

The Book of Lost Things by John Connolly
Hodder and Stoughton 2006.

A child, David, loses his mother and retreats from the trauma into books, the contents of which feed his imagination and come alive for him. When his father remarries the boy moves into his step-mother's ancestral home, and in his sadness, loss and resentment retreats ever more into himself and the world of the books that line the shelves of his room.

Then, one dramatic night, the boy leaves the actual world and enters the world of the books, their stories alive with adventure and danger. His journey back to his real family is always entertaining, occasionally very frightening, and sometimes incredibly funny.

The Book of Lost Things is a completely different genre for John Connolly, whose best selling books are usually to be found in the Crime/Thriller section of bookshops, but he shows himself to be as adept at it as in his more normal habitat.

The writing is incredibly fine, and the story is superb. I rarely laugh aloud, or am made to cry by the same book, but Connolly achieved that in this case. The description of David's loss of his mother is intensely moving, and the pain that he feels is palpable. The chapter when David encounters the seven dwarves and their house guest is as funny a take on a well-known fairy tale as you could wish to read.

The Book of Lost Things is absolutely stunning -I hope with all my heart that the publishers have an audio book of it in its entirety recorded at once.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh