

q book: **ROBBIE'S STORY**

Robbie's Story: Gay Novel, Forgotten in Obscurity, Strides into the Limelight

In the mid-1980s, Stuart Carey wrote a novel no-one wanted. 'Gay novels don't sell,' he was told. He put it in a drawer, and got on with his life working for Leeds City Council, and tried to forget about it. Before long his job folded due to council cuts and he eked out a precarious living as a private therapist, with a clapped-out boiler he couldn't afford to get fixed.

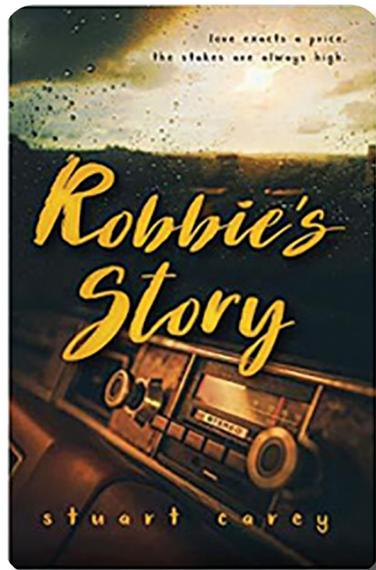
Then, a couple of years ago, he attended a 1980s event at a gay bar and someone asked him: 'What were we and what were we about in those days?'

Stuart found himself replying: 'We were hustlers and smoky cowboys, fireside tale-weavers married to chance. We were wise jesters and brazen prophets who thought we owned the world.'

That night he got out his manuscript. He felt inspired.

Stuart had heard about the new independent publisher The Conrad Press and heard it was on the lookout for new talent to nurture. Stuart got in touch with principal, James Essinger, and after the conversation decided to write the novel from scratch so that he, Stuart, could make it all he wanted it to be. Knowing that there was a strong chance it would get published made all the difference: writing a novel you think will never get published is obviously disheartening no matter how much talent you have.

So he woke up before the birds, popped on his ancient headphones and with copious amounts of Brahms and strong coffee to keep him awake, three months later he had revised his gay novel and Robbie's Story was born.



Synopsis:

Robbie Stebson is a young man in his twenties, a hopeless romantic; struggling to allow himself to love his own sex. Very nearly married, he falls for Tyrone, a young Irishman. Robbie, an enthusiastic teacher of English, is horrified that some of his pupils are being emotionally abused by a senior teacher. Robbie feels he has to make a stand; thus embroiling himself in a maelstrom of bullying, blackmail and the attempted murder of his lover. Robbie's Story tells of his dysfunctional family, friendships and the betrayals he suffers; as well as his promiscuity, trawling gay bars and clubs with a driven need. And yet throughout, there is the happy-ever-after dream he believes can never come true.

As Stuart says: *'Essentially, it's a gay love story: aching, tender, lyrical yet celebratory, and also strident and raw. Betrayals and family secrets hover like spectres. Blackmail and attempted murder are also part of the busy traffic of what I've tried to make a helter-skelter narrative.'*

Stuart continues: *'I was born in Carlisle, Cumbria, in 1958 and I've always known that I was gay. I worked for much of my life in the field of mental health and counselling. My first love was always writing. I've scribbled stories in tuppenny notebooks since I was a child and I once walked the four miles to school and back for a week: saving the bus fare to buy a paperback copy of David Copperfield. My teachers had banned me from reading it at school: I can't remember why. After I read it, I knew I wanted to be a writer.'*

The Conrad Press published 'Robbie's Story' by Stuart Carey earlier in 2019. It is available from all good bookshops and also on eBay and Amazon. ISBN 978 1911 546 1 911546436 RRP £9.99 Also available as an ebook.

Copies can also be purchased from Amazon: <https://amzn.to/2QJFsxY>

About the Author:

Stuart Carey was born in Carlisle, Cumbria, in 1958. He has spent most of his working life in Mental Health; the majority of this time in the field of counselling. He is passionate about LGBT rights, all things vintage and retro and says his idea of perfect heaven is browsing charity shops and hunting out old vinyl records. He lives in West Yorkshire with his gay partner.