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# Small Town Hero

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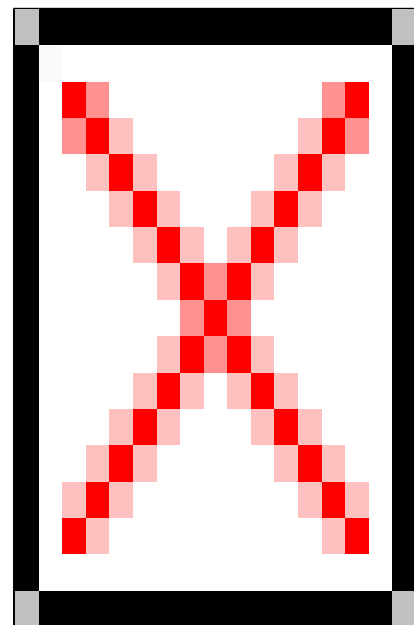
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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5



Children's books are best when they tell you how to think rather than what to think, and thinking is definitely required when reading Patrick Neate's latest novel for young adults. Gabe, 13 years and grieving for his father, finds that he can navigate the world in a non-linear and fairly illogical way by breaching the fence of this world and appearing in another. This genetically-inherited ability to sample the many worlds or multiverse theory only comes to light after his father's funeral, and leads him down a path of self-discovery as well as familial discovery.

Gabe's voice is startlingly modern, fresh and outspoken, reaching directly to the target audience and sucking them in with as much power as a black hole. His interests include football and gaming, and navigating the normal teenage world of social media, friendship and limitations imposed by the adults in his world(s). He is, in fact, so authentic, exploring his feelings, fears and motivations whilst at the same time constantly trying to decipher the emotions of the adults around him, that any doubts about the scientific theories that underpin the plot are swiftly eliminated, and the reader is compelled to believe that not only does Gabe's favourite video game, *Small Town Hero*, exist, but so does the idea of a multi-universe. The non-linear timeframe takes a little thought and concentration from the reader, but it is the ability to

learn and digest the theories at the same time as Gabe, to be with him and will him to win at his game, as well as at life, that makes the book compulsive and compelling.

The book is reminiscent of Christopher Edge's **The Many Worlds of Albie Bright**, but for an older reader, and is smart and involving. Sly touches remind a much older reader of Back to the Future, and this is an awesome addition to narratives that play with time-bending and choices. The invigorating tone of the narrator shakes up the young teen genre nicely. This is an excellent read that touches the heart whilst also probing the head of its readership.

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