

Dolet

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Weinberg paints a vivid portrait of a learned man who refused to be silenced.

Dolet is the engaging tale of a real-life Inquisition-era writer and scholar. Compelling and action-filled, this historical novel portrays an uncelebrated but influential figure in the French Renaissance, one whose life was cut short by the religious hysteria that swept Europe in the 1500s.

Not much is known about Étienne Dolet, a French printer who published scholarly works in Latin. Dolet was a fervent Ciceronian who spoke his mind, regardless of the consequences. As a young man, he gave a speech in Toulouse that challenged church doctrine. He found himself marked as a possible heretic and rabble-rouser, and his egregious error followed him throughout his short life.

Dolet spent his years as a wanted man, sought for his heresy. He often escaped capture and punishment via friends who helped him hide, or via royal pardon. Dolet made a name for himself as a printer, opening his own shop and publishing works that threatened the religious order. His actions set the foundation for his ultimate end. He was hanged on his thirty-seventh birthday, while simultaneously, the books that he had printed burned.

Despite the unfiltered outspokenness that caused Dolet to make many enemies throughout his life, the author shows another side to the man whom many consider to be the first martyr of the Renaissance.

Dolet is a story replete with suspense and intrigue, encompassing a few nerve-racking scenes to appease any lover of the adventure genre, but one that also contains an element of romance. The intelligent narrative illuminates Dolet's strong opinions about many topics. Dolet's internal conflict, between living out loud and being politically correct, is sympathetically portrayed.

Weinberg paints a vivid portrait of a learned man who refused to be silenced. Despite his flaws (such as his occasional displays of conceit), Dolet is forwarded as a human being with a passion for life, for ideas, and for his wife and son.

Dolet provides much to ponder, and serves also as an invaluable history lesson. This page-turner of a historical novel will make audiences grateful to live in a time when freedoms of speech and religion reign.

HILARY DANINHIRSCH (Spring 2016)

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