



Ramps and Rails, Ups and Downs

FEATURING **OLLIE™**

BY SUSAN HUGHES
ILLUSTRATED BY GÉRALDINE CHARETTE



OLLIE[™]

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An Our Generation® book

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Chapter One

CATCHING A RIDE

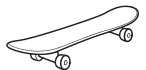
“Theodore! Ollie!” Mom called up the stairs. “If you want a lift to school, I can take you right now. I’m heading in that direction!”

Excellent. That meant my brother, Theo, and I wouldn’t have to grab the school bus this morning.

“But I repeat: I need to leave right now, kids!”

“Coming!” Theo called from his boy’s cave, aka his bedroom, down the hall. He’s 11, two years older than I am. I’m messy—but he’s twice as messy. Clothes all over the floor, a tower of magazines on his desk, and extra skateboard parts scattered everywhere. However, I admit, I’m slower than he is. Pretty much always. At home anyway. At school though...

“Ollie, you better be down in two minutes,” Theo yelled to me as he hurried past my doorway. “If we miss Mom’s ride and have to catch the bus, I’ll be mad.”



We like riding with Mom whenever we can. It's not that we don't like the bus, it's because we like spending time with our parents. They're both busy real estate agents. They always seem to be dashing off to open houses, meeting with clients, taking calls during family dinners or missing them altogether—mornings, afternoons, and evenings. Weekends, too.

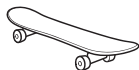
So, getting a ride to school with one of our parents is a good way for us to squeeze in some extra minutes.

I finished buttoning my shirt, grabbed my hairbrush, my hair elastics, and my backpack, and raced after Theo.

I stopped at the front door where Dad stood waiting, fiddling with his phone and holding my lunch bag.

“Here you go, Olive!” he said, handing me the bag and giving a gentle tug to my tangle of hair. “I’m still not used to seeing you and Theo in school uniforms; shirts buttoned up and tucked in—almost. Even your face is clean, except for a little jam you missed.” He grinned, wiping my mouth.

“New school, no choice,” I reminded him. “Are you going to be home for dinner tonight?”





“I’ll be here. Mom won’t,” Dad said. His phone rang. “So, I’ll get to hear all about your day. Oh, and I’m making pasta!” He threw me a kiss and lifted the phone to his ear.

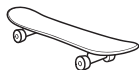
I ran to the car.

Of course, Theo was in the front passenger seat, wiggling his eyebrows at me. He loves sitting in the front seat next to Mom. And for now, he gets to sit there because he’s 11 and I’m only 9. I’m not quite big enough yet, but as soon as I am, I’ll try to get to the front seat before him. It’ll be first come, first served*.

Theo and I get along great, but we’re both competitive. We want each other to do well, but we each want to do better than the other, to be the best!

Sound impossible? Maybe. But wanting to be as good as Theo makes me try harder at everything.

Like now. I hadn’t even finished buckling my seatbelt and Theo was telling Mom about an amazing trick he learned on his skateboard a few days ago. And then, as we headed down our street, Theo told her how he helped a friend at school with some math problems at lunch yesterday.



“Good job,” she said.

I smiled to myself. He still hadn’t told Mom or Dad about the history test he got back last week. On the school bus home that day, I peeked over his shoulder while he looked at it. A-. Not bad for most kids, but Theo wasn’t happy with anything below an A.

No way would I ever tell on Theo, though. It was like we had a code. We competed against each other, yes. But tattle*? Never.

“And how are you doing back there, Ollie?” Mom asked.

“I’m good, Mom,” I said.

“Anything special going on today? Are you both feeling OK about school?” she asked. “I can’t believe it’s November already, and you’ve been in your new school for two months.”

We’d just moved into this city before the beginning of the school year.

“Yes, I really like all the new friends I’ve made,” Theo said, easily. Theo is a friend magnet. He just has to look at a kid and that kid will want to be his friend.

Me? It’s different for me.



I loved my old school, and it was hard to leave. I had two really good friends there and I miss them. We'd known each other since we were in preschool.

But, "Yup, thanks," I said to Mom.

I'd been worried about coming here and how I'd manage. I'd never really had to make new friends before. But I'd found a way. And so things were OK, after all. Pretty much, that is.

"Here's fine, thanks, Mom," I said, as I always do when we're a block from the school.

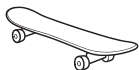
"I can take you closer," Mom said.

"No, thanks," I said quickly. "Leave us here, and you won't get stuck in the line-up of cars at drop-off in front of the school."

Mom pulled over and Theo and I hopped out. With a quick wave goodbye, Mom drove off.

As always, Theo set his skateboard down and buckled on his helmet.

"Oh Ollie. You're so ridiculous!" he said.



Chapter Two

SCHOOL OLIVE

“Seriously, Ollie, come on,” Theo said with a grin. “Walk with me into school this once.”

But I said, “No way!” and headed off at a quick pace, leaving him behind.

I pulled two hair elastics and several hair clips from my pockets and lassoed my wild hair into two ponytails. I snapped the hair clips here and there.

“OK, then. See you later,” Theo called, as he glided past me. “Oh, and don’t forget to tuck in your shirt. And knot your tie properly—*Olive!*”

I quickly checked my shirt, but of course, he was teasing. I had pulled up my socks and tucked in my shirt while I was in the car. My tie was fine too.

I was all neat, tidy, and calm. No longer Ollie, I was ready for my day of being Olive. School Olive.

Up ahead at the school gates, Theo met up with



his new buddies. At our old school, he had made so many friends because he was friendly, kind, and athletic. He could be himself and everyone liked him. It was the same here, and I was happy for my brother.

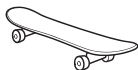
I had made three new friends, which was amazing. It just wasn't nearly as easy for me as for Theo. In fact, it was a little complicated.

As the bell rang, I met up with my three new friends in line: Hilary, Tess, and the girl I seem to get along with best—Rochelle. We all said hi and headed into school and to our classroom.

On my first day of school, I had been nervous. It was so different from my old school. Everyone was wearing uniforms here, and the girls all seemed more... fancy. Their hair was perfect. They looked super smart and serious. Athletic, too. Many of them even had pierced ears!

I wasn't sure I would fit in. Yes, I'm smart. And serious about certain things, and pretty athletic. I'm not sure why I felt so awkward. But I did.

So, when the girls who sat near me in class talked about loving gymnastics and taking dancing lessons, I nodded along, like I also enjoyed those things.



When they mentioned their favorite fantasy books, I pretended I'd read them too. I rushed to the library that weekend, borrowed the books, and read them all. I wanted to be able to talk about the characters and plots, in case the girls did.

