

Reunited

Montag stepped out of the river. There was a beautiful light from the stars and the moon within the darkness of the world. When he looked closely he saw the man on the moon that Clarisse had talked about. He walked on to find the railroad Faber had told him to follow. He continued on the railroad until he saw a light ahead of him. It was bright and beautiful and had a warming and comforting feeling to it. He wasn't used to this comforting light. It was mesmerizing and unfamiliar in the way that a child sees and experiences new things for the first time. He continued to go towards it, and as he got closer he noticed that there were people surrounding it. It was a little fire where people were keeping warm. He stared at it with wonder and with wide eyes like it was a strange creature staring straight back at him. To have a fire comforting and warming people instead of killing and burning. Right before he was about to take another step forward someone around the fire spoke boldly,

"Montag. Come out."

"How do you know my name?"

"We saw you on the monitor."

"What monitor?"

They pulled out a small screen and let Montag watch it, and it showed the helicopters and the mechanical hound following someone who they claimed was Montag himself.

"They lost you at the river, so they followed him and told everyone it was you." One of the men around the fire said.

Montag watched as the mechanical hound leapt up into the air with a rhythm and a sense of timing that was incredibly beautiful. Its needle shot out. It was suspended for a moment in their gaze, as if to give the vast audience time to appreciate everything, the raw look of the victim's face, the empty street, the steel animal, a bullet nosing the target. The hound landed on the man. The man was screaming. He screamed and screamed. Then all was silent. "Guy Montag is dead, I repeat Guy Montag is dead." They announced from the helicopter on the monitor. Montag stared with a face full of confusion, anger, and sadness. He stood unmoving with his eyes locked on the monitor. Everyone believed him dead. Montag looked around the fire at all the faces. Some younger. Probably in their twenties or thirties much like Montag. Some older, some with wrinkles, and look more like Faber. They all had at least one thing in common. They had wisdom in their eyes.

"I am Granger." The man Montag had been speaking to introduced himself, and stepped forward.

Montag nodded and shook Granger's hand.

"What are you all doing here?" Montag asked as he looked around at everyone.

"We all are here for the same reason as you. To get away from everything going on in there." Granger nodded his head towards the city, "And we all remember."

"Remember what exactly?" Montag asked curiously.

"Books."

"I am not sure I understand."

“Every one of us here remembers a book we have read, and we stay out here where no one will bother us.”

“Should you not tell people about this? Share your knowledge? Can’t we change things, if we tell everyone?” Montag questioned.

“Yes.”

“Then why not do it?”

“We will. When the time comes.”

Montag was about to question them further when he heard something coming up behind him. He turned around to see a person getting closer to them. He couldn’t quite make them out but he recognizes the faint, yet distinct smell of strawberries and apricots.

“Montag?” she asked.

He now knew exactly who this person getting closer to him was, even though it seemed impossible. He noticed her pale, moon like skin and small figure.

“Clarisse? Is that you?” He couldn’t move, but his eyes grew in excitement and confusion as to how she could be here. Clarisse ran up and hugged him tightly.

“How is this possible? I thought you were hit by a car. I thought you were dead.” Montag asked.

“No. I’m here. I’m alive and crazy as ever.” She laughed lightly like the sound of a stream bubbling and flowing with the current.

“How did you get out here? I still cannot believe it!”

“I know. I saw you on the monitor and figured you would be dead by the time I got back not standing in front of me.”

“Yet here we both are.”

“Yes, here we are indeed.” She said before giving him another small hug.

“How did you get out here?” Montag asked again.

“It is quite a story. Remember I told you about my uncle a few times?”

“Yes. Yes I remember that. Your uncle.”

“Yes. He was the one who helped me get here. I decided I wanted to try it, reading a book I mean. I talked to my uncle and he had one for me. As I was walking home someone saw me with the book under my arm and called the firefighters. A man named Captain Beatty came up to me and tried to get me to give him the book, but I refused. My uncle had told me several times about the river and the railroad and what it was like out here. I do not know how he knew. I did not know if it all was real or just stories, but I ran, ran, ran until I reached the river. Once I did I swam until the railroad was in sight. Then after all of that I found myself here with Granger and everyone else.”

Montag took all of the information in as she went on to tell him about how she, like him, watched “her death” on the monitor as an innocent girl was run over with Captain Beatty’s car. Then when she finished her story he started to think and curiously asked her,

“Clarisse...Now what did you say your uncle’s name was?”

“Oh, did I not mention his name is Faber.” She said.

“Faber?!?” Montag asked excitedly.

“Yes...” She trailed off confused by Montag’s excited tone.

“Your uncle is actually Faber? Faber.”

“Yes.” She repeats, “Why? Do you know him..?” Clarisse wondered, still a bit confused.

“Why yes! Yes I do!” Montag exclaimed. “Faber told me how to get out of the city. If not for him, your uncle, Faber, why I wouldn’t be here. I would be dead rather than Beatty or the man who was killed in place of me.”

“Beatty is dead? What happened?” Clarisse wondered.

“I killed him.”

“You did? Why? How?”

“He was at my house, and he was having me burn it down because I had books. I was speaking to your uncle through an earpiece and Beatty threatened to track him down and then I burned him. He burned right there with my house. Burned.” Montag said with anger building up inside of him as he visibly stiffened and went rigid.

“Oh, I hope my uncle is okay.” Clarisse said worriedly.

“Don’t worry that earpiece burned too, no one knows he helped me.”

“So how did he help you what happened?”

“It started when I met him in the park...” Montag told Clarisse about everything he went through. From reading the poem to Mildred and her friends to killing Beatty and finding his way to the river and the railroad tracks.

Once they were finished talking they walked to the river together and sat there looking out at the busy, moving, city they once lived in, yet from where they sat it seemed quiet and calm. They sat in silence. Silence. No cars, no people, no alarms. Just silence and darkness except the light from the stars, the moon, and the lights in the city away in the distance. How small and peaceful it looked from here. Then all of a

sudden a huge bright light devoured their city like a python eating its prey. After that, smoke clouded over everything. They couldn't see their city anymore it was gone in the smoke and fire. Once everything cleared and they could see the city again, there really was no city to see at all.

They sat there with their eyes glued to the scene in front of them. Everything had crumbled to the ground and had an orange glow from the flames engulfing what survived the bomb that was just dropped. That had devoured their city. Montag started thinking about Mildred, and Clarisse about her uncle. Their before comfortable silence changed. Clarisse and Montag both sat up straight with their eyes glued ahead of them. They were both stiff and you could feel the tension.

"Do you think anyone survived?" Clarisse asked quietly, and clearly wondered if her uncle was okay.

"I am sure they are okay..." Montag said, trying to comfort Clarisse as well as himself.

"Yes, I guess so..." She trailed off, then deciding, "I think we should go back."

"What? Go back? But I have just got here."

"Yes. Go back. I need to make sure my uncle is okay, and didn't you tell me you had a wife?"

"Well yes but-"

"Then it is decided, let's go!" She exclaimed, running off.

"Wait!" Montag called after her but it falls on deaf ears as she continued running.

"Where are you two going?" Granger shouted after them.

Montag yelled back as he was running after Clarisse with Granger watching them,

“Back to the city it seems!”