

Witney Author Creates a Page-Turning Trilogy

Meeting Kelly Barker and talking to her about her writing and how her three books – written in short succession – came about was an interesting experience. Her first book, 'The Inner Temple', was published in September 2022. Since then, Kelly has written two more: 'Even the Gods Fear It' follows the lead character Zoe once more. This will be published by the end of 2022.

'Even the Gods Fear It' will also include one of Kelly's short stories as an added bonus: 'The Apple Tree,' which brings in elements of her childhood memories of her beloved grandmother's garden in East Oxford.

Kelly, originally from Oxford, moved to Witney ten years ago. When she is not writing, she works as a barber and in her first book, 'The Inner Temple' her protagonist is also a barber. It is however writing rather than cutting hair which Kelly finds so inspirational. At school, she struggled with her lessons due to her suffering from dyslexia. That did not, however, prevent her from having a lifelong love of books encouraged by her grandmother who she loved dearly and who sadly has not witnessed Kelly's success as an author.

"I am an avid reader. My grandmother collected books, and so do I. I love reading and for as long as I can remember, I wanted to be part of the book world. I have written a daily journal for years and once my husband had set me up with a new laptop, I felt it was time to write a longer story, never thinking I would write three in such a short space of time! I set my stories in locations that inspire me and 'The Inner Temple' uses the mystical, man-made Hell Fire Caves at West Wycombe. As for the plot of my first novel, daydreaming has always fascinated me. Why do we do it? Where do we come from and do some people, more than others, choose to live in a world we have created? Sleep deprivation also fascinates me. Experiencing both made me realise that the two are connected. It was the nightmares of real life that kept me awake at night, forcing me into the world of daydreams.

When I was writing 'The Inner Temple,' switching between Zoe the character who works in a barber shop but is an aspiring author and Ivy, the fantasy character who is a

vampire queen, happened organically. I believe that we all have alter egos to some degree – Zoe was mine, and Ivy was Zoe's. As I am yet to find my true author's voice, I am still experimenting with writing in the first and third person. By writing a story within a story, this is helping me to discover my true strengths and weaknesses."

"The Inner Temple' is certainly an intriguing book and a page-turner too. It is the type of novel that you want to have several hours set aside to continue reading and become fully immersed in the story. Reviews on bookshop websites endorse this with most people saying the same thing and giving five-star ratings.

Her second book, 'Even the Gods Fear It' sees Zoe torn between her new-found abilities to create characters that come into existence through her storytelling, and her loved ones. The love story that Kelly has created sees the lead character coming to the realisation that you cannot have power without repercussions, or will she destroy herself in the process?

Kelly explains the rationale behind her second book. "I wrote 'Even the Gods Fear It' because I personally question humanity and wanted to see what Zoe would do if she was faced with a certain dilemma and had the power to do something about it."

Her third novel, 'Necromantia' has a Christmas theme and will be available in 2023. When Kelly is not working in the barber's shop, she devotes six hours a day to her writing. As an enthusiastic animal lover, her Macedonian rescue dog, Lana sits close by and gives her inspiration too. Dogs and cats both play an integral part of Kelly's stories.

Kelly Barker's books are published by Troubadour Publishing Ltd. They are available to buy in Waterstone's in Witney and online from other book retailers. To find out more about Kelly Barker visit kellybarker.org.

