

Spies & Detectives term 2, 2007

The shadowy world of spies and detectives has never been so popular in books for children and teens, and there have never been so many youthful protagonists. We have moved beyond the innocence of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys. Today's heroes are younger and/or harder, and the divide between good and evil is often unclear.

Reviewers: Sanya Baker, Joanna Baynes, Helen Beckingsale, Crissi Blair, Tina Collins, Annie Coppel, Noelene Coppel, Lois Huston, Wayne Mills, Angela Soutar, Rosemary Tisdall

Picture books

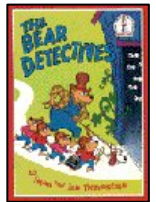
The Bear Detectives

Stan and Jan Berenstain

Collins 1976

ISBN 0001713159

Papa Bear and his dog Snuff are on the trail to find who took Farmer Ben's prize pumpkin. Papa Bear, of course, never listens to his children. A favourite picture book featuring the Berenstain Bears. 3+. LH



Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book?

Lauren Child

Hodder Children's Books 2002

ISBN 9780340805558

Herb falls asleep with his head on the open pages of his fairy tales book and wakes up, startled, to the sound of a very cross girl with golden locks telling him he shouldn't be in Her story. You guessed it, Herb is inside his book. And everybody wants a piece of him for all the things he has added to its pages over the years. The biggest crime of all though, is the strange disappearance of Prince Charming and if Herb values his life, he's going to have to track him down... Highly recommended to fairytale lovers aged 4+. SB



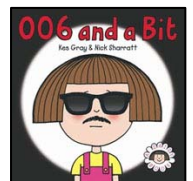
006 and a Bit

Kes Gray, illus Nick Sharratt

Bodley Head Children's 2006

Hb ISBN 0370328760; ISBN-13 978-0370328768

Daisy, first introduced in *Eat Your Peas!* returns. Daisy wants to be a spy, so she dresses up appropriately and creates a secret spy language, and is known as 006 and a Bit – but others don't understand. About to give up, another spy arrives. 4+. AC



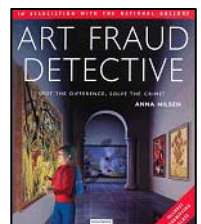
Art Fraud Detective: Spot the Difference, Solve the Crime

Anna Nilsen, illus Andy Parker

Kingfisher 2000

Hb ISBN 0753404788

Some of the town gallery's priceless masterpieces have been stolen and replaced by clever forgeries. The reader's job is to spot the differences, enjoy a mystery and learn about famous paintings in one go! (35 paintings from the National Gallery.) The story runs through the book with split pages giving information about the paintings for those interested. For upper primary, intermediate. RT



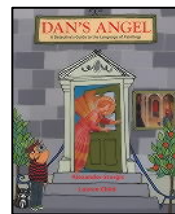
Dan's Angel: A Detective's Guide to the Language of Paintings

Alexander Sturgis, illus Lauren Child

Frances Lincoln Ltd 2002

ISBN 0711218846

Aspiring detective Dan investigates the inside of an art gallery, where he meets an unexpected guide – an angel who comes to life from one of the gallery's paintings! Together, they travel from one well-known piece to another, and Dan learns that hidden within each painting are clues to the picture's story and meaning. For upper primary, intermediate. RT



Junior fiction (ages 7-12)

Max Remy Super Spy series

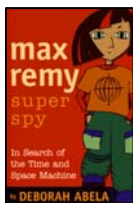
Deborah Abela

Random House Australia 2002

ISBN 1740517652; ISBN-13 978 1740517652

Also published by Oxford University Press as **Max Remy, Spy Force**

Max (Maxine) is a fairly sophisticated, assertive, quick thinking 11-year-old Sydneyite visiting her country aunt and uncle in the summer holidays. Her uncle has invented a time and space transporter which Max and new friend Linden use (without permission). Many 'hold your breath' events are crammed into the ten hours they have in London. Characterisation is very well done and includes many issues, but still suitable for 9-12 year olds. There's a nicely restrained use of humour and banter. The contemporary illustrative style and the emotional aspects will have more appeal to girls. AS



