

Fahrenheit 451
Discussion Questions
&
“Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold

1. How does Faber define the value of books? Does his definition of “quality” apply to media other than printed books? Do you think his definitions are accurate or not? Explain.
2. Discuss Montag’s relationship with Mildred. Is this a typical marital relationship in their culture? Discuss the role of family in the characters’ lives, particularly in relation to the TV parlor “families” and their nature and function. media other than printed books? Do you think his definitions are accurate or not? Explain.
3. Describe Clarisse’s effect on Montag and her function in the novel. How and why does she change him? Why does she vanish from the novel?
4. Discuss the use of quotations from literature in *Fahrenheit 451*. Which works are quoted and to what effect? Pay specific attention to “Dover Beach,” the Bible, and quotes from Shakespeare.
5. How plausible is the future envisioned in this novel? Specifically, do you think the author provides a convincing account of how censorship became so rampant in this society?
6. Why do you think Beatty hates books?
7. Read the poem “Dover Beach,” by Matthew Arnold. In what ways is it significant that Montag reads this particular poem to Mildred and her friends?

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“Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold

The sea is calm tonight.

The tide is full, the moon lies fair

Upon the straits; on the French coast the light

Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,

Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.

Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!

Only, from the long line of spray

Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,

Listen! you hear the grating roar

Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,

At their return, up the high strand,

Begin, and cease, and then again begin,

With tremulous cadence slow, and bring

The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago

Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought

Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow

Of human misery; we

Find also in the sound a thought,

Hearing it by this distant northern sea.