). Sir. (*More touchings of buttons. There is a strange, low electronic growl from below.*)

BEATTY. Shall we insert an identity sensor card in the Hound's muzzle, Montag? Here we are...texture, odor, color, shape, weight, width, height of one Jameson L. Black.

BLACK (*faintly alarmed*). Hey, now. I was just joking.

BEATTY. Joke away. Our great lovely Hound of Hades will soon be trim-fit and on the scent. See there, the blueprints, Black, eh? (*BEATTY points at the images changing on the screen.*) That muzzle, the great metal flare of nostril has ten million computerized sensor plaques tucked

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ACT I

away and ready to snuff the winds of the world!
Its computer inserts can remember the scents,
the smells, of nine thousand five hundred
guilt-ridden men on the run!

BLACK. How you *do* go on.

BEATTY. Notice the feet. Eight of them! Eight! For
speed, balance, mobility. The damn thing can
run faster than any man, any car! (*BEATTY
flicks his radio-control box. We see the legs
of the Hound, spidery, animate, running on the
screen, blowing like dark feathers in the
wind, beautiful and terrible in one.*) And the
mouth--oh, dear me, Black, *do* come see the
mouth. (*Closeup, on the screen, the mouth of
the HOUND. ALL kneel to look down into the
floor pit.*) In that mouth, a tongue that is a
hollow tube, a sharp needle that stings and
injects novocain, procaine, into the legs of its
prey.

BLACK. Why not some sort of gun?

BEATTY. Oh, that's no fun, too quick, too banal,
eh, Montag? And, Black, listen to *this!* (*BEATTY
flicks his remote-control box. The HOUND
bays, an incredible electronic cry-- very
satisfying to the hackles.*) Splendid! Yes?

BLACK (*leaping back*). Christ...who thought of that
damned thing?

BEATTY (*proudly*). I did! (*Standing.*) When I was a
boy I invented a monster on a moor. I named it
the midnight Beast...and then--The Hound of
the Baskervilles. It ranged my nightmares night
on night when I was ten and cold in bed and
loved the dark. "Hound," I'd say, "come get me!"
And the Hound would come. (*BEATTY nods.
MONTAG makes the HOUND wail again. BLACK
shivers.*)

BLACK (*thinking*). Hey, wasn't there a...book once
by that name?

END—

Audition Cut 4: (WOMEN)

Start

— CLARISSE. There's a place, out beyond the edge of town... There are people out there who haven't been in the city for years. If I can get through to them...

And maybe in a year, two years--you could head on out yourself. Find the nicest, greenest farm around...and... I sometimes think of this, late at night. There you come, out of the city at last, forever...walking along the road...and you hide on a farm in the barn behind the house, with the fresh straw in the hayloft and sleep all

END

— night.

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ACT II

Start →

FABER. ...Oz.

MONTAG. Oz?

FABER. An old film, once an old book, about an old fraud...a silly Wizard who spoke in great tones, but was empty and foolish and cowardly. That's me...mind full of junk...Clarisse's grandfather, a coward, and crazy. (*Stops, stares at MONTAG.*) Forgive me. Just *looking* at a Fireman scares the hell out of me. What do you want?

MONTAG (*circling him*). Is she alive?

FABER. Yes! No! Maybe! (*A pause.*) Could be dead.

No one will tell.

MONTAG (*to himself*). Dead?

FABER (*sighing*). Or disappeared, as she would have put it.

MONTAG. How? I want to know. (*MONTAG almost weeps, his eyes shut.*)

FABER (*watching this, catches himself*). Watch it, Faber. Remember: Wednesday burn Whitman. Thursday burn Thoreau. Friday? Faber!

MONTAG (*recovering*). You won't burn. I need your help. Some...something's missing. No. (*Turns away, to exit.*) Forget that I came. (*Stops.*) I...don't know how to say it. I've never had family. Not with my wife, my work, not when I was young...not now until I met...

FABER. Clarisse?

MONTAG. Maybe it was because she talked so damned much and made up for lost time. Maybe she said things I only half-thought or dreamed. All I have of her now is you.

FABER. Hamlet's Father's ghost, of little use.

MONTAG. Yes! I used to stand outside your house nights, see the lights like a circus, hear the voices...laughter, want to be inside. I need a family. Clarisse said you knew everything!

FABER (*exasperated, flattered*). Damn that girl!

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ACT II

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MONTAG. Teach me.

FABER. I'm too old, you're too young...too meadow-beast dumb. It'd take years. I'm not well. I'm tired and, Mr. Montag, you're looking at a coward. I saw the way things were going a long time back. I saw, and I said nothing. Oh, when they finally set the structure to burn books, I yelled quietly, grunted a few times, but it was already too late. No one was left to grunt or yell with me.

END → MONTAG. I want you to teach me about the books.

FABER. It's not the books you need, it's some of the things that once were *in* them! They were only a receptacle, yes, a place where we stored things we were afraid of forgetting. But there is nothing magical about them to teach. The magic is the way in which they stitched the patches of the universe together for us. Of course you can't understand that.

MONTAG. I want to!

FABER. All right, you said something was missing? Intuitively, you're right. Three things *are* missing, Mr. Montag, swallowed in your fires, perhaps forever. Number one: *Quality*.

MONTAG. ...Quality?

FABER. Quality! Yes! The damned mediocre writers ran a quick hand over life. The bad ones raped her and left her to the flies. But the good ones? Touched life often...showed us the pores in her face. Texture. Fresh detail. Quality of information.

MONTAG. What else is missing?

FABER. Second item? Leisure. I don't mean off-hours. Lord knows we've a surplus of those. But time to...talk and listen, consider...Not to be hypnotized by TV walls that tell you how and