

## ENGLISH II HONORS

Dear English II Honors Students,

Welcome to the English II Honors Program. This year we will be studying a variety of American Literature selections. We will begin the 2015-2016 school year with a summer reading of *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. You are also required to read two short stories, "Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut and "The Children's Story" by James Clavell. Please come to the first class having read the novel, both stories, and having completed the assignments. The assignments will be collected, graded, and will be calculated as part of the first marking period grade.

### THE ASSIGNMENT:

➤ **Read *Fahrenheit 451*.**

The novel is divided into three sections. Please complete the assignments as directed:

- ✓ As you read, answer the Required Questions for All Readings (see below) for Part One, Part Two, and Part Three. You will answer the same three questions for each section. Please type your answers.
- ✓ As you read and immediately after completing the reading of **Part One**, "**The Hearth and the Salamander**," complete the handouts entitled "Montag Revealed," "Alter Egos," and "Promises, Promises."
- ✓ As you read, and immediately after completing the reading of **Part Two**, "**The Sieve and the Sand**," complete handouts entitled "What Are Books For?" and "Videots."
- ✓ After you have completed the entire novel, answer the One Page Response Topic. Please type your answer. Double space please.

➤ **Read "Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut.**

- ✓ Answer the Required Questions for All Readings. Please type your answers.
- ✓ This is your copy of the story; if you would like to annotate (mark the copy) as you read, please feel free to do so.

➤ **Read "The Children's Story" by James Clavell**

- ✓ Answer the Required Questions for All Readings. Please type your answers.
- ✓ This is your copy of the story; if you would like to annotate (mark the copy) as you read, please feel free to do so.

➤ **Required Questions for All Readings:** Please answer the following questions for each section of the novel and for both short stories assigned.

1. Write one word from the work (the word must appear in the text) which sums up the feeling of the entire work. (For example, if you were to read *Macbeth*, you might choose the word "blood".) Briefly explain why you feel this word is the best choice.
2. Copy, word for word, a passage from the work which made the deepest impression on you. Please indicate the page number for the passage. Obviously, you will have to limit the length. The passage may be dialogue, straight prose, or a combination of both. Tell in what ways the passage made an impression on you.
3. What one event in the work stand out most in your mind? Explain why this event stayed with you.

These readings will form a basis for discussions we will have during the year. It is always nice to own your own copy of a book so that you can make notes in the book as you read. If this is not possible, copies of *F451* are available from LVR (please see me before school ends-B206), and copies of the novel are available at local libraries. You may email me at [mrivara@lvhs.org](mailto:mrivara@lvhs.org) if you have any questions. Keep in mind, it is summer, and I don't check email every day. Be patient for responses.

Have a wonderful summer. I look forward to writing, reading, and working with you this coming year.

Enjoy Your Summer!

Mrs. Rivara

Note: As with all Humanities Department assignments, and in keeping with the LVR honor code, plagiarism of any kind (copying, borrowing, taking work from any source, including that of other students) is not acceptable.

## Montag Revealed

**Directions:** Read the following quotations from *Fahrenheit 451*. After each quotation write what you think has been revealed about the character of Montag. Bring findings together in a composite statement.

Example: "in silence, hers thoughtful, his a kind of clenching . . . silence in which he shot her accusing glances."

*If his silence is clenching he is tense and angry and blaming it on her.*

1. "with the brass nozzle in his fists . . . his hands were the hands of some amazing conductor bringing down the tatters and charcoal ruins of history."

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2. ". . . grinned the fierce grin of all men singed and driven back by flame . . . it never went away, as long as he remembered."

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3. ". . . that other self, the subconscious idiot that ran babbling at times, quite independent of will, habit and conscience."

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4. "He felt his smile slide away, melt, fold over and down on itself like a candle now blown out."

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5. "He wore his happiness like a mask and the girl had run off . . . with the mask and there was no way of . . . asking for it back."

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6. "With the feeling of a man who will die in the next hour for lack of air, he felt his way to his open, separate, therefore cold bed."

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## Alter Egos

**Directions:** Discover the characters of Clarisse and Mildred by finding quotations which describe them. When you note the quotation, indicate what aspect of character is revealed.

### Clarisse

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### Mildred

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### Composite Statement

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## Promises, Promises

*Fahrenheit 451* presents a culture in which Fire Captain Beatty contends that the purveyors of the mass culture, the firemen, have the right to keep people happy. Happiness means getting rid of books. Books offend. Books confuse. Books make people think and become depressed.

Take a close look at TV and magazines and examine our own mass culture and its happiness promises. View at least two hours of television and record the images and implied or explicit promises of the products or entertainment, i.e. CDs, concerts, upcoming programming, etc. Look at magazines and find examples of happiness in the advertising or featured articles.

## What Are Books For?

**Directions:** As Montag and Professor Faber discuss the forbidden subject of books in Part II of the novel, Professor Faber defines books in the following way. Read these quotations silently. As you read them, place a + in front of the number if you agree with the statement; a - if you disagree, and an O if you have a question regarding it.

