

David Sharp has bestowed upon his public, finally, the summation of all that there is of the heart. For it is the essence of heart that Sharp has overwhelmed us with in Sveener and the Shmiel. Sharp is capable of anything where expression of the human soul is concerned. Anything but one thing that is: he cannot give us a hero, a villain, a foil, or a fool, without providing him value; without giving him a gift, a reason to exist. . . a purpose.

And how easy that must be, you say? You could try it. Start with a lonely young man trudging under the yoke of a guilty past. Throw in his simpleton younger brother who is as often the object of the young man's poison as he is the antidote. Give them a project of enormous ambition but ridiculous simplicity. Set the mix in motion and watch them. . . what? Disintegrate? Maybe. Almost.

It could go that way, but that way would rob you and me of the breadth of Sharp's gift of well, *conveyance*. He has only just begun to communicate with us. The message is barely audible, the ink just taking form. Still want to play director? Let's leave this one to the master.

As if the story were not rich enough, Sharp adds more color: a strange uncle who may or may not actually share the same temporal dimension. Either way, Sharp embodies the character long enough to bestow upon the boys a gift that will change the direction of each of their lives, and will inevitably quarter up our hearts yet again, and then again. The gift will attract false love, and betrayal, and then unlock true love, and forgiveness. The gift will also be dismissible, but still leave room for love, and betrayal, and love, and still more forgiveness.

From what spring of passion, what well of despair does one man draw such a sea of conflict? While I can't answer my own simple question, I can tell you this: He is no faker. He is no liar. What you experience in watching Sveener I believe you experience "as" David Sharp--first person singular.

And as such, with the cloak of the teller now your costume, enter as a guest. Feel free to advance on your favorite characters. Give this boy hope. Tell that girl to behave. Introduce the fool to his fancy. Engage the Enigma only to discover the Prophet. Retreat. Observe them dance.

Yes, you will be led to the heart of Sveener. Your journey will be less the traveler, more the vessel. Sharp will prove that tenderness and callousness are to a gifted storyteller but two words for the same thing, separated only by time and perspective.

I recommend Sveener and the Shmiel as a dish best enjoyed sober, and possibly alone. Sharp's imagery will provide your intoxicant. The cast your companions.

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