



The Burning

Laura Bates

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Fire is like a rumour. You might think you've extinguished it but one creeping, red tendril, one single wisp of smoke is enough to let it leap back into life again. Especially if someone is watching, waiting to fan the flames ...

New school.

Tick.

New town.

Tick.

New surname.

Tick.

Social media profiles?

Erased.

There's nothing to trace Anna back to her old life. Nothing to link her to the 'incident'.

At least that's what she thinks ... until the whispers start up again. As time begins to run out on her secrets, Anna finds herself irresistibly drawn to the tale of Maggie, a local girl accused of witchcraft centuries earlier. A girl whose story has terrifying parallels to Anna's own...

The compelling YA debut from Laura Bates, founder of the Everyday Sexism Project and bestselling author of *Girl Up*.

PRAISE FOR LAURA BATES:

'One of the first women to harness the power of social media to fight sexism and misogyny and give millions of young women a voice.' *Grazia*

'Mature, eloquent and passionate, Bates is in many ways the voice of her generation.' *Huffington Post*

PRAISE FOR *GIRL UP*:

'A bracing love letter to today's teenage girls' – *Sunday Times*

'Essential reading for young women and girls' – *Morning Star Online*

'This no-nonsense guide to being a girl in 2016 is one all teen girls should read' – *Red magazine*

'If you have a daughter or a niece or a younger sister or a goddaughter, buy it for them now' -- *The Pool*

PRAISE FOR *EVERYDAY SEXISM*:

'This is an important book' – *Independent*

'A potent reminder of how far feminism has come and how far it has to go' - *Kirkus Reviews*

'A game-changing book, a must-read for every woman' – *Cosmopolitan*

'Funny and clever' - *Telegraph*

The Burning Details

Date : Expected publication: February 21st 2019 by Simon Schuster Children's UK

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Author : Laura Bates

Format : ebook 368 pages

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From Reader Review The Burning for online ebook

Eleanor says

Also posted on my blog!!

I finished reading this book over a week ago, and it's taken me this long to be able to try and write a review of it. I'd given myself that time so that hopefully I could feel more confident discussing it, but I've had to accept that that's probably not going to happen. This is a difficult one to talk about.

Anna is a teenage girl who grew up in Birmingham. However, when she and her mother suddenly move to Scotland, she cuts contact with everyone she used to know. She's deleted and deactivated all her social media accounts, she's ditched her phone entirely, and she's changed her surname. Something happened to her in Birmingham that she doesn't want following her to Scotland. Unfortunately, it fairly quickly becomes apparent that she isn't going to be that lucky. While this is happening, Anna develops an interest in a girl who was accused of witchcraft in the local area a few hundred years prior.

Like I've already said, this was a difficult read. Bates' author's note states that everything that happens to Anna, and some of the other girls, were taken from the real stories that have been told to her by real girls across the country. The thought that situations exactly like Anna's are taking place every day is horrifying. This book could definitely be overwhelming at times, and reading it while already feeling emotionally fragile isn't the greatest idea. I learnt that one the hard way.

The way that the pieces about the girl who was accused of witchcraft, Maggie, were written was really cool !! I love how Bates played with the pov in these sections. They were also really well written in their own right, and the last few were heartbreaking.

There were a couple of things in this novel that didn't feel like they'd been followed through to their proper conclusions. Going through them all would look like I was being really nitpicky, but I can come up with quite a few fairly easily. I recognise that this is actually representative of real life. In reality, many things don't get investigated until it's all sorted and/or links together in a nice little bow, but in fiction it's nice when it does.

I'll be honest, going into this, the title, cover, and description had all had me convinced that Anna had been framed for arson. The truth was a lot less exciting, but I got over it quickly.

This is an important book, and I think that it's a good idea for most people to read it.

I received an e-arc through Netgalley in return for an honest review.

Emily May says

Because fire is sneaky. You might think you've extinguished it, but one creeping red tendril, one single wisp of smoke is enough to let it leap back to life again. Especially if someone is watching, waiting to fan the flames.

