

THE GAP

IT'S BLACK. And silent.

Then, the faint SNICKETY-SNICK of a Tube train. It grows louder and closer...

Fade in

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND TUNNEL

Lights on the front of the train appear, grow rapidly closer as the sound CRESCENDOS.

They GLARE at us, and the train SREECHES past with a flicker of bright lights and a blur of people.

Then it's DARK once more.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND PLATFORM - RUSH HOUR

The train rattles into a station and slows to a stop. People hustle and bustle as a TANNOY announces the train's destination.

Commuters of all kinds come and go, some more rushed than others.

P.O.V. CCTV CAMERA:

We monitor the action from above, in a grainy grey/green.

TANNOY

This train is ready to depart. Mind the doors please, mind the closing doors.

The doors shut, the packed train eases out of the station.

BACK TO PLATFORM:

More crowd appear, pushing and jostling: people absorbed in wherever they're going, in their own worlds.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND ESCALATORS

The commuters file up and down escalators, long crocodiles of people staring at the head of the person in front.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND TICKET HALL

They swipe cards and tickets and pass through turnstyles, expressionless faces going through the motions.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND PLATFORM

The platform's less crowded now, less bustling.

P.O.V. CCTV CAMERA:

A handful of people is scattered along the emptier platform.

AND THERE, at one end, alone, is a MAN playing with a yo-yo. Flinging it up and down. Not casually, but with a *purpose*. Outwards, in different directions.

BACK ON PLATFORM:

This man is JAKE - 50 or so, gaunt, haggard face that makes him look older than he really is. His eyes are tired and empty-looking; he's a little hunched, a little grubby.

He flicks his yo-yo out ahead of him as he patrols the end of the platform. He never takes a step without first swinging his toy in the direction he's going.

Occasionally he jerks his head around, twitches, as if being watched or expecting someone/something to appear.

Further up the platform, TWO TEENAGE GIRLS sit on a bench, chatting. We eavesdrop:

GIRL 1

...and she said, he just completely vanished. Like, into thin air. Poof.

Her eyes go wide and her hand mimics something vanishing.

GIRL 2

What, he just vanished?

GIRL 1

Yeah, there one minute, gone the next.

GIRL 2

Yeah sure. He probably went round a corner or something.

GIRL 1

No no, she said there weren't any corners or anything, she went and checked it out, there was nowhere he could've gone!

GIRL 2

Seriously?

GIRL 1

Seriously!

GIRL 2

Nah no way... There must be a...

We pull away and leave them gossiping. Their hushed voices turn to distant whispers, a 'PSS PSS' that we can't understand but know as a whisper.

Then another TRAIN approaches with that SNICKER-SNACK, which blends into the whispers, until only the train is audible.

It thunders along the rails and screeches to a halt. Doors open, people get on and off - including our girls - and it continues into the next tunnel.

JAKE stands stock still and watches intently. When the train's gone, he carries on. A swing here, a swing there.

P.O.V. CCTV CAMERA:

Jake yo-yos away. We flick to the tunnel entrance. And back.

The train's rear lights fade into the black tunnel.

A VOICE, quite deep, serious, pensive, speaks over the relative silence:

VOICE 1

I've heard... stories... about 'The Gap'...

In no rush, a second, different voice follows:

VOICE 2

The Gap? You mean on the Underground?

They speak as if talking to an unknown interviewer. Chatty, gossipy.

VOICE 3

(American) Oh yeah, I heard some weird things about the Subway. The Underground, I mean. Like, about The Gap?

We leave, head down a tunnel. The voices follow.

INT. ANOTHER LONDON UNDERGROUND PLATFORM

We emerge from the tunnel into another station.

VOICE 4

The Gap. Between the train and the platform?

VOICE 6

Haha. Mind the Gap! You can buy girls' underwear with that on the front!

We drift around the station platform, watching more people as they wait for the next train.

VOICE 7

Oh yeah man I heard some bullshit story about spooky shit happening in the Tube...

VOICE 5

(Russian) ...People haf been going missing...

VOICE 8

What, people falling down into the Gap and disappearing? Believe that you'll believe anything...

