



Ghosts

Raina Telgemeier, Braden Lamb (With color by)

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Catrina and her family are moving to the coast of Northern California because her little sister, Maya, is sick. Cat isn't happy about leaving her friends for Bahía de la Luna, but Maya has cystic fibrosis and will benefit from the cool, salty air that blows in from the sea. As the girls explore their new home, a neighbor lets them in on a secret: There are ghosts in Bahía de la Luna. Maya is determined to meet one, but Cat wants nothing to do with them. As the time of year when ghosts reunite with their loved ones approaches, Cat must figure out how to put aside her fears for her sister's sake -- and her own.

Raina Telgemeier has masterfully created a moving and insightful story about the power of family and friendship, and how it gives us the courage to do what we never thought possible.

Ghosts Details

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Author : Raina Telgemeier , Braden Lamb (With color by)

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From Reader Review Ghosts for online ebook

Debbie says

Anytime I see a book that has something to do with ghosts, I wonder if the author is going to be contributing to the too-high-pile of problematic books with characters who are haunted or inspired by the ghost of a Native character. One example (there are many) is Susan Cooper's Ghost Hawk.

I think Telgemeier's Ghosts is one of those problematic books, but I don't think that Telgemeier is aware that she's doing that same thing. The story she tells, and the reviews of her story, demonstrate (yet again) an ignorance of history. I imagine some people defending the book by saying its audience isn't old enough for the complexity of that history, but that holds true only for a selected (possibly white) audience. Native children, and children of color, know far more history than one might expect, because history informs and shapes our daily lives, today. History, of course, informs the daily lives of White children, too, but in a way that means they're ignorant--and are taught ignorance--until they're deemed "ready" for that dark history.

In the story, the children visit a mission where they see ghosts. At first Maya (the younger sister) is taken aback, but in the next panels, we see the ghost hug her, so she decides it is a friendly ghost. She says hi, but Carlos tells her that most of the people buried there were from Mexico, so, they like it when people speak Spanish to them. So, Maya calls out "Hola!"

That visit to the mission is the point where--for me--the story really starts to unravel.

The missions were there (obviously) for a specific reason: to turn Native peoples into Catholics and to claim that land for Spain. Some see missions and missionary work as a good, but if you pause for a minute and think about what they and that work is designed to do, and if you do a bit of reading, you'll learn that it was far from the benevolent character with which it is regarded by most of society.

At the missions, life for Native people was brutal. There was rape. Enslavement. Whippings. Confinements. And of course, death. Analyses of the bones at the mission burial sites that compare them with bones found elsewhere show that the bones of those who died at the missions were stunted and smaller than the others.

Some of Telgemeier's ghosts might have spoken Spanish, but it is far more likely that their first language was an Indigenous one. Did they joyfully want to be spoken to in Spanish, the language of their oppressors? Given the history, I think it is unlikely that these ghosts would be smiling as Telgemeier shows in her book.

At my site, there's more information, and references to books that can help teachers, parents, librarians, learn about the missions.

<https://americanindiansinchilrenslit...>

AleJandra says

4 Sister Love STARS

El Dia de los muertos es una celebración hermosa, familiar y que nos hace enorguéllesernos de haber fundido una tradición prehispánica con el catolicismo (así somos de fregones los mexicanos).

Pero en la actualidad ha sido un tema por demás manoseado, que sirve para la venta de disfraces y pintarse las caras de catrina sin saber que es una catrina (como Beyonce).

Pero bueno, para hacer esta reseña me voy a bajar de mi High horse, y le voy a cortar slack a la autora, que en realidad no tiene culpa de que todo mundo quiera hablar de este tema, aunque no sepan.

La autora sin duda se documentó mucho, lo que se menciona referente a la celebración me pareció que lo hizo de una forma respetuosa y bien informada. Obviamente la representación de los fantasmas es muy fantasiosa y caricaturizada, pero es un libro para niños. La historia me pareció muy linda y tierna, enalteciendo los lazos familiares y el enriquecimiento de la cultura.

Así que bravo Raina Telgemeier por darnos unas protagonistas latinas, bravo por la multiculturalidad, bravo por los dibujos tan hermosos de los tamales, bravo por mostrar una familia unida a pesar de la adversidad, bravo por darnos un personaje con capacidades diferentes.

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Mi hija Mexicocanadiense ya se ha vuelto su fan, a sus 5 años, porque se pudo ver representada en este libro.

Ya se los dije y espero que me hagan caso: **REPRESENTATION MATTERS.**

No tienen idea lo mucho que impacta en la vida de una niña, que esta creciendo con 2 culturas, con 2 lenguajes, y una cabeza muy confundida por querer descubrir a donde se pertenece.

