

Homegrown vampire novel on shelves

By Josephine Mah
Staff writer

It's three days after Halloween and Stony Plain author Erika Knudsen still has vampires on the brain.

The Stony plain resident has written and published her first book on vampires entitled *Beyond the Threshold of Death*.

The fictitious novel centres around the heroine, Deirdra O'Dea, a modern-day vampire. Split into two sections, the first part of the novel is set in old world Ireland. It's 1795 and the young Deirdra has fallen ill.

Her father unknowingly hires a vampire named Mylana to care for his sickly daughter. The two become fast friends and Mylana, unable to watch her friend's health deteriorate, offers her the immortality of being a vampire. Part two is set in modern day. An "ancient blood god" has risen to power and sets out to ultimately kill every living vampire. The novel is really about Deirdra's struggle to survive, said Knudsen.

The novel started out as a short story Knudsen wrote in response to a request by a friend. "It became its own entity," Knudsen, a hairdresser by day, said. "I didn't set out to write a book." Researching the history of Ireland was difficult but really makes a difference in the details of the novel, Knudsen said.

"You want it to be as real as it can be so the readers can envelop themselves in it. It makes it a bit more realistic."

The vampire genre has always intrigued Knudsen and the novel is a natural extension of that interest.

"I just find it very fascinating. It's interesting to imagine what it's like to be immortal. It's kind of fun in general."

The novel took five years to complete. Knudsen ran into some trouble when trying to find a publisher. Several companies read the manuscript, liked it, but were too busy to print the novel. She decided to take the matter into her own hands and started a business called Eris Publishing. The book was printed by a local print shop. The first 200 books were made available on Tuesday. Knudsen Kristi Bradbury, created the art on the cover.

There is a sequel already in the works.

Beyond the Threshold of Death includes one chapter of the next novel, *Resurrected*.

The novel is not for children, Knudsen warns, but more for older teens and adults.

The book is available at the Story Teller in Stony Plain at The Sanctuary on Whyte Avenue in Edmonton.