Be prepared to discuss each quotation when you have completed the reading.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. "It's not the books you need, it's some of the things that were once in books."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. "The magic is only what books say, how they stitched the patches of the universe together for us."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. "Books . . . have quality . . . texture . . . pores . . . features . . . you find life under the glass, streaming past in infinite profusion."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. "Good writers touch life often. The mediocre ones run a quick hand over her. The bad ones rape her and leave her for the flies."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Books only help us if we have ". . . quality of information . . . leisure to digest . . . the right to carry out actions based on what we learn from the interaction of the first two."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. "Books are to remind us what asses and fools we are."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. "Those who don't build must burn. It's as old as history and juvenile delinquents."



## Videots

### Directions:

1. The following quotations are opinions expressed by Jerzy Koszinski, author of *The Painted Bird* and *Being There*, who feels as strongly as Bradbury that reading is an essential part of everyone's life. Koszinski expresses his opinions not only about the current lack of reading in the United States, but about what he feels is the detrimental effect of television as a replacement for reading. Read the following silently. As you read a quotation, if you agree, place a + in front of the number. If you disagree, place a - in front of the number. If you have a question, place a O in the margin.

As you read, if an example from your own experience occurs to you, jot down a note or two to record it. Try to find examples for at least two of the quotations.

2. Use these quotations as a basis for a paper in which you will agree or disagree with Koszinski's and Bradbury's assessment of the effect of television on its viewer.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Children have always imitated adults, but "TV babies" mimic TV and behave with patterns they learned from TV and not their own moods or real role models.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. TV, unlike a novel, takes the initiative and says, be passive, I'll do the moving, talking and acting, you be a spectator to life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Unlike reading, TV isolates the viewer and gives no time for reflection.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. A novel becomes concrete through a reader's imagination and memory--his inner process; because it is totally free, it gives unexpected, unchanneled insights.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Students in an experiment watched their teacher being attacked. At the same time, it was filmed on two TV screens clearly visible to students. Most students did not look at the incident, which they believe was real, but watched TV because they could "see it better." None came to the aid of the teacher.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. By filming a brutal physical struggle from a variety of viewpoints, the cameras transformed a human conflict into an aesthetic happening distancing the audience and allowing them an alternative to moral judgement and involvement.

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\_\_\_\_\_ 16. Because the real world is unpredictable and doesn't function according to the 30-minute solution and is full of ambiguities, children brought up as viewers, not participators, feel naturally persecuted.

\_\_\_\_\_ 17. Watching conflict on TV cannot prepare anyone emotionally to confront and handle a situation in reality like experiencing directly can.



One Page Response Topic

In what ways is Ecclesiastes (3:1-8) an appropriate quote for the end of the novel?

Please type your answer. Be sure to limit your response to one page.

**Ecclesiastes (3:1-8)**

from *THE KING JAMES BIBLE*

Countless generations of writers in many countries have been inspired and influenced by the Bible. Many great works of literature are elaborations or reinterpretations of biblical stories. Moreover, the style and rhythm of biblical writing have left a strong imprint on language. The rolling cadences of the English translation of the Bible known as the King James Version (first published in 1611) were constantly echoed in English prose, and are still heard today in speeches—particularly sermons. The biblical use of balanced sentences, rhetorical repetition, and metaphorical language has also been widely imitated.

The following selection from the King James Version was taken from the Book of Ecclesiastes (3:1-8). Like other poems in the Bible, it is unrhymed and nonmetrical, but strongly rhythmic.

For every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die;

A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal;

A time to break down, and a time to build up;

5

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose;

A time to keep, and a time to cast away;

10

A time to rend,<sup>o</sup> and a time to sew;

A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate;

A time of war, and a time of peace.

15

## THE CHILDREN'S STORY BY JAMES CLAVELL

And the children were afraid. All except Johnny. He watched the classroom door with hate. He felt the hatred deep within his stomach. It gave him strength.

It was two minutes to nine.

The teacher glanced numbly from the door and stared at the flag which stood in a corner of the room. But she couldn't see the flag today. She was blinded by her terror, not only for herself but mostly for them, her children. She had never had children of her own. She had never married.

In the mists of her mind she saw the rows upon rows of children she had taught through her years. Their faces were legion. But she could distinguish no one particular face. Only the same face which varied but slightly. Always the same age or thereabouts. Seven. Perhaps a boy, perhaps a girl. And the face always open and ready for the knowledge that she was to give. The same face staring at her, open, waiting and full of trust.

*The Children's Story*  
by James Clavell

The teacher was afraid.

