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# Girl Meets Boy

'Exuberant'  
GUARDIAN

'Joyful'  
JEANETTE WINTERSON

'Clever, complex and thrilling'  
TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

## Ali Smith Girl meets boy



• THE CANONS •

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### Description :

Présentation de l'éditeur A STUNNING RETELLING BY THE AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR ALI SMITH 'Joyful' JEANETTE WINTERSON 'Pulls you in and doesn't let you go . . . bold and brilliant' JACKIE KAY 'A glorious wide-awake dream of a book . . . By the time I finished, my heart was beating and tears stood in my eyes, even as I had the biggest smile written all over my face' KIRSTY GUNN Girl meets boy. It's a story as old as time. But what happens when an old story meets a brand new set of circumstances? Ali Smith's re-mix of Ovid's most joyful metamorphosis is a story about the kind of fluidity that can't be bottled and sold. It is about girls and boys, girls and girls, love and transformation, a story of puns and doubles, reversals and revelations. Funny and fresh, poetic and political, here is a tale of change for the

Par Ali Smith  
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(Mobile ebook) Girl Meets Boy

Par Ali Smith : Girl Meets Boy before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Girl Meets Boy:

modern world. Extrait I Let me tell you about when I was a girl, our grandfather says. It is Saturday evening; we always stay at their house on Saturdays. The couch and the chairs are shoved back against the walls. The teak coffee table from the middle of the room is up under the window. The floor has been cleared for the backward and forward somersaults, the juggling with oranges and eggs, the how-to-do-a-cartwheel, how-to-stand-on-your-head, how-to-walk-on-your-hands lessons. Our grandfather holds us upside-down by the legs until we get our balance. Our grandfather worked in a circus before he met and married our grandmother. He once did headstands on top of a whole troupe of headstanders. He once walked a tightrope across the Thames. The Thames is a river in London, which is five hundred and twenty-seven miles from here, according to the mileage chart in the RAC book in among our fathers books at home. Oh, across the Thames, was it? our grandmother says. Not across the falls at Niagara? Ah, Niagara, our grandfather says. Now that was a whole other kittle of fish. It is after gymnastics and it is before Blind Date. Sometimes after gymnastics it is The Generation Game instead. Back in history The Generation Game was our mothers favourite programme, way before we were born, when she was as small as us. But our mother isnt here any more, and anyway we prefer Blind Date, where every week without fail a boy chooses a girl from three girls and a girl chooses a boy from three boys, with a screen and Cilla Black in between them each time. Then the chosen boys and girls from last weeks programme come back and talk about their blind date, which has usually been awful, and there is always excitement about whether there'll be a wedding, which is what its called before people get divorced, and to which Cilla Black will get to wear a hat. But which is Cilla Black, then, boy or girl? She doesnt seem to be either. She can look at the boys if she wants; she can go round the screen and look at the girls. She can go between the two sides of things like a magician, or a joke. The audience always laughs with delight when she does it. You're being ridiculous, Anthea, Midge