Gilda Joyce: Investigator

Jennifer Allison

Hodder Children's 2007

ISBN 0340911360; ISBN-13 978-0340911365

First published as *Gilda Joyce: Psychic Investigator* by Dutton 2005

First in a series featuring 13-year-old Gilda, who wants to be a psychic investigator. In this episode, she inveigles an invitation to distant relatives in San Francisco for the summer. They live in a haunted house, possibly by Aunt Melanie who committed suicide a decade earlier. Gilda decides to discover the truth and Juliet, her same-aged cousin, is dragged along. 10+. AC

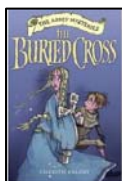
The Buried Cross (The Abbey Mysteries)

Cherith Baldry

Oxford University Press 2004

ISBN 0192753622

Could the bones found at Glastonbury Abbey really be those of King Arthur? When they are stolen Gwyneth and Hereward seek to find them in order to save the Abbey. The first in a series of mysteries set in Medieval England. 8+. AC



The Case of the Graveyard Ghost and Other Mysteries

Duncan Ball

HarperCollins 2005

ISBN 0207200440

Anna and Tim use their wits and common sense to solve three mysteries that happen right in their own neighbourhood of Possum Creek. Who is breaking the statues in the graveyard? Who is the graffiti vandal spray painting houses? And who has stolen a unique clock? The stories are humorous and highly illustrated, in almost a 'graphic novel' format. For ages 6-9. TC

Emily Eyefinger series

Duncan Ball

HarperCollins

First published 1992

A girl born with an eye on the end of her finger would have to become a spy. Emily and her extra eye do solve a lot of domestic and school based problems. The stories are engaging with a mixture of cheerfulness, humour and good sense and some nice lessons in how to cope with being somewhat different from everyone else in the world. A pleasure to read, each book is arranged as a series of short stories of 6-8 pages and aimed at 8-9 year olds. AS

Chasing Vermeer

Blue Balliett, illus Brett Helquist

Scholastic 2004

ISBN 0439372976

Petra Andalee and Calder Pillay have in common an intellectual curiosity, a certain eccentricity and their terrific teacher Ms Hussey. When Ms Hussey launches a new term's project with the statement 'Letters are Dead!'. Petra and Calder find themselves teaming up for more than their assignment. Are the three mysterious letters delivered in their neighbourhood connected to the theft of a famous painting? And is their beloved Ms Hussey in some kind of trouble? Despite the hype about this book as *The Da Vinci Code* for kids, *Chasing Vermeer* is an engaging mystery for 8-12 year olds who enjoy solving puzzles for themselves. SB



Spy Babies

Ian Bone

Lothian Books 2000

ISBN 0734401051

Ellie Priest has a simple plan to teach her mother a lesson. She runs away to her friend Brand's place, only to discover that he's a spy! Then everything goes wrong when she and Brand get caught and turned into babies. Although Brand and Ellie are able to read each other's thoughts, how can they save the world when they're wearing nappies and no one understands their baby talk? And how can they stop further experiments from being performed on themselves? A fun fantasy spy story. 10+. TC

Assassin (Lady Grace Mysteries)

Patricia Finney, writing as Grace Cavendish

Doubleday 2004

Hb ISBN 0385606443

Lady Grace Cavendish is one of Queen Elizabeth I's Maids of Honour, with a special place in the queen's heart. When one of Grace's suitors is found dead, with suspicion cast on a second, Grace decides to solve the mystery, which deepens with the unusual behaviour of her third suitor.

