

Now is Not the Time to Panic

KEVIN WILSON



Praise

'*Now is Not the Time to Panic* is totally its own thing: mysterious, hypnotic, wonderful.'

Emma Straub

'Wilson's stories manage to be unexpected, totally new, and yet gets to the heart of human experience in the most familiar way.'

LitHub

'Wildly funny, wonderfully sincere—and a little bit devastating...Utterly indelible.'

Courtney Summers

About the author

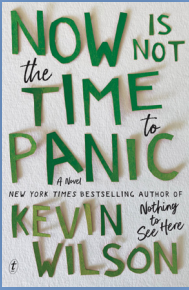
Kevin Wilson is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Nothing to See Here*, as well as the novels *The Family Fang* and *Perfect Little World*, and the short-story collections *Tunneling to the Center of the Earth* and *Baby You're Gonna Be Mine*. He lives with his family in Sewanee, Tennessee, where he is an associate professor in the English department at Sewanee: The University of the South.

About the book

A bold coming-of-age story, written with Kevin Wilson's trademark wit and blazing prose, *Now Is Not the Time to Panic* is a nuanced exploration of young love, identity and the power of art. It's also about the secrets that haunt us—and, ultimately, what the truth will set free.

Discussion questions

1. What are your initial observations about the narrative voice? What strikes you most about it?
2. What first draws Frankie to Zeke? How does the dynamic between them shift over the course of the book?
3. How does Frankie's childhood compare with your own? Discuss her feelings of isolation and being 'weird'—what makes her feel this way? How does it shape her relationships with other kids?
4. When Frankie and Zeke are making art, Frankie spends a lot of time trying to figure out what 'art' is. Does she ever reach a conclusion? How would you describe the art they make?
5. Is Frankie right that everything in her whole life can be traced back to the moment she cuts her finger? Why does this moment hold such particular significance for her?
6. Consider the art that Frankie and Zeke make against the artistic careers of Zeke's mum and Frankie's neighbour Mr Avery. How does our relationship with art shift from childhood to adolescence? How does the way this experience is reflected in the book make you feel?
7. What is it about Zeke and Frankie's posters that makes everybody panic? What do you think people fear about it the most?



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8. Discuss the novel against your knowledge of other religious hysteria and community-wide panic (e.g. the Salem witch trials or the widespread Satanic panic across America in the 1980s). Why do you think these phenomena occurred when and where they did?
9. Why do you think Kevin Wilson has chosen to tell the story from Frankie's perspective as both an adolescent and an adult? How does this shape your relationship with the contents of the text? How would it change if the story was told from only one perspective?
10. Do you agree with Zeke when he tells Frankie that they have to take a portion of the blame for what happened to Lyle? Which of their actions do you agree or disagree with? What control did they have over what happened? Are artists responsible for the way people respond to their work?
11. What is your response to Zeke when Frankie finds him towards the end of the book? Would his life have been better if they hadn't met?
12. Is the ending of the book inevitable? Can you imagine it going any other way? How would you describe Frankie's and Zeke's respective resolutions?