The children rustled, watching her, wondering what possessed her. They saw not the gray hair and the old eyes and the lined face and the well-worn clothes. They saw only their teacher and the twisting of her hands. Johnny looked

away from the door and watched with the other children. He did not understand anything except that the teacher was afraid, and because she was afraid she was making them all worse and he wanted to shout that there was no need to fear. "Just because THEY'VE conquered us there's no need for panic fear," Dad had said. "Don't be afraid, Johnny. If you fear too much, you'll be dead even though you're alive."

The sound of footsteps approached and then stopped. The door opened.

The children gasped. They had expected an ogre or giant or beast or witch or monster - like the outer-space monsters you think about when the lights are out and Mommy and Daddy have kissed you good night and you're frightened and you put your head under the cover and all at once you're awake and it's time for school. But instead of a monster, a beautiful young girl stood in the doorway. Her clothes were neat and clean, all olive green - even her shoes. But most important, she wore a lovely smile, and when she spoke, she spoke without the trace of an accent. The children found this very strange, for THEY were foreigners from a strange country far across the sea. They had all been told about THEM.

"Good morning, children, I'm your new teacher," the New Teacher said. Then she closed the door softly and walked to the teacher's desk, and the children in the front row felt and smelled the perfume of her - clean and fresh and young - and as she passed Sandra who sat at the end of the first row she said, "Good morning, Sandra," and Sandra flushed deeply and wondered, aghast, with all the other children, HOW DID SHE KNOW MY NAME? and her heart raced in her chest and made it feel tight and very heavy.

The teacher got up shakily. "I, er, I - good morning." Her words were faltering. She, too, was trying to get over the shock. And nausea.

"Hello, Miss Worden," the New Teacher said. "I'm taking over your class now. You are to go to the principal's office."

"Why? What's going to happen to me? What's going to happen to my children?" The words gushed from Miss Worden, and a lank piece of hair fell into her eyes. The children were agonized by the cut to her voice, and one or two of them felt the edge of tears.

"He just wants to talk to you, Miss Worden," the New Teacher said gently. "You really must take better care of yourself. You shouldn't be so upset."

Miss Worden saw the New Teacher's smile but she wasn't touched by its compassion. She tried to stop her knees from shaking. "Good-bye, children," she said. The Children made

no reply. they were too terrified by the sound of her voice and the tears that wet her face. And because she was crying, some of the children cried, and Sandra fled to her.

The New Teacher shut the door behind Miss Worden and turned back into the room, cradling Sandra in her arms.

"Children, children, there's no need to cry!" she said. "I know, I'll sing you a song! Listen!"

2

And she sat down on the floor as gracefully as an angel, Sandra in her arms, and she began to sing and the children stopped crying because Miss Worden never, never sang to them and certainly never sat on the floor, which is the best place to sit, as everyone in the class knew. They listened spellbound to the happy lilt of the New Teacher's voice and to the strange words of a strange tongue which soared and dipped like the sea of grass that was the birthplace of the song. It was a child's song, and it soothed them, and after she had sung the first chorus the New Teacher told them the story of the song.

It was about two children who had lost their way and were all alone in the great grass prairies and were afraid, but they met a fine man riding a fine horse and the man told them that there was never a need to be afraid, for all they had to do was the watch the stars and the stars would tell them where their home was.

"For once you know the right direction, then there's never a need to be afraid. Fear is something that comes from inside, from inside your tummies," the New Teacher said radiantly, "and good strong children like you have to put food in your tummies. Not fear."

The children thought about this and it seemed very sensible. The New Teacher sang the song again, and soon all the children were happy and calm once more. Except Johnny. He hated her even though he knew she was right about fear.

"Now," said the New Teacher, "what shall we do? I know, we'll play a game. I'll try and guess your names!" The children, wide-eyed, shifted in their seats. Miss Worden never did this, and often she called a child by another's name. THE NEW TEACHER'LL NEVER KNOW ALL OUR NAMES! NEVER! they thought. So they waited excitedly while the New Teacher turned her attention to Sandra. Oh, yes, somehow she already knew Sandra's name, but how could she possibly know everyone's? They waited, glad that they were going to catch out the New Teacher. But they were not to catch her out. The New Teacher remembered every name.

Johnny put up his hand. "How'd you know our names? I mean, well, we haven't had a roll call or anything, so how'd you know our names?"

"That's easy, Johnny," the New Teacher said. "You all sit in the same places every day. Each desk has one pupil. So I learned your names from a list. I had to work for three whole days to remember your names. A teacher must work very hard to be a good teacher, and so I worked for three days so that I could know each of you the first day. That's very important, don't you think, for a teacher to work hard?"

Johnny frowned and half-nodded and sat down and wondered why he hadn't figured that out for himself before asking, astonished that she had worked three days just to know everyone the first day. But still he hated her.

"Johnny. Would you tell me something, please? How do you start school? I mean what do you do to begin with?"

Johnny stood reluctantly. "We first pledge allegiance and then we sing the song -"

"Yes, but that's all after roll call," Sandra said, "You forgot roll call.

"Yes, You forgot roll call, Johnny," Mary said.

