

The Book of Lost Things

John Connolly

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Book	The Book of Lost Things
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Content Introduction	<p>High in his attic bedroom, twelve-year-old David mourns the death of his mother, with only the books on his shelf for company. But those books have begun to whisper to him in the darkness. Angry and alone, he takes refuge in his imagination and soon finds that reality and fantasy have begun to meld. While his family falls apart around him, David is violently propelled into a world that is a strange reflection of his own -- populated by heroes and monsters and ruled by a faded king who keeps his secrets in a mysterious book, The Book of Lost Things.</p> <p>Taking readers on a vivid journey through the loss of innocence into adulthood and beyond, New York Times bestselling author John Connolly tells a dark and compelling tale that reminds us of the enduring power of stories in our lives.</p>

“Connolly turns from criminal fears to primal fears in this enchanting novel.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Deeper meaning resides in the fairy tales told to me in my childhood than in the truth that is taught by life.”

—Friedrich Schiller(1759-1805)

“Everything you can imagine is real.”

—Pablo Picasso(1881-1973)

The Book of Lost Things

“For in every adult dwells the child that was, and in every child lies the adult that will be.”

This story is gloomy and it lets me to associate with the movie : Pan’s Labyrinth. “The book of lost things” is characterized by “family love”. To love and be loved are growing together in the leading role — David’s heart. For David, it is a need and also a desire. The story recounts that David lost his mother when he was a child. His father marries another woman after his mother passes away. David doesn’t get along with it because he doesn’t fully recover from the painful and sad feeling of losing his mother. The series of complicated emotions influence David for a long time even more when his stepmother gets a baby, which makes David to feel jealous and detest his half blood brother. 「How to defeat the evil in little David’s heart?」 It’s the symbolism in this story, David crosses a strange world by death and grows gradually in travel. He experiences the responsibilities and feelings of his parents. As adults, we have to give up something; this does not mean a negative message, but to face the weight that he could handle in his own hands. This is the sorrowful reality of adults, and also the beauty of adults that they dedicate their spirit into. In this book, it describes that the single parenthood child is hit and feels helpless for love and be loved in his heart. How to destroy the evil in your mind when you are young ? This question must exist in single-parents child. What attitude do we have to the person attended our parent? And how to construct our mind when we face it? I think every single-parent has this experience, and it doesn’t find the easy answer in our youth. Nowadays, there are a lot of single-parent families, which is the result from the high divorce rate. This book “The book of lost things” reflects the portrayal of single-parent families, and makes the parents pay attention to the feeling of their children.

The idea of “The Book of Lost Things”

I am curious where did the idea for The Book of Lost Things came from? The writer says “I wanted to write about childhood and grief, about that transition from childhood to adulthood, but I suppose I knew that I would end up mining my own childhood for much of the book, and that was colored by books and stories. Thinking about it now, I delved very deeply into my past, and into my own fears as both a child and an adult. I’m surprised by what came out, and I can’t help but feel that the book gives form to a great deal of material that was sitting around in my subconscious and/or unconscious mind. I just hope that others will see echoes of themselves in it. I think that they will. After all, I know that those elemental stories that provide the backbone of the book have survived for a reason, and if

they had that kind of impact on me then they will have had a similar impact on others.” And he also says:”I think that it’s a book about childhood, or more specifically that period or moment when a child becomes very aware of the reality of the world in which he lives: that it is difficult, that it owes no debt to the souls that inhabit it, that it is likely to be filled with a certain amount of pain and loss and that, ultimately, human beings are powerless against the force of mortality. Something is lost at that moment. I don’t want to call it innocence, because I find it hard to remember when I was ever innocent, even as a child. There is always awareness in children of their own vulnerability, however deeply buried it may be, and I think that is what the great folk tales and fairy tales tap into. Yet they are also very affirmative, positive stories, in that their ultimate message is that these challenges can and must be overcome as part of the transition from childhood to adulthood. An older child could certainly read the book (and a couple have, and did enjoy it) but I think a child will read it differently from an adult, and that has been my experience of the book’s reception so far. Adults have been far more aware of the theme of loss in the book, and its final chapter will resonate more with adults than with children, I think. In fact, I’ve been very surprised by some of the interpretations that readers have drawn from it. Elements of it are quite deliberately ambiguous, so it’s not entirely unexpected, but I suppose what has pleased me most is that adults have applied their own experiences to the book, and that has affected the way in which they read it and understand it.”

And when we talk about there is a particular fascination with fairy tales and folk tales in the book, he says:” Because they’re so elemental, I suppose. I was always interested in something that the Brothers Grimm wrote in the introduction to one of their collections. They said that every society, and every age, produced their own versions of the same tales. I think I saw some similarities between the earlier tales and elements of mystery and supernatural fiction, which was why they found their way into my earlier books too. In *The Book of Lost Things*, they become the building blocks for the creation of the world into which David retreats after the death of his mother. They are the first stories, the essence of later tales, and so he returns to them and, over the course of the book, learn from the variations upon them that he himself composes in his imagination.”

