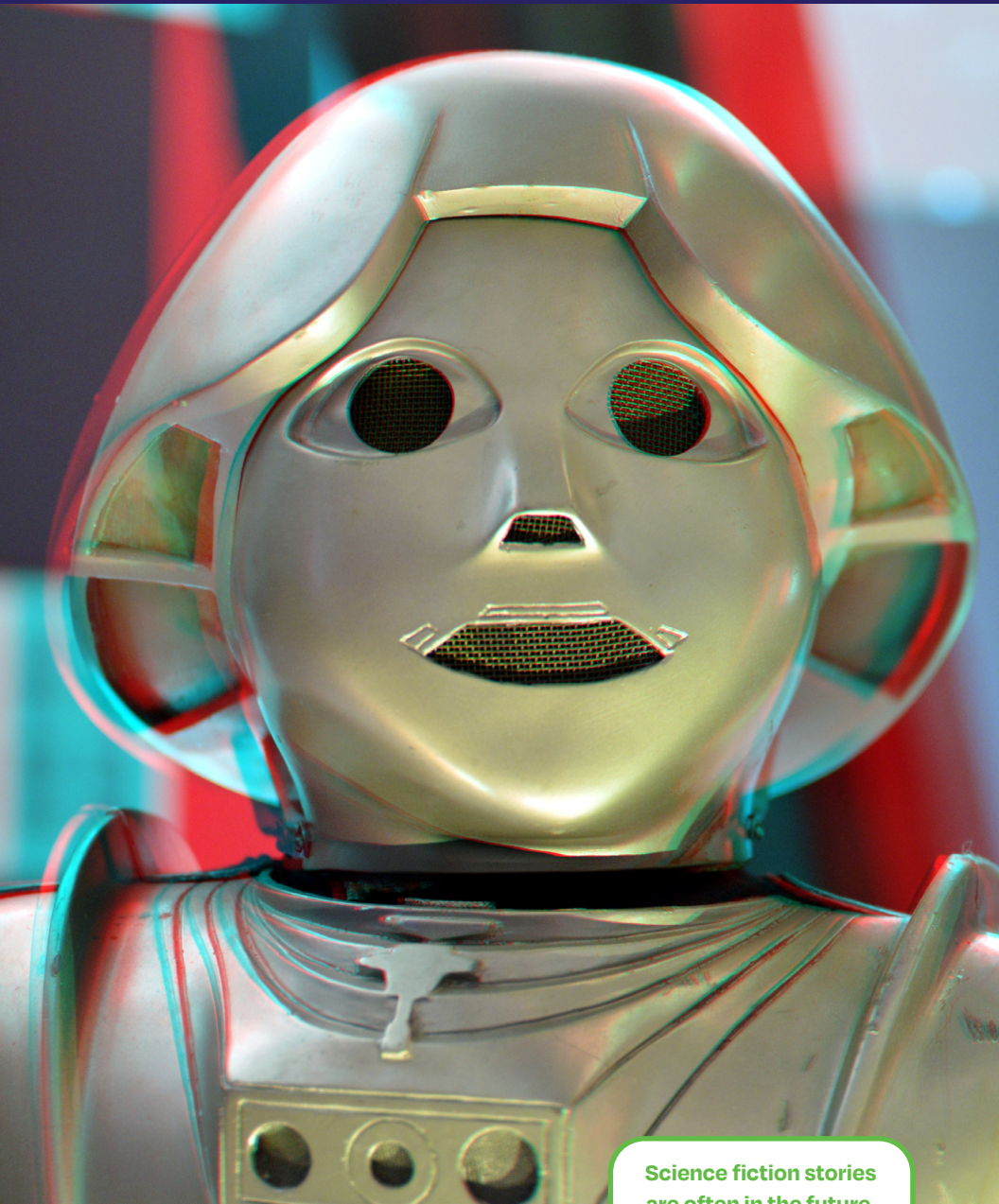


# Science Fiction





Science fiction stories  
are often in the future.

## What is Science Fiction?

Imagine a man facing a pack of hungry space aliens. Then, imagine a girl shrinking to the size of a dime. Finally, imagine people who try to read books, but firefighters take their books and then arrest them. Events like these occur in science fiction.

Science fiction stories are often strange tales that have roots in science. It is the science in science fiction that makes these stories seem like they could happen.

There are different kinds of science fiction. Travel stories might include trips into the past or the future, or into outer space. Alien stories might include creatures that invade Earth. Sometimes, however, the aliens are humans who land on other planets. Another kind of science fiction might include civilizations that seem perfect, but have hidden secrets. Science fiction writers create stories that amaze us and also make us think about our own world.

### Key Notes:

What are science fiction stories about?

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## Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury is one of the greatest writers of science fiction, and he has won many honors for his work. Several things inspired Ray Bradbury to write science fiction.

