



Born Again

Kelly Kerney

Download now

Read Online ➔

Born Again

Kelly Kerney

Born Again Kelly Kerney

What happens when a Bible Quiz Champion takes on Darwin? Mel, a faith-filled Pentecostal, has the chance to escape Slow Rapids, Indiana, by attending academic summer camp. The only catch? She has to read forbidden tomes like *The Origin of Species*. So she forges the permission slip, promising God she'll bring him a lost soul in exchange.

Mel conscientiously uses her Biblical expertise to argue Darwin's theories, but meanwhile begins to realize that her parents, her pastor, and her church aren't what she thought. She zealously battles demons every day—lascivious heathens at school, the Frederick's of Hollywood catalog, her backsliding brother and sister. But now, suddenly, she must also conquer the doubts of her own heart.

Born Again Details

Date : Published September 5th 2006 by Mariner Books (first published 2006)

ISBN : 9780156031455

Author : Kelly Kerney

Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Fiction, Young Adult, Religion, Contemporary

 [Download Born Again ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Born Again ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Born Again Kelly Kerney

From Reader Review Born Again for online ebook

Themarie says

What struck me the most about this novel is that the young protagonist, 14 year-old Mel, is far more complex than I originally expected her to be. She has been raised in a fundamentalist Pentecostal church, where she has won several Bible trivia championships and has recently pledged her virginity to God. Mel attempts to evangelize at school (and miserably fails) and she criticizes others for their sins or for attending non-fundamentalist churches.

Yet at the same time, she longs for thong underwear and fantasizes about her pastor's sex life with his wife. She secretly criticizes her church's practice of speaking in tongues. She also lives in the shadow of her older sister, a foul-mouthed single mother with an abusive boyfriend who rebels against her parents' religion yet is still moved by the church services. She bears the brunt of her mother's frustration with life and borderline emotional abuse. As she reads through The Origin of Species for a summer school project, she gradually allows herself to question the indoctrination her church has pushed on her for all her life.

Mel's story is so brutally honest that it is almost profane; it is a politically incorrect yet important insight into the secret lives of fundamentalist Christians.

Ashley says

I don't think I "got" this book. It's about an evangelical girl reading Darwin for the first time and her struggles with it. I felt that it was full of cliches and a bit over the top. There has to be a better book on this topic.

Lorna says

This is a book that every youth pastor should read and probably every Christian parent. It is the journey of a girl away from her faith in God toward neo-Darwinism. This is an eye-opener and can shed light on some of the reasons that our youth are rejecting faith as they mature. In just a few short months, the young lady goes from being the "perfect church girl," to a "demon-possessed maniac," back to a "perfect church girl." She settles back into the church routine, doing what is expected of her, but her faith is all but dead. So, from the outside, with only a few crazy outbursts that could be mistaken for common teen angst, it doesn't appear that anything has changed. But everything has changed. The discovery is in the internal dialogue. It is disturbing and sad.

I give it 3 stars, because I read it to find out what happened, not because it was particularly well-written. The theme intrigued me enough to read through all of the profanity, which I admit was necessary to make it real. Unless you are weak in your own faith and ignorant of apologetics, this book shouldn't shake your own faith. But, if you are weak in faith and feel inadequate regarding the faith/science issues, you may want to steer clear.

I would NOT recommend this to your teens, unless read aloud as a family and used as a discussion starter,

which I am not brave enough to do.

Marvin says

Narrated by a bright, 14-year-old girl who's grown up in a Pentecostal family in Indiana with an older brother & sister who've both gone astray, while she's a model Christian & Bible Quiz Champion who has thoroughly absorbed the teachings of her church & family but is beginning to struggle with them. She has been accepted into a summer academic camp for which she's supposed to read Darwin's Origin of the Species. She's curious about it even though it's on a list of her church's banned books, so she reads it surreptitiously & makes notes after each chapter (recorded here) in which she weighs Darwin against the Bible. Interestingly, she does so thoughtfully but generally finds Darwin, not the Bible, wanting. As a reader, I kept waiting for the light to go on & for her to reject her teachings, but to the author's great credit, it's never that simple. The writing's not great, but since it's narrated by a 14-year-old girl, the voice feels appropriate & authentic (the author, only 26 herself, grew up in a Pentecostal background), & the depth & complexity of the characters & the author's respect for them is impressive.

Colette says

A good concept, but there was WAY too much going on behind the main plot: ex-alcoholic father! schizo mother! a sister who's a teenage mother! anarchist brother! Pick one and move on and leave the rest for another novel.

