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Blue Flame

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Suddenly the Cathars and the Occitain are popular as subjects for a story, for here is a book following on from Kate Mosse's **Labrinthe** set in this area, and dealing with the difficulties faced by the Cathars in medieval France. (The Cathars practised their religion differently from mainstream Catholics in France at that time.) This first novel of a projected trilogy tells of the fledgling romance between Raimon, son of a Cathar weaver, and Yolanda, daughter of the count. They grew up together in the relaxed atmosphere of the hamlet of Castleneuve. Parsifal, a Merlin type figure, guards the blue flame of the title given to his forbears by Christ himself, which is the symbol of the Occitain. He passes it onto Raimon towards the end of the story after the Inquisitor arrives at Castleneuve to search out the Cathars and divide the community, turning neighbour against neighbour and imprisoning people in the castle cellars before attempting to burn Raimon at the stake.

The first few chapters are not easy reading which is a pity because once the storyline is established this is an exciting and enthralling read. The history may be unfamiliar to many young people but trouble between people over the way they practise their religion is universal. Although the Cathars are made to appear the villains here, Raimon preaches tolerance, urging the people to join together against the French King's proposed invasion, to defend their way of life, more than the way they practise their Catholicism. Yolanda is a spunky heroine although it is difficult to see her attraction for Hugh, a seasoned soldier from Paris, as although she is 14 and of marriageable age, she is unkempt and a tomboy. It would have been good to have included a brief note about the historical background and a map to help the reader engage with the opening chapters.

Running Order:

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