

## In the Eyes of Mr. Fury

**Philip Ridley**

Valancourt Books (Dec 6, 2016)

Softcover \$18.99 (388pp)

978-1-943910-37-3

*A lovely patchwork of stories, this novel explores human relationships via magical realism.*

Philip Ridley's *In the Eyes of Mr. Fury* is a fantastical and profound exploration of relationships.

Witnessing the gruesome suicide of Judge propels Concord Webster, an aspiring filmmaker, on a journey through stories. Psychic midwife Mama Zepp serves as Concord's guide through the past. Mystical visions draw together younger versions of his parents and other outsiders, until Concord begins to understand the real circumstances behind Judge's demise. He plumbs the true depths of his own individuality, learning how he fits into the narrow-mindedness of The Street.

A lovely patchwork of stories, the novel spans space and time via the delightful Mama Zepp. Enigmatic and of mystical proportions, she eschews typical modes of magic, summoning the past selves of the novel's actors through biscuits or strangely enchanted film reels. Concord walks the line between times, situating himself within the truth of Mama Zepp's stories and struggling to accept his situation, even amidst a torrent of judgment.

Mr. Fury is a tangential piece of the overarching story, a string puppet Concord encounters far into his pursuit of revelation, that testifies to the great power stories have on their audience: "He's been cursed. Whatever he touches turns into a mirror. So he keeps seeing himself in everything. All the time."

The novel is written in a unique voice, and at first glance seems to be straightforwardly minimalistic. This dressing disguises a vast underbelly of emotion. Concord wrestles with himself, and the way others regard him, in beautiful lines of poetry that elicit inescapable empathy and sympathy.

The experiences of LGBT people are rendered in heartbreaking starkness, and though there are obvious clashes between Concord and his parents, as well as between characters in Mama Zepp's stories, almost no one is painted in broad strokes.

*In the Eyes of Mr. Fury* elevates perceived profanity into higher realms, insisting on every individual's inherent humanity.

MEAGAN LOGSDON (Winter 2017)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.*