As a child, Bradbury was interested in magic. When he was 11 years old, he saw a performance by Harry Blackstone, a famous magician. Bradbury even went up on stage to help Blackstone make a horse disappear. From that time, Bradbury loved magic.

Movies, adventure books, and comic strips also inspired Ray Bradbury. He especially like horror films filled with mystery and with unusual and strange creatures. His favorite adventures took place on other worlds. In the daily newspaper, he read comic strips that had ray guns and rocket ships.

Bradbury creates magic through words. His stories take readers on trips through space and time. He tells tales of strange beings and surprising events that sometimes seem both scary and real.

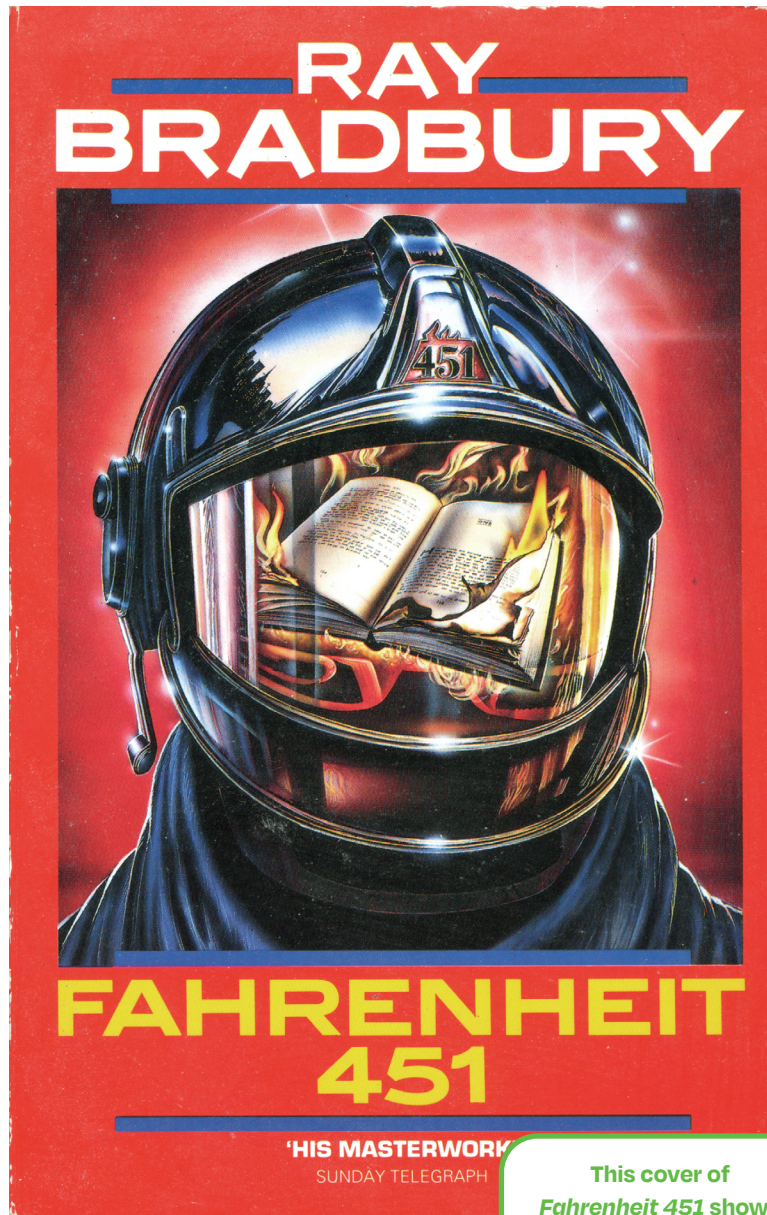
### Key Notes:

What does Ray Bradbury write about?

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These people look at illustrations by Aldo Sessa from Ray Bradbury's books at an art exhibit.



This cover of *Fahrenheit 451* shows books burning.

## Fahrenheit 451

*Fahrenheit 451* is Ray Bradbury's most popular science fiction book. The story takes place in a future in which books and reading are against the law. When books are discovered, they're burned and their owners are arrested. The temperature at which books burn is 451 degrees Fahrenheit.

In this future, firefighters don't put out fires. Instead, they make fires and burn books. Guy Montag is a firefighter who questions the purpose of his job. Because he secretly reads books, Montag begins to understand how books can lead people to ask questions about things that are going on around them. He comes to realize that his government doesn't want people to think.

