



★ **The Gaps**

Leanne Hall

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Leanne Hall's exploratory novel *The Gaps* is about what it feels like to be left behind after tragedy strikes.

When sixteen-year-old Yin is abducted, her community is rocked. Everyone at the elite Balmoral Ladies College is on edge as they try to connect the dots to a previous student's disappearance. Emergency parent meetings are held; anonymous safety emails are sent. Even when all begins to quiet down, some are left in turmoil.

Told from dual perspectives—those of Chloe, an outsider scholarship student, and Natalia, the popular bad girl—*The Gaps* marks each day from Yin's disappearance. Some days are quick, thrilling ones, brimming with new information about the case; others are drab slogs through life, matching the reality of grief. The two girls form a strange alliance: they seem to be alone in caring more about Yin's well-being than their fear of being taken next. When Chloe hears a racist remark in class, it spurs her to start an audacious art project that she completes with Natalia's help: a portrait that encapsulates their feelings of being different, lost, alone, and grieving.

The book takes on the traumatic reality of being a young woman in the contemporary world, watching terrible things happen and learning ways to avoid being the next victim. It also touches on the subtle racism of being labeled "other" in a white community: it isn't until Chloe is deep in her research for the art project that she realizes that most of the art books in her school's library are by and about white people, even though they're in an Asian community.

The Gaps is a gutting novel about grief, guilt, and friendship in the aftermath of a horrific crime.

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