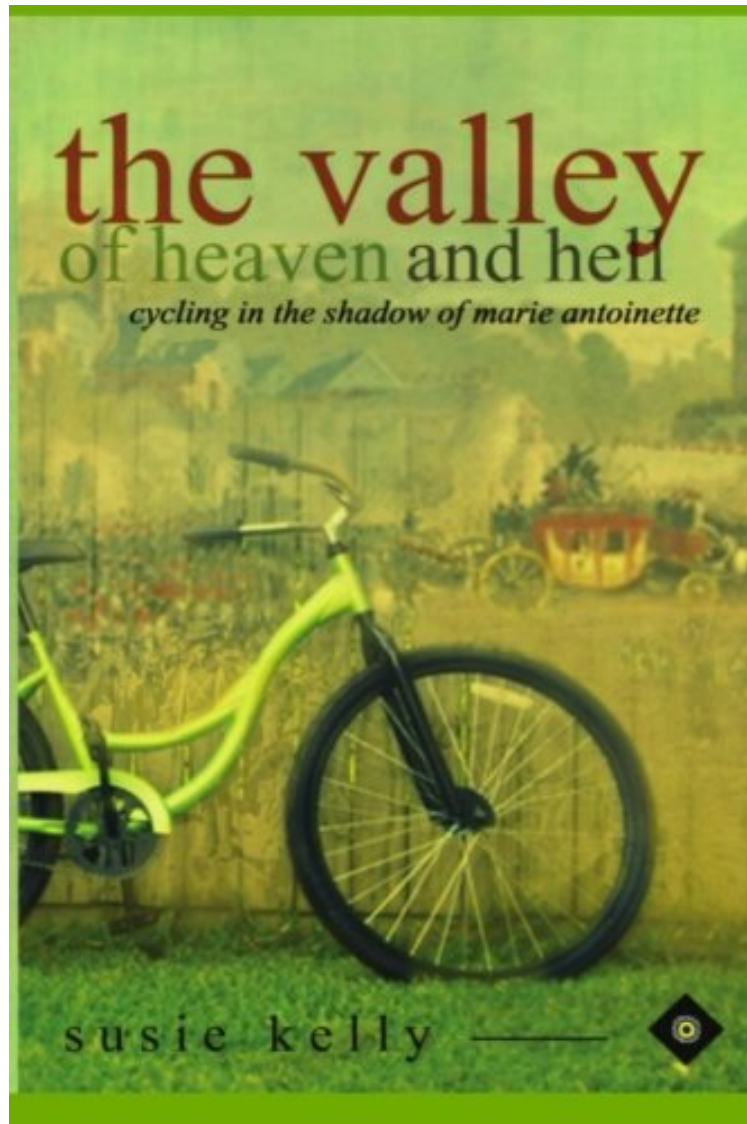


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## The Valley Of Heaven And Hell - Cycling In The Shadow Of Marie Antoinette

*Susie Kelly*

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**Susie Kelly : The Valley Of Heaven And Hell - Cycling In The Shadow Of Marie Antoinette** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Valley Of Heaven And Hell - Cycling In The Shadow Of Marie Antoinette:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Get on yer bike!By JosephI wanted to give this 4.5 stars, but that wasn't an option. Simply, I really enjoyed this book. Susie Kelly is erudite, opinionated, funny and warm-hearted. She