A good dose of historical information is scattered throughout the book, but not obtrusively so. First in a series. 9+. AC

Harriet the Spy

Louise Fitzhugh

HarperCollins 1964; Collins Modern Classics 2004

ISBN 0060219106; 0007155026

Unlike the characters in most modern spy stories for children and teens, who become involved in life threatening adventures, Harriet M. Welsch spies on her neighbours and writes down her observations in a notebook. She also writes frank observations about her friends, which leads to big trouble for Harriet when she loses her notebook and it is read by her classmates. Harriet has a very different lifestyle from most of today's children – she has a nurse to look after her, and a resident cook, but readers will identify with her troubles when she is ostracised by all her friends. 10+. HB



For Your Paws Only (Spy Mice)

Heather Vogel Frederick

Puffin Books 2006

ISBN 0141319879

The heroes are a group of mice who have forged a sophisticated society through the shrewd use of human knowledge and technology. The villains are rats, famous for their gluttony and evil doing. In this book, Glory and new recruit Bunsen are aghast to find Roquefort Dupont, the leader of the rat underworld, is back for revenge and what's more, is learning to read! If he learns to read, who knows what knowledge he can find to further his evil plans? A fun read for 7-10 year olds. LH



Detective Dan

Vivian French, illus Alison Bartlett

A & C Black 2004

ISBN 071366861X; ISBN-13 978 0173668612

Dan is in trouble at school because his lunchbox is always on the floor, and Minnie the cat follows him all the time. Dan's friend Billy decides to solve the mystery of the lunchbox. One of the White Wolves series written for emergent readers. 6+. AC

Agent Z Meets the Masked Crusader

Mark Haddon

Red Fox/Random 2003

(First published 1993)

The hero, Ben is a dreamer. What goes on in his mind is much more enthralling than what is going on around him. He transfers his thoughts in and out of real life and reports on his imaginative episodes. Ben and two friends start an 'Agent Z' clubhouse, set up events and pranks at school and score them afterwards under three categories: daring, success and laugh value – until one day they realise that there might be a real 'Agent Z' getting his own back. They also hone their sleuthing skills on the school bully and use the information gained to stop him bullying. This would appeal to 10+ and younger advanced readers who appreciate the imagination and humour of others. AS



Leonardo and the Death Machine

Robert Harris

HarperCollins Childrens 2005

ISBN 978-0007194230

An adventure thriller set during the Renaissance in Florence, Italy starring Leonardo da Vinci as a young apprentice who witnesses a murder and becomes involved in a plot to take over the city. Many characters, places and events are based on historical facts, while the detail of Leonardo's adventures are fiction. This is definitely a page-turning, compelling read! 11+. JB

Time Stops for No Mouse: A Hermux Tantamoq Adventure

Michael Hoeye

Putnam 2002

ISBN 0399238786

Hermux Tantamoq is a watchmaker. He is also a mouse. When Linka Pearlfinger (yes, another mouse), brings in an urgent watch repair job and fails to collect it, he finds himself trying to solve a mystery which involves murder, kidnapping and the quest for eternal youth. Despite the fact that the characters are mice, so technically it's fantasy, this is a good mystery story which will appeal to 11+. HB

The Ghost in the Tokaido Inn (Samurai Mysteries)

Dorothy & Thomas Hoobler

Puffin 2001

ISBN 0698118790

Seikei is a merchant's son who is desperate to be a samurai. When he helps Judge Ooka solve a theft, the judge is impressed. Seikei demonstrates the necessary honour of a samurai, so the judge adopts him. The first in a series of mysteries featuring a real-life 18th-century Japanese judge. 11+. AC

Three of Diamonds

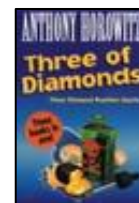
[containing *The French Confection*, *The Blurred Man* & *I Know What You Did Last Wednesday*]

Anthony Horowitz

Walker Books 2004

ISBN 0744583551

It's a dangerous life being the younger brother of the world's worst private detective Tim Diamond – yet 13-year-old Nick has survived... so far. These three mysteries are set to test his survival instincts to the full! These are fast moving stories with intriguing characters, fast gripping plots and excitement from the beginning. A witty detective series for anyone who enjoys crime mixed with humorous elements. 9+. TC



