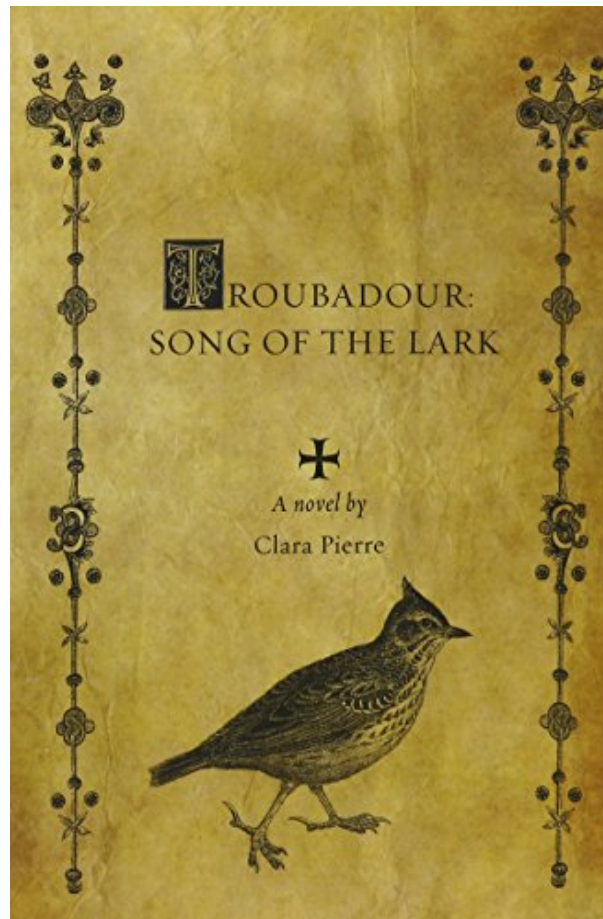
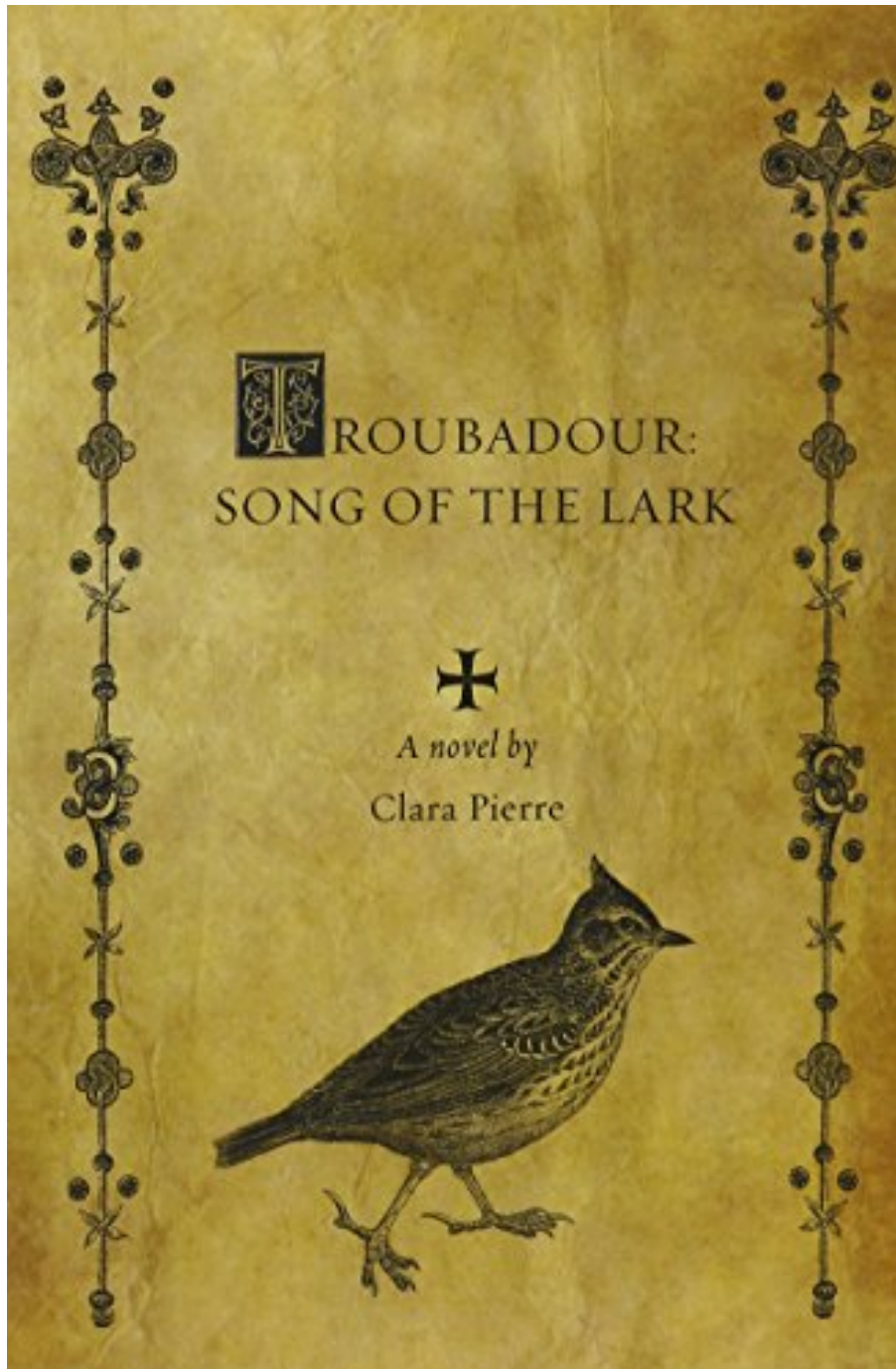


