

F451 Montag & Beatty Conversation Guide

Read the following quotations that reflect Captain Beatty's ideas of happiness. **Agree or disagree that his definitions apply to present-day America. Defend your point of view by finding specific examples from our culture to dispute or agree with his views.**

1. "More sports for everyone, group spirit, fun, and you don't have to think, eh? Organize and organize super-super sports. More cartoons in books. More pictures. The mind drinks less and less. Impatience. Highways full of crowds going somewhere, somewhere, somewhere, nowhere."
2. "People want to be happy, isn't that right?...Well, aren't they? Don't we keep them moving, don't we give them fun? That's all we live for, right? For pleasure, for titillation?"
3. "We're the Happiness Boys...We stand against the small tide of those who want to make everyone unhappy with conflicting theory and thought."
4. "So bring on your clubs and parties, your acrobats and magicians, your daredevils, jet cars, motorcycle helicopters, your sex and heroin, more of everything to do with your automatic reflex. If the drama is bad, if the film says nothing, if the play is hollow, sting me with theremin, loudly. I'll think I'm responding to the play, when it's only a tactile reaction to the vibration. But I don't care. I just like solid entertainment."
5. "Colored people don't like Little Black Sambo. Burn it. White people don't feel good about Uncle Tom's Cabin. Burn it. Someone's written a book on tobacco and cancer of the lungs? The cigarette people are weeping? Burn the book. Serenity, Montag. Peace, Montag. Take your fight outside."
6. "Books cut shorter. Condensations. Digests. Tabloids. Everything boils down the gag, the snap ending. Classics cut to fifteen-minute radio shows, then cut again to fill a two-minute book column, winding up at last as a ten—or twelve—line dictionary resume...Hamlet in a one-page digest in a book that claimed: now at last you can read all the classics; keep up with your neighbors. Do you see? Out of the nursery and into the college and back to the nursery; there's your intellectual pattern for the past five centuries or more."