From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs Basil E. Frankweiler

E.L. Konigsburg

Aladdin 2002 (first published 1967)

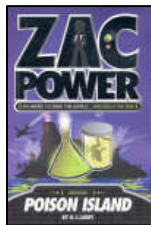
ISBN 0689711816

Claudia Kincaid feels unappreciated and decides to run away from home. But Claudia is no ordinary child and her running away will not be ordinary either. And certainly not spur of the moment, after all you wouldn't want to be forced to return when you realise you have nowhere to go and nothing to eat, would you? Claudia and her chosen brother Jamie's flight to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York doesn't only find them a comfortable place to reside but a mystery that will take all of their intelligence and insight to resolve. This Newbery Medal winner is recommended for 10-13 year olds. SB

Poison Island (Zac Power)

H.I. Larry
Hardie Grant Egmont 2006
ISBN 1921098449

12-year-old Zac and his family are spies for the Government Investigation Bureau. They are parachuted from a Jumbo jet onto a tropical island to find out what the evil Dr Drastic intends to do with his Solution X invention. Along the way they escape from quicksand, piranha and a cave-in but not before Zac acquires the Solution X formula. The book has a large font and black and white drawings. Suitable for a not too discerning 7-9 year-old. WM



Monkey Undercover

Gabrielle Lord
Scholastic 2006
ISBN 978 186504909

When Gusty and her friends kidnap an ill-treated bull-terrier from a bikie gang, they believe they are simply doing the right thing. But right soon turns extremely wrong. Several break-ins, Molotov cocktails, kidnappings, crooked cops, arrests and undercover operations later, Gusty and her sister, brother and friends find themselves at the centre of an international smuggling ring – with nowhere to run! 11+. JB

Fishy Business for Francis Fry

Sam McBratney, illus Kim Blundell
Colour Jets series
Harper Collins 1998
ISBN 0006753825

Francis, a private eye with trench coat, is called upon to solve a tricky case of missing fish, some very valuable. Lots of sly jokes and playing with words. (One pair of fish is called With and Without.) All ends well, with the nasty villain in true English style being apprehended. Copious colour illustrations and most pages have speech bubbles as well as text. 7+. AS



The Fall of the Amazing Zalindas

(Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars)
Tracy Mack & Michael Citrin, illus Greg Ruth
Orchard 2006

Hb ISBN 0439828368; ISBN-13 978-0439828369
When three members of the Amazing Zalindas fall to their deaths at the circus, Sherlock Holmes is called in to investigate, while solving another crime. He calls on the Baker Street Irregulars to help him. Wiggins, the leader of the boys, is ably assisted by Ozzie, who impresses Mr Holmes with his deductive reasoning, and others. 8+. AC

The Riddle of the Frozen Phantom

Margaret Mahy
Collins 2001
ISBN 0007113749

Sophie's discovery of a whalebone pendant hidden at the back of a chest of drawers launches Sophie, her siblings, their famous explorer father Boniface Sapwood and his naturalist colleague Corona Wattlely in a race across the frozen Antarctic lands to find the lost ship Riddle before greedy villain Rancid Swarthy. (Phew!) This zany comic mystery could only have come from the pen of New Zealand's own Margaret Mahy - read and enjoy! 7-12. SB

A Case for G. String

Julia Owen
Scholastic NZ 2005
ISBN 1869436768

G is for Geraldine, usually known as Mickey. While delivering the newspapers for her brother, in the hope of seeing delectable Darcy, Mickey discovers something odd is going on at old Miss Horn's house. Miss Horn is dead and her fierce little dog, Cupcake, has disappeared, but Mickey is sure she saw someone in the house. Soon Mickey has all her friends helping her solve the mystery. An enjoyable read for 11+. CB



Mystery at Tui Bay

Janet Pates
Scholastic NZ 2003
ISBN 186943563X

When 13-year-old twins Scott and Emma are sent to help at their aunt and uncle's campground during the holidays things start going missing. Their evasive new friend Kelly immediately falls under suspicion but Scott, the effective detective, announces that he will solve the mystery and clear Kelly's name. Winner of the 2002 Storylines Tom Fitzgibbon Award. 9+ TC