How else could I make new friends? These girls would think I was weird if they knew what I really did after school and on weekends. But if I could be like them, maybe they'd like me.

And so far, so good. I just need to remember to be School Olive when I'm with them.

In our classroom, Rochelle, Tess, Hilary, and I all sit together at one big table, two across from two, right beside the window.

"I went to a play with my grandparents on Sunday," Hilary told us as we sat down.

Tess sat next to me. "We got to go on the balance beam at gymnastics on Saturday. But ballet class on Sunday was so hard," she sighed. She waved her hands gracefully, demonstrating several positions. "What did you do, Olive? Anything fun?"

Hmmm... What could I tell them? "Um, Mom and





I made dinner together on Saturday—stir fry surprise,” I said. “We raided the cupboards, pulled out all kinds of things, and concocted a new recipe!”

Tess laughed. “That sounds fun,” she said.

I laughed too, relieved she didn’t ask what I did the rest of the day on Saturday and Sunday.



At lunchtime, my friends and I headed together to the school cafeteria.

I thought back to the first day of school. I was so scared of eating alone. But our teacher asked Rochelle to be my buddy for the day, so that was the first time I sat with her, Tess, and Hilary at lunchtime.

I memorized what they brought for lunch. On the weekend, I went grocery shopping with Dad. I bought the exact same things the girls ate so I could have lunches like them.

Theo thought I was silly. “You don’t even like sandwiches,” he said.

But being like them meant trying to get good grades, listening to the teachers, and following all the rules.



Last year, I didn't always pay attention in class. Or do my homework or study my hardest.

Now, two months in, my teacher and my parents were pleased with how well I was doing. I was, too and a bit surprised. So was Theo. He usually did better than me at school and finally, he wasn't the only one getting good grades.

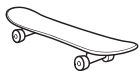
"We're proud of you, Ollie," Dad told me when I brought home my history test last week. Mom came home late that night, after I'd turned out my light, but she came up to give me a special kiss.

So, guess what? Trying to be more like my friends than like me, like Real Ollie, wasn't all bad.

Today, we found a table and sat down. Tess frowned, peeking into her lunch box. "Cheese taco. Trade, anyone?"

Six weeks ago, Tess's dad had declared "no more sandwiches." He told Tess he was going to make her educational lunches by preparing a round-the-world menu. I loved seeing what she pulled out of her lunch bag each day, but Tess usually rolled her eyes.

"Olive, trade me?" she begged.



“OK,” I said.

It was perfect. I got to give away my sandwiches, get bonus points with Tess for being a good sport, and my friends didn’t know I liked her food better than mine!

Being School Olive wasn’t so bad most of the time—except that I couldn’t hang out with Theo at school. Ever. My three friends ignored all the boys at school, including their own brothers, so...I had to do it, too.

Like today. When my girlfriends and I got to the playground after lunch, Theo waved at me from across the yard. But I couldn’t run over and say hi to him. I couldn’t even wave back. I needed to be as much like my friends as possible. It wasn’t fun pretending Theo wasn’t my best friend, but it was the smartest thing to do.



Chapter Three

MY VERY OWN SKATEBOARD

“I just went for it!” Theo said.

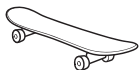
It was the end of the school day. Theo and I were waiting for the school bus. He pulled off his tie and stuffed it into his backpack.

“I just pushed off* fast, hit the jump, and went into the air.” Theo waved his arms around as he described the skateboard trick he had tried at lunchtime. “And I actually landed it, all wheels back on the ground!”

“Nice,” I said, grinning. It was fun to see him so excited.

“Ollie—I mean, Olive—if you brought your board to school, maybe we could skateboard home together instead of taking the bus,” he said. “Wouldn’t that be fun?”

“Yes, but I doubt Mom and Dad would let us,” I said.



But he and I both knew that wasn't the real reason I never brought my skateboard to school.

Theo pulled gently on one of my ponytails. "No skateboard, tidy ponytails, tucked-in shirt—you're such a chameleon, Ollie! You might be happier if you just let your so-called friends see the real you!"

Chameleons try to blend in with their surroundings to stay safe. I guess that's what I was doing. But it was for the best.

If my friends knew I wanted to be the best skateboarder in the world? They'd dump me.

So many people have the wrong idea about skateboarders. Maybe because the sport was first started by surfers who wanted some fun when the waves weren't big enough. They nailed roller-skate wheels to wooden boards and invented "sidewalk surfing"!

The boarders made up all kinds of cool tricks and their own rules. They skated wherever they could. People don't always like skateboarders because they think skateboarding is dangerous. They don't think it's a real sport. And yes, you need to wear safety equipment and be careful. But isn't that true of football, horseback



jumping—even gymnastics?

Anyway, I'm worried my friends might have those same wrong ideas about skateboarders. So, maybe I'll tell them my secret eventually, but—

“Not yet,” I told Theo. “And you won't tell them in the meantime, right?”

Theo nodded, and I knew I could trust him.

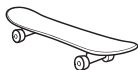
We got on the bus, and he joked around with some friends while I looked out the window. I thought about how we first got into skateboarding. It was about two years ago. Our Aunt Joy came for a visit and brought us gifts. She got me a purple scooter, but she gave Theo a skateboard.

Theo began to board all the time. He loved it. Sometimes I'd ride on my scooter, but lots of times, I'd sit on the curb and watch. It looked amazing.

One day, Theo let me try his board. I couldn't balance at all at first. But by the third and fourth try, I did OK. And I loved it too.

Soon I was asking Theo to borrow his board almost constantly.

“Ollie, maybe you should get your own,” he told



me one day.

So I asked Mom and Dad for a skateboard, but they said I'd have to wait until my next birthday—which was ten months away.

No way. I couldn't wait! I decided to save up all my allowance. I asked my parents if they'd pay me for doing extra chores, like vacuuming the living room, watering the garden, and even mowing the grass in the backyard. And as the weeks went by and Theo saw what I was doing, he did extra chores too and gave all the money to me.

Finally, I had enough to buy a skateboard!

I had pored over* them on our family computer, so I knew exactly which one I wanted. Mom took me to the sports store and there it was, waiting just for me! And Mom got me safety gear too—a helmet, knee pads, elbow pads—and skate shoes. She said they were from her and Dad as an early birthday present.

The moment we got home, I changed into a pair of comfy shorts and my new skate shoes, put on the safety gear, and started skateboarding.

Up and down our driveway and the sidewalk in front of our house. Over and over and over.





