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Book Review: 'The Missing' by CL Taylor

3 days ago
by [Rachel Casey](#)
 [The Missing](#)

C.L. Taylor's latest novel, *The Missing*, is a gripping psychological thriller that looks at families and the damage that keeping secrets between them can cause.

Billy Wilkinson is missing. He has been for six months. His mother, Claire, is still hopeful that he will be found alive. She takes part in television appeals and spends her time handing out flyers with her son's face on to anyone who will take one.

But when she starts to have blackouts, and wakes up in parts of the town she doesn't remember getting to, she starts to ask questions. She knows that everyone in her family, including herself, blames themselves in some way for Billy's disappearance. But Claire must come to terms with the fact that someone might not be telling her the whole truth, and that maybe she can't trust those closest to her as much as she thought she could.

This is a fantastic book that will keep you turning the pages. I will admit, it was about a third of the way in before I was fully gripped, but once it got to that point, I didn't stop reading until I got to the end.

The Missing deals with some relatable issues – social media and the dangers that come with it, how well you may or may not know the people around you, and family dynamics and the tensions that miscommunication can bring about. The atmosphere of the book is tense right from the beginning. One of the first scenes in which we see the Wilkinson family together is when Jake, Billy's brother, and their father, Mark, are having an argument after a disastrous television appeal. It's made clear that this isn't the first fight they have had, that they haven't been getting along for a while.

It becomes obvious that each family member has their own way of dealing with Billy's disappearance, and that each way contradicts the ways of the others. Jake has taken to drinking, which angers his father. Mark has his way of compartmentalising all of his emotions so that he seems to bottle everything up and then explode when he gets angry. Claire just wants to be able to talk to her family about everything they are going through, but neither her son nor her husband are willing to open up, both thinking they are helping by keeping quiet.

It's from Claire's point of view that the story is written, and her distress at losing her youngest son and desperation to find him are made obvious through Taylor's writing. You empathise so much with Claire and feel her heart break every time she thinks she sees Billy on the street, only to find out it's another stranger. Through Claire's eyes you start to suspect every character.

Taylor paces the story perfectly, giving you just enough information to suspect someone, and when you think you've got it sussed, she gives you something else that completely throws you off and has you pointing the finger at someone else. The only thing I didn't suspect at all was the actual ending.

A lot of this choppiness and changing of suspects is helped by the WhatsApp messages that preface some of the chapters. You're not told who the messages are from, and with each snippet of conversation, another idea starts to form in your mind about what happened to Billy. The way Taylor uses different social media platforms makes the story realistic and much more believable.

If you're a fan of 'whodunit' books, and a good psychological journey, then you will love this book. It has everything you need to keep you hooked and culminates in an unexpected and emotional ending that, I'm not afraid to admit, had me shed a tear or two.

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About the author

Rachel Casey

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