

You me and the cat

Concerning the cat: Writers' Note

"The story I'm about to tell you began with a girl, and a cat."

In my case, just a girl, L, (although she does have several cats). Some years ago, rather early on in our friendship, she showed me a book and I said I had half a mind it didn't remind me of a project I'd been trying to write for quite a while, off and on again, but it had never seemed to come together. I mucked around with it for a bit when one day a guy about my age walked into my head and sat down on the back step of a house with a cat at his feet. And I began to write. I told L I had started writing something, 'I hope it's that piece you told me about ages ago, inspired by that book,' she said, and it seemed futile to argue.

That was in March 2015. I wrote the (very rough and hilariously unfinessed) first draft over the course of an eight week masterclass, and then tried to integrate it all a bit better; I had a public reading, reworked it a bit, did another couple of drafts; had a workshop exploration of the text, and did some more work on it, another couple of drafts. And here we are.

Is it the play I set out to write? Yes, and no. It is, in that a lot of the ideas I'd been trying to write about for a number of years are in there; but 'no,' in the sense that it's a lot bigger, darker, deeper, brighter, more beautiful, warm, and human than I had ever dreamed of it being.

I said I wrote the play for a girl, and that is true. But I also wrote it for my late grandfather, who I never heard say a bad word about anyone (though he certainly had cause to), and who always saw the best in everything and everyone. If I can share a little of his optimism, warmth, compassion, and gentleness in this play, I will be very happy indeed.

This is not a play about politics or credit-card repayments or tax returns or the change in butterfly migration patterns or quantum physics or chaos theory; it's about the grand plans we have, the things that keep us up at night, the people we fall in (or out of) love with; our best friends and people closest to us; the things we sometimes can't say to the people we want to say them to; it's about family and friends, people interacting with other people, trying to help each other keep going. Yes, there is darkness in the play, as in the world around us, but there's also five tons of love (at least), a little bit of magic, and a desire to be good – better – people. And cats.

GS

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