

# 7

## Lesson Seven

### FOCUS: Character Development

The protagonist gradually undergoes a change of heart. The protagonist's shortcomings fundamentally affect the manner in which he or she is able to respond to the challenge brought by outside forces. While some changes begin from outside forces, changes also brew within thoughts and emotions as our hero searches to overcome fears, realize dreams, or discover identity.

Montag questions whether his profession is justified and whether the values he has held so dear—burning books and all it implies—are wrong. Mrs. Hudson forces Montag to question whether his life might be fundamentally improved by reading. Is he missing something invaluable? He then repudiates his profession. He does so partly through the intercession of Clarisse and Faber, messengers from a world he barely understands. The narrator explains, “Even now he could feel the start of the long journey, the leave-taking, the going-away from the self he had been” (p. 103). By the end of the novel, Montag has been profoundly changed. As a three-dimensional character, Montag has an inner and an outer life unlike the two-dimensional portraits of other characters.



### Discussion Activities

In Part Three, Beatty explains “Old Montag wanted to fly near the sun and now that he’s burnt his damn wings, he wonders why. Didn’t I hint enough when I sent the Hound around your place?” (p. 113) Beatty refers to the myth of Icarus, told in Ovid’s first-century poem *The Metamorphoses*. A version can be found at [www.loggia.com/myth/daedalus.html](http://www.loggia.com/myth/daedalus.html). Ask students why Bradbury compares Montag to Icarus. How does this shed light on Montag’s development?



### Writing Exercise

As Montag escapes the city and enters the silences of the natural world, he looks forward to the time “needed to think all the things that must be thought” (p. 143). He discovers “He was not empty. There was more than enough here to fill him” (p. 144). How has the silence and emptiness of nature proved fulfilling compared to his former life? How have books led to these realizations?



### Homework

Finish Part Three (pp. 146-165). Ask students to begin to think about how Bradbury has constructed the plot to reach this dramatic conclusion. Students should come to class ready to discuss the two most important turning points in the novel.