Korrina (OwlCrate) says

Second book for booktubeathon complete! I looooved this one. I'm obsessed with ghosts and skeletons and Dia de Los Muertos so this story was right up my alley. But it also had a ton of heart packed into it as well. Definitely recommend it!

Kelli says

I bought this book for my daughter at the school book fair and when I handed it to her she screamed, jumped up and down, and disappeared with it into her room. She raved about it, told me she thought I'd love it, begged me to read it, brought it downstairs and put it in my book pile. Fast forward two months and I found it back in her room, carefully placed among her treasures. I get it. It's vibrant, honest and deals with the issues of disease and death in a non-threatening and dare I say, positive way. It is there but it doesn't feel like the main focus, which makes it seem more like part of life and also the introduction of Day of the Dead alights this with celebration.

There are many topics woven throughout this story. But, as the author said in her notes: **At the end of the day, love transcends life and death.** What a wonderful, always timely message. 4 stars

**I grew up in a Portuguese family where death was a constant topic. Who was sick, died, was dying. I truly believe I am scarred for life from this merry-go-round of bad news and what I perceived as a child as very impending death. I work daily to ensure my children are less afraid/worried/anxious/terrified than I was/am that every breath is their last.

Faythe says

I had some problems with some things. The family stuff was fine. The Mexican stuff and Dia de Los Muertos? Not accurate. At all. If troubles me that it's praised without fact checking and it's being praised so much.

Jan Philipzig says

I like Raina Telgemeier's fluid, spunky, unpretentious cartooning a lot, and it is beautifully matched here by a very timely story that is all about embracing the Other. You know, rather than "bombing the shit out of" it.

Toph says

Probably my favorite book by Telgemeier so far. 3/5 stars.

Rebecca says

Reading this in my own world, I would give it 5 stars. The sister relationship is spot-on, as always ("attempted grab! successful dodge!"). Raina's facial expressions and comic timing are delightful. Braden Lamb's coloring is incredible. The use of the ghosts, as a terminally ill child and her family deal with death (and navigating family cultural heritage), seems inspired. Yet I'm listening to others' reactions to the use of Spanish missions, Spanish language, and Dia de los Muertos. These views expand my own reading of the story.

<http://readingwhilewhite.blogspot.com...>

<https://booktoss.wordpress.com/2016/0...>

<https://americanindiansinchildrenslit...>

Nat says

This was the perfect heartfelt, quick, and light graphic novel to pick up after feeling emotionally exhausted by my first read of the year.

Catrina and her family are moving to the coast of Northern California because her little sister, Maya, is sick. Cat isn't happy about leaving her friends for Bahía de la Luna, but Maya has cystic fibrosis and will benefit from the cool, salty air that blows in from the sea. As the girls explore their new home, a neighbor lets them in on a secret: There are ghosts in Bahía de la Luna. Maya is determined to meet one, but Cat wants nothing to do with them. As the time of year when ghosts reunite with their loved ones approaches, Cat must figure out how to put aside her fears for her sister's sake - and her own.

First and foremost, I have to mention that my little sister is a huge fan of Raina Telgemeier's work, particularly the graphic novel *Sisters*, so I can't wait to share this one with her. The author excels once again at featuring that special bond created between sisters. Like, seeing Cat care and worry for her little sister Maya, who's born with cystic fibrosis which affects her breathing and digestion.

Secondly, the color palette is refreshingly vibrant in **Ghosts**. And so were the aspects of the author being willing to explore happiness as much as she was willing to explore pain, grief, and unhappiness.

Which then leads me to feature how utterly spellbinding and visually stunning the celebration scene was:

Last but not least, this graphic novel made me feel excited to go and check out the Disney film **Coco**, also centered around Día de Muertos, as soon as possible.

*Note: I'm an Amazon Affiliate. If you're interested in buying **Ghosts**, just click on the image below to go through my link. I'll make a small commission!*

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Pinky says

What I did after reading this:

I love Raina Telgemeier's graphic novels! I've read the Babysitter Club, Smile and Sisters. I loved all of those and when I saw this at the library, I was super excited to read it. It was a cute story that talks about an important issue. I love Maya and Cat, they are such loving sisters. I love how they look out for each other and care for each other. I feel like it would be better to jump right into this book without knowing much about it. At least, that's what I did and I enjoyed it. I highly recommend this to everyone!

I'll be off again!

