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# Silenced

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[Matthew Martin](#) [3]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

When his best friend Declan is killed in a car crash coming home from a party, Chris is struck dumb - literally. Everyone assumes it's temporary, but as the months progress, he is still unable to speak.

The story is told in the second person. As Chris regales Declan with what has happened in the subsequent months, we learn a lot about the strength of their relationship: they were best friends since nursery school (?Almost too close? his mum explains to the child psychiatrist); they formed a comedy duo with plans to take their act to the Edinburgh festival; they shared many in-jokes about their fellow students. The extent of Chris?s loss is palpable.

When the novelty of the situation wears off, only two schoolmates make any effort with Chris. There?s the charismatic, super-confident new boy Will, who never knew Declan and who does his best to get Chris to forget him. In contrast there?s the very appealing, sympathetic Ariel who lives in a caravan with her mother, communing with nature and meditating. Unbeknownst to Chris, she was Declan?s girlfriend, and wants to talk about him all the time.

The reader only gradually becomes aware that Chris is suppressing something and this mystery makes for a truly gripping read; it seems there may be more to Chris?s silence than grief alone.

It might not be a subject that obviously lends itself to laughs, but this is a very funny read. From Chris?s description of the Facebook outpourings of grief from those who barely knew Declan (?Don?t take this the wrong way, mate, but you were a hell of a lot more popular after you?d died,?) to his brilliant depictions of classmates and teachers, humour abounds.

This is a wonderful book ? gripping, funny, heartbreaking and thought provoking. It is one of the few teenage books which should appeal equally to both sexes. Although a standalone novel, those who have read Simon Packham?s previous books (**Comin 2 gt u** and **The Bex Factor**) have the added bonus of encountering previous characters in cameo roles.

**Links:**

[1] <http://reviewwww.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/silenced>

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