

Even if there had not been the historical precedent of the burning of the books in Nazi Germany in the '30s, Bradbury would have been justified in his projection of a State which not only barred certain books, but which banned *all* books.

Certain books, according to the convenience of the powers that be, have always been "under fire"; in the fire with them all is the inevitable conclusion to such a mentality.

Fireman Montag, the central figure of Bradbury's novel (he is in fact the "hero" if one accepts such terms), belongs to a future technocracy, when the fire-brigade is employed, not to extinguish fires, but to burn books and set fire to any house in which books are found or reported to exist.

Poor Montag, who wants to read a book, is well and truly out on a limb: suspected by his colleagues at the (fire) station, deserted by his wife—and almost any man who has ever contemplated the slightest move outside convention will recognise Mrs. Montag who lives in a doped world of super-television and accepts the voice of authority and what *they* say as gospel.—poor Montag is a man on the run and seems to be doomed.

But a fire, although it consumes and destroys, is also a beacon giving off light and perhaps a signal or a message. Bradbury's "message" is that at some later date in history it may be necessary once again to plead for the liberty of the press and that meantime, while there are books there is hope.—H.J.

DETAIL

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Lucky Thirteen

With this first volume at our new lower price we welcome many new members to the Science Fiction Book Club. If you enjoy *The Kraken Wakes* we hope you will recommend the Club to as many friends as possible.

If you have suggestions to make we are always glad to hear from you and your letters are read with intense interest—we are only sorry that life is too short to reply to all correspondents individually.

* * *

A member, hearing of the reduction in price, rang up to ask if this meant that there was to be a reduction of our standards—literary and physical. The answer is "No" on both counts. *The Kraken Wakes* is a full length novel, produced in the same 'plain and decent' format as other club books.

* * *

Taking the title of Willy Ley and Chesley Bonestell's book *The Conquest of Space*, Paramount have made a science fiction film that will please the customers. It will first be shown in London at Easter before going out on general release. Hope you like it—we did.

* * *

THE KRAKEN WAKES by John Wyndham

(Michael Joseph 10s. 6d. S.F.B.C. 4s. 6d.)

If you still number among your acquaintance a few who scoff at science fiction as fantastic nonsense—"essentially unreadable"—is a favourite term of abuse from the uninitiated—then