



Pages :

Format cm :

Prix :

EAN : 9782262009663

Night in the Middle Ages

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Publisher : Perrin

Category : Humanities and Non-Fiction

Genres : History

Keywords : Tradition - Chiapas - Second chance -
Undocumented - Elderly

Thanks to electricity, humans have tamed the night. But what of people in medieval times, when darkness reigned after sunset?

This book tells of what happened at night in the days when candles were our only defense against darkness. By night, people feared the devil, brigands, phantoms, witches, and werewolves. Altercations, murders, plots, adultery, and rape were far from rare. Though forbidden by night, work nevertheless went on. There were diversions: vigils, disturbances, fireworks, taverns, and merrymaking that lasted till dawn. Verdon also describes beds and bedrooms, bedclothes, sleep, and cures for insomnia and dreams. But above all, night was a time for spirituality: prayer was advised for late nights, when all was quiet.

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