



The Boy in the Burning House

By Tim Wynne-Jones

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The Boy in the Burning House By Tim Wynne-Jones

An Edgar Award Winner

Two years after his father's mysterious disappearance, Jim Hawkins is coping -- barely. Underneath, he's frozen in uncertainty and grief. What did happen to his father? Is he dead or just gone? Then Jim meets Ruth Rose. Moody, provocative, she's the bad-girl stepdaughter of Father Fisher, Jim's father's childhood friend and the town pastor, and she shocks Jim out of his stupor when she tells him her stepfather is a murderer. "Don't you want to know who he murdered?" she asks. Jim doesn't. Ruth Rose is clearly crazy -- a sixteen-year-old misfit. Yet something about her fierce conviction pierces Jim's shell. He begins to burn with a desire for the truth, until it becomes clear that it may be more unsettling than he can bear. What is the real meaning of the strange prayers Father Fisher intones behind the door of his private sanctuary? Why does Ruth Rose suddenly disappear? And what really happened thirty years ago when a boy died in a burning house?

The Boy in the Burning House is the winner of the 2002 Edgar Award for Best Young Adult Mystery.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

From its opening scene, in which a teenage girl overhears her stepfather's creepy confessions, to its terrifying conclusion in a deserted mine shaft, Tim Wynne-Jones's *The Boy in the Burning House* has the magnetic energy of a well-crafted made-for-television thriller, without pausing for commercial breaks. Like the best of the TV thrillers, *The Boy in the Burning House* features a smiling, unredeemable villain: Father Fisher, who leads the Church of the Blessed Transfiguration in a remote farming community.

Fourteen-year-old Jim Hawkins's father, Hub, has disappeared, and Ruth Rose, the pastor's stepdaughter, tries to convince him that Fisher killed Hub. If that possibility isn't unsavory enough, Jim discovers that his dad and Fisher were both involved in a fire that killed another teenage boy 30 years before. It is the unraveling of this long-hidden mystery that gives *The Boy in the Burning House* its page-turning edginess. As Jim investigates his father's past, his memories of a gentle and morally upright father are twisted out of shape. "He felt like he was burning up," Wynne-Jones writes, "and there was a boy inside him hammering to get out into the air."

As the novel roars towards its conclusion, some of its psychological richness and narrative consistency are sacrificed to fast-paced action sequences. Fisher's midnight stalking of Jim and Ruth Rose is as terrifying as Jack Nicholson's frenzied house crawl in *The Shining*, but Wynne-Jones never fully explains how Fisher became a monster. *The Boy in the Burning House* is a great read, but one that starts to wobble like a house of cards once the thrills are over. --Lisa Alward

From Publishers Weekly

Wynne-Jones (Stephen Fair) builds an action-packed thriller around the mysterious disappearance of a Canadian farmer. Although Hub Hawkins's body was never found, most members of his small community believe he committed suicide. His son, Jim, starts to suspect foul play, however, after a teenage acquaintance, "crazy" Ruth Rose, makes some startling accusations. She insists that her stepfather, Eldon Fisher, a highly respected minister, is really a murderer. In order to find out if the pastor was really responsible for his father's death, Jim must first dig into the past and solve another mystery involving a boy a childhood friend of both Hub and Eldon Fisher who died in a burning house. Beginning on an ominous note with Jim's fateful meeting with Ruby, this eerie novel grows darker with the revelation of each succeeding secret. While the roles of Father Fisher and his wild-spirited stepdaughter are somewhat over-dramatized, the protagonist's character remains authentic, and the swift-moving plot will keep the pages turning. Ages 10-up.

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From School Library Journal

Gr 5-9-A Band-Aid of silence has protected Jim since his dad vanished two years earlier. Now a voice begins to pick away at his scab. Ruth Rose with her wild, dyed-black hair, nose ring, and history of uncontrolled anger and mental breakdowns says some things to him that he can't dismiss as sheer crazy talk. She tells him that Father Fisher killed his dad. Father Fisher was one of Dad's best friends, and he's Ruth Rose's stepfather. The pastor's voice soothes away Jim's misgivings. He is the well-respected pillar of the community, and his friendship with Jim's dad goes back to their youth and a town tragedy that bound them to secrecy. Now someone is trying to resurrect the past. Blackmail has unleashed the dangerous actions of a desperate man. Jim, slowly recovering from the trauma of his father's disappearance, isn't sure that Ruth Rose is for real. Her

prodding smacks him with the pain that he's effectively pushed away. When Father Fisher's behavior becomes increasingly odd and menacing, Jim's friendship with this bad-tempered girl becomes sure. While the plot develops as a murder-mystery, the underlying suspense pivots around the terror with which Ruth Rose and her mother are forced to live. The conflict builds methodically, waiting for Father Fisher to make his final play. The strengths and weaknesses in human relationships are consistently well drawn, yet the systematic introduction of so many characters from the past breaks the flow of the plot, sometimes slowing down its momentum.

Alison Follos, North Country School, Lake Placid, NY

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Bertha Costa:

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children right up until adult are different content. To be sure that book is very important for people. The book The Boy in the Burning House had been making you to know about other know-how and of course you can take more information. It is rather advantages for you. The publication The Boy in the Burning House is not only giving you much more new information but also to get your friend when you really feel bored. You can spend your personal spend time to read your publication. Try to make relationship with all the book The Boy in the Burning House. You never truly feel lose out for everything when you read some books.

Lee Flynn:

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Patrick Taylor:

The book untitled The Boy in the Burning House contain a lot of information on the idea. The writer explains your ex idea with easy way. The language is very clear and understandable all the people, so do not worry, you can easy to read the item. The book was compiled by famous author. The author gives you in the new age of literary works. It is possible to read this book because you can please read on your smart phone, or gadget, so you can read the book throughout anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can open up their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice learn.

Joan Stump:

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