



## The Burning Chambers

*Kate Mosse*

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## **The Burning Chambers** Kate Mosse

Bringing sixteenth-century Languedoc vividly to life, Kate Mosse's *The Burning Chambers* is a gripping story of love and betrayal, mysteries and secrets; of war and adventure, conspiracies and divided loyalties . . .

Carcassonne 1562: Nineteen-year-old Minou Joubert receives an anonymous letter at her father's bookshop. Sealed with a distinctive family crest, it contains just five words: SHE KNOWS THAT YOU LIVE.

But before Minou can decipher the mysterious message, a chance encounter with a young Huguenot convert, Piet Reydon, changes her destiny forever. For Piet has a dangerous mission of his own, and he will need Minou's help if he is to get out of La Cité alive.

Toulouse: As the religious divide deepens in the Midi, and old friends become enemies, Minou and Piet both find themselves trapped in Toulouse, facing new dangers as sectarian tensions ignite across the city, the battle-lines are drawn in blood and the conspiracy darkens further.

Meanwhile, as a long-hidden document threatens to resurface, the mistress of Puivert is obsessed with uncovering its secret and strengthening her power . . .

## **The Burning Chambers Details**

Date : Published May 3rd 2018 by Mantle (first published April 24th 2018)

ISBN :

Author : Kate Mosse

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Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Cultural, France

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## From Reader Review The Burning Chambers for online ebook

### Emma says

Nobody does the Languedoc like Kate Mosse! I didn't realise the religious wars of France were just as viscious and prolonged as in Britain during the same time period ( Tudors and Stuarts). I was very interested to read this as I have been to Carcassonne and so could clearly visualise the scenes set there and its surrounds.

This is really the story of an everyday family living in Carcassonne with a secret. It is also a romance. The story is based in Carcassonne and then Toulouse where bitter battles were fought between the Huguenots and Catholics.

The mystery itself and the romance work quite well, but the strength of this book is Mosse's extensive knowledge and evocative description of the beautiful region in which it is set and the intricacies of the religious problem. Within this she has created a wide cast of believable and fully drawn characters. Many thanks to Netgalley for an arc of this book. All opinions are my own.

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### Victoria Sadler says

My god. MY. GOD. If you're book is going to be 600 pages long, it better be good and, bloody hell, The Burning Chambers by Kate Mosse is UH. MAY. ZING. Incredibly – and rather embarrassingly – I've never read one of Kate's novels before. And I also know very little about the political landscape of 16th century France(!), yet this piece of historical fiction is gripping. Oh my word, it is gripping.

Love and betrayal, mysteries and secrets, war and adventure, conspiracies and divided loyalties... It's all here and it unfurls with the brilliance of the most fantastic page-turner as we follow a man and a woman – a young woman in receipt of a mysterious message, and a Huguenot convert at the core of the resistance – as sectarian tensions threaten to set France alight. I could not put this down. One of the achievements of the year.

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### Emma says

What I wanted from this book was a historical mystery, what I got was a historical romance. Now, it's a decent romance, if a bit sappy for my liking, with the Romeo and Juliet style dividing line provided by the French Wars of Religion. As a fascinating and dangerous period, it effectively sets up the Catholic/Huguenot conflicts that are layered through the story, both in smaller character motivation and the larger social framework. This is done exceptionally well, the feeling of threat and uncertainty faced by ordinary people on both sides more than just a backdrop for the main plot- from *les oubliettes* to tortured confessions and street violence, it's a precarious time when anyone could be your enemy and every word you say might be monitored for blasphemy. One step awry, one wrong person trusted, one insult given to a vindictive neighbour...and you might be taken away, never to be seen again. It's making me wonder if Nazi Germany will be a step in this story.

However, the mystery aspect of the book is minimal. Clearly this is something that's going to be spread out over the series, but what it means is that you're going to get three romances with a side of somewhat flimsy

(at least in this instalment) thriller. The prologue and part of the epilogue are the only two sections which relate to the larger series, the only bits which tell the reader there's more than this book as a standalone, and it's not clear that this is what they're for. On top of that, there's a lot of repetition of language and imagery, which is supposed to provide connection between the varying POV storylines, but which feel annoying and lazy. Especially as it's used to link that add-on future storyline (of the prologue/epilogue)- one more tenuous connection to make it seem like it should be in this book at all.

After a slow start, it's pretty pacey, and I have to give props for the seriously dark suggestion that those alive at the end of this book might visit Paris for the wedding of Henri III and the feast of Bartholomew. Yet the next book needs to seriously downplay the romance and up the excitement.

