



# oklahomareads

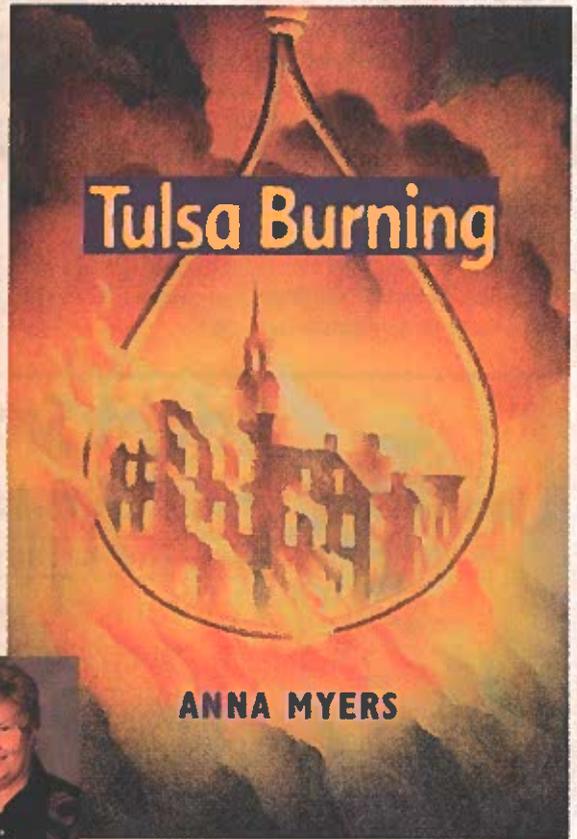
## Tulsa Burning by Anna Myers

Consider this a friendly warning: reading *Tulsa Burning* is a big adventure. The characters grab your attention. The action leaves you breathless. The conflict knots your stomach. But since the book is authored by three-time Oklahoma Book Award winner Anna Myers, readers should expect such excitement.

Anna, Young Entrepreneur Born in Texas but raised in Oklahoma and currently residing in Tulsa, Myers wrote her first story at the age of six—then charged each of her five siblings a quarter to read it. Anna eventually became an English teacher, then a writer of historical fiction for young adults. “It took me seven years to sell my first book in 1992,” Myers says, “but I’ve written one book each

year since then.” In *Tulsa Burning*, nominated for a 2003 Oklahoma Book Award, Myers employs fictional characters to recount the true horror of the 1921 Tulsa race riots.

May 31-June 1, 1921 Key to an appreciation of Myers’s book is an understanding of its historical framework. These are the facts: on May 31, 1921, an African American named Dick Rowland was arrested and jailed, accused of assaulting a white woman who worked as an elevator operator. There were no witnesses to the alleged assault. That evening, two groups gathered outside the courthouse: whites intent on lynching Rowland and blacks intent on protecting him. A scuffle ensued, a shot rang out, and the riot began. Civil officials appointed and armed white deputies, none of whom squelched the violence. By the next day, 1,256 homes and



ANNA MYERS

virtually every other building in the 35-block black district of Greenwood had been destroyed. Many of Greenwood’s

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## makereadingvisual

- One day when author Anna Myers’s daughter, Anna-Maria, was reading, she suddenly shouted, “Mom, did you know that when you read a good book, you can see the pictures in your mind?” Writers describe Anna-Maria’s experience another way: show, don’t tell.
- Myers teaches the “show, don’t tell” principles at her writing workshops. Here are some examples of good writing.
- ✓ In prose, telling would be, “Jimmie felt afraid.” Showing would be, “Jimmie’s hand shook and the hair on the back of his neck stood up.”
- ✓ In dialogue, strive to create a picture in the reader’s mind. Use visual tags, indicated by the words in bold type. “May I have the car?” **Jimmie bounced the ball. His father reached for the ball.** “Why do you need the car?”
- View a complete listing of Anna’s books at [AnnaMyers.info](http://AnnaMyers.info).

esidents were detained in holding centers, and between 100 and 300 black citizens were killed. The charges against Rowland were dismissed. No charges were ever brought against the riot perpetrators.

**History Lessons**

The writing of *Tulsa Burning* grew out of Myers's insistence that, "It is the young who must learn from mistakes made by earlier generations." In the book, best friends Noble, a white teenager, and Isaac, a young banker on Tulsa's Black Wall Street, have ample opportunities to learn such lessons. Noble says, "To Pa, I was just something to hit, not to go out of his way for." Isaac's father savors a hate so vengeful that "it couldn't ever be shrunk down to words."

Yet there is a counterpoint to all this animosity. "Don't let your Pa decide your future for you," says Isaac's mother. Her quiet wisdom, integrated with her lifestyle of compassion, drowns out the cacophony of hateful indifference surrounding Noble and Isaac. Her words resound in Noble's ears as he drives through burning Tulsa to rescue Isaac, who is knocked unconscious by a rioter's violence. But the book doesn't climax there.

"Just remember your name," Isaac's mother says to Noble. He remembers as he rescues Isaac again, this time from lynching. But the turning point comes only when Isaac attends the funeral of an innocent young girl. It is there that both races meet to share grief and acceptance. It is there that Noble witnesses a love that "broke my heart and let the hate seep out."

Read the "Final Report of the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921" at [OKHistory.org/trrc/freport.htm](http://OKHistory.org/trrc/freport.htm).

*Lori Williams is a freelance writer who specializes in writing about international adoption and the special needs child. Lori resides in Bethany with her husband Dean and daughter Aurelia.*



The Natural

# Metro Family

JUNE 2007

**Weekly Class Schedule**

Mon-Fri .....	5:35am
Sat. ....	7:35am
Mon-Sat. ....	8:35am
Mon-Sat. ....	9:35am
Sat. ....	10:35am
Mon-Fri, Sun .....	4:30pm
Mon-Fri .....	5:45pm
Mon-Thr. ....	6:50pm

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**Father's Day is June 17<sup>th</sup>!  
What Is A Dad?**

Dad is a person who is loving and kind, and when he knows what you have on your mind. Is someone who listens, suggests, and defends. A dad can be one of your very best friends! As proud of your triumphs, but when things go wrong, a dad can be patient and helpful and strong. In all that you do, a dad's love plays a part. There's always a place for him deep in your heart. And each year that passes, you're even more glad, more grateful and proud just to call your dad! Thank you, Dad... for listening, for caring, for giving and sharing, but, especially, just being you! **Happy Father's Day**

Author Unknown.



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