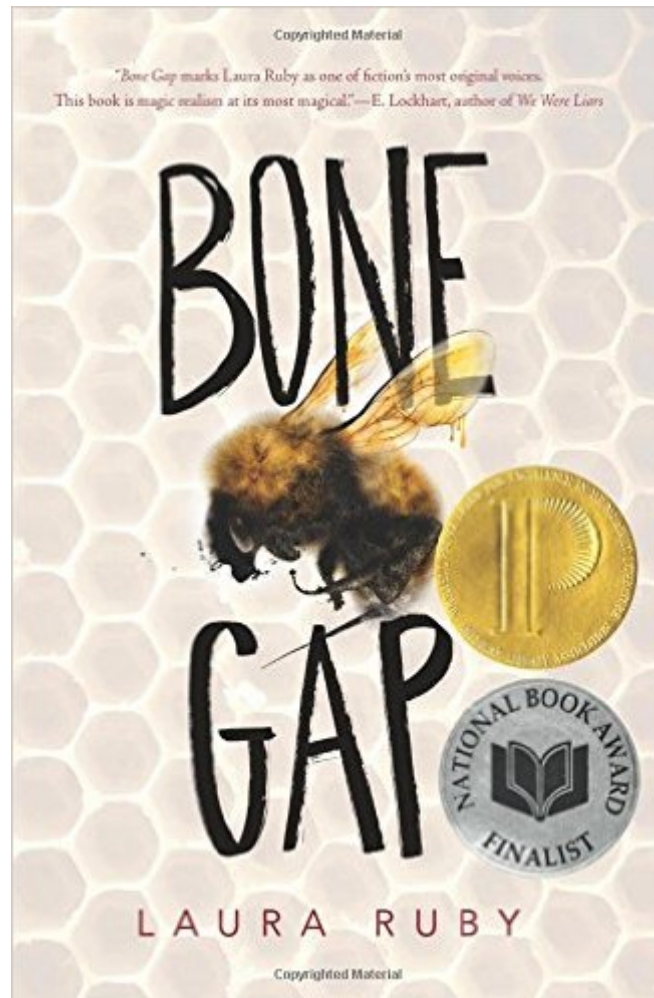


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Bone Gap



Synopsis

National Book Award Finalistâ œRubyâ ™s novel deserves to be read and reread. It is powerful, beautiful, extraordinary.â •â ”School Library JournalEveryone knows Bone Gap is full of gaps. So when young, beautiful Roza went missing, the people of Bone Gap werenâ ™t surprised. But Finn knows what really happened to Roza. He knows she was kidnapped by a dangerous man whose face he cannot remember. As we follow the stories of Finn, Roza, and the people of Bone Gap, acclaimed author Laura Ruby weaves a tale of the ways in which the face the world sees is never the sum of who we are.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is breathtaking. I just finished it about five minutes ago and am having a hard time organizing my thoughts because this book is just so incredible on so many levels. The prose, for starters. Toe-curlingly good. I caught my breath a few times. The characters are well-drawn and quirky in the best possible way and just so living and breathing and aching that you can't help but feel for them. The story is incredibly original, the magic makes me feel like I'm a little kid again swimming around inside books instead of just reading them. I honestly don't have a single criticism for this book. It's impeccable. Easily in my top 10 books ever. Read it now!

Haunting and empowering. I really don't think I can be as elegant as I want to be in reviewing this book because I'm still kind of in awe. I love magical realism, the way the mundane seamlessly blends into the magical, how you're never quite sure what is real, and this did not disappoint.

Though we start with and mainly follow the main character, Finn, a teen boy dealing with a mother who abandoned him and his brother, the character who stole the show for me was Roza. Her incredible strength of character is a model we should be showing to our kids - boys AND girls. Her story captivated me from the first. The relationship between Finn and his brother Sean was also fascinating and heartbreaking. The more you got to know the inhabitants of Bone Gap, the more you feel like you're a part of the town. It was a bit slow for me to start, but the mystery of Roza pulled me in and the sinister, otherworldly magic lurking in the gaps of Bone Gap captivated me. This is one of those books I read so fast I was hardly aware of time passing. Though you don't get a full explanation (it is magical realism, after all) of all the otherworldly mysteries in this world, the ending was definitely satisfying. I loved it.