The Case of the Perfect Prank (A Jigsaw Jones Mystery)

James Preller, illus Jamie Smith
Scholastic 2004
ISBN 0439559960

Jigsaw and his friend Mila like solving mysteries. This time their classmate Danika's cat Fou-Fou has been catnapped. But Jigsaw is a bit confused – some things just aren't making sense. What is really going on? Fun for newly confident readers 7+. AC

The Westing Game

Ellen Raskin
Puffin Modern Classics 2004 (first published 1979)
ISBN 014240120X; ISBN-13 978 0142401200

If you're looking for a good, challenging read for 10-12 year olds, don't forget this Newbery Medal-winning puzzle-mystery. Murdered reclusive millionaire Samuel W. Westing has 16 heirs of varying age, sex, race and background listed in his will, each with very individual and human foibles and eccentricities. Before claiming their shares of his fortune, they must play 'The Westing Game', which seems to have different rules and clues for every player, and the playing of which may reveal the identity of Westing's killer. Raskin was well-known for her enjoyment of tricks and puzzles and she pulled out all the stops when she put this intriguing mystery together. SB

The Case of the Ranjipur Ruby (The Baker Street Boys)

Anthony Read, illus David Frankland
Walker Books 2006
ISBN 1406300888

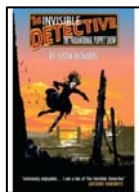
Wiggins and the other Baker Street Boys help Ravi, the son of the Raja of Ranjipur, escape from two murderous thugs. By doing so they uncover a complicated plot of greed and ambition, all helped along by Professor Moriarty. Unlike other stories with Baker Street Boys/Irregulars, this gang has girls in it, not necessarily something Sherlock Holmes would approve of. 9+. AC

The Invisible Detective series

Justin Richards

Simon and Schuster

Set in London in the 1930s, four children act as 'Baker Street Irregulars' to the detective Brandon Lake, known as 'the Invisible Detective'. The Invisible Detective never shows his face. No-one knows who he is but he has solved a lot of mysteries and crimes. Brandon Lake does not exist; he was invented by the four children, who investigate all his cases themselves. They need the cover of an adult for people to take them seriously! Each book also has a parallel subplot set in the present day, where Art's grandson and his friend Sarah have mysteries of their own to solve. Clever, different and shows what kids can do! 9+. RT



Sandsnout at the Egyptian Museum. Little did he know that he was soon to be chased by a real live mummy! The colourful printing, silly puns and marvellous adventure make a very enjoyable reading experience for those who have just graduated to chapter books. Number 26 in the series, this book, as with all the others, is sure to be loved by readers 7+. LH

Priceless Painting Pinched! (Who Dun It? series)

Simon Torok & Paul Holper, illus Stephen Axelsen
Pan Macmillan 2006

ISBN 1405037334; ISBN-13 978 1405037334

Zac and Hannah decide to solve the theft of a local collector's artwork. Is it just coincidence that there's a new art teacher at their school? What about the coded webpage? Written by two CSIRO staffers and science writers, the Who Dun It? books introduce readers to the science behind crime solving. 8+. AC

The Case of the Missing Marquess

(An Enola Holmes Mystery)

Nancy Springer

Philomel Books 2006

Hb ISBN-13 978 0399243042

14-year-old Enola, the much younger sister of Mycroft and Sherlock Holmes, tries to make her way in the world after her mother vanishes. With the aid of clues her mother left behind, Enola finds enough money to travel to London in disguise. Along the way she becomes entangled in the disappearance of young Lord Tewksbury. Watch for further adventures. 10+. AC

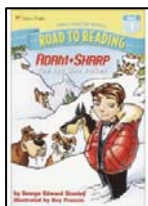
The Spy who Barked (Adam Sharp)

