

Growing Up In Flames

By Zach Jones

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**Secondary Book
of the Month**

Blurb:

This contemporary YA novel is perfect for fans of Mark Smith and Vikki Wakefield, and tackles grief, belonging and mental illness.

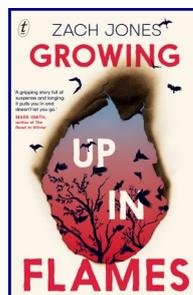
I've heard of Noah the way you hear about car accidents. A series of whispers, theories and rumours...

Kenna's mother Ava was killed in a bushfire not long ago. Now Kenna's living with her uncle and his young family in the small town where Ava grew up, and she feels like an intruder.

Noah's mother has a mental illness that makes him both carer and jailer - constantly watchful, keeping things on an even keel.

One night Kenna sees the general store on fire, and a boy standing watching as it burns. It takes her a while to notice he's holding a petrol can, but then things move fast. She's tackled him and run off with his bag before she even knows what's happened.

The bag belongs to Noah, and he really wants it back. Kenna wants something too. To make someone else burn the way her mum did. And there's something she doesn't know - how Noah can help her find out the truth about her family.



Lamont Review:

This is a gripping, contemporary and thoroughly Australian YA novel. I loved it.

Told mainly from the perspective of two main characters, Kenna and Noah, who are older teenagers living in a small Australian country town.

Kenna is living through the grief of losing her Mum in a bushfire. She has the added burden of believing that she might be the one who threw the cigarette into the bush that caused the bushfire.

Sent to live with her uncle, his wife and their young son, in a house that her Mum grew up in, she starts to slowly unravel the many pieces of her Mum's life that led to her leaving town and never coming back.

Noah is his mentally ill Mum's carer, after his Dad took off. He meets Kenna while his family's disused general store is burning, in a fire that he lit.

They start out as enemies. But can Noah help Kenna on her quest to find the truth about her Mum?

With themes of family, small town prejudices, mental illness and discovering your origins, it is a wonderful novel for all teenagers 14 and older.

Reviewed by Rob

Teacher Notes prepared by the publisher are available for this title on our website.