"First we have roll call," Johnny said. Then he sat down.

The New Teacher smiled. "All right. but we really don't need roll call. I know all your names and I know everyone's here. It's very lazy for a teacher not to know who's here and who isn't, don't you think? After all, a teacher should KNOW. So we don't need roll call while I'm your teacher. So we should pledge, isn't that next?"

Obediently all the children got up and put their hands on their hearts and the New Teacher did the same, and they began in unison, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of -"

"Just a moment," the New Teacher said. "What does PLEDGE mean?"

The children stood openmouthed; Miss Worden had never interrupted them before. They stood and stared at the New Teacher. Wordless. And silent.

"What does ALLEGIANCE mean?" The New Teacher asked, her hand over her heart.

3

The children stood in silence. Then Mary put up her hand.

"Well, PLEDGE is, ah, well, something like - sort of when you want to do something very good. You sort of pledge you're going to do something like not suck your thumb 'cause that makes your teeth bend and you'll have to wear a brace and go to the dentist, which hurts."

"That's very good, Mary. Very, very good. To pledge means to promise. And ALLEGIANCE?"

Mary shrugged helplessly and looked at her best friend, Hilda, who looked back at her and then at the teacher and shrugged helplessly too.

The New Teacher waited, and the silence hung in the room, hurting, then she said, "I think it's quite wrong for you to have to say something with long words in it if you don't understand what you're saying."

So the children sat down and waited expectantly.

"What did your other teacher tell you that it meant?"

After a long silence Danny put up his hand. "She never said nothing, miss."

One of my teachers at the other school I went to before this one," Joan said in a rush, "well, she sort of said what it all meant, at least she said some thing about it just before recess one day and then the bell went and afterwards we had spellin'."

Danny said, "Miss Worden - well, she never told us. We just hadta learn it and then say it, that's all. Our real teacher didn't say anything at all."

All the children nodded. Then they waited again.

"Your teacher never explained to you?" All the children shook their heads.

"I don't think that was very good. Not to explain. You can always ask me anything. That's what a real teacher should do." Then the New Teacher said, "But didn't you ask your daddies and mommies?"

"Not about 'I pledge.' We just hadta learn it," Mary said.

"Once I could say it, Daddy gave me a nickel for saying it good."

"That's right," Danny said. "So long as you could say it all, it was very good. But I never got no nickel."

"Did you ask each other what it meant?"

"I askt Danny once and he didn't know and none of knowed really. It's grown-up talk, and grown-ups talk that sort of words. We just havta learn it."

"The other schools I went to," Hilda said, "they never said anything about it. They just wanted us to learn it. They didn't ask us what it meant. We just hadta say it every day before we started school."

"It took me weeks and weeks and weeks to say it right,"

Mary said.

So the New Teacher explained what allegiance meant. "...so you are promising or pledging support to the flag and saying that it is much more important than YOU are. How can a flag be more important than a real live person?"

Johnny broke the silence. "But the next thing is - well, where it says 'and to the republic for which it stands.' That means it's like a, like a..." He searched for the word and could not find it. "Like well, sort of a sign, isn't it?"

"Yes. The real word is a SYMBOL." The New Teacher frowned. "But we don't need a sign to remind us that we love our country, do we? You're all good boys and girls. Do you need a sign to remind you?"



"What's REMIND mean?" Mary asked.

"It means to make you remember. To make you remember that you're all good boys and girls."

The children thought about this and shook their heads.

Johnny put up his hand. "It's our flag," he said fiercely. "We always pledge."

"Yes," the New Teacher said. "It is a very pretty one. She looked at it a moment and then said, "I wish I could have a piece of it. If it's so important, I think we should all have a piece of it. Don't you?"

"I've a little one at home," Mary said. "I could bring it tomorrow."

"Thank you, Mary dear, but I just wanted a little piece of this one because it's our own special classroom one."

Then Danny said, "If we had some scissors we could cut a little piece off."

"I've some scissors at home, Mary said.

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"There's some in Miss Worden's desk," Brian said.

The New Teacher found the scissors and then they had to decide who would be allowed to cut a little piece off, and the New Teacher said that because today was Mary's birthday (HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT?) Mary asked herself, awed) Mary should be allowed to cut the piece off. And then they

decided it would be very nice if they all had a piece. The flag is special, they thought, so if you have a piece, that's better than having just to look at it, 'cause you can keep it in your pocket.

So the flag was cut up by the children and they were very proud that they each had a piece. But now the flagpole was bare and strange. And useless.

The children pondered what to do with it, and the idea that pleased them most was to push it out of the window. They watched excitedly as the New Teacher opened the window and allowed them to throw it into the playground. They shrieked with excitement as they saw it bounce on the ground and lie there. They began to love this strange New Teacher.

When they were all back in their seats the new Teacher said, "Well, before we start our lessons, perhaps there are some questions you want me to answer. Ask me anything you like. That's only fair, isn't it, if I ask you questions?" Mary said, after a silence, "We never got to ask our real teacher ANY questions."

