

The Two of Us by Sheila Hancock

John Thaw, star of 'Inspector Morse', died from cancer in 2002. In 'The Two of Us' the actress Sheila Hancock records their lives both before and after they met in 1969.

John Thaw was born in Manchester, the son of a lorry driver. He had leading roles in 'Redcap' and 'The Sweeney', but it was his role as Morse that made him a household name. In 1974 he married Sheila Hancock. Sheila was a star in the TV series 'The Rag Trade' and went on to become the first female artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Their relationship was always affectionate, but sometimes difficult. Sheila describes their life together, overcoming the challenges of depression, drink and cancer (hers and his) that at times threatened their marriage.

The first part of the book describes their early lives, both professional and personal, before they met. The later chapters include excerpts from Sheila's diaries during the time leading up to and following John's death, and the book concludes with her struggle to cope with her grief as she faces life alone.

Comments from the reading group: A difficult read at times, but an inspiring tale of two lives lived to the full.