­­Literary Devices in *Fahrenheit 451*

In *Fahrenheit 451,* Ray Bradbury utilizes a multitude of literary devices to enhance his novel.

**Directions:** For each of the following excerpts from *Fahrenheit 451,* identity the literary device.

Then explain the author’s purpose. See the model below.

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| **Quotation** | **Identify Literary Term** | **What is the Author’s Purpose?** |
| “With his symbolic helmet numbered 451 on his stolid head…” (1). | symbolism | This quotation not only characterizes Guy Montag, with a description of the protagonist’s job and uniform, but also draws the readers’ attention to the number ‘451’ and emphasizes the temperature at which paper burns. Bradbury’s use of symbolism plays an important role in characterizing Montag and his attitude towards his job, a fireman who takes pride in burning books in a society where knowledge from books is shunned. |
| “It was a pleasure to burn. It was a pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and *changed*” (1). |  |  |
| “The autumn leaves blew over the moonlit path in such a way as to make the girl who was moving there seem fixed to a sliding walk, letting the motion of the wind and the leaves carry her forward” (3). |  |  |
| “One time, as a child, in a power failure, his mother had found and lit a last candle and there had been a brief hour of rediscovery, of such illumination that space lost its vast dimensions and drew comfortably around them, and they, mother and son, alone, transformed, hoping that the power might not come on again too soon…” (5). |  |  |
| “He stood looking up at the ventilator grill in the hall and suddenly remembered that something lay hidden behind the grill, something that seemed to peer down at him now. He moved his eyes quickly away” (8). |  |  |
| “She had a very thin face like the dial of a small clock seen faintly in a dark room in the middle of a night when you waken to see the time and see the clock telling you the hour and the minute and the second, with a white silence and a glowing, all certainty and knowing what it has to tell you of the night passing swiftly on toward further darknesses, but moving also toward a new sun” (8).  |  |  |
|  “He wore his happiness like a mask and the girl had run off across the lawn with the mask and there was no way of going to knock on her door and ask for it back” (9). |  |  |
| “It drank up the green matter that flowed to the top in a slow boil. Did it drink of the darkness? Did it suck out all the poisons accumulated with the years? It fed in silence with an occasional sound of inner suffocation and blind searching. It had an Eye” (12). | Bradbury personifies the stomach-pumping machine. | Sucks the life out of Mildred/society (poisons/wars)technology looks like monsterscontrolled by governmentinner suffocation = air = knowledge |
| “There are too many of us, he thought. There are billions of us and that’s too many. Nobody knows anyone. Strangers come and violate you. Strangers come and cut your heart out. Strangers come and take your blood” (14). |  |  |
| “Play the man, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out” (33). |  |  |
| “They [the books] fell like slaughtered birds …” (34). |  |  |
| “A book lit, almost obediently, like a white pigeon, in his hands, wings fluttering. In the dim, wavering light, a page hung open and it was like a snowy feather, the words delicately painted thereon. In all the rush and fervor, Montag had only an instant to read a line, but it blazed in his mind for the next minute as if stamped there by fiery steel” (34). |  |  |
| “Montag had done nothing. His hand had done it all, with a brain of its own, with a conscience and curiosity in each trembling finger, had turned thief” (35). |  |  |
| “Mildred’s hand had frozen behind the pillow. Her fingers were tracing the books outline and as the shape became familiar her face looked surprised and then stunned” (53). |  |  |
| “A book is a loaded gun in the house next door” (56). |  |  |
| “No front porches. My uncle says there used to be front porches. And people sat there sometimes at night, talking when they wanted to talk, rocking, and not talking when they didn’t want to talk” (60). |  |  |
| “We cannot tell the precise moment when friendship is formed. As in filling a vessel drop by drop, there is at last a drop which makes it run over; so in a series of kindnesses there is at least one which makes the heart run over” (67). |  |  |
| “’That favorite subject, Myself.’‘I understand *that* one, said Mildred.’‘But Clarisse’s favorite subject wasn’t herself. It was everyone else, and me. She was the first person I can remember who looked straight at me as if I counted’” (68). |  |  |
| “’Fill this sieve and you’ll get a dime!’ And the faster he poured, the faster it sifted through with a hot whispering. His hands were tired, the sand was boiling, the sieve was empty” (74). |  |  |
| “The train radio vomited upon Montag, in retaliation, a great tonload of music made of tin, copper, silver, chromium, and brass. The people were pounded into submission; they did not run, there was no place to run…” (75). |   |  |
| “The magic is only in what books say, how they stitched the patches of the universe together into one garment for us” (79). |  |  |
| “For these were the hands that had acted on their own, no part of him, here was where the conscience first manifested itself to snatch books, dart off with Job and Ruth, and Willie Shakespeare, and now, in the firehouse, these hands seemed gloved with blood” (101-102). |  |  |
| “He felt it [the Hound] scrabble and seize his leg and stab the needle in for a moment before the fire snapped the Hound up in the air, burst its metal bones at the joints, and blew out its metal bones at the joints, and blew out its interior in a single flushing of red color like a skyrocket fastened to the street” (114). |  |  |
|  “It was only the other night everything was fine and the next thing I know I’m drowning. How many times can a man go down and still be alive? I can’t breathe” (124).   |  |  |
| “It’s a wonder it didn’t show on me, like fat” (125). |  |  |
| “…they say there’s lots of old Harvard degrees on the tracks between here and Los Angeles. Most of them are wanted in other cities” (126). |  |  |
| “So they must have their game out, thought Montag. The circus must go on, even with the war beginning within the hour…” (127). |  |  |
| “Of course! Why hadn’t they done it before! Why, in all the years, hadn’t this game been tried! Everyone up, everyone out! He [Montag] couldn’t be missed! The only man running alone in the night city, the only man proving his legs!“At the count of ten now! *One*! *Two*!” (133). |  |  |
| “He [Montag] floated on his back when the valise filled and sank; the river was mild and leisurely, going away from the people who ate shadows for breakfast and steam for lunch and vapors for supper” (133-134). |  |  |