and her husband experience (and survive) many experiences: some horrific, some plain irritating, some hilarious, many just wonderful. The people they meet can be placed on the same spectrum. I want to read more books by this author. I'm surprised she doesn't have an entry in Wikipedia. Many less worthy people do. Pity. As a side note - from time to time in this book, Kelly comments on the awful experiences she endured in Catholic school. She's clearly disenchanted with the Church. She writes that she hesitates entering a Catholic church because of the uncomfortable associations it brings. However, in two situations that she describes as 'epiphanies' she enters a Catholic church and is overcome with emotion. She puts this down to the peacefulness or beauty of the particular church she's in. She makes it very clear it has nothing to do with Christianity. "I didn't want to pray a rosary, or go to mass or read the Bible from cover to cover," she writes about her second 'epiphany.' I find this odd that somebody as clever as she doesn't connect the feelings she experiences in these places with the reason these places exist. I am a Catholic and so understand that Christ is physically present in these churches and I cannot help but feel certain that has some bearing on what she felt in those places. To be fair, later in the book she analyses her appreciation for the sumptuous beauty of Saint Chappelle church but her disgust with the sumptuousness of Versailles Palace. She concludes, "One was built for the glory of God and one for the glorification of power."

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. I ENJOYED THIS LITTLE TALE

By FFI Guy This has been an eye opening book for me. This is not one of Rick Steve's famous travels around France, no, this is a story for people like you and me, that are just regular people. This book is written by someone who looks at the world around her, not with Rose colored glasses but what I call Real World Glasses. I have always been interested in French history. This book brought to light the life and experiences, both on a present day bike tour and the long forgotten travels of a King and Queen who lost everything. I thoroughly enjoyed this one.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Valley of Heaven and Hell

By Customer I was browsing on my kindle for my next book to read. I checked the books of Bill Bryson, but have read most of what I wanted to of his. I had already read two of Ms. Kelly's books and was confident that I would enjoy this one. Not only was the book very entertaining but she provided many very interesting facts in the lives and demise of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. She encounters countless war memorials during her trip. Her descriptions of the horrors and destruction of the multiple wars France has been involved in are touching/saddening/depressing. Her story encompasses all the aspects of her, and her husband's, cycling trip and was a very good read. I'm looking forward to the next book of hers that I will read.

In three weeks Susie cycles 500 kilometres through a little-documented area of France that is idyllic cycling territory, dining sometimes in luxury and often on weird makeshift meals in her tent. Along the way there are traumas, tantrums, epiphanies, occasional matrimonial disagreements and more than one glass of champagne. Susie and Terry follow the identical route of Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI when they tried to escape the Revolution, and their journey back to their grisly executions. From Versailles, across Paris and through the Marne valley, Susie wobbles along behind her husband, visiting battlefields of WW1 and the vineyards and cellars of the Champagne region. Tens of thousands of readers have already discovered the joys of accompanying Susie on her past adventures. These include *Best Foot Forward* (Bantam 2003), a 900km solo walk from La Rochelle to Geneva, and *A Perfect Circle* (Bantam 2006), a 10,000 kilometre drive around the perimeter of France. 'It is unlikely that any other cyclist could be less competent than the author, nor be so unsuited to wearing skin-tight Lycra.' Susie Kelly "I've bought other books by Susie Kelly before. Like the best travel writers, I find that time passes quickly in her company. When it's funny it's laugh-out-loud funny, and when it's sad it is heart-breaking." "This book manages to combine history, humor and the best of travel writing all in one. I loved it!" "So vividly written that you can almost feel the author's sunburn!" "Funny, touching, instructive and a darn good tourist guide." "This book proved a terrific find! A seamless blend of information, entertainment, out loud guffaw inducement, and thought-provocation, Ms Kelly has the joyous knack of entwining story telling with enlightening education."

"There are a handful of authors who achieve that elusive trick of making you laugh out loud. For me it's James Herriot, Bill Bryson and Susie Kelly." *French Entrée Magazine*

About the Author Born a Londoner, Susie spent most of the first 25 years of her life in Kenya. In 2014, her memoir *I Wish I Could Say I Was Sorry* about an abusive childhood growing up in post-war London and Kenya, was a US digital bestseller. She now lives in south-west France with her husband and assorted animals. She believes that her explosive temper is a legacy from her Irish-American grandfather, but has no idea who to blame for her incompetence as a housewife. Susie Kelly is the Patron of the 2015 Charroux International Literary Festival.