Theo and I had loved our home in the small town of Adora, but it didn't have a skatepark like the ones we'd seen on TV shows and videos. Plus, no one we knew boarded.

So, we just skated as much as we could, going everywhere on our boards—to school, to the corner store, to the library. I got better at pushing off and I started to feel more confident. I got good at dodging cracks in the sidewalk and going around clumps of leaves and puddles. And after Theo and I watched a few videos on simple skateboard, we learned to do different kinds of turns too.

One whole year has gone by since then. I still love skating on my very own skateboard just as much as I did on the day I got it. And now we live in a city with a skatepark!

But we can only go there on weekends and this was a Monday. So, Theo and I hurried home from the bus stop and raced upstairs to change from our school uniforms into our boarding “uniforms” and skate shoes. We put on our knee and elbow pads and grabbed our helmets and boards.

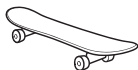
Mom and Dad had bought us a portable ramp* for



our birthdays this year. We don't have a driveway where we live now, so we leave the ramp in the empty paved lot at the end of our dead-end street. That's where we were headed.

Theo and I dragged the ramp into the middle of the lot. I pulled the elastics from my ponytails, shook my hair loose, and snapped on my helmet.

I jumped on my board. I was skating, finally. Back to the Real Ollie, happy and free!



Chapter Four

YOU HAVE TO SAY YES!

“Woo-hoo!”

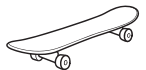
I whizzed down the side of the bowl*—*swoosh!* I shot across the bottom, and my momentum* took me right up the other side. I did a rock 'n' roll at the rim, pushing down on my rear foot to lift the front of the board and turning it. Then I rode back down into the bowl—*whee!*

I always keep an eye out for other skaters, and they keep an eye out for me. We wait our turns and stay out of each other's way. There's an understanding of how to stay safe in the bowl.

I scooted across the bottom of the bowl and zoomed right up the other side.

So much fun!

On Saturdays and Sundays, no matter what, Mom or Dad makes time to drop Theo and me at the skatepark. It's a great place to practice. The city's park has amazing



concrete structures, like bowls, ramps, rails*, and ledges*.

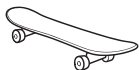
I don't skate on many of them. I'm not good enough yet. But I'm getting better, and I love to watch and learn from the other skaters.

Anyway, the park has awesome obstacles*, plus it's on the edge of the city, which is perfect, because none of the kids who come here even go to our school. I feel like the skate kids here care about the same things as me, so I don't have to try so hard to fit in. I feel like I can talk to all the kids here, even though most of them are older than Theo and me. I don't worry about trying to make a good impression*. I can be myself—fearless and strong.

Except with one of the girls—her name is Tova. She's my age. She's a good skater, but she won't take any risks. And she reminds me of the way I am when I'm at school, when I'm School Olive. So I don't talk to her much. I like hanging out with the others more.

I did another rock 'n' roll turn at the rim of the bowl, and—*whoosh!* Down I went again, over and over.

On this Saturday, Theo and I had been here all morning and most of the afternoon. Mom would be picking us up soon. I decided to skate along the flat for a



bit, so I could keep an eye out for her.

Andrea gave me a thumbs-up. She'd been working on grinding* on the rails for the last few hours. Andrea is about 16, one of the older skaters. She's always really nice to me. She made Theo and me feel welcome from the first time we stood on the edge of the park, holding our boards, not knowing anyone.

With Andrea watching, I put my back foot on the tail* of the board and pressed down hard. As the nose* tilted up, I slid the side of my other foot along the board to the top of the nose, pushing down a bit, while lifting my back foot at the same time.

I did this all really quickly and smoothly of course. And yes! The front of my board began to tip down, the back popped up, and so did I. My board and I were in the air! It was the first trick I ever learned, and it's my favorite. It's called an "ollie," the very same as my nickname!

"Ollie!" Andrea yelled.

She's cheering my trick, I thought, but then I realized she was calling me over.

"Hey, Ollie! Come here!"

Laughing, I pushed off and glided over.





“Hey, Ollie, did you hear the announcement?” Andrea asked. “There’s a new competition in a few weeks, here in our skatepark. Some of us are forming a team.”

“Cool,” I said.

“A team can have six skaters 16 and under, but at least one has to be under 12,” she said.

“Right,” I said. I looked around the skatepark.

Under 12. There weren’t many of us. Tova, me, Theo, and a few others.

She’ll have to choose Theo! I thought. Not many of us under-12s were as good as my brother. I practice lots and also challenge myself. But I try to stay on the border between safe and risky.

But Theo is a totally amazing skater. He likes to push his limits and is as tough as nails*. He avoids falling, of course, but if it happens, no biggie.

“We’ll need to choose in a week or two,” Andrea said.

“Excellent,” I said. Theo waved to me and pointed to where Mom had pulled up. “Thanks for telling me, Andrea. See you later!” I told her as I hurried away.

Theo had heard about the competition too. As we



walked to the car we agreed not to tell our parents about it quite yet. We knew they'd worry that it would distract us from our schoolwork.

But later, as Theo and I washed up for dinner, I said, "I'm sure you'll be picked to be on Andrea's team. It'll be awesome! Your first real competition!"

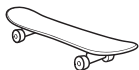
"Yeah, maybe," he said.

"Maybe what?" I asked. "Are you kidding? When they ask you, you definitely have to say yes!"

He shrugged. "We don't know they'll pick me. And if they do..." He shot me a glance. "What would you do if they picked you? Wouldn't you feel...?"

"Kids!" Dad yelled. "We only asked you to wash your hands before dinner, not have a bath!"

Laughing, Theo and I turned off the faucet and dried our hands, shouting back, "Coming right now, Dad!"



Chapter Five

WHO'S ON THE TEAM?

I like Wednesdays. Theo and I both do. Theo gets time alone with Mom because she drives him to school early for basketball practice. And I get time alone with Dad when he walks me to the school bus.

This morning, Dad told me funny stories about the dog he had when he was a boy. His name was Bellyache. Bellyache would manage to slip out of his collar when Dad walked him and get into all kinds of trouble.

I jumped on the bus, laughing as I tied up my hair in two ponytails, tucked in my shirt, pulled up my socks, and—ta-da! I was School Olive.

And it was School Olive who spied Theo skateboarding along the hallway later that day when my friends and I came inside after afternoon recess. He looked like he was showing his buddy Paulo how he could maneuver the board by leaning his weight from



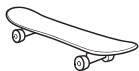
side to side. I couldn't believe it! I wanted to yell out to him. Everyone knows skateboarding isn't allowed inside the school.