VOICE 1

... The Gap... Not *that* gap... A different gap...

As people mill on the platform, a recording tells us to:

TANNOY

Mind The Gap.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND TUNNEL

We disappear into the blackness of the next tunnel, flying past an oncoming train in a daze of lights and snicker-snacks. It goes dark again, bar the odd flash of sparks.

VOICE 3

I was told, and this is like totally true, that there's this mysterious 'gap' down there that like swallows people up...

VOICE 2

Yes I heard a rumour along those lines...

VOICE 4

...Oh the ghost story about the hole?

It's still dark. We hear the odd faint noise of a train.

VOICE 6

Oh yeah there's this urban myth about a supernatural hole down in the Tube tunnels...

VOICE 2
 ...An urban myth...

VOICE 5
 ...A fairy story, a fantasy...

VOICE 7
 ...About this door or summin that
 you can't see, and people are just
 like walking through it n
 disappearing n shit...

VOICE 8
 ...It's a doorway....

VOICE 6
 Some kind of portal. That appears
 at will.

VOICE 2
 It just appears, but you can't see
 it.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND PLATFORM

Another station. A crowd of commuters on the platform awaits
 their train. We pass among them.

VOICE 6
 Like, it's there, right there in
 the station, and all the people are
 going about their business, and
 it'll suddenly appear...

VOICE 4
 ...it has no fixed position...

VOICE 5
 ...It can move around...

VOICE 3
 Oh yeah it moves...

VOICE 7
 ...an it's movin around n shit so
 you no idea where it is...

TANNOY
 The next train is the District Line
 service calling at all stations to
 Upminster...

VOICE 1
 ...There's no pattern.

VOICE 5
 Is very hard to know where is.

VOICE 2

They say it moves position...

VOICE 6

...it can just appear and disappear, open and close where it likes...

VOICE 4

Totally unpredictable.

The sound of the train mingles with the voices.

VOICE 7

...an' you'll just be like walking down the platform an' suddenly this door appears outta nowhere and...

VOICE 8

It swallows you. Yes of course.

VOICE 3

It sucks you in and you just, like, vanish.

VOICE 2

...and you disappear and never come back.

The train empties and fills with people.

VOICE 4

...and if you step through it, you're gone...

VOICE 5

Lost forever.

VOICE 1

Gone.... to who knows where?

VOICE 2

And nobody knows how it got there, or why.

There's JAKE again, watching. The train departs and he continues as usual, his yo-yo going before his every move.

The sound of the train fades and the whispers continue.

VOICE 6

It's some kind of ancient curse...

VOICE 4

...from, from Victorian times...

VOICE 3

From the middle ages, like from the time of Merlin?

VOICE 5

Somebody has disturbed a tomb, when they are building the Underground...

VOICE 7

It's some voodoo shit, y'know, this curse...

VOICE 1

The portal is a curse triggered by someone opening a sarcophagus in the British Museum...

VOICE 4

... an Egyptian mummy?...

VOICE 2

Something Egyptian, you hear lots of stories about mummies and curses...

VOICE 6

...Or it was created during the Great Fire of London... Cos so many people died...

VOICE 2

Yeah I heard it was near Pudding Lane. Near Monument...

VOICE 4

Monument would be a good place for it I suppose...

VOICE 3

...I bet it's at Temple... It's gotta be at Temple, I mean all that Dan Brown stuff with like, symbols and stuff?

VOICE 1

Or it could be a *spy* thing.

VOICE 7

...Ha! Yeah some crazy James Bond shit, like they had that car with the cloaking device...

VOICE 1

A new top-secret technology that allows agents and high-ranking public servants to teleport around the city in the blink of an eye...

VOICE 7

... Shit man imagine, you could get places just like that (CLICKS FINGERS)

VOICE 8

A teleport, that only the super-rich know about.

Jake approaches a LIFT, the doors close on him.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND LIFT

Jake presses a button.

VOICE 6

Nobody knows where it goes.

He stares out the window as it goes up.

Suddenly a dozen or so grey soul-less beings appear next to him, silent, lost, drained of colour, staring blankly ahead.

