

Walters, Eric. *The Money Pit Mystery*. Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2011. Print. [Originally published by HarperCollins in 1999].

You may recall that in 1986, Tom Hanks and Shelly Long starred in a romantic home-repair comedy called *The Money Pit*. Today, that film has generally been forgotten, and the nickname “The Money Pit” once again evokes only the legend of Oak Island, Nova Scotia. Ahoy! There be Captain Kidd’s treasure in that there pit. (...or is there?)

You may also recall that in 1999, the much-awarded [Eric Walters](#) saw the publication of a page-turner called *The Money Pit Mystery*. This new paperback edition is a straightforward reissue. However, the novel has aged well, and today’s upper elementary readers can escape to summertime adventures with a new copy of this made-in-Canada thriller.

The Money Pit Mystery effectively conveys the scale, menace, and irresistibility of the Money Pit, which so far is an immense but fruitless excavation. The Money Pit is dangerous for another reason, too, which is that it is under strict corporate control, fenced and guarded, a true-to-life detail. Protagonists Sam and Beth are inspired by their grandfather’s longtime passion for the mystery when they arrive to stay with him for the summer. Emboldened by their friend Buzz, Sam and Beth succumb to their curiosity, eventually enlisting Grandpa in their quest to find the treasure. More detailed information is available in this Lego[®]-animated student [book report](#) (*spoiler alert*).

While *The Money Pit Mystery* is a successful adventure tale, it’s also a nuanced portrayal of sibling angst, early adolescent crushes, and, most significantly, Alzheimer’s disease. The question of Grandpa’s fitness for independent living is what brings Beth, Sam, and their mother to Oak Island for the summer. The issue threads its way through the book, reminding us that the Pit is deep metaphorically as well as physically.

Recommended: 3 out of 4 stars

Reviewer: Sarah Polkinghorne