



Mind the Gap

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

When Mikey's charismatic, unsuccessful and mostly absent actor dad dies Mikey is devastated and spins into a downward spiral of alcohol, despair and self-destruction. The first person narrator of the story, Mikey's best mate, is also devastated, this time at the loss of his best friend. When he realises Mikey's desperation at not being able to remember his dad's voice he sets off on a mission to find it and give Mikey his memories back. This quest takes him from the rough, violent estate where the boys live, via the South Bank and encounters with crooked street performers, an angry agent and a vicious bully, to the depths of Embankment underground station where Mikey's dad's voice is returned to him thanks to the train announcement system.

Phil Earle has written a powerful, emotional and honest story about the destructive nature of grief and the life-saving effects of true friendship. The setting and the dialogue feel real and raw, the pace is relentless and the resolution satisfying and clever. The portrayal of Mikey, a young man unable to express his strong emotions, is heart breaking. The author brilliantly conveys the depths and complexities of the relationships, between best mates and between fathers and sons, without letting up on the urgency of the plot which has its origins in the true story of the original actor who voiced the 'Mind the Gap' announcement and his grieving widow.

This gritty novel is part of **Barrington Stoke's YA collection** and is aimed at both the 'book eater' and the 'book avoider' as described in the afterword. The tagline 'Super-readable YA' is no exaggeration and this is definitely a book to recommend to any older teens who want a short, punchy read.

Source URL (retrieved on Jun '19): <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/223/childrens-books/reviews/mind-the-gap>

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