ARC via Netgalley

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### **Cathy says**

I absolutely loved Kate Mosse's Languedoc trilogy (Labyrinth, Sepulchre and Citadel) and the atmospheric The Winter Ghosts. The author returns to the setting of previous novels – Carcassonne – but this time without the dual time structure of Labyrinth and Sepulchre. Instead the reader is plunged into the sights and sounds of 16th century France, a time of religious strife between the Catholic Church and Protestant Huguenots. 'The threat of being denounced terrified everyone; a man could be strung up for uttering the wrong prayer, kneeling at the wrong altar.' However, as one character observes, "A war of faith is always about more than faith." In this case, for some, it's about power and influence.

The Burning Chambers contains all the elements a reader has come to love and expect from a Kate Mosse novel: strong female characters, secrets passed down through generations, an inheritance, a forgery, a Will, a labyrinthine but totally absorbing plot. There is love, passion and betrayal. There is murder, treachery and brutal interrogation. And, when it comes down to it, who can be trusted, even amongst those you believe your closest friends?

The story lines involving Minou and Piet are interspersed with extracts from the testimony of an unnamed woman who reveals herself as something of a Lady Macbeth character, prepared to stop at nothing to achieve her aims. Eventually, the various story lines and leading characters converge on the place that holds the key to one element of the mystery before building to a dramatic climax. However, 'old crimes cast long shadows...' so this is a feud that could continue down the generations.

If you gave Mary Berry flour, butter, eggs and sugar, you could be absolutely sure she'd create the perfect Victoria sponge cake. In the same way, in The Burning Chambers, Kate Mosse expertly combines all the ingredients necessary for a deliciously satisfying historical fiction novel...with the Prologue providing the promise of further appetising slices still to come.

I received a review copy courtesy of publishers, Mantle Books, and NetGalley in return for an honest and unbiased review.

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## **Stephen Collins says**

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 was what was read out at my Mother's Funnel in May 09 is at being of the book.

This starts in 1862 in Franschhoek at a grave the rest is in flashback to Carcassonne in the Winter 1562, Toulouse Spring 1562 & Puivert Summer 1562 ; during the Wars of Religion set around the Host ,transubstantiation as opposed to consubstantiation. The hundreds of thousands of people who died over bread & wine. In today's standards it is very difficult to under stand Transubstantiation as it sounds very illogical. But in early Roman Catholics faith it was very much a matter of faith.

Henry VIII still believed in transubstantiation & anyone else who did not was executed even though he was head of the church & split from the Pope he still did not follow consubstantiation .

This set in France around a Catholic Girl Minou Joubert sent a strange letter SHE KNOWS THAT YOU LIVE.

This about war, religion, blasphemy, wine & bread ,love & hate so much hate .

It is set after Martin Luther nailed his 77 Edicts to the church.

But most of all this about Religion started with war on 1st March 1562 with Massacre of unarmed Huguenots in Vassy by The Catholic forces of Francis Duke of Guise this religion at its worst.

This about the thief of The Shroud of Antioch in 1558 & the hunt by Piet Reydon to clear his name .

In the Time of The Inquisitional tourcher stealing holy shrouds was really bad idea. This book a mystery of divine thought & vast rich tapestry of people in War torn France.

The 'hero' The Duke of Guise mass murder of children who today would be classed as a international terrorist but then a Hero by The Queen thank God things have changed.

The huge shadow of darkness cast from Martin Luther's influence is biggest problem that most people who read this may not see because not read about Luther yet it is the visible darkness of this book that has made the book & the main Villain come through this story so much better. There is nothing like really good stinker like Lord Foul ,Saurman , Voldumore & The Master to pack a punch here we have Vidal a very naught dark over sexed Bishop who is not the main theme of the story yet he's so important. You'll love to hate & you'll never want him to end .You need more & more of him .Kate has created a real interesting stinker.

It's big Shame that volume two The City of Tears is not due tile 2020

Some people have called this a Romantic Historical but I personally don't like to label a book with word ROMANTIC specially when it real isn't ,it as romantic under tons but only loosely but the word Romance can put people off. I was told that Forever Amber was sloppy Romance so for years I never tried it but when I did I made it book of the year. It's like ghastly term 'a woman's book' no such thing. Book should not be labeled like that.

This not Romantic story it's got love it it but so has the Bible & would not call that a Romance would you.

This as it says is only book one but don't worry as the next book is set in another time zone about different people . As for the wierd title that does make sense but I not tell you'll have read the book won't you.

TOP HISTORICAL FICTION 2018 & I THOUGHT THE STEPHEN KING WAS THE TOP BOOK HOW WRONG I WAS

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## **Pauline says**

The Burning Chambers by Kate Moss is a story of set in the 16th Century during the religious wars. It's about family, secrets and lies. I found this book slow to start with but I liked the characters. Very atmospheric and informative of the times.