But School Olive wouldn't yell, and anyway, there was Principal Storis. Principal Storis stopped in front of Theo, hands on her hips, with a "You should know better, Theodore" expression on her face. Theo put on his "Who me? I forgot this was against the rules" expression. I almost laughed!

But what if Principal Storis confiscates* Theo's skateboard for a month? Or tells Mom and Dad he's been skateboarding in the school, and they take his board away for a month? What would Theo do when he gets picked for the competition team? Like me, he does his best skating using his own board. Without it...

Theo nodded, looking sorry, and Principal Storis started walking away. Whoa, it looked like Theo got off with just a warning. He was lucky this time!

Theo turned and winked at me. But I couldn't wave back. Rochelle was right beside me, and she probably wouldn't think it was cool for School Olive to be friendly toward her own wild brother.



Then Rochelle nudged me. “Olive, wasn’t that your brother back there? Getting in trouble with Principal Storis?”

“Um...what? Who?” I said, stalling.

“Why don’t you ever hang around with him? He looks like he’s always having fun,” she said.

I was so surprised I couldn’t think of anything to say. Luckily, Hilary and Tess called to us to hurry up, and Rochelle got distracted as we headed into class.



“Theo! Theo!” I called.

It was Friday. Theo and I unbuckled our helmets as we carried our skateboards home from the empty lot.

“Have you made up your mind? You’re going to say yes, right? When they ask you?” I said.

He didn’t look at me as he took off his helmet and swung it by the straps.

“Theo, they’ll ask you tomorrow. The competition is only three weeks away. They won’t want to wait much longer,” I insisted.

Theo shrugged. “It would be weird to be on a



skateboard team without you,” he said.

“Theo, that’s really nice, but dumb,” I said. “I want you to go on the team, even without me.”

Theo just bopped me lightly with his helmet, and then we went into dinner. What a guy. Sweet. Or maybe... Could he feel nervous about being on the team with those older, really fantastic boarders?



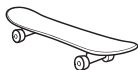
“Hey, Ollie,” Andrea called. She was standing with Gainer, Raj, Brenna, and Jess, who were some of the other best skaters at our park.

I’d been working on riding the ledges. The trick is to use an ollie to pop up onto them and then drop off the other side without spilling off the skateboard. Popping an ollie up and down sidewalk curbs is good practice for this. I did lots of that last year in front of our house.

Theo was nearby, working on getting more height with his ollie.

“Hey, Ollie, can you come here?” Andrea called.

“Sure, be right there!” I tried to get Theo’s attention before I headed over to Andrea and her friends.



Finally he saw me and glided over to the group with me.

This was it! Andrea must be about to ask Theo to join her team. My brother looked a bit hopeful, a bit nervous.

“Hey, Ollie. Oh, hey, Theo,” Andrea said. “So, this is going to be our competition team, minus one.”

“Nice,” I said, nodding. It was exciting that the five of them would represent our skatepark in the competition. Them and my brother.

“So, we want you on our team. Our under-12 skater,” Raj said.

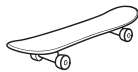
I looked at Theo, but he was looking at me. He had a funny expression on his face.

“Ollie,” Andrea said. She poked me gently with her skateboard. “What do you think?”

“I...” I blinked. “Wait—*me*? On your team?” I glanced at Theo again, and then turned to Andrea and the others. “But—why?”

“You’ve got some great moves.” Jess shrugged. “Will it be your first time competing?”

I stared. Then I nodded.





“That’s like we thought. We think you’ll do awesome,” said Gainer, giving me two thumbs up.

I just stared some more.

“So, maybe you need to think about it.” Brenna smiled. “No worries. But the competition is three weeks from today, and we have to send in our names by the end of next weekend. Can you let us know by then? If you’re not interested, we’ll have to pick someone else fast.”

I nodded. I picked up my board and held it close to my chest. I tried to keep breathing.

“Cool,” Andrea said, and off they went.

I watched them go, and I turned to Theo. His face looked sort of blank.

He took a breath and looked me in the eyes.

“Good for you, Ollie,” he said. He squeezed my shoulder the way Dad sometimes does. “I’m going to do some more skating.”



Chapter Six

WHERE DID YOU GET THAT SCAR?

Should I? Or shouldn't I?

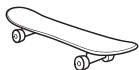
It was Wednesday afternoon and school had just ended for the day. I still couldn't decide.

"Cool." That was the word Andrea had used last Sunday, when I nodded that I would think about being on the team. But was it? Was it cool?

It sort of was. They wanted me to be on their team! They were impressed with my skateboard moves! But it wasn't cool because what about Theo? What about my brother?

Should I hold back, say no, and let them give Theo my spot?

Then again—it would be like a dream come true for me. To be in an actual skateboarding competition on this amazing team? They are so fantastic. And I'm...for my age, I'm good. Really good. They said so. I really, really



wanted to compete!

But should I? Or shouldn't I?

On Monday and Tuesday, I didn't worry too much about what to do. I waited for Theo to tell me he didn't want me to accept the spot.

But he didn't say anything about it. And I didn't talk to him about it. And neither of us mentioned it to Mom or Dad.

By this morning, it seemed strange that he hadn't said anything to me. Mom drove him to his early basketball practice, so I didn't see him before school. I decided I'd raise the topic on our bus ride home. I'd tell Theo I wouldn't say yes to Andrea. But what if I *did* say I'd be on their team—would Theo be angry?

Maybe I could ask him how he felt about all this.

Or not. Theo might be a bit mad at me because Andrea and the others asked me and not him to be on their team. Was that why he hadn't talked to me about it yet?

I walked toward the bus stop, watching for him. But he and his friend Kyle came around the corner, laughing and joking.

"Hey, Ollie," Theo called. "Kyle's coming over."



“Hi, Kyle,” I said.

So, I didn’t get a chance to talk to Theo about the competition on the bus. In fact, Theo didn’t once turn around to try to include me in their conversation.

What was his big problem? Why couldn’t he just be happy for me that I was picked for the team? Why did he have to ruin this for me?



The next morning, I woke up late and was feeling grumpy. We missed the bus and Dad ended up having to drive Theo and me to school.

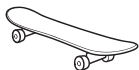
I almost forgot to put my hair in ponytails because we had to run for the school doors as the last bell rang.

At lunchtime, I was about to trade my sandwich for Tess’s chickpea salad when I saw Tess staring at my leg. Oops! Quickly, I pulled up my sock, but...too late.

“Where did you get that scar?” Tess asked. “What happened?”

