

# [PDF] Save Yourself

## Kelly Braffet - pdf download free book

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### Books Details:

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### Description:

**Author One-on-One: Kelly Braffet and Owen King**

is the author of **Save Yourself: A Novel**. is the author of **Double Feature: A Novel**. They are both currently involved in many other projects, including but not limited to: **Kelly And Owen Are Married: A Novel; Whose Turn Is It To Load The Dishwasher: A One-Act Play; and Will You Please Pick Up Cat Food On Your Way Home: A Rock Opera**. In this interview, Owen and Kelly email back and forth from separate rooms of the same house to discuss **Save Yourself**.

**Owen King:** Save Yourself has three perspectives, and I suspect that the first of those perspectives, Patrick Cusimano's, is going to be the subject of fascination and argument for lots of readers. Patrick works the zombie shift at a convenience store; his father is in prison for a drunk driving accident that caused the death of a child; he's simultaneously attracted to his brother's girlfriend

and a girl in high school; and he has aggressively awful taste in music. But one of the great magic tricks of the novel is that he is so damned likeable! How did you pull that off? Where did Patrick come from?

**Kelly Braffet:** “Aggressively awful”? Have you never heard *The Dark Side of the Moon*? I love you, life partner, but I am shaking my head sadly at you. That’s right: sadly.

Anyway: I’m glad you find Patrick likeable. I always have. He’s a smart guy who grew up in a family where being smart wasn’t particularly valued, so he ends up leading a not-particularly-smart life. When we meet him, he’s just starting to realize that. Which I think we generally find sympathetic: we don’t necessarily love losers, but we love losers who try to turn their lives around. He hasn’t turned things around yet; at the beginning of the book he still has many, many more terrible decisions to make, but he’s at least realized, in large part because of his father’s accident, that the road he’s traveling isn’t going anywhere. The question is whether or not he can switch directions. He has no idea where to start, even.

Also, Patrick isn’t a callous person. He’s genuinely horrified by and ashamed of what his father has done. I tried to show that as soon as I could, so that readers knew out of the gate how damaged and vulnerable he was. It’s fair to accuse Patrick of making abysmally bad decisions, but I don’t think anyone could argue that he’s without a conscience.

**OK:** The other two perspectives in the novel belong to Verna, the younger sister of Layla, the teenager that Patrick finds himself involved with, and Caro, the girlfriend of Patrick’s not wholly unappealing, but somewhat stolid, older brother Mike. The result is a narrative that is built with remarkable intricacy and sympathy. The way these people fit together is continuously surprising and often very moving. I know that you started with Patrick. Did the shape of the story suggest the other perspectives, or did the other perspectives suggest the shape of the story?

**KB:** My initial idea was to put Patrick, who doesn’t believe in anything, into conflict with a girl from a family where belief is central. That turned out to be Layla, but as the story developed, it started to feel like telling the story from Layla’s point of view gave too much away. So I pulled back to her little sister. And the more I wrote, the more I realized that Caro needed a few chapters of her own, for the opposite reason: if she never had a chance to tell her story, if we don’t know her history and how she feels about the life she’s drifted into, then it’s hard to understand why any man in the book would find her compelling. If readers were going to buy Patrick’s friendship with Layla, some things had to remain hidden. If they were going to buy his friendship with Caro, some things had to be explained.

I will say that, throughout the book, it was a challenge to find ways to make sure that the reader knew enough, particularly with Layla, who lives quite a bit of her life outside the narration of the story. Anything we end up knowing about that life, we know because she tells either Patrick or Verna, and creating situations where that telling seemed natural was a little tricky. She’s not a person who spills her guts every five minutes.

**OK:** So, this last one is a little bit awkward, but . . . Ah . . . I’ve enjoyed this conversation so much and I love your novel . . . Would you be interested in, um, I don’t know, getting coffee, or going bike riding or something? I mean, like, meeting outside of Amazon?

**KB:** We’re out of coffee. I used the last of it this morning. Sorry.

--This text refers to the edition.

**From** Braffet's excruciatingly rendered characters and locomotive plotting make her a writer's writer, though this novel shows all the signs of a popular breakthrough. Patrick, 26, lives with his older brother, Mike, and Mike's girlfriend, Caro, in a shabby house creaking with the ghost of their father, who a year ago killed a child in a drunk-driving accident and made social pariahs of his sons. For Patrick, life is a nauseating blur of graveyard shifts, crap food, and frustrated lust for Caro. But this is a tale of two families: Layla, 17, has fully rebelled against her minister father and is now bringing younger sister Verna into the cult of goth outcasts led by faux-vampire, Charlie-Manson-in-training Justinian. Layla's sudden relationship with Patrick puts the two plots on a collision course that is gonna end ugly—but also, in Braffet's hands, beautifully. Sex is the driving force here—as power, as weapon, and as shield—and the sweaty mechanics of the few characters recall Tennessee Williams (and would look awfully good filmed in black and white). Perceptive, nervy, and with broad cross-genre appeal. --Daniel Kraus --This text refers to the edition.

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