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# Burning Issy

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

This welcome reissue of an early Burgess novel reminds us what a versatile writer he is. *Burning Issy* is an historical novel about witchcraft, set near Pendle in Lancashire at the time of the infamous seventeenth-century witch trials. 12-year-old Issy is indeed a witch, of a kind. Haunted from infancy by a terrifying nightmare memory of fire, she also has the involuntary supernatural power to create fire as a weapon, in defence of those she loves. Issy's past is mysterious. She longs to know her true origins and nature, and is lacerated by fears of persecution, sin and the Devil, until the strange woman Iohan (her aunt, as it proves) appears when things are desperate and gradually enables her to find the truth. Issy and Iohan are priestesses of an old religion, pantheistic in nature, predating Christianity and under threat from it. They have nothing to do with Christianity's polarisation of God and Satan, good and evil, but belong to an older, innocent, more inclusive worship. Burgess convincingly recreates the confusions, fears and superstitions of a bigoted and cruel age, and Issy's troubled but successful efforts to find herself make a compelling story, exploring difficult themes in a clear, strong narrative accessible to readers of ten and over.

Running Order:

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