Welcome to Bone Gap, Illinois, where the people are a bit odd, magic lingers. Bone Gap is an apropos name since there are places, or Ægaps Æ in the town where reality is a bit fluid, and otherworldly doors appear. Brothers Sean and Finn O'Æ Sullivan live in Bone Gap, and everyone loves Sean, who is an EMT and has taken care of Finn since their mother ran off a few years before. Finn is different. Certainly different enough for the folks of Bone Gap, already a place a bit left of center, to take notice of. He Æ a bit dreamy, has a hard time remembering faces, and he Æ infatuated with a girl named Petey who lives with her mother Mel and keeps bees, and he has a best friend named Miguel, whose arms are a bit longer than normal. Finn believes his serious brother hates him, and resents having to care for him since their mother left. The situation has only gotten worse since Roza disappeared. Roza came into the brothers Æ lives in need of help, and they gave it. The town, subsequently, fell hard for the lovely Roza. Her hands brought plants and vegetables into the world as if by magic, and since she disappeared, Bone Gap is just a little less greener, the crops more wilted. Finn actually witnessed Roza Æ disappearance, and the man that took her, and now he Æ spotted that man again. But, no one will listen to Finn (who is frustratingly unable to provide details about the mysterious figure), so he must find a way to get Roza back himself. Meanwhile, Roza is being held in what seems to be a construct of the man that took her (her locations vary, as if in a dream.) He keeps her prisoner, yet grants her any wish (except her freedom, of course), while repeatedly asking her if she loves him yet. Bone Gap has a distinctive folkloric feel to it, and while dark, it Æ also quite whimsical, and Laura Ruby Æ prose is lyrical and lovely. Finn and Petey, who thinks she is ugly, but who Finn finds beautiful, begin a sweet romance, and spending time with the two of them was one of the great joys of this book. I wish that Bone Gap (and its magic) had been fleshed out a bit more, and we never

really know much about the man that kidnaps Roza, but Ruby's writing is so gorgeous, and the people of Bone Gap so quirky and interesting, those seem like small things. So much of this book is achingly lovely and it's imminently quotable. If you like magical realism, you'll love Bone Gap. Laura Ruby's writing is effortless, and her story of love (familial and romantic) and longing shot through with a generous vein of magic is, well, magical. I raced through this one, and if you're looking for something different, from a hugely talented author, give this a try.

***I received this book as a gift. Bone Gap is a bizarre and gritty tale about perception, growing up, and learning to see beyond the surface of a person into what makes them unique. PROS: Bone Gap perfectly captures the power of gossip and perception in a small town. The way that labels have a life of their own and are continued through constant use. The people of the town adore nicknames that function as stigmas, they dictate how each character lives their life and it's hard to escape once this mask is placed on them. In Bone Gap, what the town thinks of you can make or break your life there and shackle you to a very limited concept of self. The characters are intriguing and diverse. They each have unique, memorable personalities (though I would have liked to have seen more character interactions). From bee tamers to vivacious Polish girls, each character has a story that you'll want to hear. I appreciate books that I can learn from and Bone Gap had several quirky facts that I'd never heard about before. The psychological condition of face blindness for one, the foods and customs of Poland, and the complex art of beekeeping all drew me into the story. Alternating POVs flip-flopped between past and present. Hearing Roza's story propelled the mystery forward and left many things uncertain. CONS: Bone Gap is, at times, extremely slow to the point of losing interest. The story is a portrait of small town life and while it can be boring in nature, the mystery kind of got lost in the mundane monotony of everyday life. Some sections were so strange and borderline psychotic that it hit magical realism and sounded like an entirely different book. The plot was sporadic and chaotic, jumping from the slow and steady flow of the little town to this creepy fantasy land. It was unexpected but not in the best way—it was jarring and cut into the story, I had to step back and reread to make sure I didn't miss a pivotal change. The ending was over quickly and so random. There was no explanation to cops or anything like that, it was brushed under the rug. It didn't add up.

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