

Making her mark

Limehouse writer Kia Abdullah on the story behind her first book

By **LUCY WALTERS**

FROM Wharf Face of the Week to published author – it's been a busy two years for Kia Abdullah.

At the age of just 23, the computer programmer from Limehouse is attracting comparisons with *Brick Lane* writer Monica Ali after the success of her first novel *Life, Love & Assimilation*, based on the life of a young Asian Muslim girl living in Britain.

Kia, who was our Face of the Week in October 2003 while working for Marks & Spencer in Jubilee Place Mall, said: "It all started a few years ago. I wanted to write a book about my experiences growing up in east London and what it was like to live between two different cultures."

After graduating from the University of London with a first class honours degree in computer science, Kia decided it was time to put pen to paper.

"I started writing a couple of years ago in the evenings," she said. "Because I had just finished my degree I was used to not having any time to do anything so in many ways having my evenings to myself was a bit of a luxury anyway."

Kia describes her work as fact-based fiction and is already getting good feedback.

"A lot of people who have read it have said, 'is this bit true?' or, 'is that bit true?'," she said. "I had an e-mail from a girl in South Africa who said it had made her cry and it's good to be able



Plans: Kia Abdullah, a former Wharf Face of the Week, is starting her second novel after the success of her first

to affect people on that emotional level. My sisters have read it and loved it – of course, they are a bit biased.

But I was a bit worried about my parents because it covers sex and drug abuse, which are taboo subjects in our culture.

"I think the older generation will probably have a thing or two to say about it but all the best books are controversial."

Kia is flattered by comparisons with *Brick Lane* which she finds, "a bit scary".

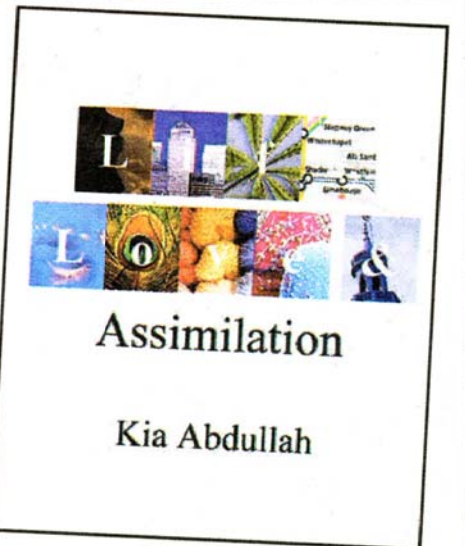
"My book is very short in comparison," she added. "Mine is based on a girl who was born here and is just as British as anyone rather than an immigrant."

Now she has been bitten by the writing bug, Kia is keen to get started on her next project.

"I would like to carry on writing and I have already got ideas for my second book," she said. "Just seeing my book up on Amazon is amazing and I'm getting great feedback."

Life, Love & Assimilation is available on Amazon. For further information visit www.kia-abdullah.com.

lucy.walters@wharf.co.uk



Cover story: Kia's first book

**LONDON CITY AIRPORT
TO MILAN (MALPENSA)**