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PDF

Twelfth century France is on the verge of war, a high stakes battle for the minds and souls of its people. Territorial disputes with Spain threaten the southern provinces. The excesses of the Catholic hierarchy are giving rise to a growing Cathar religious movement. Into this mounting conflict rides a romantic young rogue whose biggest wish is to write poems and set them to music. Gaucelm finds his way into the powerful courts of Toulouse, Ventadour, and Courthézon, and the tender arms of a prostitute who will follow him wherever he goes. Based on historic events and a real troubadour who chronicled them, Troubadour is a powerfully told story of conflicted loyalties and the ruthless leaders who will do anything to control their subjects.

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Fascinating reading!

By Susan Keefe

When Gaucelm left the village of Uzerche in the Limousin for Toulouse in 1195, it was the start of the great adventure which was to be his life.

Less than a week's ride away, the land was very different, and so it was an excited young man who rode under Toulouse's portcullis and entered the lively city. A city which was at that time said to outshine even Paris! A chance meeting with Count Raymond, led to an invitation to entertain the court that evening. Success followed, and he became as popular, as he was round. As the court's troubadour he became a celebrity with his poetry and storytelling spreading the news about life and events, at a time when many people could not read or write.

Here, I have to say that if you close your eyes throughout this book, you can almost feel as if you have been transported back in time, so vividly does the author set the scenes, laying before us detailed descriptions of the buildings, people, places and life at court.

Fortunes change however, and his bold storytelling is seen as too radical. Count Raymond releases him from court, and so travels to Ventadour with Guilhelma, a prostitute, who is to become his lifelong companion.

Once settled at the court of Countess Marie, wife of Ebles de Ventadour, Gaucelm suddenly finds himself

loaned to the court of Madame Audiarde de Malemort, Marie's friend, who has very firm ideas as to what she wants from a man, and this, and other parts of the book are quite raunchy. The strength of women in these times is an eye opener, when usually you are led to believe they are very submissive. These royal women are very powerful, and often many years younger than their husbands. Whilst he is away, back at Ventadour, Guilhelma becomes friends with Douce, Marie's strong minded daughter.

Thus follows a story of knights in shining armour, love, betrayal, fierce battles, honour, and the continual struggle between the Catholic Pope and the Cathars.

When Douce disappears from Ventadour, Gaucelm and Guilhelma's search for her, however the young woman they find at Montdragon is a very different from the love struck girl of the past. Life, people and events have changed her, and this change is about to affect them all.

With the Catholic crusaders becoming more and more zealous against the Cathars, all three decide to travel to the court of Count Raimbaut at Courthezon. Here they are warmly welcomed and Guilhelma has their son Ayen. However, the northerners invade Courthezon and Gaucelm finds himself taking sad news back to the Countess Marie at Ventadour and asking a favour...

As he rides back to Guilhelma and Ayen at Courthezon, the triumphant, but weary troubadour realises that he has indeed taken on the mantle of the famous Bernard de Ventadour who he met all those years ago at the court of Count Raymond. His storytelling must go on and he must spread the word, and the truth through his poetry and verse.

This book is beautifully written and a wonderful insight into life in the Middle Ages. The main characters are real although some things have been changed. I really loved the detail in it and it makes me want to visit everywhere mentioned, which I am sure one day I will.

I am so glad it was translated into English, and am looking forward to reading its sequel, when it is released.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

but she was confident I would be as delighted with the setting and the characters as I was ...

By G. George

Troubadour came to me as a mysterious Amazon gift from an editor/friend who said it was quite beyond something she imagined me reading, but she was confident I would be as delighted with the setting and the characters as I was diverted from my usual fare. Troubadour: Song of the Lark will leave you wondering how far we've come. Gauchelm Faidit, an unlikely protagonist, part wide-eyed, part world-wise, rotund apprentice minstrel entices us through a 12th Century French court as it indulgently wallows in viscious and violent intrigue between Pope Innocent III and a growing heretic movement by predecessors of today's Quakers. Count Rymond of Toulouse takes in Gaucelm as he offers succor to the heretics to tug at the Pope's beard and his courtiers plot. Great fodder for troubadour tunes. David Crosby of Crosby/Stills/Nash and Young recently proclaimed himself a "Troubadour." This tale is a great view of the tradition from which his proclamation springs. Troubadour has been delighting European readers for fifteen years. This is its first view on this side of the puddle.

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