



Lucky Break

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[Stuart Dyer](#) [3]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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There is a lot more depth and feeling to this novel than the playful title and colourful front cover suggest. It is a farce and a caper that catalogues an unfortunate series of accidents that leads the young narrator, Leon, into bags of trouble. However, it is also a sensitive and sentimental telling of a family's efforts to cope with loss.

Leon is a twin but, tragically, his brother died in a car accident one year ago. His mum keeps herself busy with schemes to keep the roads safe. His dad is very, very busy at work. Only his older sister seems to have time to joke and play with Leon, but even she never talks about the brother they've lost. To make matters even more uncomfortable, Leon is forbidden to play any contact sports or engage in any risky activity whatsoever - which puts a serious dent in his ambition to become a pro rugby player.

When a kooky and awkward boy joins Leon's school, it sparks a chain of events that force Leon and his family to finally confront what has happened. Arnold is weird. He does not understand sarcasm, or jokes, and takes everything literally. He is difficult company to begin with, but Leon soon finds that his incredibly blunt and forthright manner are actually just what he needs: he can finally talk about things to someone.

Arnold, somewhat accidentally, encourages Leon to take risks, and pretty soon they are tied up in a knot of trouble involving the amusement arcade, a missing wallet and a homeless man called Mr Cheeseman. Considering Leon's mum doesn't usually like him to leave the house without a hi-vis jacket, she's unlikely to react calmly to his incarceration at the local station!

There are comedic moments in the story (usually provided by Arnold's lack of tact) and plenty of pace and excitement, but the most powerful and affecting element of Rob Stevens' book is the way that Leon and Arnold's frank and open friendship so poignantly counters the secretive and uncomfortable relationship that Leon endures with his parents, as they struggle to cope with their grief. Lucky break is a fun and engaging comedy, but is much more rewarding as a drama about friendship, family and honesty.

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