



Never That Far

Tessa McMillan

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Book Review

Never That Far

Author

Carol Lynch Williams

Illustrator

NA

Reviewer

Tessa McMillan

Rating

Excellent

Level

Primary, Intermediate

Pages

176

Year

2018

Publisher

Shadow Mountain

ISBN

9780062027917

Libby Lochewood just lost Grampa Lochewood, her best friend and confidant. Libby feels incredibly alone, because her dad is not handling the loss well. The night after the funeral, an angelic version of Libby's grandfather visits her. He tells her she has the gift of seeing her deceased family members. He also tells her that he has left her a treasure somewhere in their nearby lake. Leaving her grieving father, Libby sets off to search the lake. However, several life-threatening experiences cause Libby to invite her friend & neighbor, Bobby, to join her search for the treasure. When Libby's dad finds out where she is going each day, he grounds her from the lake because it has claimed several lives. Libby tries to explain that her grandfather told her to go there, but Libby's dad refuses to listen. Eventually, after much prodding, Libby and her father finally go out on the lake. Libby's father has a near death experience that helps him see how close his deceased loved ones are to him and Libby.

Williams story is a delightful mixture of humor, loss, and heart. Through Libby's vibrant voice Williams beautifully explores how deep-rooted relationships don't end when a loved one passes away. Williams shows how actively concerned deceased loved-ones are for those still struggling to make sense of life. One weakness for Williams book was Libby's search for her grandfather's treasure. This story element was dramatically built up at the beginning of the book, but was lost or fizzle out near the end. It doesn't seem quite clear what the treasure really is in the end, if there even was a treasure. However, *Never That Far* is a great recommendation for young readers who have lost anyone they have loved.