



The Burn Journals

By Brent Runyon

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The Burn Journals By Brent Runyon

In the tradition of *Running with Scissors* and *Girl, Interrupted*, *The Burn Journals* is a truly remarkable book about teenage despair and recovery.

"Describes a particular kind of youthful male desolation better than it has ever been described before, by anyone." --Andrew Solomon, author of *The Noonday Demon*

I don't want to get out of bed.

I'm so stupid.

I did so many things wrong.

I don't know what to do.

I'm going to be in so much trouble.

What am I going to do?

I'm completely screwed.

In 1991, fourteen-year-old Brent Runyon came home from school, doused his bathrobe in gasoline, put it on, and lit a match.

He suffered third-degree burns over 85% of his body and spent the next year recovering in hospitals and rehab facilities. During that year of physical recovery, Runyon began to question what he'd done, undertaking the complicated journey from near-death back to high school, and from suicide back to the emotional mainstream of life.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Gr. 8-12. On the sixteenth page of this incisive memoir, eighth-grader Brent Runyon drenches his bathrobe with gasoline and ("Should I do it? Yes.") sets himself on fire. The burns cover 85 percent of his body and require six months of painful skin grafts and equally invasive mental-health rehabilitation. From the beginning, readers are immersed in the mind of 14-year-old Brent as he struggles to heal body and mind, his experiences given devastating immediacy in a first-person, present-tense voice that judders from uncensored teenage attitude and poignant anxiety (he worries about getting hard-ons during physical therapy) to little-boy sweetness. And throughout is anguish over his suicide attempt and its impact on his family: "I have this guilt feeling all over me, like oil on one of those birds in Alaska." Runyon has, perhaps, written the defining book of a new genre, one that gazes as unflinchingly at boys on the emotional edge as Zibby O'Neal's *The Language of Goldfish* (1980) and Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak* (1999) do at girls. Some excruciatingly painful moments notwithstanding, this can and should be read by young adults, as much for its literary merit as for its authentic perspective on what it means to attempt suicide, and, despite the resulting scars, be unable to remember why. *Jennifer Mattson*

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Review

"[**The Burn Journals**] describes a particular kind of youthful male desolation better than it has ever been described before, by anyone." -Andrew Solomon, author of **The Noontday Demon**

"A fascinating account of the mending of a body and mind, told with the simple and honest sensibility of someone too young to have endured so much." —Arthur Golden, author of **Memoirs of a Geisha**

"Runyon has, perhaps, written the defining book of a new genre, one that gazes...unflinchingly at boys on the emotional edge ." -*Booklist* (starred review)

"A taut, chilling account of the author's attempt to commit suicide...a must-read for teenagers struggling with self-doubt."-*The Denver Post*

"An excruciating, brilliant book...WOW." —A.M. Homes, author of **Things You Should Know**

From the Trade Paperback edition.

From the Inside Flap

BRENT RUNYON WAS 14 years old when he set himself on fire.

This is a true story.

In *The Burn Journals*, Runyon describes that devastating suicide attempt and his recovery over the following year. He takes us into the Burn Unit in a children's hospital and through painful burn care and skin-grafting procedures. Then to a rehabilitation hospital, for intensive physical, occupational, and psychological therapy. And then finally back home, to the frightening prospect of entering high school.

But more importantly, Runyon takes us into his own mind. He shares his thoughts and hopes and fears with

such unflinching honesty that we understand--with a terrible clarity--what it means to want to kill yourself and how it feels to struggle back toward normality.

Intense, exposed, insightful, *The Burn Journals* is a deeply personal story with universal reach. It is impossible to look away. Impossible to remain unmoved.

This truly riveting memoir is a spectacular debut for a talented new writer.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Antonio Duncan:

Spent a free a chance to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or their friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Would you like to something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? Can be reading a book might be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing you will ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the guide untitled *The Burn Journals* can be fine book to read. May be it could be best activity to you.

Elizabeth Fischer:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray a person, why because this *The Burn Journals* reserve written by well-known writer who knows well how to make book that could be understand by anyone who have read the book. Written within good manner for you, dripping every ideas and creating skill only for eliminate your personal hunger then you still question *The Burn Journals* as good book but not only by the cover but also by the content. This is one guide that can break don't judge book by its handle, so do you still needing another sixth sense to pick that!? Oh come on your reading through sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to another sixth sense.

Anne Shibata:

Are you kind of stressful person, only have 10 or even 15 minute in your moment to upgrading your mind talent or thinking skill even analytical thinking? Then you are receiving problem with the book when compared with can satisfy your short time to read it because this all time you only find book that need more time to be go through. *The Burn Journals* can be your answer mainly because it can be read by anyone who have those short time problems.

John Sherman:

In this age globalization it is important to someone to acquire information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The fitness of the world makes the information much easier to share. You can find a lot of personal references to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and

soon. You will observe that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. The book that recommended to you is The Burn Journals this publication consist a lot of the information on the condition of this world now. This kind of book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer use for explain it is easy to understand. The writer made some research when he makes this book. Here is why this book acceptable all of you.

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