VOICE 2

Where do they go, the ones who disappear?

The ghosts fade and vanish.

VOICE 1

Several hundred people are reported missing in London every week...

VOICE 5

Many many people disappear, nobody has clue where.

VOICE 4

I'm sure there's a lot of people lost who are never found.

VOICE 8

Oh thousands of people go missing in London all the time...

VOICE 3

Yeah like I heard 3,000 people a year go missing?

VOICE 7

Maybe they's disappearin' for a reason, y'know?

VOICE 2

Perhaps they go somewhere. When they pass through The Gap.

The lift doors open, Jake exits.

VOICE 5

I don't know where they go...

He turns towards the spiral stairs. A sign says '102 Steps'.
He slowly descends, yo-yo first.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND STAIRWELL

VOICE 6

I reckon it's a portal to Hell...

VOICE 8

They say it's a portal...

VOICE 5

A portal?

VOICE 1

Like some kind of... *Gateway*...

VOICE 7

...To another dimension...

VOICE 4

A parallel Universe...

VOICE 6

A totally different dimension, a
different world...

VOICE 3

It's like, the *real* underground.
You know, *the Underworld*...

VOICE 8

Hades...

VOICE 1

A Godless place.

VOICE 8

They say God's omnipresent, but
maybe he can't see that far
underground...

VOICE 3

It's like, the Devil is snatching
people, out of the sight of God?

Jake approaches the bottom of the steps now. A PERSON passes
him on the narrow inside, bemused.

*This passer-by suddenly turns into a grey wraith, like in the
lift, open-mouthed and drooling, a lost soul traipsing up and
down the stairs.*

He passes, and becomes normal again.

VOICE 2

Maybe they're disappearing for a reason?

VOICE 6

Maybe they were meant to go, maybe it was their time...

VOICE 8

Perhaps it's the Reaper taking people on the sly cos he can't get them by other means.

VOICE 7

I've heard it's people who are gonna commit crimes...

VOICE 4

...People who have lost their way... Lost their direction in life...

VOICE 3

Oh yeah, like guys who, their life has no purpose?

VOICE 7

So many peeps just, y'know, get up, go to work...

VOICE 4

Drifters.

VOICE 7

...sit at a desk all day n photocopy shit, go home again, go to bed...

VOICE 2

I see a lot of people like that... Just blank faces...

VOICE 5

Yes, you haf to have a goal...

Jake reaches the bottom of the steps, continues.

VOICE 6

I've heard there's a guy...

VOICE 4

...This guy whose life goal is to find The Gap...

Jake pauses, looks around, squints, as if tracking The Gap, sniffing it out...

VOICE 8
Oh yeah whassis name...?

VOICE 6
The old guy, with the yo-yo!

VOICE 2
There's a creepy old guy with a yo-yo who's apparently looking for the Gap.

Jake enters the platform.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND PLATFORM

VOICE 4
They say he got sucked into it once

VOICE 6
That he's the only person who's been through it and returned...

VOICE 1
It didn't quite get him.

The sound of a TRAIN APPROACHING starts to subdue the whispers, as it rumbles into the platform.

VOICE 5
No-body is sure why...

Jake stops and faces a set of doors, staring.

VOICE 7
He got lucky, man.

People get off, people get on. Jake too. The doors shut.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND TRAIN

Jake stands amongst the travellers.

VOICE 2
Perhaps he wasn't meant to go.

VOICE 7
I think: suddenly his life found a purpose? Y'know?

The Tube pulls away and into the darkness. It surges through the blackness, jolting from side to side. The whispers merge into the snicker-snacks...

TANNOY

The next station is Ravenscourt Park, where the platform is shorter than the train. Travellers in the rear carriage wishing to alight should proceed to the next carriage and do so there.

Jake looks uncomfortable. He doesn't seem to like the enclosed space, itching for the doors to open again.

VOICE 4

I thought they found it once?

The train slows and finally stops.

VOICE 2

They found it at the end of a platform?

VOICE 6

Yeah at one place where the platform is shorter than the train...