Hilary and Rochelle both peered down at my leg.

“Oh, I tripped over a curb last year,” I said, feeling my face get hot. “I can be such a klutz* sometimes.”



That wasn't exactly what happened, but it was close enough. Actually, I got the scar when I wiped out doing a skateboard trick over a curb last year.

But just then Theo came over.

"Ollie," he said. "Can we talk for a minute? About...well, you know." He smiled. His hair was messy, and his shirt untucked.

"Ollie?" Rochelle said to me. "He calls you Ollie?"

"Who is that?" Hilary whispered to Tess.

I glared at Theo, who shrugged a sorry. Like he'd forgotten not to call me Ollie here at school. Like he cared that he might ruin everything for me.

"No!" I hissed. "I can't talk to you right now." I took a big bite of my apple.

He shrugged again, said, "OK," and walked away.

The rest of the afternoon, I felt terrible for treating him that way. Really terrible.

Rochelle asked me what was wrong. So did Tess. Of course, I didn't tell them—but I couldn't pretend everything was OK either.

Theo and I got to the school bus stop just as the bus pulled up. I was so happy to see him. As soon as we found





seats, I apologized right away.

He frowned. "I'm sorry I called you Ollie in front of your friends," he said. "I'm sorry I acted friendly to you. But Ollie, do you really want friends who don't know those things about you? Should you keep hiding away the real you?"

I just apologized again without answering.

"I don't get it," he said, sighing. "I hope you know what you're doing."

"I do," I told him, confidently. "I know what to do about them. But Theo, what should I do about the competition? Say yes to Andrea and the others? Say no?"

Theo stared at me. "What do you mean? You have to say yes. You have to be on their team. It sounds amazing. A great opportunity for you. If they'd asked me, I would have said yes."

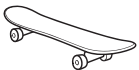
Really?

I felt kind of hurt. He'd have said yes right away if they'd asked him? Wouldn't he have worried about me feeling left out? Wouldn't he have even asked me my opinion?

"Hmmm," I said. "Right."



Theo put his headphones on and began listening to music. I turned and looked out the window.



Chapter Seven

OBSTACLES

The rest of that day and on Friday, Theo and I didn't talk again about the team and what I should do. On Friday, we didn't ride the bus together, either to school or on the way home. Theo ended up going early to school, and then he went to a friend's house after school and he even stayed for dinner.

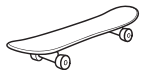
Mom and Dad were both busy preparing for their weekend open houses, so they didn't notice that he seemed to be avoiding me.

Well, maybe he was upset, but I was upset too. I was still surprised by him saying he would have gone on the team if they had asked him.

I kept wishing I could talk about all this with a friend. With Rochelle.

But there was no way.

Explain I was a skateboarder? That I loved riding



fast, taking chances? That I'd saved up forever for my special skateboard and when I rode it, I felt I could do almost anything? That I wasn't sure if I should agree to be on a skateboard team in case my brother felt left out?

No. She wouldn't understand. She wouldn't want to be my friend anymore. She'd tell the others.

I'd be alone at school.



On Saturday, Mom dropped us off at the skatepark. I skated all day, trying to decide what to do.

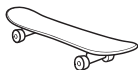
Near the end of the afternoon, while I took a water break, Tova skated over to me. She didn't say anything for a minute, and I didn't either. She fixed her ponytail. She straightened her shorts and pulled up her socks.

Still, neither of us spoke.

"Ollie," she said finally, "are you OK? You look upset."

I felt a lump in my throat. I was so surprised she had noticed. I snuck a look at her. She twirled her bracelet nervously.

I wished I could tell her about what was bothering





me at school. Maybe she'd understand. We did seem to be alike in a lot of ways. But I just couldn't. I didn't know her well enough. I'd hardly ever spoken to her before.

"Thanks, Tova," I said. "But...it'll be OK."

"OK then. That's good," she said.

I smiled back.

And then Theo came over and stood beside me. He smiled and nudged me with his helmet.

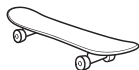
"What did you decide, Ollie?" he asked. "You should take the spot. That way, at least one of us can be in the competition."

"Theo," I said, "do you really mean it?"

"Sure, why not?" He shrugged. Then he grinned at me.

I was so relieved. I still had to hide my skateboarding from my friends and be School Olive all week, but at least things were back to normal between Theo and me.

"Ollie?" I heard someone call. It was Andrea. She was heading toward us. I knew I needed to give her my answer today. Was I on the team or not?



When Mom picked Theo and me up an hour later, I was holding a competition permission form for Mom and Dad to sign.

I was going to be on the team!



Chapter Eight

SKATERS ARE LOSERS

“You’re in a skateboard competition?” Hilary said.

“Do you actually even skateboard?” demanded Tess. “Have you really been hiding this from us all this time?”

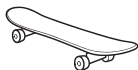
Rochelle hadn’t been at school all day. Tess and Hilary had gone inside to use the bathroom during recess. The three of us had just met up again and were about to head down the hallway to class.

“Why didn’t you tell us that you skateboard?” Tess asked.

“Maybe because skaters are losers,” said Hilary, flicking her hair back.

My face burned. I stopped and put my hands on my hips. *Skaters are losers?* I was so embarrassed. And angry! I wanted to cry and yell at them.

But that was something Ollie might do, and I was



School Olive right now. Calm and cool. Polite. Always doing the right thing.

I took a deep breath. I would somehow explain. Somehow make it OK. But first...

“Who told you that?” I asked.

“Why does that matter?” said Tess. “Is it true?”

“I bet that’s how you really got that scar,” said Hilary.

“Well?” asked Tess. “Are you going to tell us?”

The bell rang. Hilary and Tess turned abruptly and walked away.

“Ollie, what’s wrong?” It was Theo. He was on his way to class. He touched my arm. “Are you OK?”

“They found out,” I moaned. “Oh, Theo, somehow my friends found out I’m going to be in a skateboard competition. So now they know I’m a skateboarder.”

Theo looked down.

“Theo?” I asked. “*You* didn’t tell them, did you?”

“Ollie, let me explain...” he said.

“Theo...no! You didn’t!” I wailed.

“I didn’t do it on purpose,” he said quickly. “It slipped out. By mistake. They stopped me in the hall. One





of them asked if I was your brother, and she asked me about my skateboard, and everything just sort of poured out. Because I'm so proud of you, Ollie. And I thought it might actually help you do your best in the competition if your friends were there, cheering you on. It's silly you haven't told them!"

I shook my head. "Theo, I don't believe it. I thought I could trust you."

