

BRINGING NEW LIFE

By *ELIZABETH LOVEGROVE*

THE WITNESS

Kim Thatcher, an administrator, who is pacing the halls eagerly awaiting the birth of her first children — twins! Her personality trait is a *convincing and personable manner*, and her source of strength is *her love for Sarah and their unborn children*.

OTHER CHARACTERS

- ⊙ *Sarah O'Brien*, Kim's partner. She's 36 weeks pregnant, and is in the process of having her labour induced after a difficult twin pregnancy.
- ⊙ *Sunita Desai*, Sarah's midwife, who has just started working at Peventry and is still getting used to some of the ways the systems differ from her last hospital
- ⊙ *Alfred Johnson*, an old man who works as a volunteer serving drinks and bacon sandwiches in the hospital cafe. He's been here for decades and knows everyone, though his memory's not what it once was and he gets a bit confused sometimes.
- ⊙ *Dr Julia Ellingham*, obstetric consultant and fertility specialist, who oversaw Sarah and Kim's IVF procedure, and has been the main physician supervising Sarah's pregnancy.

LOCATION AND ERA

Present day, Peventry University Hospital. A large hospital associated with the local university where various health professionals are trained. The hospital is made up of an assortment of buildings of different eras, attached to each other seemingly at random. There are confusing walkways and staircases, and the numbering of the floors doesn't always make sense where different buildings have been incorporated into each other. A brand new research wing has been

under construction for several years, but is mired in bureaucratic delays and financial shortfalls.

OTHER LOCATIONS

- ⊙ *The maternity ward* is in the oldest part of the hospital, originally a 16th century manor house, which was refitted early last century, and only occasionally refurbished since. The decor is a mix of wood panelling, carved stone, flimsy partitions and chipped paint.
- ⊙ *The fertility lab* is the only part of the new research wing to be completed, after a substantial donation from a mystery donor. It's modern and high tech, but surrounded by partially completed building sites.
- ⊙ *The hospital cafe* is a large, bland space with wobbly tables and squeaky chairs, on the first floor of a 1960s concrete block. Its walls are papered with layers of posters about public health issues, medical union business, patient support groups, etc. Some of the posters are seriously out of date, and it seems likely that if you peeled away the layers you could go back through the entire life of the cafe.
- ⊙ *The hospital chapel* used to be the private chapel of the original manor house. It's dark and creepy and there's a crypt below it.

CARDS

- ⊙ A Bizzarerie
- ⊙ Warped Bodies

BRINGING NEW LIFE: SAMPLE CLUES

- ⊙ Sarah's maternity notes contain scribbles which look like no human language.
- ⊙ A newborn set of twins with extremely large heads.
- ⊙ A handwritten poster on the café wall which asks 'Do you have any information about the Peventry family who lived in the manor until 1914?'
- ⊙ A chiller cabinet of test tubes labelled with odd symbols.
- ⊙ Midwives never stay working in the Peventry Maternity Ward for very long.
- ⊙ A strong, acrid scent wafting out of a hurriedly closed door.
- ⊙ Partners are discouraged from attending births at Peventry.
- ⊙ Many of the staff members working in the hospital were born there.
- ⊙ The Peventry family tombs in the crypt under the chapel have an unusual number of twins, buried together, although in most cases one died very young and the other very old.
- ⊙ Strange patterns in bricks in a half-completed building.