George Edward Stanley

Golden Books 2002

ISBN 978 0307264121

Eight-year-old Adam Sharp has his lunchbox stolen. Now, usually that's not a big deal. But it is when Adam is IM-8's greatest spy and the lunchbox is a computer with a top-secret program DOGBARK installed on it. This is the first of Adam's adventures. 6+. JB



Sammy Keyes and the Skeleton Man (Sammy Keyes)

Wendelin van Draanen

Scholastic 2004 (first published Alfred A. Knopf 1999)

ISBN 0439981247; ISBN-13 978-0439981248

This is the second book about schoolgirl sleuth Sammy Keyes and it is a high point in a thrilling series. Sammy and her friends are mustering the courage to go trick-or-treating at a spooky old house when they find themselves knocked over on the path by a man, dressed as a skeleton, heading the other way. When they get to the door, they find the house ablaze and the owner tied to a chair. As usual, the irrepressible Sammy leaps in to help and then finds she can't resist her curiosity about the reclusive victim and the crime. The Sammy Keyes books have enough lively characters, school rivalries, comic moments and devilish plots to keep your 10 to 13-year-olds riveted. SB

The Secret of the Crocodiles (Lady Violet Winters)

Karen Wallace

Simon & Schuster 2005

ISBN 0689874839

Lady Violet's ambitions and desires contrast sharply with the expectations of Edwardian society – and her mother. While holidaying in Egypt, Violet and her father's ward Garth become embroiled in a mystery. Although they realise that Violet's father may help them, they don't feel comfortable reporting all they know to the adults. 10+. AC

The Mummy with No Name (Geronimo Stilton)

Geronimo Stilton

Scholastic 2006

ISBN 978 0439841177

Geronimo Stilton is usually the mild-mannered editor of the Rodent's Gazette, but wherever he goes, he always seems to find a mystery! In this particular book, Geronimo receives a call for help from his good friend Professor

Senior fiction (ages 12+)

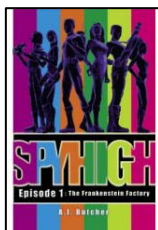
The Frankenstein Factory (Spy High series)

A J Butcher

Atom 2003

ISBN 978 1904233138

They can hack any computer, break any code, take out bad guys from 200 metres and vanish without trace. In fact about the only thing that Bond Team can't do is bond – with each other. They need to learn to work together or they can forget about ever graduating from Spy High. That's right, forget – they will be mind-wiped should they flunk. JB



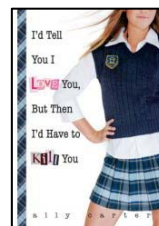
I'd Tell You I Love You but Then I'd Have to Kill You

Ally Carter

Hyperion 2006

Hb ISBN 1423100034

This book is great fun and will appeal to fans of series such as **The Princess Diaries**. Cammie is a Gallagher girl – she attends the exclusive Gallagher Academy, which is really a training ground for master spies. What Cammie is not prepared for is how to talk to an ordinary boy from a 'normal' family and much of the story involves the conflict between her school life and her developing relationship with Josh. An entertaining story with a great cover. HB



Talking to Blue

Ken Catran
Lothian 2000
ISBN 0734401361

A psychological thriller. Blue is a sadistic murderer who kills people because they are wearing blue and Mike has had contact with all the victims and is receiving mysterious phone calls from Blue. This is a suspenseful read with a surprising twist at the end. *Blue Murder* and *Blue Blood* continue the story, *Blue Blood* being told from the point of view of Mike's girlfriend Sheril. HB

The Face on the Milk Carton

Caroline Cooney
Laurel Leaf 1990; Delacorte 1996
ISBN 0440220653; 038532328X

15-year-old Janie Johnson is an only child of well-to-do parents. When she sees the portrait of a missing child on a milk carton, she recognises herself and discovers that her parents are really her adoptive grandparents. They believe she is the child of their daughter who joined a cult many years ago. Janie is determined to solve the mystery of who she really is and finally makes contact with her birth family. There are several more books about Janie: *What Happened to Janie*, *The Voice on the Radio* and *What Janie Found*. A gripping read. HB

Calling a Dead Man

Gillian Cross
Oxford University Press 2001
ISBN 0192718274

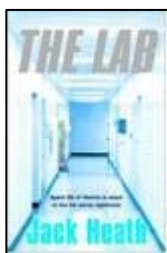
Also published as *Phoning a Dead Man*.