"But, Ollie..."

I felt a burning in my stomach. "Theo, I know the real reason you told them. You're mad that I'm in the competition instead of you."

"No, that's not true," said Theo. "I told you I didn't mind!"

"Well, I don't even really know if I want to do it now," I went on.

"Ollie, it's too late. You have to do it! The competition is this Sunday," Theo said.

By now, I was so hurt and angry I was crying. I pushed past Theo and hurried to my class. But then I stood in the open doorway.

How could I go in and act like nothing had



happened when everything had changed? Everything had gone wrong.

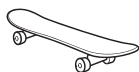
I wanted to turn around, go home, give up.

And I might have. But Mrs. Ali saw me standing there.

“Come along, Olive,” my teacher called. “Time for our math lesson.”

So, I told myself: if you can do an ollie onto a ledge and off, and if you can do the bowl at (almost) top speed, you can do this.

I wiped my eyes on my sleeve, breathed in and out, and I headed to my seat.



Chapter Nine

VANISHED!

Well, I made it through the rest of the week. I didn't see much of Theo, because whenever we were on the bus together, I ignored him. I got Mom and Dad to take me to the skatepark most afternoons so I could get in some extra practice, but Theo didn't come. He sort of gave up trying to talk to me.

Mom and Dad were really excited about me being in the competition. Although Dad wondered why Theo wasn't on the team. "Your brother's good, too, right? And doesn't he have more experience than you?"

Right then, Theo happened to come into the living room where Dad and I were chatting.

I was worried about what he might say. Would he tell the truth? Would Theo tell Dad he wasn't sure why I was picked instead of him when he was so much better than me?



But he didn't.

"Ollie hasn't been skating as long as me, but she's really good, Dad. Better than I am for her age, for sure. Maybe just plain better than me," he said.

Dad nodded. "I see," he said. He looked happy. Like Theo was being a good sport to say that about me.

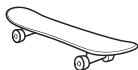
Then I figured it out.

Theo was only saying this because he felt bad. He felt guilty about telling my friends about me, my skating, and the competition! But he was still secretly mad that I was chosen for the team instead of him.

So I kept avoiding him that week. As for Hilary and Tess, I was a bit of a coward. I didn't want to give them a chance to ignore me, so I avoided them, too. Rochelle wasn't at school at all. I think she was away with her dad visiting her grandmother. So at least, she didn't know yet—didn't know I wasn't really School Olive.

I felt so bad. No, I hadn't been honest with the girls, but see? From the way they reacted, I knew I'd been right to hide the real Ollie from them.

And the next day, I found out for sure that Theo was mad at me.





When I got home from school, I practiced boarding outside for a while, alone. Theo was inside, hanging out with Kyle.

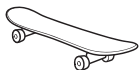
But when I was clearing the table after dinner, I suddenly remembered I'd left my board outside. I had never forgotten to bring it in before. That's how distracted I was! That's how mad I was at Theo!

I ran out to grab it. I was sure I'd left it just outside our front door.

But...it was gone.

I searched and I searched. No skateboard.

It had vanished!



Chapter Ten

GOING IT ALONE

Where was my skateboard? How could it be gone?
Worse, how could I compete without it? How?

My panic changed to anger.

I knew what had happened.

I ran inside. Theo was just heading upstairs, but he stopped when I yelled to him.

“Where is it?” I demanded. “Theo, you scared me. I thought someone had stolen it.”

Theo stood on the stairs, looking confused. “What are you talking about?” he asked.

“Did you hide my skateboard because I’m mad at you for telling my friends that I’m in the skateboarding competition? Because I’m in it and you’re not?”

“Ollie, do you really think I would take your board and hide it?” Theo asked, frowning. “Of course, I didn’t. Why would I do that? And I only told your two friends



about the competition because I overheard them talking about you in the hallway. One was saying you're not very outgoing. The other said she thought you might be good at sports, but you didn't seem very interested."

He hesitated. "It bothered me. They were criticizing you. They didn't sound like they were being good friends."

I folded my arms. *Hmm...*

"So I told them you're an amazing skateboarder and you were even asked to join a team in a competition this weekend. I was standing up for you, Ollie," he said.

"Oh," I said. I bit my lip.

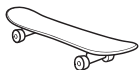
"And I'm sorry you lost your board, and normally I'd help you look for it or lend you mine for the competition. But now? After you accuse me of taking yours? No way."

Theo turned and stomped up the steps.

"Theo, I'm sorry!" I called. "Theo!"

I heard his bedroom door close.

I felt horrible. My brother has always been so amazing and supportive. How could I have doubted him?



I tossed and turned all that night and I woke up late on Saturday morning. I rushed to find Theo, say sorry again, and see if he was ready to head to the skatepark. I was going to meet up with the team for our final practice, and I was sure he'd want to go too. But he wasn't in his room—or downstairs.

“Your brother said he's going to hang out with Sadir today,” Mom told me. She was a bit distracted. She was expecting to make a big sale this weekend.

I nodded. His skateboard leaned against the back door. For a moment, I wondered, Should I “borrow” it? But no. Theo didn't want me to use it. And I didn't deserve to use it.

“OK, come on, honey,” Mom called. “I'll drop you at the skatepark.”

“Yes, coming,” I told Mom. I hadn't told her my skateboard was gone. All the way to the skatepark, I waited for her to ask where it was. But she was on a work call, so she didn't notice.

I knew I would have to tell Mom and Dad that my board was stolen. Should I tell her what I'd said to Theo? No. I was so careless to leave my board outside. And I was



too embarrassed to tell her that I thought Theo had hidden it.

How could I tell her I thought he'd been jealous of me? I just couldn't do it. Not yet anyway.

No, I would put up posters on telephone poles in our neighborhood when I got home and maybe someone would return the board and I'd never have to tell my parents.

"Oh, there's Andrea! Good luck practicing and have fun today, honey," Mom said as she dropped me off. "I'm so excited you're going to be in the competition tomorrow. I can't wait to cheer you on!"

Andrea, Raj, Brenna, Jess, and Gainer—my new teammates—were already practicing hard when I arrived. I hurried over.

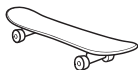
"You're late," Raj called.

"We expect you to do well tomorrow," Jess said.

I nodded. I didn't know what I was going to do, but I couldn't tell them that my board was gone.

"I'll be out there in a minute," I told them, pulling on my hoodie, trying to stall.

A minute later, Tova came over. She put her hand



on my arm. “Everything OK?” she asked.

I wanted to say yes, but I couldn’t speak.