Some sentences the writer wants to give the readers “When I was a boy, I saw the world through the prism of books. I read voraciously, from children's books to Ian Fleming's James Bond novels, from classics to folk tales. Books and stories were my way of understanding the world in which I lived. In a way, they still are, for while I have endured grief and loss, have fallen in love and fallen out of love, I continue to turn to books to make the world more comprehensible to me, to reassure myself that my experiences, while unique to me in their details, are common to all those who follows this path we share. I have learned from novelists, poets, playwrights and historians that what may sometimes seem beyond endurance can be endured, for others have endured it, and that when all hope seems lost there is still a reason to

believe, for others have found hope in the darkest of places. Now I too write books, and I suppose that I also try to put my experiences into words, to communicate something of what I feel about the world in the hope that it will strike a chord with others. I have written seven books: six novels and a collection of short stories and novellas, and each in its way has been a step on the road to writing this book, *The Book of Lost Things*. I have mined my childhood to write it, finding inside me the memory of the boy that I once was in order to create a book about books, a story about stories and their power to alter our existences and to shape the adults that we will become. It is, as the title suggests, a book about loss, a story about the sometimes painful transition from childhood to adulthood and all that falls away in that moment. But it is also a hopeful book, for it suggests that, in the end, it is better to live than to give up, better to grasp experience and endure the thorns than to risk having the beauty and joy that this world has to offer pass us by. I hope that you enjoy this novel, and if, like me, you were formed by books, then you may see a little of yourself within its pages for, as the dedication states, just as in every child waits the adult that will be, so too in every adult lies the child that was.”

Everything you can imagine is real

High in his attic bedroom, twelve-year-old David mourns the loss of his mother. He is angry and he is alone, with only the books on his shelf for company.

But those books have begun to whisper to him in the darkness, and as he takes refuge in the myths and fairytales so beloved of his dead mother he finds that the real world and the fantasy world have begun to meld. The Crooked Man has come, with his mocking smile and his enigmatic words: ‘Welcome, your majesty. All hail the new King.’

And as war rages across Europe, David is violently propelled into a land that is both a construct of his imagination yet frighteningly real, a strange reflection of his own world composed of myths and stories, populated by wolves and worse-than-wolves, and ruled over by a faded king who keeps his secrets in a legendary book...

This book had a lot of classical fairy tales which were in the west, and the writer rewrote the tales with his personal concept. By doing so, it became fascinating, with dark color and adult stories one by one. As the example :

“At that moment, the mirror on the wall to his right shimmered and grew transparent, and through the glass he saw the shape of a woman. She was dressed all in black and was seated on a great throne in an otherwise empty room. Her face was veiled, and her hands were covered in velvet gloves.”

“Can I not look upon the face of the one who has saved my life?”-Asked Alexander.
“I choose not to allow it, “the Lady replied. — Beauty and the Beast

“Once upon a time, there was a girl who lived on the outskirts of the forest. She was lively and bright, and she wore a red cloak, for that way if she ever went astray she could easily be found...”
— Little Red Riding Hood

“Some of the poems were not too bad, once he gave them a chance. One was about a knight — except in the poem he was called a ‘Childe’ — and his search for a dark tower and whatever secret it contained. The poem did not really seem to end properly, though. The knight reached the tower and, well, that was it. David wanted to know what was in the tower, and what happened to the knight now that he’d reached it, but the poet obviously did not think that was important. It made David wonder about the kind of people who wrote poems...”

“A faint light appeared in the topmost window of the tower, and then was blocked as a figure passed by the opening. It paused and seemed to stare down at the man and boy below, then disappeared...”
— Childe Roland

“And then I had some good fortune. Three surgeons were travelling through the forest, and I came upon them and captured them and brought them here. They told me of a salve that they had created, one that could fuse a severed hand back upon its wrist, or a leg to its torso. I made them show me what they could do. I cut the arm from one of them and the others repaired it, just as they said they could. Then I cut another in half, and his friends made him whole again. Finally, I severed the head of the third, and they fixed it again upon his neck. “And they become the first of my new prey...”
— Surgeons and Surgery

“Huh,”-said the dwarf, apparently satisfied, and started walking again.”Everybody has heard of her: ‘Ooooh, Snow White who lives with the dwarfs, eats them out of house and home. They could not even kill her right. ‘Oh yes, everybody knows about Snow White.”
“Er, kill her ? ”-Asked David.
“Poisoned apple,”said the dwarf.” Didn’t go to well. We underestimated the dose.”
— Snow White and the Dwarfs

This book also had many monsters in the Greek and Roman myths. Just like the example :

“(David) saw a shape, much larger than any bird that he had ever seen, gliding through the air, supported by the up draughts from the canyon. It had bare, almost human, legs, although its toes were strangely elongated and curved like a bird’s talons. Its arms were stretched wide

and from them hung the great folds of skin that served as its wings. Its long white hair flowed in the wind...

It had a female form : old, and with scales on its body instead of skin, yet still female for hat. He risked another look and saw the creature now descending in diminishing circles.”
“Harpies,”-said David... — Harpies

“David had never seen a troll before, although he had always been fascinated by their presence in stories. In his mind, they existed as shadowy figures that dwelt beneath bridges, testing travelers in the hope of eating them when they failed. The figures that climbed over the lip of the canyon, flaming torches in their hands, were not quite what he had accepted. They were smaller than the Woodsman, but very broad, and their skin was like that of an elephant, tough and wrinkled. Raised plates of bone, like those on the backs of some dinosaurs, ran along their spines, but their faces were similar to those of apes : very ugly apes, admittedly, and ones that seemed to be suffering from severe acne, but apes nonetheless. Each troll took up a position in front of one of the bridges and smiled unpleasantly. They had small red eyes that glowed sinisterly in the light of the torches...”
— Trolls

Reference

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