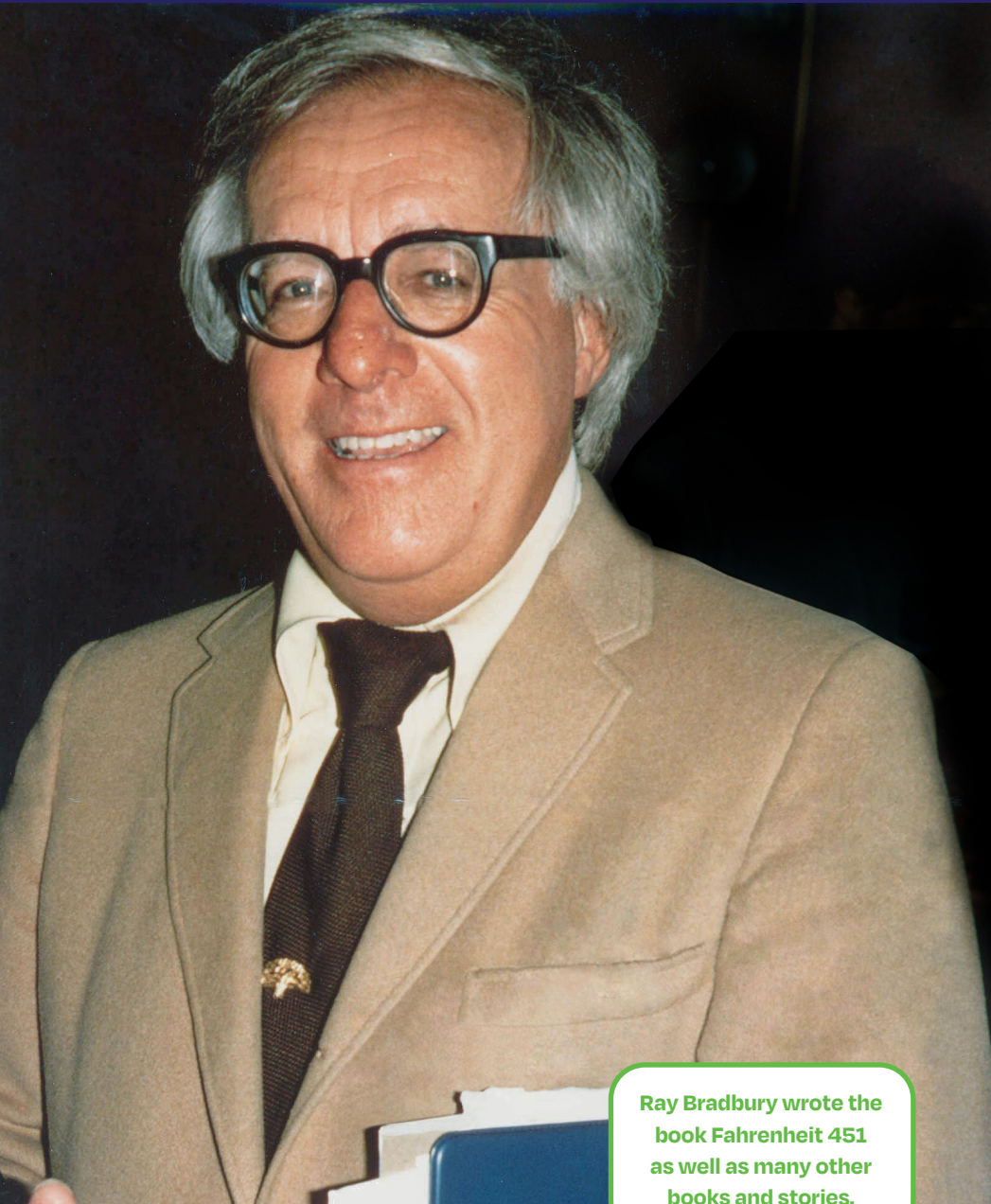
When Montag's reading is discovered, officers try to arrest him. However, Montag escapes and joins a group of people who are trying to save books by memorizing them. Later, they'll tell their memorized books to others so that books won't be forgotten.

### Key Notes:

In *Fahrenheit 451*, what happens to people who read?

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Ray Bradbury wrote the book **Fahrenheit 451** as well as many other books and stories.

## Censorship

One of the main ideas in *Fahrenheit 451* is that people have a right to read books, even if others don't like the ideas in them. When people are not allowed to read what others have written, it is called censorship. Sometimes some of the words are changed. At other times, a whole book is censored.

At times, *Fahrenheit 451* itself was censored. In, 1967, the book's publisher began to sell a version of the book in which words that might offend some readers were changed, or edited.

In 1979, Ray Bradbury discovered that only the edited version of *Fahrenheit 451* was available. He was angry that the book in which he wrote about the danger of censorship was itself being censored. Because he wanted people to read his book as he has written it, Ray Bradbury ordered the publisher to sell *Fahrenheit 451* only in its original, unedited version.

### Key Notes:

What is censorship?

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