



The Things We Cannot Say

Kelly Rimmer

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In 1942, Europe remains in the relentless grip of war. Just beyond the tents of the Russian refugee camp she calls home, a young woman speaks her wedding vows. It's a decision that will alter her destiny...and it's a lie that will remain buried until the next century.

Since she was nine years old, Alina Dziak knew she would marry her best friend, Tomasz. Now fifteen and engaged, Alina is unconcerned by reports of Nazi soldiers at the Polish border, believing her neighbors that they pose no real threat, and dreams instead of the day Tomasz returns from college in Warsaw so they can be married. But little by little, injustice by brutal injustice, the Nazi occupation takes hold, and Alina's tiny rural village, its families, are divided by fear and hate. Then, as the fabric of their lives is slowly picked apart, Tomasz disappears. Where Alina used to measure time between visits from her beloved, now she measures the spaces between hope and despair, waiting for word from Tomasz and avoiding the attentions of the soldiers who patrol her parents' farm. But for now, even deafening silence is preferable to grief.

Slipping between Nazi-occupied Poland and the frenetic pace of modern life, Kelly Rimmer creates an emotional and finely wrought narrative that weaves together two women's stories into a tapestry of perseverance, loyalty, love and honor. *The Things We Cannot Say* is an unshakable reminder of the devastation when truth is silenced...and how it can take a lifetime to find our voice before we learn to trust it.

The Things We Cannot Say Details

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From Reader Review The Things We Cannot Say for online ebook

Joann says

First of all - I won this awesome book in a Goodreads Giveaway for an honest review. Thanks to everyone for the privilege to read this book. The book is inspired by the author's own family history and unearths a tragic love story and a family secret whose far-reaching effects will alter lives forever. In 2019, separated from her family, Alice begins to uncover the story her grandmother is so desperate to tell, and discovers a love that bloomed in the winter of 1942. As a painful family history comes to light, will the struggles of the past and present finally reach a heartbreaking resolution? This was a very satisfying read.

Penny Flannery says

What a wonderful read, could not put this book down until I found out the ending. Like all of Kelly's books has that awesome twist, that you might work out earlier rather than later. This book reminds me of 'The Bronze Horseman' another wonderful novel about WWII, and the horrors that it contained. Absolutely loved it, every time I read one of Kelly's books I can't decide which is my favourite, but at the moment it's definitely this one.

Sue says

I love historical fiction especially novels about WWII. There have been so many of them the last few years that it would be easy to keep reading the same story over and over but once again an author has totally put a different spin on the story and it read like a story of a time period that I knew very little about. The book was well written and very well researched with characters that I really cared about and that I cried with during the book.

This is a dual time line novel. Time line 1 is present day with Alice as the narrator. Alice lives with her husband, daughter and special needs son. For the last several years she has concentrated her whole life on the needs of her son - often to the exclusion of her daughter and husband. Her beloved grandmother is dying and requests that Alice go to Poland to find someone from her past. After refusing to talk about her years during WWII for so long, Alice is convinced she must make a trip to Poland for her grandmother. The second timeline is in the late 1930s and early 1940s in Poland and is Alina's story. Alina is in love with Tomasz and had been since they were children. Soon after he goes to Warsaw to college, the Nazis invade Poland and start to take away privileges not only from the Jewish people but from everyone - they take all of the food that the farmers grow and leave the people to starve. As Alina tries to live under the new regime, she wonders if life will ever get back to normal and she will ever see Tomasz again.

This emotional novel is about loyalty and honor but most importantly it's a novel about love.

Thanks to Edelweiss for a copy of this book to read and review. All opinions are my own.

Jamie says

This book was so incredibly amazing, it took my breath away and it has taken me 8 days to think about how to put into words a review that truly encompasses what I felt about this book. Dual timelines that are equally as powerful in their own right and even more so when the two come together quite literally floored me. In present day, Alice is dealing with a stressful family life including a special needs autistic son, a gifted daughter and a husband who is more devoted to his work life than his family life. Her beloved Grandmother (Babscia in Polish) has been hospitalized after suffering a stroke, leaving her motor functions struggling, including her ability to speak. Babscia is determined to get Alice to find Tomasz, who is Alice's dead Grandfather... now since Babscia isn't calling Ghostbusters, there's a bit for Alice to unravel here... which leads us to the second timeline, Nazi-occupied Poland in the 1930s.

The title of this book is so beautifully fitting, not just for those characters that physically cannot speak, but for the things others felt like they just could not say. As to not give anything else away, I urge you to read this book, pre-order it, get your library holds in months in advance - by whatever means necessary - DO NOT MISS THIS ONE.

And thank you Kelly Rimmer for writing another book that required about 100 boxes of kleenex for the aftermath!

Thank you to Graydon House for an advance copy. All opinions are my own.

