



Dear Tom

Tom Courtenay

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'I suppose my luck is You, Ann and Dad and more so if I could really write.' Annie Eliza Courtenay

Tom Courtenay was born in Hull in 1937 and brought up near the fish dock where his father worked. When he left home for university, his mother, Annie, wrote to him every week and when her letters became more searching and more intimate in response to Tom's unhappiness he kept every one, not knowing that after her early death they were to become his most treasured possession.

Tom has selected the best of them to go in this book and interwoven with them a portrait of what was going on in his life at the time, in the heady days of the early Sixties when successful young working-class actors were coming to the fore for the first time. Annie's letters are astonishing - wise, funny, with a natural instinct for words, but also deeply painful. She knows she's worthy of a better, more creative life, but she hasn't been given the chance.

Partly a memoir of a working-class way of life that has gone for ever, partly a powerfully moving record of the love between mother and son, partly a portrait of the artist as a young actor, *Dear Tom* is sure to excite admiration and delight in equal measure.

Dear Tom Details

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Marilyn says

TOm grew up in NZ and wrote letters to his mother and she wrote to him for all the time he lived in London and became a famous actor. The book gave be insitght in to NZ living in the 20' and 30's . Kind of boring and I did not finish it.

Jan Chapman says

Enjoyable read

Tony Robinson says

An original work of art. A beautiful book that made me laugh out loud and cry many times. Though, fave actor, Tom Courtenay is ten years older than me -all the characters he describes on the Hessle Road and Hull Fish Docks were my 'Aunts' & 'Uncles' and his days in London after leaving home to study,when his Ma wrote her letters to him, are very familiar too. Please read it - I can promise you an unexpected, authentic and fabulous treat.

Jane says

This made me laugh. It made me cry. Tom Courtenay was born 6 years after my Dad, and 3 years after my Mum, and the Hull and 'Essle Road he describes are familiar from their stories. And his sister, Ann, with her husband and two sons lived in the house next door to my family home during my early childhood - I have a teddy bear in the loft that the eldest of the boys gave me when I was born. I didn't read this for the actor autobiography aspect. I read it for the Hull, Hessle Road aspect. And it went a little way to fill the Hull-shaped gap I've been feeling recently. Including reminding me of some phrases that I haven't heard in a fair few years. Chuntering being one such example.

Tracey Wilde says

I didn't like Tom Courtenay much at the end of this. I felt that he tried to disown his family to a certain extent and that this was an attempt to make amends. I felt the relationship between his Mother and him throughout his childhood bordered on obsessional and I felt sorry for his sister and his Father. It was a bit 'Sons and Lovers' ! After he left home though he didn't really want to know. He comes over as all me, me, me ! I enjoyed the read though and a snapshot of working class Hull.

Lara says

LOVED IT. An absolute must for anyone who admires British New Wave cinema. Also, there are some cracking photos of Tom in his yooof!

Susanne says

a charming and heartwarming book.

Franziska Self fisken says

Delightful, heartwarming book about Tom Courtenay's parents and his home background. Lovely to realise that Tom himself always respected and loved his parents and sister despite moving up to the dizzy heights of stardom, and he explains why in this affectionate portrayal of a working class background in Hull in the mid-twentieth Century.

Annie says

Lovely

Bettie? says

[image error]

Jennifer says

An honest and somewhat sad memoir about the childhood and career path of British actor Tom Courtenay and the unfulfilled dreams his mother took to her grave ... this book would naturally be of great interest to someone who either admires the acting work of Tom Courtenay or has a special interest in what it felt like to grow up in the Hull region or other fishing-industry town of Northern England ca. 1940. Coming to the book with neither of these, (it was a somewhat unusual choice of the zurich book club), I admit having had to plod through at many points. It was not exactly what you'd call a page-turner. This is however, not Mr. Courtenay's fault, as he probably wrote it first and foremost for himself and to honor the memory of his mother and second for the 2 categories of people mentioned above and only third for other random persons. Still, it was good to spend some time in that rough world of Hull - life was hard in many ways for the women and the men, but the Fish Dock area also possessed an enviable cohesion. Courtenay portrays this in all of its eccentric and charming facets for readers who have the patience to stick with him.

minnie says

Loved this book when I read it a few years ago,its based around the letters his mother wrote him when he

went to London to become an actor. Tom's mother Annie had dreams of being a writer and uses the letters to express her thoughts and ideas as well as telling about the daily drudge of a working class woman from Hull. The letters are charming and this is a beautiful book.

John says

I loved this book. It affected me emotionally, I think because I identified so much with Tom, being from a happy working-class background, the first one in my family to go to university, and was very close to my mother and miss her a lot.