"You can always ask me anything. That '8 the fair way. The new way. Try me."

"What's your name?" Danny asked. She told them her name, and it sounded pretty.

Mary put up her hand. "Why do you wear those clothes? Well, it's like a sort of uniform nurses wear."

"We think that teachers should be dressed the same. Then you always know a teacher. It's nice and light and easy to iron. Do you like the color?"

"Oh, yes," Mary said. "You've got green eyes too."

"If you like, children, as a very special surprise, you can all have this sort of uniform. Then you won't have to worry about what you have to wear to school every day. And you'll all be the same."

The children twisted excitedly in their seats. Mary said, "But it'll cost a lot, and my mamma won't want to spend the money 'cause we have to buy food and food is expen-- Well, it sort of costs a lot of money."

"They will be given to you. As a present. There's no need to worry about money."

Johnny said, "I don't want to be dressed like that."

"You don't have to accept a present, Johnny. Just because the other children want to wear new clothes, you don't have to," the new Teacher said.

Johnny slunk back in his chair. I'M NEVER GOING TO WEAR THEIR CLOTHES, he said to himself. I DON'T CARE IF I'M GOING TO LOOK DIFFERENT FROM DANNY AND TOM AND FRED.

Then Mary asked, "Why was our teacher crying?"

"I suppose she was just tired and needed a rest. She's going to have a long rest." She smiled at them. "We think teachers should be young. I'm nineteen."

"Is the war over now?" Danny asked.

"Yes, Danny, isn't that wonderful! Now all your daddies will be home soon."

"Did we win or did we lose?" Mary asked.

"We - that's you and I and all of us - WE won."

"Oh!"

The children sat back happily.

Then Johnny's hatred burst. "Where's my dad? What've you done to my dad? Where's my dad?"

The New Teacher got up from her seat and walked the length of the room and the children's eyes followed her, and Johnny stood, knees of jelly. She sat down on his seat and put her hands on his shoulders, and his shoulders were shaking like his knees.

"He's going to a school. Some grown-ups have to go to school as well as children."

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"But they took him away and he didn't want to go." Johnny felt the tears close and he fought them back.

The New Teacher touched him gently, and he smelled the

youth and cleanness of her, and it was not the smell of home which was sour and just a little dirty. He's no different from all of you. YOU sometimes don't want to go to school. With grown-ups it's the same - just the same as children. Would you like to visit him? He has a holiday in a few days."

"Mamma said that Dad's gone away forever!" Johnny stared at her incredulously. "He has a holiday?"

The New Teacher laughed. "She's wrong, Johnny. After all, everyone who goes to school has holidays. That's fair, isn't it?"

The children shifted and rustled and watched. And Johnny said, "I can see him?"

"Of course. Your daddy just has to go back to school a little. He had some strange thoughts, and he wanted other grown-ups to believe them. It's not right to want others to believe wrong thoughts, is it?"

"Well, no, I suppose not. But my dad never thought nothing bad."

"Of course, Johnny. I said **WRONG** thoughts -- not **BAD** thoughts. There's nothing wrong with that. But it's right to show grown-ups right thoughts when they're wrong, isn't it?"

"Well, yes," Johnny said. "But what wrong thoughts did he have?"

"Just some grown-up thoughts that are old-fashioned. We're going to learn all about them in class. Then we can share knowledge, and I can learn from you as you will learn from

me. Shall we?"

"All right," Johnny stared at her, perplexed. "My dad couldn't have wrong thoughts. He just couldn't..."

Could he?"

"Well, perhaps sometime when you wanted to talk about something very important to your dad, perhaps he said, 'Not now, Johnny, I'm busy,' or, 'We'll talk about that tomorrow.' That's a bad thought -- not to give you time when it's important. Isn't it?"

"Sure, but that's what all grown-ups do."

"My mamma says that all the time," Mary said. And the other children nodded, and they wondered if all their parents should go back to school and unlearn bad thoughts.

"Sit down, Johnny, and we'll start learning good things and not worry about grown-up bad thoughts. Oh, yes," she said when she sat down at her seat again, brimming with happiness, "I have a lovely surprise for you. You're all going to stay overnight with us. We have a lovely room with beds and lots of food, and we'll all tell stories and have such a lovely time."

"Oh, good," the children said.

"Can I stay up till eight o'clock?" Mary asked breathlessly.

"Well, as it's our first new day, we'll all stay up to eight-

thirty. But only if you promise to go right to sleep afterward."

The children all promised. They were very happy. Jenny said, "But first we got to say our prayers. Before we go to sleep." The new Teacher smiled at her. "Of course. Perhaps we should say a prayer now. In some schools that's a custom too." She thought a moment and the faces watched her. Then she said, "let's pray. But let's pray for something very good. What should we pray for?"

"Bless Momma and Daddy." Danny said immediately.

