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Forged in the Fire

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off

Media type:

Book

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The London of the seventeenth century, its Great Plague and its Great Fire provide the principal backcloth for Turnbull's *Forged in the Fire*, the sequel to her highly praised *No Shame, No Fear*. Clearly, the author's research has been meticulous, as the novel comes with a strong sense of authenticity: the sights, sounds and smells – and underlying every other smell was the sickly-sweet odour of decaying corpses – of the period and place are re-created with loving attention to colourful and, where appropriate, earthy detail. But impressive as this detail is, it is never allowed to drown the story of young and passionate romance which constitutes the book's central narrative. Some three years after the events related in *No Shame, No Fear*, Will Heywood and his beloved Susanna Thorn, still sustained by their Quaker faith, now find themselves in London, a setting in which that faith and their mutual devotion is to be dramatically (and often painfully) tested. Their struggles with the many obstacles put in their way comprise the material for a novel which is heart-warming – and totally un sentimental – in its depiction of a love which, ultimately, can conquer all. RD

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