So many mixed feelings right now.

The Burning is by the founder of the *Everyday Sexism Project* and, as expected, it has a lot of important things to say about slut-shaming, double standards, bullying, and especially how social media contributes to these. It likens the viciousness of social media trolls to actual witch hunts, leading us on something of a history lesson in the process.

I can't deny that this book had an effect on me. The author captures Anna's fear, shame and frustration as she is confronted with constant double standards. It's also very British, and I related a lot more to the high school culture here than I do when reading American YA. Some parts hit very close to home. I recognized such moments as this one:

I want to stay here, in the quiet, clean darkness, forever until everybody has forgotten that I even exist.

It is hard to look, and yet hard to look away, in parts. I just really wish I didn't have so many issues with it.

The main problem is that this book is messy and doesn't seem to know what it's trying to be (I did read an arc so maybe some things will be tidied up for publication). It touches upon almost every teen girl issue you can think of - slut-shaming, double standards, sexuality, bullying, sexual assault, teen pregnancy, abortion, body-shaming - and is so packed full of "issues" that most of these are left unexplored.

It also has some historical aspects, a bit of a mystery going on, a sort-of romance that seems out of place in the story, and even vaguely supernatural elements that were honestly jarring. There's a bit of everything thrown in, most of it not needed.

Some of the dialogue is a little weird and unnatural, too. The speech at the end, plus the reactions to it, felt unrealistic. And there are times when Anna is directly describing something through speech and I just can't imagine an actual person sat there spewing those metaphors out loud.

Another problem I had is that YA lit has changed a lot in the past few years and some parts of this book already feel a little dated-- most notably when Anna is so shocked to discover Alisha is in love with a girl.

It's a compelling read, though. I could feel my own anxiety spiking when I read about Anna obsessively checking social media. She feels like she shouldn't look, and yet her own imagination is picturing the worst anyway. It's just a shame it's so all over the place. The unexplained supernatural parts of the plot were especially difficult to suspend disbelief for.

"It's worth knowing that sometimes people see you as a symbol of something, instead of a person. And, when they do, it reflects on them, not on you."

CW: Slut-shaming; rape (off-page); homophobic slurs.

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Karen Whittard says

This is my first Laura Bates book but it certainly will not be my last. This book is raw and gritty and tackles

many subjects that a lot of authors shy away from in a way that made you feel like you knew the girls in the story and your heart couldn't help but go out to them as the horrific events played out. It is a book that I would highly highly recommend to all.

The Burning lights a fire in you - one that makes you want to fight for change and ignite sparks in others so the fire spreads and spreads.' Holly Bourne

Fire is like a rumour. You might think you've extinguished it but one creeping, red tendril, one single wisp of smoke is enough to let it leap back into life again. Especially if someone is watching, waiting to fan the flames ...

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At least that's what she thinks ... until the whispers start up again. As time begins to run out on her secrets, Anna finds herself irresistibly drawn to the tale of Maggie, a local girl accused of witchcraft centuries earlier. A girl whose story has terrifying parallels to Anna's own...

Ova - Excuse My Reading says

A resolution for me this year was not to finish the books I didn't enjoy. I've only read 20% so it's not fair to give a star rating, just not the right book for me.

Joanne says

I received this eProof for free from Simon & Schuster Children's Books via NetGalley for the purposes of providing an honest review.

Trigger Warnings: *This book features rape, non-consensual pornography, sex shaming, victim blaming, bullying, discussion of abuse due to abortion, and discussion of death from cancer.*

When I first heard Laura Bates was writing a YA novel, I was so excited to read it. I loved her feminist non-fiction books, *Everyday Sexism* and *Girl Up*, and I was sure *The Burning* was going to be incredible, too! Unfortunately, it left me a little disappointed.

When Anna moves from Birmingham to St. Monans in Scotland, she hopes it will be a fresh start. She's left her past behind, and is ready to begin anew. She's just starting to settle, to find her feet, and has made some good friends, when her past finds her, and everyone knows what she ran from. As she struggles with the abuse and bullying, and the sudden loss of her friends, her history project keeps her going. She must research the life of a local person, and has discovered that in the 17th Century, a teenage girl, Maggie, was executed as a witch. The more she discovers, the more she finds she relates to the girl whose whole town turns on her because of something someone else did - and that the world is not so different now as it was then, with girls getting blamed for what boys do to them.

I really, really wanted to love this story, but there were a number of things that just left me wanting more, sadly. From Bates' Author Note, we know that the things that happen to Anna are based on the experiences of girls and young women she has been told about when she's visited schools. In that regard, *The Burning* is a really important story. What Anna goes through is horrific, and imagining that happening to real girls and young women, today, in schools across the country, is really difficult to swallow. *The Burning* is going to be a great conversation starter, a way for people to face the truth of what's happening, but also how *others*, those in authority, react and try to deal with things. What happens in this book probably isn't going to be much of a surprise to those in schools, but because of the previous books Bates has written, I'm pretty sure her adult readers and supporters will pick this up, too, and in that case, I think it will have a massive impact. London Live tweeted a brilliant video interview with Laura Bates, and in it she discusses how teens today have parents who didn't have the pressures or the consequences that came with social media, and how there is a divide between what they experienced and what their children are now experiencing, and how she hopes *The Burning* will help to close that gap, to help them understand. And this is why this book is going to be so important, and so powerful.

But as a story, I did find it kind of lacking in areas. Once Anna's past has caught up with her and everyone at school knows about it, it's awful. The bullying and abuse she suffers is, as I've said, horrific. I really felt for her in her fear, her shame, her desperate desire to escape, to hide. But from that point on, that's pretty much all that happens to her; she is bullied and abused, and she hides it from her mum and from the teachers, and so nothing happens. It escalates at times, but otherwise, there's no change. And while it's awful, the story kind of plateaus there. So you're just reading more of the same for most of the book. I was expecting a book that would be of a girl fighting against sexism, because of Bates' previous books, and while I understand why she wrote *this* book, and the impact it will have, I wish there was some kind of change.

So I was more interested in the story of Maggie. Researching Maggie's life is the only thing that's different in Anna's story. I was really interested in the excerpts Anna read from non-fic books on witch hunts and trials, and the punishments for women who didn't behave the way men expected. So much so, I've started looking up non-fic on witch hunts / trials through a feminist lens, or their links to sexism. But there wasn't a huge deal of that research in the end. It was more a combination of conversations with an old local historian, Glenn, who is helping her, and him telling her what he's discovered, and then the dreams Anna experiences after finding a necklace hidden in her attic; she starts to dream of Maggie's life, and what she experienced. I was much more interested in the actual research than the conversations and the dreams. I was hoping Glenn would actually show her what he had found, rather than just tell her, and with the dreams, they were only snap shots of Maggie's life leading up to her death, and while what happened to her was disgusting and horrific, there wasn't enough of her to become as invested as I would have liked. I feel I would have been more invested if there were more excerpts about her life than dream visions. I also felt her story in those dream visions ended quite abruptly. I knew what was coming, but I expected more from that last dream vision, and it fell a little flat for me.

And then there's the fact that we don't really know much about any of the characters. Anna likes to swim, and was on her swim team at her previous school. Cat, one of Anna's new friends, is really into photography, and wants to be a photography. Alisha is super smart, hard working, and always gets top grades. Robin is a carer for his disabled mum. That's as much as we find out about them. No other hobbies or interests to fully flesh them out. I mean, they do have distinctive personalities and voices, but I can't tell you much about *who* they are, because we're not told.

I wasn't so keen on the ending, either, unfortunately. It's more that I didn't find the reaction to what Anna does quite believable, I just don't think it would have happened like that. Maybe it's end the story on a hopeful note, but I had various question marks over it - would Anna have actually have done that? Would she have said what she said? - and it just felt a little unrealistic? But maybe that's just me.

