

The Case of the Missing Cheese: A Grove Street Mystery

Lisa C. Mitchell

SparkBright Kids (Sep 1, 2023)

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Three friends interrogate, investigate, and draw conclusions based on their own creative ideas in the children's mystery novel The Case of the Missing Cheese.

In Lisa C. Mitchell's cozy children's mystery novel *The Case of the Missing Cheese*, neighborhood friends band together when there are a string of disappearances surrounding cheese, hoping to crack the case even as their sleuthing skills are put to the test.

Skylar, Juan, and Izzy are in third grade and are racing to finish their neighborhood mystery game before the town carnival begins. However, strange disappearances keep popping up, and they all seem to be about cheese: the cheese from Skylar's mother's grocery bag, a bag of shredded cheese from the carnival's pizza truck, and Izzy's new hamster Cheese all go missing around the same time. Thus, the children form their own detective agency, working to solve these cheese-related mysteries. They wonder if the disappearances have any connection to their elderly neighbor, whom they misunderstand and are afraid to go near.

Switching perspectives between the children, their parents, and the old man down the street, the novel does an able job of filling in the holes of its mysteries, all while showing how the situation affects individual people. The children's wild imaginations and regular misunderstandings of situations drive the plot forward further as they interrogate, investigate, and draw conclusions based on their own ideas of what happened. This lighthearted progression is complemented by the heroes' curiosity and eagerness to learn—for example, Skylar keeps a notepad with her, writing down new words she hears so she can look them up later.

Even in the midst of solving their mysteries, the children deal with everyday responsibilities and events. They do chores and run a lemonade stand to raise money to spend at the carnival. And their setting is enlivened by evidence of diversity: their neighborhood and school are bilingual, and people switch between Spanish and English when speaking to one another, making keen efforts to understand one another. Later in the story, a major misunderstanding on the children's part about their neighbor is cleared up in a connected manner. The concept of building a happy community through communication and kindness is heartening.

Children work to solve local disappearances in the fun, intriguing children's mystery novel *The Case of the Missing Cheese*, which includes complementary black-and-white illustrations.

GRACE ROGERS (September 18, 2023)

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