says shrugging her eyes at me. Cilla Black is from the sixties, our grandmother says as if that explains everything. It is Saturday tea-time, after supper and before our bath. It is always exciting to sit in the chairs in the places they usually arent. Midge and I, one on each knee, are on our grandfathers lap and all three of us are wedged into the pushed-back armchair waiting for our grandmother to settle. She drags her own armchair closer to the electric fire. She puts her whole weight behind the coffee table and shoves it over so she can watch the football results. You dont need the sound up for that. Then she neatens the magazines on the under-rack of the table and then she sits down. Steam rises off teacups. We've got the taste of buttered toast in our mouths. At least, I assume we all have it, since we've all been eating the same toast, well, different bits of the same toast. Then I start to worry. Because what if we all taste things differently? What if each bit of toast tastes completely different? After all, the two bits Ive eaten definitely tasted a bit different even from each other. I look round the room, from head to head of each of us. Then I taste the taste in my own mouth again. So did I never tell you about the time they put me in jail for a week when I was a girl? our grandfather says. What for? I say. For saying you were a girl when you werent one, Midge says. For writing words, our grandfather says. What words? I say. NO VOTES NO GOLF, our grandfather says. They put us in jail because we wrote it into the golf green with acid, me and my friend. Whats a young girl like you wanting acid for? the chemist asked me when I went to get it. Grandad, stop it, Midge says. Whats a girl like you wanting with fifteen bottles of it? he said. I told him the truth, more fool me. I want to write words on the golf course with it, I told him and he sold me it, right enough, but then he went and told Harry Cathcart at the police station exactly whod been round buying a job lot of acid. We were proud to go to jail, though. I was proud when they came to get me. I said to them all at the police station, Im doing this because my mother cant write her name with words, never mind vote. Your great-grandmother wrote her name with Xs. X X X. Mary Isobel Gunn. And when we went on the Mud March, our grandfather says. Boy oh boy. It was called the Mud March because because why? Because of some mud, I say. Because of the mud we got all up the hems of our skirts, our grandfather says. Grandad, Midge says. Dont. You should've heard the mix of accents coming out of us all, it was like a huge flock of all the different birds, all in the sky, all singing at once. Blackbirds and chaffinches and seagulls and thrushes and starlings and swifts and peewits, imagine. From all over the country we came, from Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Huddersfield, Leeds, all the girls that worked in clothing, because thats what most of us did, textiles I mean, and from Glasgow, from Fife, even from right up here we went. Soon they were so afraid of us marching that they made brand new laws against us. They said we could only march in groups of no more than twelve of us. And each group of twelve girls had to be fifty yards away from any other group of twelve. And what do you think they threw at us for marching, what do you think they threw at us when we spoke in front of the great hordes of listening people? Eggs and oranges, I say. Mud. Tomatoes and fishheads, Midge says. And what did we throw at the Treasury, at the