So yeah, I was pretty disappointed with *The Burning*. But a lot of other people have really enjoyed it, so do

read some other reviews before deciding whether or not to read it.

Louise says

This book makes a lot of valid point about how social media is used to bully people in this day and age. It paints the worst case scenario where everyone bad mouths you,the grown ups don't stand up for you... and the instigator of the whole thing is vengeful enough to chase you across the country... because with the internet you can ruin a life 100s of miles away without leaving your kitchen. It comes to something when the story of a young girl in the olden days,being tried and burned as a witch is light relief from constant bullying.

thebookishrose says

5 stars isn't enough for this book. It's a book that should be read in high schools around the world. Anna's story will resonate with most young women, which is both appalling but at the same time incredibly useful. As someone who suffered through the same thing as Anna, I completely understood her and reading this book helped heal parts of me that I didn't realise were still hurting.

Thank you, Laura, for writing this novel. I, and many others, needed it.

A full review will be up on my blog soon <https://thebookishrose.com>

Alexandra says

Read this book. If you want a recommendation, i can't say it enough. Read. This. Book.

I was in no way expecting to like this story as much as i did, and i can honestly say this is one of the best novels i've read in a long time.

I think i loved this book so much because the author made the characters and their situations feel so real, my heart really went out to these girls.

The characters were amazing - i cried for Anna and Maggie. Literally cried. Because the issues in this book are what too many girls and women have had to endure, and because i can all too well imagine what Anna, Cat and the other girls went through.

This novel tells a story of girls who have been tortured through a campaign of bullying, harassment and shaming, (with a small surprise of fantasy element too). We see the story of Anna, and Anna's discovery of Maggie and the horrific suffering she endured hundreds of years ago.

I don't want to say too much because i might give away spoilers, but this book made me so emotional. I cried, i was so angry, i was happy. It's not only a great story - it has an important message too, that you'll need to see for yourself.

I would recommend this book to everyone, but especially teenage girls.

When this is available i'll be buying my own copy - along with another to pass along to my little cousin in

her teenage years who i think would enjoy this, and should read this too.

I was sent an arc of this book through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Rachel says

It's really hard to talk about this book without spoiling anything — I mean, even the synopsis itself is kept pretty vague. Holly Bourne calls this a book that every teen girl needs to read, and I can't agree more. You can read my full review here

Thank you Pansing for sending me an advanced reader's copy in exchange for this honest review. The Burning will be available in all good bookstores in February — be sure to keep a lookout for it!

Niamh says

I was very kindly given an e-arc of this book through Netgalley and Simon & Schuster UK.

'We are the granddaughters of the witches you could not burn. And we're not putting up with it anymore'

I've added a star just for the sheer necessity of this book and for the last, maybe, ten or so pages. With such powerful words, this book suddenly became so much more intimate and intensive, and so warranted an extra push. For a debut novel, this book is incredibly accomplished. Laura Bates, the founder of the Everyday Sexism Project and a vocal advocate for young women's engagement in feminism and calling out acts of everyday sexism that they experience throughout the world, has probably seen a thousand of cases identical to the one she explores in this book, and you can tell how intimately she understands the fear, the pain, the hurt, the confusion that come with your private photos or information being broadcast to the world. At some points, this book is gripping and written with such an emotion that you feel yourself burning alongside Anna, the main character.

The book really pushes just how ill-prepared our schools and universities are for dealing with issues of naked pictures and slut-shaming. I have to admit, I cheered out loud when Anna's mother went on a tirade to a man who wanted to just get rid of the problem rather than addressing it. The girls in this book are supportive (eventually) and you get a sense of genuine solidarity rather than succumbing to patriarchal thinking. There's a lot of slut-shaming in this book, but it's nice to see girls identifying it and shutting it down. It makes a nice change from a lot of typical YA tropes.