I would like to thank NetGalley and Pan Macmillan for my e-copy in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Kim says**

Setting: Carcassonne & Toulouse; 16th century. This is the first in a new trilogy from author Kate Mosse, set largely in her usual venue of Carcassonne but, on this occasion, a story of the developing love between Catholic girl Minou and Huguenot Piet set against a background of the Wars of Religion as rivalry and disputes between Catholics and Huguenots (Protestants) trying to gain influence over the French Royal Family erupted into a series of violent clashes, leading to thousands of deaths. I don't usually read books set in this era so it says a lot for the author's talents that I was absolutely hooked from the first page and simply could not put the book down. Can't wait for the second in the trilogy (which sadly does not come out until 2020!) and also looking forward to hearing the author speak at the Derby Book Festival tomorrow - 10/10. P.S. Having heard Kate speak today, it turns out it's a quartet of books rather than a trilogy!

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## **Kath Middleton says**

Set in the Languedoc in the sixteenth century, this book brings to life the religious strife of the times. Catholic and Huguenot, allegedly both Christian and both worshipers of the same God, torture and kill for supremacy. Young Minou and her family are caught up in it all, but she's more important than she knows.

The story really brings the times to life. It immerses the reader in the suspicions of the times, where friends can become enemies without warning. I've read some of the author's previous historical novels and always find myself drawn in completely. This book is no exception. I loved it.

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## **Amanda says**

Kate Mosse is hugely influential in the publishing world, largely due to founding the Women's Prize for Fiction. She is also a hugely successful novelist.

Mosse's novel *Labyrinth* was a phenomenal success followed by *Sepulchre* and *Citadel*. *The Burning Chambers* takes us back to Carcassonne and Toulouse and the French middle ages.

The year is 1562, the Catholic ruling King of France is waging war against the protestant Huguenots. In Carcassonne, live the Joubert family. Bernard, the Father, Minou the eldest daughter, Aimeris her brother and little sister Alis, Madame Joubert dead five years ago.

All seemed well until Bernard returned from his travels and now refuses to leave the house, forcing Minou to take charge of his small bookshop. Life is about to get more complicated when a letter, with the word 'SHE KNOWS THAT YOU LIVE' is delivered to the bookshop. Just what do the words mean, who is the she?

Elsewhere trouble is brewing, there is danger in every corner, and not all can be trusted as Piet Reydon, Huguenot rebel, is finding to his cost. A chance meeting with old friend Vidal, a high ranking Catholic clergyman and the question of the lost shroud of Antioch leave Piet fleeing Carcassonne for Toulouse but not before a fleeting encounter with Minou. Their lives will become inextricably linked when they find themselves trapped in the city when ferocious fighting breaks out between the Catholics and the Huguenots.

In the small village of Puivert, a long hidden document threatens the status of its Mistress, Blanche de Bruyere who will stop at nothing to protect herself.

If your reading this and thinking this all sounds too much, then suspend that thought. Yes, there are several strands to the novel and yes it all sounds a bit complicated don't be put off because this novel has everything.

Lets start with how wonderful the characters are.

We have our dashing hero Piet Reydon, desperate to liberate France from the tyranny of the Catholics, to let every man chose how and what religion they wish to follow. He is brave and courageous not afraid to face those who would see him dead.

Minou is our heroine, a young naïve woman forced to grow up, to face upto her past and fight for her family. She is tenacious and driven, hugley strong in the face of great adversity.

We have two wonderful villains in Vidal and Blanche De Bruyere. Vidal intent on gaining power and authority in the French Catholic church stopping at nothing to get what he wants. He has a great partner in Blanche, obsessed with finding Minou and safeguarding her status to the point of insanity.

There are numerous other characters who play their part and enhance the whole novel, some adding a lighter touch in what can be quite a dark novel.

The historical detail is just brilliant. Mosse has obviously done her research but does not swamp the reader in too much detail. There is just enough information for you to understand the complexities of the conflict and how the characters represent each side.

The imagery is amazing and I particular loved the scenes towards the end which were so vivid and real I felt I could have been there.

The novel is long at 600 pages but at no point did it feel laboured or that I wanted it to end. It is hugely fast paced barely leaving the reader time to catch their breath before the next swathe of battle and intrigue.

It is a novel with everything, war, intrigue and love and I cannot wait for the next in the series. My Mum is a recent Kate Mosse convert and she is going to love it!

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### **Theresa Smith Writes says**

The first book in a new series of novels by Kate Mosse, *The Burning Chambers* is sublime historical fiction. It is set in France, in the year 1562, when the Wars of Religion were beginning to take hold. These were a sequence of eight civil wars between Catholics and Huguenots and the loss and destruction was profound, with several million people dead or displaced over the 36 years these wars raged on for. Such a very long time; what madness.

*The Burning Chambers* contains an impressive amount of historical detail woven into a story that is highly accessible and vividly engaging. I was instantly swept up into the suspense and richly detailed lives of the characters. It's a huge book, but the pages just flew by for me, I really couldn't put it down. Even my sleep

was bookended with it, reading late into the night and waking up to read more over breakfast.

