



Who Is Eddie Leonard? by Harry Mazer

Subjects: Identity—Fiction; Missing children—Fiction

Awards: Best Books for Young Adults

Props: “Child Missing” poster, scarf with curlers



The FBI says that every 6 minutes someone new disappears. They become a “missing person.” Sometimes they are found in just a few days. Sometimes it takes longer—a few weeks, years. . . sometimes they never come back.

I’m telling you this because when Eddie Leonard was almost 15, he saw a poster in the post office of one of those missing people. It said, “Have you seen us?” He’d seen those signs a hundred times, but this time one snapshot caught his attention. (*Show poster*) He ripped it from the wall and put it in his pocket. When he got home he taped it to the bathroom mirror. It wasn’t a good photo, smudgy, a little out of focus and it was of a 3-year-old kid. But the more Eddie looked at it, (*Act like you’re looking in the mirror*) the more sure he became. It was his face, it was Eddie Leonard’s face, only, it was attached to another name, Jason Diaz.

Eddie Leonard began to think about his earliest memories. He had never known a mother and father. He had lived with his grandmother for as long as he could remember. When he asked his grandmother about his parents, this is what she said, (*Put scarf with curlers on your head, use redneck accent*)

“My daughter, Sharon, is your mother. But she’s not your natural mother, you stupid boy. No! She found you in a garbage can, no, a tree trunk. No, wait, I know, she found you in the park. One day a girl with a baby carriage asked Sharon to watch the baby while she went to the bathroom. The girl never came back and Sharon was stuck with you. But Sharon had big plans. She was too busy being an actress or a dancer to bother with the likes of you. So she dumped you on me and now I’m stuck with you.

Now your father, he’s already famous. Why, I just seen him on TV the other day. He’s one of them big wrestlers. His name is Big Bo Mellon or maybe it’s Big John. Well, it don’t really matter none.

Your mom, she calls here all the time, just not when you’re around. Yeah, I know you’ve never talked to either of your parents, never seen ‘um or heard from ‘um. But that don’t mean they ain’t real.” (*Take off scarf, drop accent*)

Eddie began to think more and more about that poster. What if he really was Jason Diaz? He certainly didn’t act or look anything like his grandmother. He’d never seen his mom or dad. Was this the only family he would ever know?

It didn’t seem like enough. Eddie needed to know more. In the local library, he searched the newspapers and found a story about a little boy, Jason Diaz, who had disappeared 11 years ago. Eddie couldn’t believe it—he and Jason were the exact same age.

Eddie didn’t know who he was anymore or where he belonged. He looked at the poster. He wanted to know what that face on the poster knew. Maybe he should try to find Jason’s family. Maybe that was his family. Surely life would be better with them. Right?

Who is Eddie Leonard? (Hold up book) by Harry Mazer. Where is his real family?