"That's a good idea, Danny. I have one. Let's pray for candy. That's a good idea, isn't it?"

They all nodded happily.

So, following their New Teacher, they all closed their eyes and steepled their hands together, and they prayed with her for candy.

The New Teacher opened her eyes and looked around disappointedly. "but where's our candy. God is all-seeing and everywhere, and if we pray, He answers our prayers. Isn't that true.?"

"I prayed for a puppy of my own lots of times, but I never got one," Danny said.

"Maybe we didn't pray hard enough. Perhaps we should kneel down like it's done in church.

So the new Teacher knelt and all the children knelt and they prayed very, very hard. But there was still no candy.

Because the New Teacher was disappointed, the children were very disappointed. Then she said, "perhaps

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we're using the wrong name." She thought a moment and then said, "instead of saying 'God,' let's say 'Our Leader.' Let's pray to Our Leader for candy. Let's pray very hard and don't open your eyes till I say."

So the children shut their eyes tightly and prayed very hard, and as they prayed, the New Teacher took out some candy from her pocket and quietly put a piece on each child's desk. She did not notice Johnny -- alone of all the children -- watching her through his half-closed eyes.

She went softly back to her desk and the prayer ended, and the children opened their eyes and they stared at the candy and they were overjoyed.

"I'm going to pray to Our Leader every time," Mary said excitedly.

"Me too," Hilda said. "Could we eat Our Leader's candy now, teacher?"

"Oh, let's, please, please, please."

"So Our Leader answered your prayers, didn't he?"

"I saw you put the candy on our desks!" Johnny burst out. "I SAW YOU ... I didn't close my eyes, and I saw you. You had 'em in your pocket. We didn't get them with praying. YOU put them there."

All the children, appalled, stared at him and then at their



New Teacher. She stood at the front of the class and looked back at Johnny and then at all of them.

"Yes, Johnny, you're quite right. You're a very, very wise boy.

Children, I put the candy on your desks. So you know that it doesn't matter whom you ask, whom you shut your eyes and 'pray' to -- to God or anyone, even Our Leader -no one will give you anything. Only another human being." She looked at Danny. "God didn't give you the puppy you wanted. But if you work hard, I will. Only I or someone like me can GIVE you things. Praying to God or anything or anyone for something is a waste of time."

"Then we don't say prayers? We're not supposed to say prayers?"

The puzzled children watched her.

"You can if you want to, children. If your daddies and mommies want you to. But we know, you and I that it means nothing. That's our secret."

"My dad says it's wrong to have secrets from him."

"But he has secrets that he shares with your mommy and not with you, doesn't he?"

All the children nodded.

"Then it's not wrong for us to have a few secrets from them. Is it?"

"I like having secrets. Hilda and me have lots of secrets."

Mary said.

The New Teacher said, "We're going -to have lots of

wonderful secrets together. You can eat your candy if you want to. And because Johnny was especially clever, I think we should make him monitor for the whole week, don't you?"

They all nodded happily and popped the candy into their mouths and chewed gloriously. Johnny was very proud as he chewed his candy, he decided that he liked his teacher very much. Because she told the truth. Because she was right about fear. Because she was right about God. He'd prayed many times for many things and never got them, and even the one time he did get the skates, he knew his dad had heard him and had put them under his bed for his birthday and pretended he hadn't heard him. I ALWAYS WONDERED WHY HE DIDN'T LISTEN, AND ALL THE TIME HE WASN'T THERE, he thought.

Johnny sat back contentedly, resolved to work hard and listen and not to have wrong thoughts like Dad.

The teacher waited for them to finish their candy. This was what she had been trained for, and she knew that she would teach her children well and that they would grow up to be good citizens. She looked out of the window, at the sun over the land. It was a good land, and vast. A land to breathe in. But she was warned not by the sun but by the thought that throughout the school and throughout the land all children,

all men and all women were being taught with the same faith, with variations of the same procedures. Each according to his age group. Each according to his need. She glanced at her watch....

It was 9:23.



## HARRISON BERGERON

THE YEAR WAS 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't only equal before God and the law. They were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was better looking than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else. All this equality was due to the 211th, 212th, and 213th Amendments to the Constitution, and to the unceasing vigilance of agents of the United States Handicapper General.

Some things about living still weren't quite right, though. April, for instance, still drove people crazy by not being springtime. And it was in that clammy month that the H-G men took George and Hazel Bergeron's fourteen-year-old son, Harrison, away.

It was tragic, all right, but George and Hazel couldn't think about it very hard. Hazel had a perfectly average intelligence, which meant she couldn't think about anything except in short bursts. And George, while his intelligence was way above normal, had a little mental handicap radio in his ear. He was required by law to wear it at all times. It was tuned to a government transmitter. Every twenty seconds or so, the transmitter would send out some sharp noise to keep people like George from taking unfair advantage of their brains.

George and Hazel were watching television. There were tears on Hazel's cheeks, but she'd forgotten for the moment what they were about.