Beth says

This turned out to be a darker, more complex book than I had thought the first time I picked it up at Room of One's Own bookstore in Madison, Wisconsin. It turns out not to be a young adult book, at least not in the classic sense. It's a book about a teenage girl told from her perspective, but its themes are in some ways more adult--religious/faith crises, when parents lie to control their kids, when churches lie to control their members (!), etc. I certainly think older teens who question adult authorities would find satisfaction in this book. The writing is strong, and the characters are complex throughout (well, except perhaps the preacher). And there's not much of a happy ending--more of a dangling, fill-in-the-blank kind of ending. A fascinating first novel.

Jaylia3 says

Oh, this is a beautifully written novel. Sometimes I would leave my bookmark back a page or two so I could reread particularly gorgeous passages. I think this is so far Kelly Kerney's only book and I hope she writes more. Mel, a young evangelical teenager, goes from faith and conviction to reflection, expanding awareness and doubt. The Origin of Species is assigned reading for Mel's invitation-only academic camp, but she knows her parents and God would not approve. Mel hides the book from her parents and bargains with God--she'll bring her best friend Beth to the church play so she can be saved (Mel wants to see Beth in heaven anyway). One book for one soul. Plus, since Mel knows her Bible inside and out(she's the Bible Quiz Champion), she decides she should read Darwin to disprove him. The characters, especially Mel's mixed-

belief family, and settings, including Mammoth Cave and the vaguely sinister chemical factory where her brother works, all serve the story well. This is a wonderful book-artistic, intelligent and compassionate

Amanda Scaramella says

A good premise, but horribly executed. It spins out of control with the family's multiple issues and abandons the original concept of main character challenging her religious beliefs. Towards the end, I merely skimmed through, hoping to see it improve, which it didn't.

Not a book I plan to keep for my library.

Jordan says

An engaging read, but with many stones left unturned.

How does Melanie reconcile her encyclopedic knowledge of the Bible with her newfound knowledge of her *family*, as well as evolution? Why doesn't she explore her mother's psychosis further, or examine it with her shrewd scientific lens rather than her God goggles? Does everyone get a free pass from Melanie for all of the shit they bring into her life because of the Jesus thing, even though Melanie's faith is shaken?

The ending of this book is murky. And not in an intentional-mystical-I-want-a-Pulitzer way, but in a sloppy one.

Buy this title from Powell's Books.

Lara Abdallah says

One of the most messed up things I have ever read. I can't believe I wasted my time with this book.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Jocelyn Pearce for TeensReadToo.com

Starting this book, I wasn't sure what to expect. It deals with religion, so I thought it might be preachy. It talks about Darwin, so I was expecting some strong opinions on the subject--everyone has them. BORN AGAIN is Kelly Kerney's first novel, so I had no expectations as to the writing. In the quote on the back cover, Mel (the main character) talks about using the Bible to prove Darwin wrong. I, personally, am not a religious person and believe Darwin had the right idea, so I wasn't sure I'd be able to enjoy this book.

Wow, was I ever wrong. This book deals wonderfully with the admittedly heavy topics of both Darwinian science and religion (Mel belongs to an Evangelical Pentecostal family), without being at all preachy. Kerney isn't trying to convince the reader of anything; she is only showing one girl's search for the truth, and

in that she raises some thought-provoking questions about science, religion, and life.

When the novel begins, Mel is an enthusiastic, religious, and smart teenager. She not only wants to do what's right in her own life, she wants to save everyone else, too. She believes every word from Pastor Lyle's mouth as if it came from God himself (which she believes it does). She would never dream of going against what the church and her parents teach her...Right?

When Mel receives a scholarship to academic summer camp, with that comes a reading list. She isn't sure that Pastor Lyle would approve of some of the books on it, like *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*, but they're not on the "blasphemy list," so she reads most of the books.

And then she comes to Charles Darwin's *THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES*. She knows that her family and church would certainly not approve of her reading this. Secretly, she borrows a copy from her best friend, Beth, and starts to read. At first, Mel is determined to use the Bible to prove Darwin wrong. She's sure it can be done.

However, as she reads, what Darwin says begins to make sense. This, coupled with some discoveries about the past of her own family, has her doubting some of what she's been told. If what her parents have told her about their own lives is a lie, then who knows what else is a lie? Mel also finds that Darwin and God don't have to be mutually exclusive. This is an idea that has never occurred to her; this is not what she has been taught. Mel's beliefs are being challenged, and now she has to figure out exactly what she believes before she can defend or disprove anything.

BORN AGAIN is a fascinating and brilliantly written look inside the Christian fundamentalism that is so prevalent in America today. It is a thought-provoking story about one girl, but it addresses so much more than just what Mel is dealing with. The front cover blurb on the book says that *BORN AGAIN* is "enough to make an atheist pray--that this is not America's future," speaking of the Christian fundamentalism addressed in the book. It's true; these people are so sure of their beliefs and so extreme that it is a little scary at times. As Christian fundamentalism seems to become ever more popular in America, this book is a must-read.

