

## Off The Map

By Scot Gardner

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

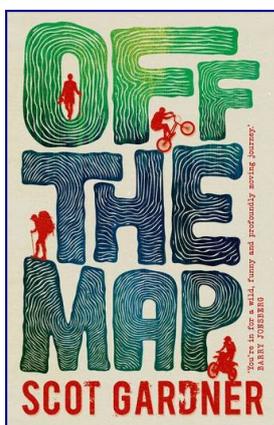
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### Blurb:

Our home town. Sometimes it feels like the centre of the universe, sometimes it's the bum-end of nowhere. We are her sons and daughters. These are our triumphs and our heartaches, our fears and hopes for a better life.

Getting lost, falling in love, pushing boundaries, exploring the world - powerfully honest stories to make you think and feel, from the award-winning author of *The Dead I Know* and *Changing Gear*.



### Lamont Review:

Scot Gardner is one of my favourite authors and so when the advance reading copy of *Off The Map* arrived I thought I would treat myself to some Christmas Eve reading!

Well, after three great chapters, I was not sure how Scot was going to link these characters. Unperturbed, but sure of Scot's ability to bring it all together, I continued. Luckily, after the fourth, I glanced at the back of my advance reading copy to see a quote from Barry Jonsberg referring to 'a stunning smorgasbord of short stories' and I had my answer!

This problem arose because usually I try not to read blurbs or quotes as I eagerly anticipate the author revealing their story. Well, in this case, I was elated, as I love short stories and we are starved of them in our YA market. So I relaxed, went back to the start, and savoured each story for what they were - individual, short and wonderful.

It is a real skill to create compelling stories in as few as five pages, like *Thingless* - that makes you wonder if we really need all of our 'things'.

Scot's stories are typically punchy and will especially resonate with many teenage boys, but also with all teenagers.

With many themes covered, including identity, family, peer pressure, masculinity, and life and death, it is easy to just read one story, but you will want to read them all.

A perfect novel for reluctant readers, but with the language Scot uses - which is in context and relevant to the characters - it would be best suited to readers 14 and above.

Reviewed by Rob