

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018 – REVIEW – Elsie Thatchwick ****

'Dearest Elsie, if you're reading this, I'm dead. I hope you're sitting comfortably. Below is the address of your father. He's alive... I know you're probably thinking I'm a right old fanny for naw telling you sooner... but better late than never. Love Nan. PS Dinnae forget tae feed the cat.'

Armed only with an address, a pack of Jammy Dodgers and a Scottish sense of humour, Elsie heads from Glasgow to Manchester in search of her father. Two actors and 20 characters drive this fast-paced dark comedy.

[Elsie Thatchwick](#) is dramatic, human and moving piece of drama, even more so given it is [Skye Lourie](#)'s first play. The writing is humorous, poignant and sharp, moving from some gallus laugh out loud moments to genuinely moving scenes.



This is a good show dealing with an interesting subject with tenderness and humour, one that deserves a wider audience. Lourie also plays Elsie and is joined on stage by [Graeme Dalling](#), who plays a variety of characters, each one with a deft touch.

Most impressive was a Jakey character, who is convincing rather than a trite cliché of how people think a street drinker behaves. Dalling's facial reactions are realistic in the parts and he helps sell them, no easy task given how quickly he moves from one to the next. The pair only have a

handful of props but all are used to good effect while also making full use of the performance area.

None of the dialogue sounds unrealistic or false, it flows like all conversations do. Each of Elsie's relationships are given time to shine and feel believable.

I particularly liked the way Elsie's father is portrayed, in a subtle manner without any nonsense. The part could quite easily get mishandled but Lourie doesn't, much to her credit, which helps make the play a better piece. Lourie has dedicated the play to her father, Buzz, and that shows in her acting at times, but not in a bad way. The emotions on her face towards the end are genuine, or at least I felt so; you can see how much the story means to her.

The play's music also works, the songs aren't shoe-horned in but fit well with the play and its pace. I look forward to seeing more of both Dalling and Lourie and I hope she continues to write.