In 1666, more than half a million people called London home. Many houses and other buildings filled the city. Most of these structures were made of wood, and many had straw roofs. It sounds quaint, but when a fire broke out on September 2, those materials made perfect fuel. In no time, all of London was burning out of control.

The fire started in a bakery on Pudding Lane. The baker forgot to put out the fire in his oven before going to bed. Sparks from the oven ignited a fire. By the time the baker discovered it, the fire was too big for him to extinguish. A strong wind caused it to spread quickly.

London did not have a fire department. At that time, people fought fires by passing buckets of water, but that was not enough for this fire.

The fire burned for days! People grabbed what they could and fled the city. On the fourth day, the fire was put out, but the city was demolished. Thousands of homes were gone. Many churches and businesses were destroyed too. Surprisingly, fewer than 20 people died.

After the fire, the people of London were determined to rebuild. It took many years, but they restored London to a beautiful and thriving city!
Quick Quiz

5. What is the main idea of *London Burns*?
   m. In 1666, a great fire destroyed the city of London.
   n. The Great Fire of London could not be put out quickly.
   o. Half a million people lived in London in 1666.

6. What ignited the Great Fire of London?
   c. a tipped oil lamp in the bakery
   d. buildings made of wood and straw
   e. sparks from a baker's oven

7. What does the word *spread* mean in this story?
   r. to unfold or open as wide as possible
   s. to go out and affect many people or places
   t. to cover with a layer of something

8. Which was NOT a reason that the fire was hard to put out?
   a. London's buildings looked very quaint.
   b. Many of the buildings were made of wood and straw.
   c. The strong wind helped spread the fire.

Talk about what you learned
Do you think a fire would be as likely to destroy London today? Why or why not?