

The names have been changed ...

Former Key West hotelier writes 'romans a clef'

Two cups on my table, Book 1
by Lura Gorman
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By Sara Matthis

Two Cups on My Table opens with a quote that dates back to the T'ang Dynasty:

"Although my neighbors are all barbarians,
and you, you are a thousand miles away,
there are always two cups on my table."

To author Lura Gorman, it means missing the tangible person but feeling his presence always. It's a fitting opening to the romance, partially set in Key West. The Key West portion comes at the end of the novel and continues in the yet-to-be-released part two of the book. Key West's role is significant. That's because it's a coded tell-all, or in the parlance of the literary types — a roman à clef. Sort of.

"It's not really about my life, but everything in there is based on something real that happened," Gorman said recently, via a telephone interview from her other home in Wellington, Florida. Key West has been her "heart home" for the past 24 years and, for a time, she was also a part owner of La Te Da.

"Definitely, part two is more Key West based," Gorman said.

Both parts one and two are sure to set Key West abuzz, and locals will be guessing the real identities of some of the characters — like "Nate" and "Tony."

The novel follows the life of Claire, presumably a character-

ization of Gorman herself. Part one deals mostly with her third marriage to a pharmaceutical corporate chief named Jake Jablonsky. Theirs is a tumultuous relationship, its start overlapping the pair's previous romantic entanglements. The author's descriptions of the budding romance were compelling, probably more so because it describes the "grown up" romance between middle-age adults rife with real life complications — divorce proceedings, his and her children, and a disapproving mother-in-law. And lots of sex, good sex according to the author, but not, readers will find, explicit sex.

Towards the end of the first novel, that relationship is deteriorating and a new one is beginning — with "Tony," a mysterious sailor who comes and goes with the wind — and Gorman promises much more on that in part two.

Gorman's publisher, Shirrel Rhoades of Absolutely Amazing eBooks, said the book is about "a modern-day Elizabeth Bennet, a woman who loves two Mr. Darcys." But it's also more than that. It's also a commentary on our times with references to what the AIDS epidemic did to Key West to the successes and setbacks of a Claire's own profession as a house "flipper" before the terminology ever existed.

"I've always had a love affair with old buildings and old houses. Everywhere I went, I found something to buy," Gorman said.

The novel is also part travelogue with beautiful descriptions of trips in the American South, France and Russia. The

characters make their homes in Indiana, upstate New York, Connecticut, Seattle, New Hampshire and, of course, Key West.

Gorman said she wrote the first draft of this book six years ago, during a summer spent in New Hampshire.

"It's not what I planned to write, but it felt right," she said. "I just hope people will pick it up and smile and laugh and cry."

Two Cups on My Table is well written, with beautiful sentence structure and good words. And, if the secondary characters seem to pop up and disappear as fully formed as genies, well that's to be expected in a book that doesn't stop — much like it's main character. If nothing else, Two Cups on My Table is a book about a woman with incredible energy that she pours into relationships, her children, homes and jetting around the world.

The second part of Two Cups on My Table will be released soon. The books are available on AbsolutelyAmazingEbooks.com or Amazon.