



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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The Burn Journals By Brent Runyon Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #381002 in eBooks
- Model: FBA-|283740
- Published on: 2005-10-11
- Released on: 2005-10-11
- Format: Kindle eBook
- Dimensions: .10" h x .10" w x .10" l, .0 pounds

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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 Noonday 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:

Maxine Elam:

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive today, people have to do something to make themselves survive, being in the middle of often the crowded place and noise through surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated the item for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a e-book your ability to survive increases then having a chance to endure than others is high. For yourself who want to start reading a book, we give you this particular *The Burn Journals* book as a nice and daily reading book. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

Earnestine Marcus:

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Jeremy Clayton:

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James Turco:

As a college student exactly feel bored for you to reading. If their teacher expected them to go to the library as well as to make summary for some guide, they are complained. Just minor students that has reading's heart and soul or real their interest. They just do what the trainer want, like asked to the library. They go to presently there but nothing reading seriously. Any students feel that studying is not important, boring and can't see colorful pics on there. Yeah, it is for being complicated. Book is very important in your case. As we

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