These brutal religious wars were just so terrible, and Mosse does an incredible job of bringing this dark history to life. The corruption threaded through society was rife, and each individual had to keep their wits about them at all times. You literally had no idea who you could trust. And yet, within this environment, neighbours would band together to protect their own against the forces that sought to crush them. Community was still rich and evident, albeit, a little more cautious though.

Against this volatile background is a mystery involving Minou's heritage and a woman who thinks she hears the voice of God, a truly frightening woman who is pursuing Minou and will stop at nothing to achieve her end game.

The drama is high, the suspense even more so. There's romance, crime, mystery, war, gothic themes, and history. The pages that head each part are adorned with photos that compliment the setting of the next section, a nice touch that firmly gives the reader a sense of time and place. The Burning Chambers is a novel that will appeal to a wide range of readers and it really is Kate Mosse at her very best.

Thanks is extended to Pan Macmillan Australia for providing me with a copy of The Burning Chambers for review.

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### **Kelly Furniss says**

Set in the 16th Century during the wars between the Catholics and Huguenots Mosse brings alive the story with the descriptive attention to detail giving a real sense of the period. At times I felt it quite hard going because of the religious aspect but I ploughed on to be rewarded with a entertaining story based around this of divided loyalties, conspiracies, love and betrayal.

A book I would recommend. My thanks go to the author, publisher and Netgalley in providing a arc in return for a honest review.

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### **Stephen says**

thanks to net galley and the publishers for a free copy in return for open and honest review.

interesting novel based in the times of the religious wars in 16th century France and the relationships between several families on both sides. felt the prologue could of been developed more at the start and end it felt out of place. felt that the book could of been slightly shorter and got bogged down towards the middle

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### **Paromjit says**

Kate Mosse has written her trademark gripping historical fiction packed with adventure, mystery, conflict



and romance. Here she takes us back to France's Wars of Religion and the harrowing blood letting that took place in that historical time period, bringing back echoes of my studies of these events in European History long ago when the established Catholic Church was determined that no Huguenots should remain in the country. The story is set in Languedoc in 1562, in Carcassonne, where 19 year old Minou Joubert is minding her father's bookshop. She receives a rather odd letter in which there are just five words, 'She knows that you live'. Not being able to make any sense of this whatsoever, she puts it out of her mind, unaware she is in grave danger. This is a story of mystery, conspiracy, betrayal, love, and family secrets amidst the most turbulent of times.

Minou happens to meet a Huguenot convert, the young Piet Reydon who has his own personal quest in defending his faith to the utmost to fulfill, and is going to need her help in extricating himself from La Cite. Minou and Piet finds themselves irreversibly drawn to each other, in the most dangerous of times. Minou's father is not in the best of health and keeping family secrets from his daughter that have the power to destroy Minou and the family. There is the search for an old will, wanted by another to become more powerful. He sends her and her younger brother, Aimeric, to Toulouse, believing they will be safer there. He is mistaken, for in Toulouse, the fires of religious conflict are blazing out of control, with neighbour turning on neighbour, and where old friendships are destined to turn into fatal enmities. Mosse weaves a compelling fast paced historical novel that is atmospheric and evokes the time and place beautifully. A wonderful, entertaining and exciting mystery read which engaged and absorbed me. Many thanks to Pan MacMillan for an ARC.

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### **Tracey Allen at Carpe Librum says**

*The Burning Chambers* by Kate Mosse is an epic tale of a family in mid 1500s France set against the backdrop of the civil unrest between the Catholics and Huguenots. This is quite a hefty tome coming in at over 580 pages and while I don't mind a chunky read every now and again, I did find this one a little too long. I wanted the main character to spend more time at her father's bookshop and felt a little robbed when that was just a kicking off point to her story.

Containing a mystery and a love story amongst the turbulent political setting, the writing was evocative but sometimes a little repetitive (e.g. the word pernicious appears twice on page 123). The period seemed to be excellently researched though and those with an interest in the French Wars of Religion will thoroughly enjoy this historical fiction novel.

Overall I found it a good but slow moving story with the convergence of the characters at the end a little unrealistic. *The Burning Chambers* is the first in a series with the second novel *The City of Tears* due for publication in 2020. I'm pretty sure fans of Ken Follett will enjoy this series.

\* Copy courtesy of Pan Macmillan Australia \*

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### **Sarina Morrhaye says**

Wat lees ik haar boeken toch graag. Dit boek is heel mooi in elkaar gezet, doordat je in Minou haar reis word meegenomen. Het conflict tussen katholieken en protestanten word ruimschoots aan bod gebracht. Ja, het was eentje zoals alleen Kate Mosse ze kan vertellen. ?