She stood beside me quietly. And before I knew it, I found myself telling her everything. I went on and on, and she nodded while I talked.

When I finished, we watched the other kids skateboarding. I felt a bit lost. I didn’t know who I was at that minute. I didn’t feel like School Olive. I didn’t feel like Ollie, the skateboarder, either.

Tova held out her skateboard to me. “Here,” she said. “Use mine.”

“What? No,” I said. I shook my head. “I can’t take your board. You came here today to skate, and you won’t be able to.”

“Ollie!” called Andrea, waving to me from the bowl. “Come on!”

I waved back to her, uncertainly.

“Ollie, really. It’s no problem,” Tova said quickly. “Take it. You need it more than me. You can use it today and tomorrow in the competition.”

I swallowed. She was being so nice.

“Are you sure?” I asked.





“Absolutely,” she said, giving me a big smile.

“Thank you, Tova,” I said.

“Practice hard today,” Tova added. “I just know you’ll be great tomorrow, Ollie.”

I grinned and jumped on the board. I *would* practice hard. I would focus on my moves. I was Ollie, a skateboarder, fearless and strong!



Chapter Eleven

THINK LIKE A SKATER

As soon as dinner was over, I held onto my feeling of fearlessness and I told Mom and Dad I had lost my skateboard. I explained that Tova had let me use hers today, and that I could use it tomorrow too.

I waited nervously but they were pretty calm. They agreed I'd been careless to leave it outside, but they said they'd help me replace it. Of course, I'd have to contribute by once again doing extra chores.

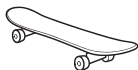
I was so happy!

"Thanks, Mom and Dad," I said, running to hug them both.

Next, I had to talk to Theo. I could do it. I was Ollie, fearless and strong.

Theo had gone up to his room right after dinner. I hurried upstairs and tapped at his door.

"Theo? Theo, can I come in?" I called.



“Sure, Ollie,” he said. He was lying on his bed, reading a boarding magazine.

I perched on the edge of his bed and launched into my apology. I told him again and again that I was sorry for being a bad sister. For being selfish. For not trusting him.

“OK,” he said. “It’s fine.” He put his magazine down and sat up.

“Really, Theo,” I continued. “I should never have accused you of taking my board, and...”

“OK, OK,” he said, rolling his eyes. “Stop! Apology accepted. Just move and let me read my magazine!”

I grinned and refused to budge. “Not until you promise you’re going to the competition tomorrow.”

He grinned. “Are you kidding?” he said. “Of course, I’m going. Now get out of here, and make sure you get a good night’s sleep!”



Mom and Dad stood in the crowd of spectators, chatting with the other parents. Yes, they were both here to watch me! I almost couldn’t believe it. They had so much going on, but they said this was more important.



Theo watched from the side of the park as I warmed up on Tova's board with Andrea, Raj, Brenna, Jess, and Gainer. Now I stood with him as the first event began.

"How are you feeling?" Theo asked.

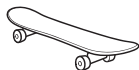
"OK, but still feeling guilty," I told him. "This should be you competing. You're better than me. You know it, and I know it."

"Seriously, Ollie, get over it. I'm fine, and I want you to win! So right now, you need to act like a winner. You need to think like a skater. No emotions. Just focus on your moves."

I nodded.

Jess and Gainer were both in the first event—bowl for under-16s. They nailed it, zooming up one side of the bowl and into the air, turning and flipping their boards, grabbing the boards with their hands mid-air! Theo and I cheered and high-fived.

Next was the street event for under-16s. Brenna, Raj, and Andrea were competing in it. I watched each of my teammates go through their moves, one by one, moving through the course with stairs, ledges and handrails, walls and slopes. I suddenly saw Tova, standing with a small



group of kids. She saw me looking and waved, and I waved back.

The bowl event for under-12s was underway. I watched the first few competitors, but then—oh no, there was Rochelle!

My stomach lurched.

Rochelle! Why was she here? What should I do?

Theo looked at me. “What’s wrong?” he said.

I pointed to Rochelle. Maybe I shouldn’t compete. Tess and Hilary were probably never going to talk to me again. What if I lost my last school friend? Thinking about it was making me feel wobbly.

“Ollie, she’s probably here to support you. Or maybe not,” he said. “Either way, you have to forget about everything but your performance. You can do this. Think like a skater. Focus on your tricks.”

My event was about to begin—the street skate for under-12s.

Theo gave me a quick hug. “Go for it,” he said.

Mom and Dad were cheering.

“Good luck!” Andrea shouted. “Make us proud!”

Suddenly I remembered: I love skateboarding.



Competing today was a dream come true for me—for the real me. I had to do it and do my best, no matter what.

Out I went on Tova's board. I reminded myself to feel like a winner and I started my run.

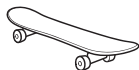
I jumped down one set of stairs and did a tricky turn I'd been practicing for weeks. I headed to a different set of stairs and completed another difficult trick—skating straight down and hitting each stair just right. *Alright!*

I popped an ollie, did a slide along the concrete and came to a perfect stop. I did another ollie followed by another really good slide, and one more ollie. I was doing OK. Better than OK!

I headed along the slopes, up and down, up and down, and up, loving the feeling of flying as fast as the wind. I came back on the level, ollied up onto the rail, and slid along it with my board. *Whoa!* I almost went down, but I quickly recovered my balance and made it to the other side. *Phew!*

Now came my last trick—and the hardest one. The 50-50*. I'd been practicing and practicing it.

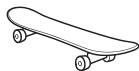
Hoping for the best—no, determined to *do* my best—I skated toward the ledge, approaching it from the





side, and when I got just close enough, yes! I ollied up onto it. *Whoosh*—I slid across it, so my board was half on and half off the ledge, just so! I kept my weight just right. When I reached the end, I dropped off the ledge, keeping my feet on my board.

Yahoo! I did it!



Chapter Twelve

THE REAL OLLIE

Our team didn't win first place. Or second or third.

But we weren't absolutely last either. And the six of us were all really happy with our performances. Me especially, I think. I was so relieved I hadn't made any huge mistakes. I couldn't stop grinning. Andrea even called me a rock star!

Mom and Dad hugged me and said they were proud of me.

Theo ran up and threw his arms around me, shouting, "Way to go, Ollie!"

And then Rochelle was there with a big smile on her face.

"Ollie, you're an amazing skater! Is that what you call yourself? A skater? Or a boarder?" she said. "Well, in any case, wow—I had no idea you're such a great athlete. I'm glad I got back from visiting my grandma in



time to watch you compete. And I'm so glad Hilary and Tess spilled the beans*. They have to hurry to their ballet practice, but they asked me to congratulate you. They're over there, just leaving." Rochelle pointed toward the parking lot.

