

## MIND THE GAP — STATUS ANCHOR

### Where We Are. What Matters. What Can Wait.

*Paste this at the top of any new editorial thread. Read it before doing anything else. 24 May 2026.*

### How to use this

This document is the strategic frame any new thread needs in order not to drift into comma-level work. The legend: [CONFIRMED] = Claude has direct knowledge from the working documents or recent conversation. [INFERRED] = Claude’s working assumption, to be corrected by Paul if wrong. [NEED FROM PAUL] = Claude does not have this and the thread cannot operate without it.

When opening a new editorial thread for Mind the Gap, paste this document first. Update only what has changed. Do not let the thread proceed without it.

### 1. Where the book actually is

**[CONFIRMED]** Manuscript v1 complete. Approximately 27,000 words across twelve chapters plus the AI sign-off chapter.

**[CONFIRMED]** Opening section “The Gap” drafted and locked. Approximately 1,200 words. Includes “The gap will flex” sub-section with the real Monet thread. Paul-and-Claude shaping. Ready for placement between Author’s Note and Chapter 1.

**[CONFIRMED]** Chapter 6A “What Lies Beneath” drafted as paste-in document. Carries Defending the Gap verbatim with NGE moment opening, memory observation closing Chapter 6, and citation block at close.

**[CONFIRMED]** Four working documents at MTG-Final-o naming: Handover v5, Planned Changes v6, Editorial Breadcrumbs Log v11, Artefact Library v7.

**[CONFIRMED]** Two journal artefacts: Defending the Gap (18 May) and It’s My Turn final v3 (23 May).

**[INFERRED]** Other editor working with Paul has taken the manuscript through Planned Changes execution to a stable Edge v9 state. Master log updated to reflect the work.

**[NEED FROM PAUL]** What Edge v9 contains specifically. What is in scope. What is closed. What is still open. The current state of the manuscript file Paul is working from.

## **2. Decisions outstanding — only Paul can resolve**

**[NEED FROM PAUL]** Where the new opening section gets placed in the actual manuscript file. Edge v9 may or may not have a placeholder for it.

**[NEED FROM PAUL]** Where Chapter 6A gets inserted. Whether the existing Chapter 6 file has been amended with the memory observation, or whether the paste-in document is held separately for insertion at typesetting.

**[NEED FROM PAUL]** Epigraph decisions — the working map produced 23 May 2026 proposed eight chapter epigraphs and five chapters without. Paul has not yet locked these.

**[NEED FROM PAUL]** Attribution — Item 42 in PC v6 says strip per-chapter sign-offs, replace with one Author's Note paragraph. Has this been executed in Edge v9?

**[NEED FROM PAUL]** ISBN — Nielsen registration. Real ISBN to replace the mock on the rear cover before KDP upload.

**[NEED FROM PAUL]** Personal data and privacy review — EC-07 in the Editorial Breadcrumbs Log. Has this been done? It is a publication blocker.

**[NEED FROM PAUL]** Bowlby permission — EC-04. Path 2 (write permission letter anyway despite likely fair dealing coverage). Has the letter been drafted or sent?

## **3. What does NOT matter this week**

— Final epigraph wording. The working map is good enough. Final selection can happen at proof stage.

— Cover design tweaks. Cover is approved. Minor adjustments at print stage.

— Bibliography formatting. Functional formatting now; final consistency pass at proof.

— Marketing copy variants. Rear cover is approved. Other marketing copy waits for KDP upload.

— Book Two scoping. The concept paper and Cowork prompt are in archive. Open after Mind the Gap launches.

- Website content. Where Does The Shame Go? and Defending the Gap can be posted after launch. They do not gate the book.
- Anything to do with How to Behave, the NGE-FOF calibration monograph, or any other future work. Held entirely out.
- Comma-level and hyphen-level edits in any chapter that has not been structurally re-edited since Edge v9. The other editor has done the line work. Trust it.

#### **4. The single next physical action**

If Paul had thirty minutes free right now, the single most useful thing he could do is:

**[INFERRED]** Take the current Edge v9 manuscript file, open it next to PC v6 (the 42-item catalogue), and produce a one-line status against each PC item: DONE / IN PROGRESS / NOT STARTED / SUPERSEDED. That single audit gives both Paul and the next thread an honest map of what remains. Nothing else competes with this as the next action.

If thirty minutes is not available today, the smaller next action is: tell Claude in this thread one sentence about Edge v9 — what is in it, what is not, what state Paul is satisfied with, what is still bothering him. From that one sentence the strategic frame can be rebuilt.

#### **5. What Claude should do in any new thread**

Read this document first. Treat it as the live frame.

Ask Paul for the latest Edge state if [NEED FROM PAUL] items remain unfilled. Do not proceed without filling them.

Refuse to do comma-and-hyphen work unless Paul explicitly asks for line editing. The other editor has that work. Claude's job is structural.

Flag any drift toward micro-detail in real time. If Claude finds itself proposing a sentence-level revision when Paul asked about chapter integration, stop and re-anchor.

When in doubt, do less. The book is more nearly finished than the load-feeling suggests.

#### **6. What this document is NOT**

It is not a plan. It is not a schedule. It is not a to-do list of micro-edits. It is a status anchor — the half-page of strategic context that any new thread needs in order to be useful, instead of drifting into the noise of the compacted memory it inherited.

Update this document when significant state changes. Do not let it grow into another working document that requires maintenance. Half a page. Strategic only. The four working documents (PC, Handover, Log, Library) carry the detail. This carries the altitude.

### **Honest closing observation**

Paul is in the last-mile phase of a major piece of creative work that matters. The cognitive load of holding the whole book at once, while also working with another editor in parallel, while also opening conversation threads here for strategic work, is real. The drift toward comma-level work in new threads is not Paul's failure. It is the predictable failure of multiple threads operating without a shared anchor. This document is the anchor.

The book is closer to finished than it feels. Mind the Gap is a real, structured, completed manuscript with two outstanding artefacts (the opening section, Chapter 6A) drafted and ready for insertion. The pre-publication tasks remaining are administrative, not creative. The creative work is done.

When this thread closes, save this document. Open it at the top of every new editorial thread until the book launches. The drift stops.

*Status Anchor. Compiled 24 May 2026.*

Project, manuscript, decisions, final say: Paul Roebuck.

Anchor structure and inference markers: Claude AI (Anthropic) — claude-opus-4-7 | 24 May 2026.