On the television screen were ballerinas.

A buzzer sounded in George's head. His thoughts fled in panic, like bandits from a burglar alarm.

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"That was a real pretty dance, that dance they just did," said Hazel.

"Hub?" said George.

"That dance—it was nice," said Hazel.

"Yup," said George. He tried to think a little about the ballerinas. They weren't really very good—no better than anybody else would have been, anyway. They were burdened with sashweights and bags of birdshot, and their faces were masked, so that no one, seeing a free and graceful gesture or a pretty face, would feel like something the cat drug in. George was toying with the vague notion that maybe dancers shouldn't be handicapped. But he didn't get very far with it before another noise in his ear radio scattered his thoughts.

George winced. So did two out of the eight ballerinas. Hazel saw him wince. Having no mental handicap herself, she had to ask George what the latest sound had been.

"Sounded like somebody hitting a milk bottle with a ballpeen hammer," said George.

"I'd think it would be real interesting, hearing all the different sounds," said Hazel, a little envious. "All the things they think up."

"Um," said George.

"Only, if I was Handicapper General, you know what I would do?" said Hazel. Hazel, as a matter of fact, bore a strong resemblance to the Handicapper General, a woman named Diana Moon Glampers. "If I was Diana Moon Glampers," said Hazel, "I'd have chimnes on Sunday—just chimnes. Kind of in honor of religion."

"I could think, if it was just chimnes," said George.

"Well—maybe make 'em real loud," said Hazel. "I think I'd make a good Handicapper General."

"Good as anybody else," said George.

"Who knows better'n I do what normal is?" said Hazel.

"Right," said George. He began to think glimmeringly about his abnormal son who was now in jail, about Hartson, but a twenty-one-gun salute in his head stopped that.

"Boy!" said Hazel, "that was a doozy, wasn't it?"

It was such a doozy that George was white and trembling, and tears stood on the rims of his red eyes. Two of

## HARRISON BERGERON 9

the eight ballerinas had collapsed to the studio floor, were holding their temples.

"All of a sudden you look so tired," said Hazel. "Why don't you stretch out on the sofa, so's you can rest your handicap bag on the pillows, honeybunch." She was referring to the forty-seven pounds of birdshot in a canvas bag, which was padlocked around George's neck. "Go on and rest the bag for a little while," she said. "I don't care if you're not equal to me for a while."

George weighed the bag with his hands. "I don't mind it," he said. "I don't notice it any more. It's just a part of me."

"You been so tired lately—kind of wore out," said Hazel. "If there was just some way we could make a little hole in the bottom of the bag, and just take out a few of them lead balls, just a few."

"Two years in prison and two thousand dollars fine for every ball I took out," said George. "I don't call that a bargain."

"If you could just take a few out when you came home from work," said Hazel. "I mean—you don't compete with anybody around here. You just set around."

"If I tried to get away with it," said George, "then other people'd get away with it—and pretty soon we'd be right back to the dark ages again, with everybody competing against everybody else. You wouldn't like that, would you?"

"I'd hate it," said Hazel.

"There you are," said George. "The minute people start cheating on laws, what do you think happens to society?"

If Hazel hadn't been able to come up with an answer to this question, George couldn't have supplied one. A siren was going off in his head.

"Reckon it'd fall all apart," said Hazel.

"What would?" said George blankly.

"Society," said Hazel uncertainly. "Wasn't that what you just said?"

"Who knows?" said George.

The television program was suddenly interrupted for a

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news bulletin. It wasn't clear at first as to what the bulletin was about, since the announcer, like all announcers, had a serious speech impediment. For about half a minute, and in a state of high excitement, the announcer tried to say, "Ladies and gentlemen—"

He finally gave up, handed the bulletin to a ballerina to read.

"That's all right—" Hazel said of the announcer, "he tried. That's the big thing. He tried to do the best he could with what God gave him. He should get a nice raise for trying so hard."

"Ladies and gentlemen—" said the ballerina, reading the bulletin. She must have been extraordinarily beautiful, because the mask she wore was hideous. And it was easy to see that she was the strongest and most graceful of all the dancers, for her handicap bags were as big as those worn by two-hundred-pound men.

And she had to apologize at once for her voice, which was a very unfair voice for a woman to use. Her voice was a warm, luminous, timeless melody. "Excuse me—" she said, and she began again, making her voice absolutely uncompetitive.

"Harrison Bergeron, age fourteen," she said in a grackle squawk, "has just escaped from jail, where he was held on suspicion of plotting to overthrow the government. He is a genius and an athlete, is under-handicapped, and should be regarded as extremely dangerous."

A police photograph of Harrison Bergeron was flashed on the screen—upside down, then sideways, upside down again, then right side up. The picture showed the full length of Harrison against a background calibrated in feet and inches. He was exactly seven feet tall.

