



BOOKRAPT™

THE BAY OF PLENTY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED
www.bookrapt.org.nz info@bookrapt.org.nz



***Phantom Limbs* by Paula Garner**

Publisher: Candlewick Press

Otis and Meg were inseparable – the best of best friends, who were slowly becoming more than that. But then Otis' beloved little brother, Mason, dies suddenly, and Meg and her parents move away.

Drowning in grief, Otis is pressed by Dara, friend, mentor, and self-appointed swimming coach, into training for the Olympics. Then Otis hears that Meg's father is moving back, and Meg will be coming to stay for three weeks. More than anything Otis wants to pick up their relationship where they left off, but what does Meg want?

Told in first person from Otis' point of view, this is the story of three people with holes in their lives – phantom limbs that still cause pain. For Dara, it is the physical loss of her arm, along with the accompanying loss of her dreams of swimming in the Olympics. Otis and Meg suffer from the loss of both Mason, and their own close relationship.

There are no easy answers for any of them, and readers are kept guessing (and hoping) till the very end as to what the outcome will be.

The character of Otis is beautifully realised in a tender but realistic picture of teenage boyhood – warts and all. Dara's character is also well-drawn, but the character of Meg remains more enigmatic (and frustrating) due to her reluctance to discuss things with Otis.

This is Paula Garner's first book, and she has produced a winner.

Author's website: www.paulagarner.com

Reviewed by Penny Guy, Children's Librarian