Rebecca McNutt says

This graphic novel deals with some profound and heavy topics and themes, from the paranormal to cystic fibrosis to moving away your school and friends. However, *Ghosts* is a beautiful and hopeful graphic novel from the author of *Smile*, one that teaches younger readers that even in the most dire situations there is always a bright side.

David Schaafsma says

Telgemeier keeps getting better and better, and this is her best book so far. All of her work has been wildly popular and multiple-award-winning, in part because she is so irrepressibly happy and energetic, with so much *joie de vivre* to go around. Two were memoirs, *Smiles* and *Sisters*, and I thought they were great for pre-teens, all my kids loved them and have read them again and again. *Drama* started to deal just a tad more seriously with some social issues, but in *Ghosts* we see her most ambitious and--for me; I'll let you know about what the kids say--satisfying project so far.

Cat, a tween, has to leave her friends to move to Bahia de Luna to help with the health of her breathing-challenged sister, Maya, who has cystic fibrosis. Bahia de Luna is inspired by foggy Half Moon Bay, coastal California, a place of magic, and her story is also in part inspired by Dia de los Muertos. The threat of death and ghosthood is ever-present for the super happy Maya. Knowing that people might die is a good thing, I suppose; the fact that Telgemeier has Cat confront her fears about death and the world of spirits adds depth to this story.

And in this story ghosts--the spirits of the people we love that Dia de Los Muertos celebrates--are very present in this foggy town. A local boy introduces Maya and Cat to the ghosts and this gives Telgemeier a chance to draw ghosts (not that impressively) and a Day of the Dead celebration (depicted much more impressively, beautifully). She's a talented kid graphic novel writer and artist, with lots of life and color. Not that much depth yet, but it's coming. . . .

Ghosts is a really lively, engaging tale, not heavy, celebrating family and tradition and acknowledging death as part of life. And Telgemeier seems to understand sisters, which is another plus. I liked it quite a bit.

sharon says

So, here is what I wrote to a friend who was interested in the accuracy of the portrayal of Cystic Fibrosis. So,

if you are interested in that aspect - here ya go! I have a daughter with CF and am pretty actively involved in the CF community:

As for the CF stuff, it is definitely accurate, but it is quite rare today for a child of that age to have such advanced stage disease. Not that it never happens, but rare. Most cases that are considered severe would have children who still live pretty regular lives but are hospitalized every couple months for IV antibiotics and such (a "tune up"). Also, while there is some use in moving somewhere with salt water in the air, anyone with that severe of an illness would definitely want to be near a major cf center. Salt water is probably no help at that point, and why move to the middle of nowhere instead of to like, say, near the ocean in a major city with great health care! But....all that said, those are sort of nitpicky details probably and coming from a reader with too much knowledge. I am a little concerned, though, with the outdated portrayal of CF as a death sentence in youth. It is a serious illness, generally considered chronic, not fatal, for young people today.

So, that's my critical review. Also, I really love the book. The layers and symbolism, the handling of complicated issues, the rediscovery of personal heritage ...all make this stand out. I am, though, reserving some judgement until I hear more from people of the culture she is writing about, since I am not an expert and can't judge if there is inaccuracy or offensiveness in her portrayal of Day of the Dead etc.

Lola says

Every time Raina Telgemeier releases a new graphic novel, I get super excited. Her stories are so heartfelt and honest.

“Ghosts,” however, is a little different from her previous works. For starters, it isn’t as realistic, which I think is its main weakness. It definitely is the reason why I couldn’t give it a 5-star-rating.

I loved the culture in it, especially the Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) which I’ve always found quite interesting and spectacularly unique. It’s definitely the author’s most diverse book to date.

However much I enjoyed the Día de los Muertos elements and scenes, though, I found that the addition of actual ghosts who interact with people took away from the realism of the story.

But it’s pretty charming and moving nonetheless. Cat’s sister Maya has cystic fibrosis, which is why they had to move to Bahía de la Luna, where fog is ever-present in the air. The right place to find ghosts, if one wishes to.

Cat and Maya’s relationship is extremely heart-warming and honest. They truly care for one another and not only because they both know they’re not going to be sisters for ever. Plus Maya, although she is very sick, keeps her smiles on at all times; I found her to be tremendously brave.

The themes explored make this a memorable graphic novel I think anyone looking for an original and atmospheric story should read. And it’s so masterfully illustrated you’ll want to keep it for ever. I sure as hell will treasure this copy.

Jon(athan) Nakapalau says

I always love finding 'hidden gems' like this GN. The relationship between sisters is told from a perspective of hope tinged with possible loss; the relationship with the ghosts of loved ones who return during Dia de los Muertos underlines the limited time we have with our loved ones...a lesson we need to remember every day.
