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Burn Baby Burn



Synopsis

While violence runs rampant throughout New York, a teenage girl faces danger within her own home in Meg Medina's riveting coming-of-age novel. Nora Lopez is seventeen during the infamous New York summer of 1977, when the city is besieged by arson, a massive blackout, and a serial killer named Son of Sam who shoots young women on the streets. Nora's family life isn't going so well either: her bullying brother, Hector, is growing more threatening by the day, her mother is helpless and falling behind on the rent, and her father calls only on holidays. All Nora wants is to turn eighteen and be on her own. And while there is a cute new guy who started working with her at the deli, is dating even worth the risk when the killer likes picking off couples who stay out too late? Award-winning author Meg Medina transports us to a time when New York seemed balanced on a knife-edge, with tempers and temperatures running high, to share the story of a young woman who discovers that the greatest dangers are often closer than we like to admit and the hardest to accept.

Book Information

Hardcover: 320 pages

Publisher: Candlewick; First Edition edition (March 8, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0763674672

ISBN-13: 978-0763674670

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 1 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Best Sellers Rank: #24,798 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #10 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > 20th Century #15 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Violence #147 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family

Customer Reviews

This review originally appeared on herestohappyendings.com. Burn Baby Burn is an incredibly powerful novel about a young girl growing up in New York City in 1977. It deals with A LOT of sensitive issues, including domestic violence, drugs, and shootings that occur throughout the city at that time, by a shooter known as Son of Sam. Burn Baby Burn tackles these issues head on, and dives into a young girl's world where she deals with these things on a regular basis. Nora Lopez is

almost eighteen years old. She and her best friend, Kathleen have birthdays only one day apart, and to celebrate, they plan on going dancing all night long at a disco club - they've been planning their celebration forever. The two girls spend so much of their time together and they're practically like sisters. Kathleen's family seems so perfect - her father is a very important firefighter, her mother is the wonderful, doting mother that everyone loves, and their family often takes trips together. Kathleen has everything provided for her, and wants for nothing. Nora, on the other hand, doesn't have it so easy. Her father left their family when she was still small - he remarried and now has another son. While he sends checks to cover the rent (when he remembers to send them), it's never quite enough, especially now that Nora's mother is getting less and less hours at her job at the tape factory. Nora works at Sal's Delicatessen, and is required to give her mother \$50 a month to help pay the bills, but she tries to save some money for things she needs.

Set against the backdrop of New York City in 1977, Burn Baby Burn takes place when things were changing for women, a serial killer was on the loose, a city was failing, it was the hottest summer on record, and disco was queen. Nora López can't wait to turn 18. Mima doesn't know it yet, but as soon as she's an adult, she is moving out to make it on her own. There's too much pressure at home where Mima's dwindling hours at work make her afraid that they can't pay the rent and her brother, Hector, is ratcheting up the kind of trouble he is getting up to. At school is a different kind of pressure: her counselor and shop teacher want her to "do something with her life" and go to a local technical college. What's the point? The only stable things in Nora's life are her friendship with her best friend, Kathleen, and Kathleen's loving parents, and her job at Sal's. And when Pablo starts working at Sal's, Nora begins to believe that maybe she can have more than she thinks. But hanging over everyone's heads is the killer who is shooting young couples on dates and the oppressive heat. It's a powder keg getting ready to blow. Having previously read Ms. Medina's Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass, I knew what great storytelling I was in for. The books do have similarities - there's a Latina heroine in bleak-ish straits, and both stories also include a NYC setting, school and an absent father. Nora is desperate to separate from her Mima-imposed responsibilities and for her parents to be the parents for once. It's a girl on the cusp of womanhood, wanting to shed her old life and make something of herself.

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