

About the Author



K. D. Kragen

K. D. Kragen is a freelance philosopher, writer, editor and homemaker, who lives on Bainbridge Island, Washington, with his wife, Janet (writer and educator).

Mr. Kragen is also the author of *The KillWare Chronicles*, a two-novel compendium of *KillWare* and *The Wastes*, also available from ArcheBooks Publishing.

You can visit K. D. Kragen at either kdkragen.com, killware.com or Plagueman.com.

ArcheBooks Publishing
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Plagueman

The Conflict Between The Mystical And The Barbarian In All Of Us

Lt. Kierkive was a Kipchak Tartar warrior in the army of the Western Mongol Horde. Theresa was a beautiful young girl from Siena, Italy, preparing to take her vows as a nun in the Dominican order. Their lives cross in the mid-14th century, as the Black Death begins its sweep westward into Europe. Pope Clement VI sits on the papal throne in Avignon, France, surrounded by the cunning and conniving College of Cardinals and the secular Court of King Charles IV. It is a time of desperation and madness.

For Theresa, Kierkive is a soul in need of compassion, mercy and salvation; yet at the same time this mysterious stranger from the east stirs within her passions of which she dare not speak. To him, she is an angel of mercy, opening his barbarian's heart and helping him discover the true meaning of love and sacrifice.



"K. D. Kragen is incredible—drawing his reader inside medieval bedlam. He has an intimacy with all of the characters in this classic tale. I felt transported to the colorful, yet bleak 14th century world, to see and sense the devastating plague, to witness barbarians leaving their prey stripped of dignity and will. How amazing that love could flourish amidst so much chaos—to see the spark of mystic spirit arise in the "Plagueman." Kragen has an instinctive ability to understand our past and put the correct language and elements into his narrative, to serve up to us the succulent suspension of disbelief."

Venera Di Bella Barles
Author of *They Was Holdin' Hands*

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Excerpt...

Kierkive felt a sword blade glance off his shoulder. Fuccini stumbled back. The dark shape raced past out into the corridor.

"Get him!" yelled Fuccini.

Ignoring the blood running down his arm, Kierkive lunged, caught the fleeing soldier's tunic. An instant later he had the man disarmed and held his own sword at the soldier's throat.

"Please," the man sputtered. "You can have them. In there. All yours. Just let me go. I—" the man's voice gurgled as Kierkive pressed the sword harder into his windpipe, cutting into him. "Pleassse, I, I—"

Again the visions were more vivid than ever. Kierkive pulled the trembling, half-drunk soldier to his feet, and pushed him into the chamber ahead of him. "Show-ed us!"

Fuccini grabbed a wall torch and followed.

The man stumbled on the muddy floor of the dungeon, crawled ahead to the stool and grabbed the candle. Raising on unsteady legs, candle in hand, he led Fuccini and Kierkive through a short low-arched tunnel and a second door.

The sounds of weeping met them as they entered the large circular, high-domed cell. In the middle was a cage, its massive iron bars jagged with rust and age. Hung some ten feet over their heads, naked arms and legs sprouted from it—the women were packed in so tightly their limbs stretched out through the bars on all sides as if trapped in there were a single mutated human form.

"It is Kierkive!" someone gasped, and others began to cry out: "Mercy!" "Save us!" "Mother Mary, mercy, Theresa, your man has come for us!"