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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

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Family Issues > Family

Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up • Nora Lopez is 17 in 1977 when New York City faced one of its most horrific summers in history. A serial killer called Son of Sam was on the loose, shooting innocent couples; the city faced a blackout complete with looting; and arson was rampant. Nora's brother Hector is illegally dealing drugs and physically abusing his mother, Mima, and Nora. Their father is practically out of the picture, unreliably sending checks and calling only on the holidays. Nora works at her

neighborhood deli, helping the family to make ends meet. Just when Nora's fear and panic peaks, she meets new hire Pablo. While Nora is not ready for a relationship, one quickly forms. Ashamed and embarrassed, Nora hides secrets about her family from Pablo and from her best friend, Kathleen. Medina uses Nora's story to seamlessly connect readers to an unforgettable period in history, the setting leaving readers thirsting for more information about the summer of 1977. The character development is tight and accurately constructed. Medina holds nothing back, shedding light on the characters' flaws, which teens today will be able to relate to. Medina is on point with the teen voices, evoking their intense fear, panic, and dreams. VERDICT A devastatingly intense story, this work is a must-have for all collections, especially where Ruta Sepetys's books are popular. —Erin Holt, Williamson County Public Library, Franklin, TN

Rooted firmly in historical events, Medina's latest offers up a uniquely authentic slice-of-life experience set against a hazy, hot, and dangerous NYC backdrop. Rocky and Donna Summer and the thumping beats of disco, as well as other references from the time, capture the era, while break-ins, fires, shootings, and the infamous blackout bring a harrowing sense of danger and intensity...An important story of one of New York City's most dangerous times. —Kirkus Reviews (starred review) Medina weaves historical context throughout Nora's first-person narrative, expertly cultivating a rich sense of atmosphere while still keeping her characters sharply in the foreground...Powerfully moving, this stellar piece of historical fiction emphasizes the timeless concerns of family loyalty and personal strength, while highlighting important issues that still resonate today. —Booklist (starred review) Medina uses Nora's story to seamlessly connect readers to an unforgettable period in history, the setting leaving readers thirsting for more information about the summer of 1977. The character development is tight and accurately constructed. Medina holds nothing back, shedding light on the characters' flaws, which teens today will be able to relate to. Medina is on point with the teen voices, evoking their intense fear, panic, and dreams. A devastatingly intense story, this work is a must-have for all collections, especially where Ruta Sepetys's books are popular. —School Library Journal (starred review) This vividly evoked coming-of-age story is set against actual events in 1977 New York City...Nora is an empathetic character, and Medina depicts her troubled family and their diverse Queens neighborhood with realistic, everyday detail. Numerous references to New York's budget crisis, arson wave, and "Son of Sam" newspaper stories deliberately ground the story in a real time and place, while an ample sprinkling of seventies disco and funk song references creates a brighter soundtrack for the dreams and romance of teenage girls, hinting at a

hopeful future for Nora. •The Horn Book (starred review) Nora is strong and believable, a possible romance has heat, and Medina (Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass) gets gritty 1977 New York City right: feminism and disco in the air, Son of Sam, and •come July •the blackout and the ensuing looting and fires...elements in this coming-of-age story are elegantly and eloquently explored. •Publishers Weekly I don't know if I've ever called a book "masterful" before, but I'm more than a little tempted. •Kirkus Reviews Historical fiction is sometimes a hard sell for contemporary teens; however, Medina's novel entices readers by developing realistic characters and a strong plot framed by the turbulence of 1977 in NYC. At its heart, this is a novel about growing up. Nora struggles to find her identity outside of her family and make choices that will impact her future. There is a strong theme of feminism and redefining a woman's role during that time in history. Nora's outlook on relationships and life in general is frank but refreshingly honest...this novel is a strong choice for its message, characters, and historical perspective. •VOYA Medina steeps her narrator in a period world of wearing Sasson jeans, mourning for Freddie Prinze, and screaming at Carrie, but mostly it's an atmosphere of palpable and excruciating tension for Nora as her family drama mirrors the external threat. Her feelings are believably complicated...While Nora's milieu may be different, contemporary readers will respond to her doubt about the world and her own possibilities, and they'll be glad to see her bravely moving forward nonetheless. •Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books Meg Medina once again shines in evoking a specific setting peopled with complex, diverse characters. •Chicago Tribune Medina draws her characters deeply, and makes a struggling New York City their perfect, complicated backdrop. •Plain Dealer

It's 1977 and New York City is in chaos. A record heat wave is scorching everyone. Arsonists are burning buildings for the insurance. A serial killer named Son of Sam is killing young couples kissing in cars. And then there's a city wide blackout. Amidst all this, Nora struggles with her own crises. Her mom just got laid off from work, her father spends all his time (and money) with his new family, and her brother is becoming increasingly violent and abusive. Can she keep her family together, while the city seems to be falling apart? This historical novel from Meg Medina is easily one of my favorites this year. I don't know which was more engaging: being taken back in time to one of the worst summers in New York history, or taken into Nora's chaotic family. The city's and Nora's troubles keep escalating with every page, making this a suspenseful and completely satisfying read. Nora is such a strong and sympathetic character, I wanted to see her succeed despite the odds

against her.

It's been awhile since I speeded through a novel so quickly. I apologize to my family and friends I ignored this weekend LOL! This novel was great, I was sad when it ended. The characters felt real the voices authentic, from the first few pages I was pulled in. A hard knock life coming of age novel served straight up. Deals with quite a few issues that go swept under the rug like, juvenile domestic violence, teens in leadership positions in the homes due to an absentee parent. If you like this book please go back and read Medina's other novel Yaquis Delgado wants to kick your ass.

Purchased for a high school library - I'm sure the kids will enjoy!

Love this book. One of my favorites of 2016.

This well-written novel had me at the edge of my seat. With the fear of Son of Sam and the empathy towards such a lovely main character, I would say it was book that completes all needs of a reader. I loved being transported to New York in the 70's and yet now understand the fear and tension I never knew before. A must read!

I don't review books very often but I had to do so for this one because I loved it that much. As a big fan of Meg Medina's books, this book is now my favorite of her amazing work. The characters spring to life within the first page and you can't stop reading until you reach the end. Love Love LOVED it.

This book was suspenseful, heartwarming, and was a good representation of Young Adult literature. I very much recommend reading it!

If you grew up in the 70s this books for you. It also speaks to growing up Hispanic in a tough environment but with a great message at the end. Loved it!

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