Disappearing Act
Margaret Manchak

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Reviewer: Margaret Manchak
Reading Level: Intermediate; Young adult;
Rating: Dependable;
Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;
Subject: Brothers and Sisters--Juvenile fiction; Orphans--Juvenile fiction; Stalking--Juvenile fiction;

Twelve-year-old Kevin and his older sister Holly have a stalker they have nicknamed "The Toad". That's why they flee their home in New Mexico for California and disguise themselves as street performers: Kevin becomes a beachside fortune-teller, and Holly tries to make it as an opera star. They make good money and good progress on overcoming the grief of their mother's recent death, but have they really eluded The Toad? Will they ever be safe? What does he want from them? It will take a bit of luck and a few of Kevin and Holly's new street-skills to outdo their dangerous shadow.

Fleischman is a good writer, so the dialogue is natural and the story flows easily. The plot, however, is found wanting when compared to some of the great young-adult-mystery novels, and the anticipated twists at the end are underwhelming. Still, it's an entertaining read and the characters that Kevin and Holly meet are fun and believable.