

THE BURNING

BY LAURA BATES

READING GROUP GUIDE



“A HAUNTING RALLYING CRY.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“A PAINFULLY REALISTIC, SPELLBINDING NOVEL.” —*Shelf Awareness*

1. Maggie’s story, though four hundred years old, has been handed down for centuries through local accounts and area folklore. Anna’s story is based on the real-life experiences of thousands of teenage girls. What are the main similarities and differences between their stories? Have things changed dramatically for young women in those four hundred years?
2. How do you feel about the conversation between Anna and Emily Winters? How do you think both girls feel afterward?
3. How well do you think Ms. Forsyth and Miss Evans handle the information they learn about Anna online? Is there anything they could have done differently to better support her?
4. When Robin tries to stand up for Anna, he experiences homophobic bullying from some of the other boys. What pressures do the young men in the novel face, from one another and from outside?
5. What do you think Anna’s mother is thinking and feeling when they arrive in St. Monans?
6. How would you describe Anna’s relationship with her mother? Does it change over the course of the novel?
7. Why do you think Headmaster Greaves reacts the way he does to Anna’s situation?
8. How would you describe Alisha’s character? What do you think about the way she defines true love in her conversation with Anna on the pier?
9. Alisha and Cat are very different but are extremely close friends. What do you think makes their relationship so strong?
10. How do you think Anna’s old friends back in Birmingham feel now that she is gone? Do you think the way they feel about Anna will change as they grow older?
11. Both Anna and Cat experience backlash for making decisions about their own bodies. In what ways are girls’ bodies policed in the novel and in real life?



About Laura Bates

LAURA BATES is a UK-based author and the founder of the Everyday Sexism Project, a crowd-sourced collection of stories from women around the world about their experiences with gender inequality. Laura has received the 2015 British Empire Medal in the Queen’s Birthday Honours; has been named in the BBC Woman’s Hour Power List 2014 Game Changers; and in 2013 she won *Cosmopolitan’s* Ultimate Woman of the Year Award. She was also named in CNN’s 10 Visionary Women List. Follow her efforts on Twitter @everydaysexism.