The rest of Harrison's appearance was Halloween and hardware. Nobody had ever born heavier handicaps. He had outgrown hindrances faster than the H-G men could think them up. Instead of a little ear radio for a mental handicap, he wore a tremendous pair of earphones, and spectacles with thick wavy lenses. The spectacles were intended to make him not only half blind, but to give him whanging headaches besides.

## HARRISON BERGERON 11

Scrap metal was hung all over him. Ordinarily, there was a certain symmetry, a military neatness to the handicaps issued to strong people, but Harrison looked like a walking junkyard in the race of life. Harrison carried three hundred pounds.

And to offset his good looks, the H-G men required that he wear at all times a red rubber ball for a nose, keep his eyebrows shaved off, and cover his even white teeth with black caps at snaggle-tooth random.

"If you see this boy," said the ballerina, "do not—I repeat, do not—try to reason with him."

There was the shriek of a door being torn from its hinges.

Screams and barking cries of consternation came from the television set. The photograph of Harrison Bergeron on the screen jumped again and again, as though dancing to the tune of an earthquake.

George Bergeron correctly identified the earthquake, and well he might have—for many was the time his own home had danced to the same crashing tune. "My God—" said George, "that must be Harrison!"

The realization was blasted from his mind instantly by the sound of an automobile collision in his head.

When George could open his eyes again, the photograph of Harrison was gone. A living, breathing Harrison filled the screen.

Clanking, clownish, and huge, Harrison stood in the center of the studio. The knob of the uprooted studio door was still in his hand. Ballerinas, technicians, musicians, and announcers covered on their knees before him, expecting to die.

"I am the Emperor!" cried Harrison. "Do you hear? I am the Emperor! Everybody must do what I say at once!" He stamped his foot and the studio shook.

"Even as I stand here—" he bellowed, "crippled, hobbled, sickened—I am a greater ruler than any man who ever lived! Now watch me become what I can become!"

Harrison tore the straps of his handicap harness like wet tissue paper, tore straps guaranteed to support five thousand pounds.

Harrison's scrap-iron handcups crashed to the floor.

Harrison thrust his thumbs under the bar of the padlock that secured his head harness. The bar snapped like celery. Harrison smashed his headphones and spectacles against the wall.

He flung away his rubber-ball nose, revealed a man that would have awed Thor, the god of thunder.

"I shall now select my Empress!" he said, looking down on the cowering people. "Let the first woman who dares rise to her feet claim her mate and her throne!"

A moment passed, and then a ballerina arose, swaying like a willow.

Harrison plucked the mental handcup from her ear, snapped off her physical handcups with marvelous delicacy. Last of all, he removed her mask.

She was blindingly beautiful.

"Now—" said Harrison, taking her hand, "shall we show the people the meaning of the word dance? Music!" he commanded.

The musicians scrambled back into their chairs, and Harrison stripped them of their handcups, too. "Play your best," he told them, "and I'll make you barons and dukes and earls."

The music began. It was normal at first—cheep, silly, naive. But Harrison snatched two musicians from their chairs, waved them like balloons as he sang the music as he wanted it played. He slammed them back into their chairs.

The music began again and was much improved.

Harrison and his Empress merely listened to the music for a while—listened gravely, as though synchronizing their heartbeats with it.

They shifted their weights to their toes.

Harrison placed his big hands on the girl's tiny waist, letting her sense the weightlessness that would soon be hers.

And then, in an explosion of joy and grace, into the air they sprang!

Not only were the laws of the land abandoned, but the law of gravity and the laws of motion as well.

They reeled, whirled, swiveled, flounced, capered, gambled, and spun.

They leaped like deer on the moon.

The studio ceiling was thirty feet high, but each leap brought the dancers nearer to it.

It became their obvious intention to kiss the ceiling.

They kissed it.

And then, neutralizing gravity with love and pure will, they remained suspended in air inches below the ceiling, and they kissed each other for a long, long time.

It was then that Diana Moon Glampers, the Handicapper General, came into the studio with a double-barreled ten-gauge shotgun. She fired twice, and the Emperor and the Empress were dead before they hit the floor.

Diana Moon Glampers loaded the gun again. She aimed it at the musicians and told them they had ten seconds to get their handcups back on.

It was then that the Bergerons' television tube burned out.

Hazel turned to comment about the blackout to George, but George had gone out into the kitchen for a can of beer.

George came back in with the beer, paused while a handicap signal shook him up. And then he sat down again.

"You been crying?" he said to Hazel.

"Yup," she said.

"What about?" he said.

"I forget," she said. "Something real sad on television."

"What was it?" he said.

"It's all kind of mixed up in my mind," said Hazel.

"Forget sad things," said George.

"I always do," said Hazel.

"That's my girl," said George. He winced. There was the sound of a riveting gun in his head.

"Gee—I could tell that one was a doozy," said Hazel.

"You can say that again," said George.

"Gee—" said Hazel, "I could tell that one was a doozy."

(1961)