

Retribution

by Beverley Elphick

Imagine if your beloved child was snatched away almost from under your very nose. What would you do? To what lengths would you go to recover her? That was the dilemma facing Esther Coad in Elphick's 'Retribution', the second in a trilogy which began with 'Three Round Towers'.

With factual snippets from local newspapers of the time and historical documents lending context, Retribution takes us once more to 18th century Lewes. The country is suffering the ravages of the war with France and Spain. Unscrupulous press gangs leave women unsupported, struggling with food shortages and rampant disease as their menfolk are forced onto the King's ships. In the midst of this we find Esther and the child Beth safely and happily settled with her patrons, gentleman farmer John Elwood and his young wife Cecilia, and looking forward to her imminent wedding with Wilf. This idyll, however, is short-lived.

Under the guidance of well-respected local physician Dr Grieve, Esther hones her nursing skills and continues her training as a midwife. Unconscious of the fact that these abilities will almost certainly save her life in a sinister turn of fate, Esther is determined to master

poetry prose & illustration

them so as to help poorer women in the neighbourhood who cannot afford the doctor's ministrations.

But when her vicious aunt, a notorious smuggler, reappears seeking vengeance having escaped from prison, Esther's dreams are shattered.

She is catapulted into a nightmare world in which everything she holds dear has been wrested from her and

in which her resilience and resourcefulness are stretched to the absolute limit. Will she regain the security of home she has worked so hard to achieve or will she be cast adrift to an uncertain future?

Beverley Elphick has captured a fragment of history and embellished it with a spirited heroine and a lively storyline. A real page-turner that had me drawn in right to the end.

Retribution is available from Sussex Stationers in Lewes, by order from your local bookstore, from www.troubador.co.uk or from Amazon. For more details visit www.beverleyelphick.com where future book signing events will be posted as the covid situation eases.

