



Empire Rising: A Novel

Thomas Kelly

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A Novel of High-Stakes Romance and Betrayal, Set During the Race to Finish the World's Tallest Building

In *Empire Rising*, his extraordinary third book, Thomas Kelly tells a story of love and work, of intrigue and jealousy, with the narrative verve that led the *Village Voice*'s reviewer to dub him "Dostoevsky with a hard hat and lead pipe."

As the novel opens, it is 1930—the Depression—and ground has just been broken for the Empire State Building. One of the thousands of men erecting the building high above the city is Michael Briody, an Irish immigrant torn between his desire to make a new life in America and his pledge to gather money and arms for the Irish republican cause. When he meets Grace Masterson, an alluring artist who is depicting the great skyscraper's ascent from her houseboat on the East River, Briody's life turns exhilarating—and dangerous, for Grace is also a paramour of Johnny Farrell, Mayor Jimmy Walker's liaison with Tammany Hall and the underworld. Their heartbreakingly love story—which takes place both in the immigrant neighborhoods of the Bronx and amid the swanky nightlife of the '21' Club—is also a chronicle of the city's rough passage from a working-class enclave to a world-class metropolis, and a vivid reimagining of the conflict that pitted the Tammany Hall political machine and its popular mayor against the boundlessly ambitious Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Colin Harrison, in *The New York Times Book Review*, called Kelly's *The Rackets* "A well-paced, violent thriller, [and] an elegy for the city's old Irish working class." In *Empire Rising*, Kelly takes his work to a new level: telling of the story of the people who built the "eighth wonder of the world," he makes old New York the setting for a rich and unforgettable story.

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