



The burning girls

By C. J. Tudor

First published in 2021

Genre & subject

Psychological fiction

Thrillers fiction

Synopsis

Welcome to Chapel Croft. 500 years ago, eight protestant martyrs were burned to death. 30 years ago, two teenage girls disappeared without a trace. Two months ago, the vicar committed suicide. Reverend Jack Brooks, a single parent with a 14-year-old daughter and a heavy conscience, arrives in the village hoping to make a fresh start and find some peace. Instead, Jack finds a town mired in secrecy and a strange welcome package - an old exorcism kit and a note quoting scripture. 'But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed and hidden that will not be known.' The more Jack and daughter Flo get acquainted with the town and its strange denizens, the deeper they are drawn into their rifts, mysteries, and suspicions. And when Flo is troubled by strange sightings in the old chapel, it becomes apparent that there are ghosts here that refuse to be laid to rest. But uncovering the truth can be deadly in a village where everyone has something to protect, everyone has links with the village's bloody past, and no one trusts an outsider.

Author biography

C. J. TUDOR is the author of *The Burning Girls*, *The Other People*, *The Hiding Place* and *The Chalk Man*, which won the International Thriller Writers Award for Best First Novel, the Barry Award and the Strand Magazine Award for Best Debut Novel. Over the years she has worked as a copywriter, television presenter, voice-over artist and dog walker. She is now thrilled to be able to write full-time, and doesn't miss chasing wet dogs through muddy fields all that much. She lives in England with her partner and daughter.

Discussion starters

- How do secrets and hidden identities affect the characters and their actions? When is keeping a secret better than telling it? Which character surprised you the most?
- Religion is central to *The Burning Girls*, from Jack's job as a vicar to the legend of the burned martyrs of Chapel Croft. How does religion and its past—both recent and far away—influence the future?
- Jack is not the traditional vicar and says she secretly enjoys watching people realize that she is, in fact, Jack. In what ways did the characters challenge your expectations?

- Fire can be a destructive or purifying thing, and there is an old saying, “baptized by fire,” to describe people learning and growing through very difficult experiences. How was fire used throughout the book?
- Jack is haunted by the past, both literally and figuratively, throughout the book. Has there been a time or place in your own life where you have felt the weight of your own past?
- Chapel Croft is a tiny, remote village with an insular community that does not want to challenge the way things have always been (especially where the Harper family is concerned). How does village’s burning martyrs legend and its small-town gossip work against Jack? How does it help her, if at all?
- What did you think about the ending? What do you think is next for Jack and Flo in Australia?

If you liked this book, you may also like...

Killing floor by Lee Child

Once there were wolves by Charlotte McConaghy



If you are looking for something new to read try **NoveList!** It is a free database to help you find that perfect book. Visit www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/library

Author biography from Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Orwell), discussion starters from www.litlovers.com/reading-guides and read-a-likes from NoveList.