Jake gazes at the open doors, but doesn't go through.

VOICE 1

If the train is longer than the platform...

VOICE 3

It's cos they thought they'd found the Gap...

Jake looks towards the back end of the platform. He glares at it, like an old adversary.

VOICE 4

I'm sure they saw someone vanish down one end, so they went and blocked off the whole area...

VOICE 6

They called in an exorcist and everything...

VOICE 2

They had the area blessed.

VOICE 1

...but to no avail...

The doors close and Jake looks back to the platform ahead.

VOICE 5

The Gap moved to somewhere else...

The train moves off.

VOICE 8

It's not like there's a shortage of
stations...

*Suddenly all but Jake turn to grey ghosts, all bolt upright,
all facing the platform; they have far-off, hopeless
expressions, deep, tired eyes. Silent.*

We stay amongst the lost souls, dead quiet as we rattle and
scrape along the tracks, into the next tunnel. The lights
give off an eerie glow.

They all gaze forwards, motionless, with glum faces.

This is their Tube hell.

The voices fade in and out. More deliberate, thoughtful:

VOICE 2

I wonder what happens if you step
into The Gap...

VOICE 6

I've heard you never come back,
once you've passed through...

VOICE 1

...a one-way ticket...

VOICE 8

Game over.

VOICE 4

There's nothing on the other side,
just darkness...

VOICE 3

It's just totally black. Like,
nothing...

VOICE 1

And you can't see in, and you can't
see out. It's just... a void.

VOICE 4

A void. Like, a gap... Just a huge
vacuous... hole...

VOICE 7

Nah it's like a bottomless pit.

VOICE 5

A burning inferno...

VOICE 8

Hell.

VOICE 6

There's like several levels, like Dante's Inferno, and you pass down through them all...

VOICE 5

My hell would be going to work every day, for eternity...

VOICE 2

Same thing every single day.

VOICE 4

Day and night, just non-stop.

VOICE 8

Commuting. Forever.

VOICE 3

Like, in an endless loop...

VOICE 1

Going round... and round... and round...

VOICE 5

Never arriving your destination.

The lights flicker, and the apparitions become real people again, suddenly a little more colourful and lively.

VOICE 7

Man that's some *bad* nightmare.

VOICE 6

Just going from station to station and never stopping...

VOICE 8

No purpose.

The train approaches the next station and slows down.

VOICE 1

Pointless. Direction-less.

VOICE 4

Drifting...

VOICE 2

Non-stop.

VOICE 6

Through the nothingness...

VOICE 8

A never-ending journey through a
nowhere-land. Through a void.

The train stops, people get out, including Jake.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND PLATFORM

VOICE 6

Round and round through a void,
a... gap!

He slinks to the back wall and waits for the rush to pass.

VOICE 5

...The Gap...

VOICE 3

Yeah, that's The Gap they talk
about.

Jake flings his yo-yo on the relatively empty platform.

VOICE 2

Maybe that's the *real* Gap.

VOICE 4

The gap between the platform...

Jake strolls towards a quiet end of the platform, swinging
his trusty yo-yo firmly ahead of him.

VOICE 8

Between the platform and the
train...

VOICE.

(Imitates tannoy) 'Please mind the
gap'

The voices come fast and chaotic, lots of whispers building
to a crescendo.

VOICE.

Please mind the gap

VOICE.

Mind the gap.

MANY VOICES

Mind The Gap

VOICES

...between the train and

VOICES

...between the platform and the

VOICES
...train... platform...

MANY VOICES
Mind.. Mind... mind...

Just then Jake's yo-yo flies out in front of him and STOPS.

The end and half the chord VANISH INTO NOTHINGNESS.

DISAPPEAR.

The thread is taut in front of Jake, at about 45 degrees, but the end is not there. Swallowed up by an invisible hole.

VOICES
Mind the gap mind the gap mind the
gap...

Jake's face is one of relief, horror, adulation.
He gazes, eyes wide, speechless.

TANNOY
Mind The Gap.

We pass through an invisible rectangular portal in front of Jake, and disappear into blackness...

FADE OUT.