



Random Acts of Heroic Love

Danny Scheinmann

● About The Book

Can love outwit death? A heartbreaking, epic story of two lives sustained by the memory of love.

1992: Leo Deakin wakes up in a hospital somewhere in South America, his girlfriend Eleni is dead and Leo doesn't know where he is or how Eleni died. He blames himself for the tragedy and is sucked into a spiral of despair. But Leo is about to discover something which will change his life forever.

1917: Moritz Daniecki is a fugitive from a Siberian POW camp. Seven thousand kilometres over the Russian Steppes separate him from his village and his sweetheart, whose memory has kept him alive through carnage and captivity. The Great War may be over, but Moritz now faces a perilous journey across a continent riven by civil war. When Moritz finally limps back into his village to claim the hand of the woman he left behind, will she still be waiting?

A dramatic portrait of two men sustaining their lives through the memory of love. Cinematic and brimming with raw emotions, it is the magnificent and emotive debut from a remarkable new writer.

● About The Author

Danny Scheinmann is a writer, actor and storyteller. He has performed at the Royal National Theatre and in over 35 countries. His tours included storytelling in Siberia and working in an avant-garde theatre group creating shows with street children in Columbia, the Philippines, Cambodia and Vietnam. Born in Manchester, he now lives in London with his wife and three children.

● For Discussion

- Roberto says that at the quantum level everything is subtly connected, that we live in a holistic universe built on hidden connections, chaos and uncertainty. At first this preoccupation with physics might seem to be at odds with a love story – what purpose does it serve?
- “Any time not spent on love is time wasted”. Leo and Moritz certainly live their lives by this; how do you think their stories might have differed if love wasn't their motivating force? Do you agree with Tasso's quote?
- Moritz's story is told in the first person, and Leo's in the third person. Why do you think the author employed these different narrative techniques? Do they have an effect on how we emotionally engage with each of the characters?
- Moritz passes his story on to his son, Fischel, who in turn passes it on to Leo. Is Moritz a reliable narrator? Is it possible that stories change as they are passed down?
- Moritz's love story unfolds against a background of oppression and war, and Leo's love for Eleni is inseparable from his grief at her death. Do you think the tragic backdrop to their stories heightens their experience of love?
- When Moritz finally finds Lotte after his epic journey, she is engaged to be married to another man. Do you think that her love for Moritz isn't as strong as his love for her?
- Did you relate to one of the stories more than the other? How do you think the two stories inform each other?
- At the end of the book, Leo finds a tentative new love, with Hannah. Does this change the way we think about his love for Eleni?
- Moritz and Leo's stories are separated by seventy-five years. How has the way we think about romantic love changed since Moritz's day?
- How do you think that reading Moritz's letters to Lotte helped Leo to come to terms with the death of Eleni?
- Leo's notebook jottings and photographs are interspersed throughout the book. What do you think the author's intentions were in including these?
- In both stories there are elements that are based on real events – Moritz's story is based on that of Danny Scheinmann's own grandfather, and the story of Eleni and Leo is based on a tragic event in the author's past. Was this apparent when you were reading the book? Does it change the way you think about the novel?