Home Office, at the Houses of Parliament? he says. Fishheads, I say. I am finding the idea of throwing fishheads at official historic buildings very funny. Our grandfather tightens his hold round me. No, he says. Stones, to break the windows. Not very ladylike, Midge says from the other side of his head. Actually, Miss Midge, our grandfather says. My names not Midge, Midge says. Actually, as it happens, we were very ladylike indeed. We threw the stones in little linen bags that wed made ourselves with our own hands especially to put the stones in. Thats how ladylike we were. But never mind that. Never mind that. Listen to this. Are you listening? Are you ready? Here we go, our grandmother says. Did I never tell you about the time when I was a really important, couldnt-be-done-without part of the smuggling-out-of-the-country of Burning Lily herself, the famous Building-Burning-Girl of the North East? No, I say. No, Midge says. Well, I will then. Will I? our grandfather says. Yes, I say. Okay, Midge says. Are you sure? he says. Yes! we say together. Burning Lily, he says, was famous. She was famous for lots of things. She was a dancer, and she was very very beautiful. Always the eye for the lasses, our grandmother says with her own eyes on the television. And one day, our grandfather says, on her twenty-first birthday, the day that the beautiful (though not near as beautiful as your grandmother, obviously) the day that the beautiful Burning Lily became a fully fledged grown-up which is whats supposed to happen on the day youre twenty-one she looked in the mirror and said to herself, Ive had enough of this. Im going to change things. So she went straight out and broke a window as a birthday present to herself. Ridiculous present, Midge says. Im asking for a Mini Cooper for mine. But soon she decided that breaking windows, though it was a good start, wasnt quite enough. So she started setting fire to buildings buildings that didnt have any people in them. That worked. That got their attention. She was always being carted off to jail then. And in there, in jail, in her cell, you know what she did? What? Midge says. She just stopped eating, he says. Why? I say and as I say it I taste the toast taste again all through the inside of me. Because she was like anorexic, Midge says, and had seen too many pictures of herself in magazines. Because there wasnt anything else for her to do, our grandfather says to me over the top of Midges head. They all did it, to protest, then. Wed all have done it. Id have done it too. So would you. Well I wouldnt, Midge says. Yes you would. Youd do it too, if it was the only thing you could do. So then they made Burning Lily eat. How? I said. You cant make someone eat. By putting a tube down her throat and by putting food down the tube. Except, they put it down the wrong part of her throat, into her windpipe, by mistake, and they pumped food right into her lungs. Why? I say. Uch, Midge says. Rob, our grandmother says. They have to know, our grandfather says. Its true. It happened. And that thing with putting the tube into her windpipe had made her very very ill, so they had to let her out of the jail because she nearly died. And that would have been very bad publicity for the police and the jail and the government. But by the time Burning Lily got better theyd passed a new law which said: As soon as one of those girls has made herself better out there, and isnt going to die here in jail, on our hands, as if it was us who killed her, we can go straight back out and arrest her again. But you know what? What? I say. What? Midge says. Burning Lily kept on slipping through their fingers. She kept on getting away with it. She kept on sett... Revue de presse The great thing about stories is that they can build their own walls and then let us walk right through them. Girl Meets Boy is a joyful celebration of life in all its strange shapes, on all sides of the wall. Jeanette Winterson, The Times A spritely love story that plays on notions of gender and sexuality to exuberant effect. The Observer Smith has done a splendid job. Alongside the touching love story are some perceptive insights on the ambiguities of gender. As fanciful as it is honest and as moving as it is hilarious, this is a gorgeous story. The London Paper An ecstatic, exhilarating helter-skelter ride of a story which shows just how relevant Ovids myth of the transformative power of love is to modern readers . . . [Smith's] Midge and Anthea are jean-clad demonstrations that myths arent about exotic gods but human experience. Financial Times It is clever, complex and thrilling . . . Girl Meets Boy delights because it refuses to stop at a single metamorphosis; despite its compactness, its stories multiply and rebound exuberantly, its echoes calling to one another across the pages. The Times Literary Supplement (TLS) Ali Smith bursts from the page with her fabulous retelling of the story of Iphis and Ianthe from Ovid's Metamorphoses. Girl Meets Boy . . . pulls you in and doesn't let you go. . . . Smith's retelling is bold and brilliant containing the best sex I've read in years. One of Jackie Kays favourite books of 2007, The Observer From its arresting opening line to its exuberant ending, Girl Meets Boy is concerned with gender, love and transformation. London of Books A cheerful, sexy, disorienting take on the gender-shifting myths of Iphis . . . Smiths spare and sharp lyricism . . . are handled with glee . . . and Smiths cadences, which read like classical drama, carry the novel along beautifully. Publishers Weekly Ali Smiths Girl Meets Boy might give you the inspiration you need to seek out love . . . [A] compact, rollicking novel . . . In Smiths hands, Ovids gender-bending metamorphosis story

gets a Madison Avenue-style makeover. The San Diego Union-Tribune Ali Smiths re-mix of Ovids most joyful metamorphosis is a story about the kind of fluidity that cant be bottled and sold. Scottish Arts Council[Smith] shows us unfamiliar beauty within the mundane, as if we were children again. . . . In prose marked by harmonious opposites, shes childlike and wise, exuberant and subtle, humorously intelligent and provocatively dry. The Globe and Mail [A] witty, profound, humane paean to passionate love. . . . Highly original, audacious and lyrical, she has become a special writer. The Sunday Herald To read Ali Smith is like being borne up on the wing of a bird in flight. The Globe and Mail Ovid could hardly be a better fit for Smiths ethereal and transformative imagination. Daily Telegraph By the time I finished the book, my heart was beating and tears stood in my eyes, even as I had the biggest smile written all over my face. The Observer From the Hardcover edition.