Jade says

I had to wait a few days after I finished this one to write a review. My feelings were so mixed I wanted to give them time to straighten themselves out and see if they went more towards yay or towards nay. I'm still confused so I'm going to explain why right here. I've read so many WW2 related novels, most based on fact or at least somewhat true to what may have happened during that time, so I sometimes feel some writers just rehash overdone storylines or, worse, overlook historical events for the sake of a storyline rather than integrity. When it comes to those aspects Kelly Rimmer was pretty much on track in her novel: the storyline is quite original in terms of where and when it takes place, and she also seems to have stuck very close to historical accuracy. I grew up with my stepfather's family who were forcibly removed from their homes in Poland in 1940 and sent to Siberian concentration camps before being released and sent off as refugees with no home, and no country to call their own anymore, so a lack of historical accuracy would have made me stop reading the book.

I also liked the narrative style, with the two separate voices: Alina's voice recounting her life and the events she lived through in Poland after the German invasion, and Alice's present day voice as she navigates through her own life and then an unexpected trip to Poland. Kelly Rimmer is also a great writer, and she creates a wonderful vision of the little town in Poland, life under occupation, and also Polish farm life.

So why are my feelings so mixed? It was all just too easy, and fell into place so well. Just so predictable and slightly unbelievable too. So much of the story is based on the romance between Alina and her boyfriend Tomasz, that it actually becomes repetitive and slightly boring. Alina is portrayed as a hero when to me she

is spoiled and scared of everything. Alice is even worse, I wanted to shake her several times and tell her to get out of her own head for a moment, put down the glass of whatever alcohol she was imbibing and pull herself together. So, as you can probably gather I wasn't a fan of the characters really... And someone should have addressed the way alcohol is used as a crutch in the novel, because Alice definitely has a problem and no one seems to have an issue with it (or maybe I'm just sensitive to it having been amidst addicts all my life, I don't know).

So, all in all, there were many things about the story that irritated me, some things I liked, but I still stayed up reading it way past my bed time, because I did want to see what happened in the end, even though I kind of predicted it. I think this novel will appeal to a lot of people, I just needed something a little meatier, a little less romance, and a little more depth for myself.

If you like romance, WW2 stories, and don't mind a bit of predictability, you will probably enjoy this novel.

(Side note, as I had to mention this pet peeve of mine that really bothered me in the novel: it's "dzie? dobry" not "jen dobry". I know that is not a big issue on the grand scale of things, but for accuracy's sake the correct spelling of the Polish word should really be used.)

Thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for the advance copy!

Tamara says

5+ stars

Kelly Rimmer has once again written an amazing story, one that many times while reading I had to pause and just let the tears flow.

So much of Alina and Tomasz's story paralleled what precious little I know of my own Babcia and Dziadek's lives back in Poland during WWII - like many survivors of the Holocaust neither could bring themselves to talk about what they endured during those horrible years. So stories like *The Things We Cannot Say*, although a work of fiction give a little insight into what life may have been like, and how strong, resilient and determined the people of Poland were.

The Things We Cannot Say will be a story that sticks with me for a long time, and I know it's only February, but I have a bold prediction - *The Things We Cannot Say* will undoubtedly sit atop my 'best reads of 2019' list.

Full review to come...

Colleen says

This was historical fiction at its finest! The book centers around Alina Dziak, a 17-year-old Polish girl,

navigating through life during the occupation of Poland during WWII. Her love for her childhood sweetheart, Tomasz, endures even with all the separation and suffering at wartime. Fast forward to modern day America, and we are immersed in the life of Alice, Alina's granddaughter, who is dealing with the stresses of being a mother to a son with autism spectrum disorder. As Alina travels to Poland to uncover the secrets of her grandmother's past, I found myself unable to put this book down. *The Things We Cannot Say* was heart wrenching, terrifying, and enlightening. I absolutely recommend, especially to those who love historical fiction!

Toni Osborne says

This is an historical romance at its finest. The story centers on Alina Dziak, a young Polish girl, who had to navigate through life during the occupation of her country during WW11. "*The Things We Cannot Say*" is a heart wrenching, terrifying and enlightening.

The storyline although romantic seemed closed to historical accuracy. It is told in two movements with two narratives in alternating chapters: Alina's recounts her life and events she lived through during the war and Alice's, Alina's grand-daughter, present day voice recounts her day to day life and her trip to Poland to see what became of those cherished by Alina.

Much of this book is based on the romance between Alina and her boyfriend Tomasz. It is a bit mushy but I was in the right mind set for this kind of story so I really loved it. For those who read a lot the war time period will see the events developed long before it was written but Ms. Rimmer gave it her own spin and has provided powerful timelines that smoothly came together to conclude this sad but lovely story. By the end of the book I had my box of tissues near me....

It is a wonderful read, with its awesome twists that came from time to time to keep the tension on, making this book hard to put down. I couldn't swap the pages fast enough to see where the drama would lead. Indeed I wasn't disappointed in roller coaster story, so captivated by the level of turmoil in both stories and how that impacted the families that I stayed glued to every word..."*The Things We cannot Say*" also showcases the lengths one will go for those we love. Ms. Rimmer's has an undeniable talent to draw believable and captivating players and to place them in roles true to character. Well-done.

My thanks to the Publisher Graydon House and Netgalley's for the ARC

Sally Hepworth says

Kelly Rimmer has raised her already high bar with this unforgettable novel. It is that rare author that takes the reader so deeply into a world that you smell the smells, feel the hunger, see the devastation.

Alina and Tomasz's story is one of bravery, resilience, and the lengths we will go to for the ones we love. It felt so real to me that last night, when I finished reading, I cried for them. Not for myself, but for Alina and Tomasz. Also for the millions of people who lived this. Honestly, I have read so many books about this period that I was skeptical as to whether I could be shown anything new. I was.

If this book isn't a giant bestseller, I will eat my hat. Fans of Jodi Picoult and Kristin Hannah now have a new go-to author.

I'm so excited to see what happens to this special book

Tina Woodbury says

Review coming soon...

Stacey Ellice says

Wow! Kelly Rimmer, you have done it again! But this book was on a whole different level.

Historical fiction has always been a favourite genre of mine, but so many don't do it justice - you succeeded with flying colours! The dual timelines added a wonderful, captivating message to the overall storyline. I put it down knowing that it is so very important to honour and celebrate our history - write things down so that generations to come understand our story.

The generational differences between Alice and Alina highlighted different levels of turmoil that impact families, whether it be as violent and traumatic as war, or as emotionally draining as 21st century pressures and parenthood. We all have a story, and we all fight for a better future.

Without spoiling the story, this book encompasses love, hate, heartbreak, struggle, pressure, battles, strength, weakness, passion and much much more. Thank you Kelly for another amazing, inspiring addition to your collection.

Marilyn says

The Things We Cannot Say by Kelly Rimmer was one of my favorite books I have read about World War II and the Nazis. All my emotions were working on overdrive as I read this book. Once I started it I found it hard to put down. Kelly Rimmer brought to life the struggles and anguish the Polish families living in Poland during the course of the Nazi invasion had to endure. I have read so many books about the Holocaust and the cruelties the Jewish people, gays and gypsies faced in the camps but I was disturbed at how little I knew about how the Nazis treated the Poles.

The Things We Cannot Say alternated between present day Florida in the United States and Trzebinia, Poland during the Nazi invasion of Poland. Alice, a wife, mother, daughter and granddaughter was visiting her Babcia (grandmother in Polish) in present day Florida. Alice's 95 year old Babcia had recently had a stroke that had left her unable to speak. Alice went to the hospital with her seven-year-old autistic son Eddie (Edison). Eddie was non-verbal and used a program on his I-pad that helped him communicate with others. Babcia knew that she did not have a lot of time left before she would die and she had a very important request for Alice to do for her. As Eddie snuggled next to his Babcia she took his I-pad and with much

frustration and repetitive tries finally was successful in making Alice understand what she wanted her to do for her. Babcia's dying wish was for Alice to travel to Trzebinia, Poland.

Alina Dziak was a young fifteen year old girl living in Trzebinia, Poland during the Nazi invasion with her parents, twin brothers and her older sister and her husband. Alina and Tomasz were more than best friends. He was her soulmate and she was his. Living in the same village they met when she was nine years old but she had known since then that she would marry him someday. Even when Tomasz went to Warsaw before the Nazi invasion to study medicine she knew he would come back to her. Then the Nazis invaded Poland. Alina's world was changed drastically. On the day of the invasion, the Nazis brutally killed the mayor of her village and Tomasz's father, the doctor for her village as she stood there with the people of her village and her family and witnessed the cold hearted cruelty. Alina's twin brothers were ordered to leave their home and family and were sent to work in Germany. Her family later learned of both of their deaths. Dreaming and hoping for Tomasz's return was the one thing that forced Alina to live and go on with her life as it was. Alice's and Alina's stories come together when Alice decides to travel to Poland to grant her Babcia's dying wish. Alina's and Tomasz's story was one of ultimate love for one another, bravery and sacrifice. Their love for each other was beautiful and pure as was Alice's love for her Babcia.

This is the first book I have read by Kelly Rimmer but it will not be my last. Her style of writing allowed me to see and feel every part of this story. As I already stated, this is one of my all time favorite books of this genre I have read in a long time.. I cried and smiled throughout the book. If you are looking for a book about love, bravery, resilience, devastation and perseverance then this is the book for you. I highly recommend this book. Thank you Graydon House and Netgalley for giving me the opportunity to read *The Things We Cannot Say*. All the opinions expressed in this review are my own.

Jo says

This has been my favorite read of the past year! The story was fascinating with an original spin on WWII historical fiction. I couldn't put this book down and had many emotional moments with the characters. Fans of *The Nightingale* will love this story! I can't wait to read more from Kelly Rimmer.

Thank you Graydon House and Edelweiss -this was a beautiful book!

Good Book Fairy says

4.5

Leanne Lovegrove says

I was lucky enough to win an ARC copy of this book from the author, thanks Kelly. I loved this book. It's a moving story told across generations about the atrocities of the war that affected one particular family. It's about their survival, heartbreak, resilience and their happiness and most of all enduring love and what that really means. I cried and I never cry whilst reading. It's truly beautiful and is a story that will stay with me. I highly recommend it.