Jeff says

This book disgusts me. Boring, bloated, inconsequential, and absolutely wretched with shamefully cheap symbolism, this is a book that I'd hesitate to burn for fear of the flames. What if smoke or ashes from the book infiltrated my pores and sinuses? What if its shittiness became a part of me?

John says

To say I'm in two minds about this book would be a gross understatement. I'm in about seventeen minds about it.

Mel, aged 14, is the thoroughly indoctrinated youngest child in a fundagelical family. The eldest, Jared, has broken the bonds of the indoctrination, although he still occupies the basement of the family home. Mel's big sister Kyle has in a way broken those same bonds, in that she's living in sin with the periodically violent Lance and has borne his child; even so, she's swallowed the Kool-Aid. As has Mel herself -- she keeps getting in trouble at school through priggishly trying to force her extreme religious notions about morality

onto the other kids. Besides, she's a Bible Quiz champion.

But then Mel gets a scholarship to an academic summer camp, and discovers that one of the books on the recommended-reading list is Darwin's *Origin of Species*. So she does a deal with God, convinced He'll think it's okay for her to read the Satanic text if she (a) does so in order to understand and thereby destroy Darwin's arguments and (b) saves the soul of her best friend Beth by convincing her to attend the church's annual play.

There's very much more to the plot than this -- such as Mel's discovery that, for all her parents' current ostentatious piety, they were no great saints in their younger lives -- but that's the gist of it.

Kerney is a good stylist, and she had me laughing aloud quite a few times as Mel recounted her egregious errors in social skills, her misapprehensions about the nature of good and evil and reality, her attempts to keep hidden her obsession with sex. The hilarity was much needed as I read the book, because really the underlying message is very depressing. Kerney is at pains to tell us at the outset that, even though she was reared in a Pentecostal fundamentalist family, the novel is in no way autobiographical. That said, I think we can assume with confidence that its portrayal of the milieu of fundamentalist families in the US Midwest is reasonably accurate, complete with its love of aggressive ignorance, its detestation of rationality or anything else that might threaten the bedrock of reality-denying faith, its worship of authority for authority's sake (because Pat Robertson is so obviously the voice of God), and so on. That people can live in such a godforsaken state (yes I *did* see what I did there) of willful self-delusion and regard it as *virtuous* actually brings tears to my eyes. I assume this was Kerney's intent: to open those same eyes of people like me to the way that others around us are thinking.

I sympathized with poor Mel as she worked her way from a position of cast-iron certainty that everything her pastor said was gospel (did it again) to the realization that Darwin might be talking a heck of a lot of sense in her clandestinely read copy of *Origin of Species*. I liked her voice, which was very engaging and pulled me through the book's several longueurs.

Where I was disappointed was in the creationist arguments that the book presents. I'd expected that Kerney would develop some humdinger creationist points that I'd have to think hard to refute, but in fact all Mel produces -- or her pastor and parents produce -- is the same old same old, with the Second Law of Thermodynamics taking front and center position. If this is the best that the evangelical creationists can come up with, then (again) it's depressing.

I think this is probably an important novel, and I'm very glad that I read it. I'm not so sure that everyone will enjoy it, and I'm not even 100% certain that I did so myself. But in order to try to get our society functional, if that's even possible, we have to make the effort to understand how the profoundly irrational amongst us *think*, and I'd say that *Born Again* is a considerable -- and often very funny -- aid in exactly this.

Az says

the average academic will wince while reading this book. why? because it's in the voice of a fourteen year-old who belongs to a strict pentecostal church. they believe in their own salvation right alongside pat robertson.

however, the central character is too smart to buy all of it. oh, she buys plenty of it, but you'll find yourself cheering when she discusses contradiction between scripture and the real world. trouble is, she's only got

about half a theory. her scope is too limited to understand all of what she parrots. and that's sad.

a good book makes you feel, right? well, this one will do it. my major critique is that those of us who are personal familiar with some of the arguments presented in the text on the side of conservative christianity may have feelings that lead us to throw this book against a wall instead of finishing it.

i did finish it, for the record. because i was hoping for something to happen and had to see if it actually did. it didn't.

Vanessa says

I'd read one of Kerney's other books and liked it well enough to try this. Seeing as I lived in northern Indiana and was raised in a fundamentalist church, I figured I'd identify with some of the situations. And to be sure, I did, and those parts were funny and true. But that was useful for about a chapter or two. The story wasn't carried by it. There was no subtlety to the plot: I could see each melodramatic point and each analogy, and it felt labored. I was battered by two-dimensional characters, who circled each other as uselessly as a child's mobile. The mother was particularly poorly-done, with three (very badly-rendered) tropes at once: abused, OCD, saved in the most over-the-top way. I was bored halfway through, and by the end, I honestly didn't care what happened to Mel's book, knowledge, or life.
