

Ollie Oxley and the Ghost: The Search for Lost Gold

Lisa Schmid

Jolly Fish Press (Jun 18, 2019)

Softcover \$11.99 (216pp)

978-1-63163-289-1

Lisa Schmid's debut novel for middle-grade readers *Ollie Oxley and the Ghost* is an engaging story full of mystery and mischief.

Ollie has moved, again, with his mother and little sister. His mother's new job is in her hometown of Granite City, California, and the family is hoping that they will get to stay permanently. Making new friends has never been easy for Ollie. The school bully, Aubrey, targets him immediately. When Ollie meets Teddy, he is happy to have a friend, but Teddy is not an ordinary boy; he is a ghost! Soon Ollie finds himself pulled into a race against Aubrey for class president while also trying to find the lost gold that Teddy's father had discovered during the nineteenth-century gold rush. Solving the mystery of the lost gold becomes urgent when Ollie learns that his mom's new boss is about to lose ownership of the theater, which will force his family to move again.

Granite City is an excellent setting—a town with an interesting gold mining history. The theater Ollie's mother works in, the local candy store, a history museum, and the pink Victorian home the family lives in all provide a wonderful environment for the story.

The characters are endearing. Ollie is used to moving from place to place and has developed his own rules for surviving any new environment. His interactions with his little sister and with the other children are amusing. Teddy is a funny but lonely ghost who always seems to cause trouble. Even Aubrey has a bit of personality underneath the bullying and bravado, making her nearly sympathetic.

Ollie Oxley and the Ghost is a satisfying middle grade mystery that hints at future adventures for Ollie and Teddy.

CATHERINE THURESON (May/June 2019)

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