It's not the best book in the world. As a debut, it's a very solid effort, but doesn't have the punch or graphic grip that a novel like Louise O'Neill's 'Asking For It' might have- but it's a pretty good start. The witchcraft subplot is very convenient and could have done with a little more exploration and thought, but it's an interesting angle to take in a novel of this type. I love this subgenre of feminist YA and I think, as we explore more topics close to it, the books will just keep getting better and better.

'The Burning' by Laura Bates will be released in the UK on February 21st, 2019.

Danni Jervis says

A phenomenal novel by a wonderful human being that is trying to raise awareness of just how badly society still treats young women.

It is quoted that every teenage girls needs to read this but I believe everyone should read this regardless of age or gender. An incredibly startling but all too real experience of teenage life and making mistakes and the extremes that people go to to make you live with them.

Megan Staunton says

Laura Bates' debut YA does not disappoint, and in fact I'm hesitant to even call this young adult as it unpacks a plethora of integral themes that affect everyone, no matter your age. Just as we've come to love Laura for shining a light on society's unjust discriminations in her previous non-fiction titles, Laura turns her hand to creating a cast of characters in *The Burning* that are real, tangible and flawed, harnessing the power of social media to give her characters a voice, both online and IRL.

Basyirah says

Actual rating: 4.5 stars

"...in my opinion it would have made a lot more sense if he had said that fire was like a rumour. Because fire is sneaky. You might think you've extinguished it, but one creeping red tendril, one single wisp of smoke is enough to let it leap back to life again."

Told from the perspective of Anna Clark, *The Burning* discussed some important issues of sexism, sexual harassment and online abuse. Anna and her mum had moved all the way to Scotland from Birmingham due to a tragedy of sexual online harassment that had struck her. She changed her last name, got rid of her social media and moved to another country, trying to erase her past, thinking it'd never find its way back to her, but she was proven wrong when her past haunted her, yet again, in a worse possible way.

"I guess things don't always turn out the way you think they will."

The pace of the story was moderate. I find the story of Maggie included in between was quite draggy at first, but although I still find it quite irrelevant to the whole plot, it was an interesting tale and it brought another kind of emotional ride to the story.

Anna was drawn to Robin, a boy in one of her class, but I love how the story didn't center around their love interest or relationship. I'm especially glad that the author didn't turn the story around and make the main character a helpless young lady who needed to be saved by a boy or by love, but instead showed strong female character traits in both Anna and her mum towards the end when handling the situation.

I highly recommend this book to everyone, yes, boys included. God bless Laura Bates for writing Anna's and Maggie's stories.

"Actions have consequences, young lady. You'd do well to remember that."

Disclaimer: I would like to thank Pansing for this ARC in exchange for honest review! This book will be published in February 2019 and will be available at all good bookstores. Pick it up once it's out!

Liz Barnsley says

The Burning is one of those books that takes you on an emotional rollercoaster ride, from sadness to anger to despair to redemption and Laura Bates, through her beautifully written character voice, shows you what it means to be a teenage girl in today's social media society.

Dealing with issues of victim blaming, casual sexism and the still very skewed way of "dealing" with things, The Burning shines a light right into the darkest corners of reality.

Hugely relevant for young women today and adding an important voice to the current debate, I thought it was excellent. Not preaching, not assuming but intelligently told, hugely insightful and a real page turner.

Recommended. Fuller review nearer publication.

legenbooksdary says

This book centres around what it feels like to have someone post something without our consent on social media, about friendship and finding the strength from someone Anna literally would never expect to. Though the story may be a bit slow and draggy, it's what at the end that matters—the message that no one deserves to be treated harshly and that we are all human beings after all.

This book is important and that we should all address to because there are so many girls out there who have befallen into this tragedy. It can change their lives, have on so many effects that may be seen or invisible and we should make eradicate this issue so that no one has to experience it.

This is a very enlightening story and I don't think so I would've picked it up if I really knew what it was about but I'm glad I did. The blurb on the front cover which was quoted by Holly Bourne is right because yes, every girl should read this book, The Burning.