"They came to watch?" I said, surprised.

Sure enough, Hilary and Tess were leaning out a car window, waving and giving me a thumbs-up.

I wasn't sure what to say to Rochelle.

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you before about my skateboarding..." I began.

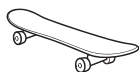
But Rochelle stopped me. "No problem. Listen, is it OK if I call you Ollie too? And did you know I love mountain biking? Do you want to go with me sometime? I never asked before because some kids find it scary."

"I didn't know you liked mountain biking. Yes! I'd love to go with you," I said.

Suddenly, it was so obvious. Theo had been right along. It was better to be myself.

"Rochelle, this is my brother, Theo, who is also a really good friend to me," I told her.

And I was forgetting another important person!





Quickly I spotted Tova. I ran to her and, laughing, brought her over to meet Rochelle. I explained all about losing my board and how Tova let me borrow hers.

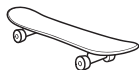
“Thanks again, Tova,” I said.

“You’re the best,” Theo told her.

“Sorry to interrupt,” Dad said, “but Mom and I are hoping we can take you, and Theo, and your two friends to the Shake and Smoothie Shop to celebrate your star efforts today, Ollie.”

“Will you come?” I asked Tova and Rochelle. “Please?”

They both nodded. And after a quick chat with their parents, we were off—my wonderful parents, my amazing brother, my good friends Tova and Rochelle, and me. The Real Ollie.



Glossary

*Many words have more than one meaning. Here are the definitions of words marked with this symbol * (an asterisk) as they are used in this story.*

bowl: *a concrete skatepark structure, sunken in the ground like an in-ground swimming pool, that has sloping sides and a flat bottom*

confiscates: *takes away something that belongs to someone else as a punishment*

50-50: *a skateboarding trick where the skateboard slides along an obstacle like a rail or ledge with the board hanging half-on and half-off*

“first come, first served”: *a phrase meaning that whoever gets somewhere first gets their choice*



grinding: *a skateboarding trick where the skateboard slides along a surface like a ledge, curb, or rail, but without using the wheels*

klutz: *someone who is clumsy*

ledge: *in skateboarding, a long concrete block with edges like a curb, used for slides or grinding tricks*

“make a good impression”: *have others think favorably about you*

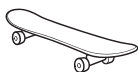
momentum: *the force your body has when it is moving*

nose: *the front end of a skateboard*

obstacle: *something a skateboarder skates on or over, such as stairs, a ledge, a curb, or a ramp*

pored over: *read about or studied carefully*

push off: *with one foot on the skateboard, move the board forward by pushing on the ground with the other foot*



rail: *an object that skateboarders use to do tricks on. Two types are: handrail (on the sides or down the middle of stairs) and flatbar (raised slightly off the ground)*

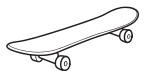
ramp: *a slope, sometimes curved at the top, that skaters use for gaining speed or certain tricks*

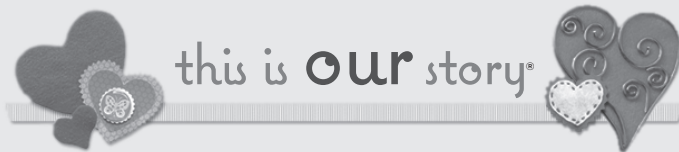
“spilled the beans”: *told something that was supposed to be secret*

tail: *the back end of a skateboard*

tattle: *to tell what someone else has done wrong*

“tough as nails”: *strong and determined*





We are an extraordinary generation of children.
And have we got a story to tell.

Our Generation® is unlike any that has come before. We're making a positive impact on our community by performing small, but powerful, acts of kindness, standing tall for causes we believe in, and creating a narrative where everyone can make a difference.

We're speaking up for those around us, taking leaps to develop big ideas, and embracing new opportunities without ever forgetting to build lasting memories along the way. From playing sports outdoors and learning new instruments, to singing out loud and dancing around, we're laughing together with friends as we share in the best moments of being a kid.

Our dreams have no limits, our voices echo around every corner, and we have the strongest belief that we can make anything and everything possible with our greatest gift: imagination.

This is our time. This is our story.

ourgeneration.com

About the Author

Susan Hughes is an award-winning author of many children's books, including picture books, chapter books, young adult novels, nonfiction books for all ages, and even a graphic nonfiction book. Susan is also a freelance editor and writer. She helps coach and guide other writers in revising and polishing their own manuscripts.

About the Illustrator

Passionate about drawing from an early age, Géraldine Charette decided to pursue her studies in computer multimedia in order to further develop her style and technique. Her favorite themes to explore in her illustrations are fashion and urban life. In her free time, Géraldine loves to paint and travel. She is passionate about horses and loves spending time at the stable. It's where she feels most at peace and gives her time to think and fuel her creativity.



Ramps and Rails, Ups and Downs became the book that you are holding in your hands with the assistance of the talented people at Maison Battat Inc., including Joe Battat, Dany Battat, Loredana Ramacieri, Sandy Jacinto, Véronique Casavant, Cynthia Lopez, Laurie Gaudreau-Levesque, Alexandra Bonfà, Ananda Guarany, Jenny Gambino, Arlee Stewart, Natalie Cohen, Zeynep Yasar, Joanne Burke Casey, and Pamela Shrimpton.

Ramps and Rails, Ups and Downs

Ollie™ was nervous about making friends when she started at her new school in the city. So, she's been doing her best to be just like the other girls in her class. Her strategy seems to be working, but it's complicated.

It means Ollie must hide some things about herself, for example: what she really wants for lunch, how she prefers to wear her hair, and that she gets along well with her skateboarding brother, Theo. But most of all, her own love of skateboarding.

Then, an exciting opportunity comes up at the skatepark—and everything goes wrong between Ollie and her brother, and with her friends at school.

Ollie isn't sure what to say, what to do, or how to feel.

Showing her one true self might be the solution.

But is she brave enough to do that?

It's impossible to separate **Our Generation®** characters from the generation of girls who read about and play with them, for they are one and the same.

They're changing the world by making their households greener. They're baking cupcakes to help charities. They're writing in their journals, practicing for recitals, doing cartwheels down the block and giggling with their friends until they can hardly breathe. **Our Generation** is about girls growing up together. "This is our story" reflects the community of these amazing girls as they laugh, learn and create the narrative of their own generation.

Ages 7 and up

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