This is an exciting story set during the Cold War. John, an explosives expert, has died in an accident in Russia and his sister and his friend Annie are determined to uncover the truth about his death. Following a signal from John's phone they are lead across Russia, into Siberia and deeper into danger. HB

The Lab

Jack Heath
Pan Macmillan 2005
ISBN 0330422316

Agent Six of Hearts is an invincible special agent working for the Deck and fighting to uphold values in a city controlled by ChaoSonic. His invincibility is due the fact that he is a clone, produced by illegal genetic experimentation, and the story touches on a number of ethical dilemmas faced by society today. The author wrote this book in his teens because he thought the set texts at high school were really dull. This is a high action story containing a lot of violence. A sequel is now available. HB



The Dark Side of Midnight (Spy Girl)

Carol Hedges
Usborne 2006
ISBN 074606750X

In her dreams Jazmin is a super cool spy with the latest in high tech equipment. In reality she is a slightly over weight schoolgirl – until her mother (who really is a spy), goes missing, and Jazmin is called on to help out. Fast paced adventure which will appeal to teenage girls. HB

SilverFin (Young Bond)

Charlie Higson
Puffin 2005
ISBN 0141318597

SilverFin is the first novel in the Young Bond series featuring Ian Fleming's superspy James Bond as a teenager in the 1930s. This thrilling prequel to the James Bond dynasty introduces young James, 13-years-old, just about to start boarding at Eton, having been educated at home by his Aunt Charmain since the death of his parents. The first adventure sees James teaming up with Red Kelly as they investigate Red's cousin's disappearance. They make their way to a remote Scottish castle where a wealthy American has been conducting some very disturbing experiments. Edge of the seat excitement, just as Ian Fleming created! RT

Stormbreaker (Alex Rider)

Anthony Horowitz
Walker Books 2000
ISBN 1844289303

This is the first book in the series about Alex Rider. When Alex's uncle is killed they said it was an accident but Alex knew better. Forcibly recruited into MI6 fourteen-year-old Alex has to take part in gruelling SAS training exercises. Then, armed with his own special set of secret gadgets, he's off to investigate Herod Sayle, inventor of a supercomputer called the Stormbreaker. Sayle plans to distribute these computers to schoolchildren throughout England. Is the Stormbreaker the real deal, or simply too good to be true? A suspenseful spy story leaving you hooked and eager for more. TC

Deep End (Special Agents)

Sam Hutton
Collins 2003
ISBN 0007148429

Maddie Cooper was just a normal teenager until she and her parents were gunned down in a London street. Her mother dead, her father in a wheelchair, Maddie joins Scotland Yard as a trainee in the special squad Police Investigation Command. There she meets Alex, who works undercover, and Danny, an electronics genius. Together, the three of them combine to try to bring down the big bosses of the underworld. But things go wrong when Maddie and Alex themselves are kidnapped... First in a series of exciting spy adventures. LH

Bad Kitty

Michele Jaffe
Puffin 2006
ISBN 0141319763; ISBN-13 9780141319766

Jas wants to be a detective, but is thwarted at every turn by her father. While on holiday with the family (including her cousin and her evil hench-twin) Jas' propensity to get into trouble raises its head – dramatically. This so upsets her father that she decides to become a Model Daughter, thus upsetting her friends so much they stage an emergency intervention, afraid Jas has been taken over by pod people. Quirky, funny and it's best not read in public due to the distinct possibility of laughing aloud. HB



The Books of Fell

[containing *Fell*, *Fell Back* & *Fell Down*]

M.E. Kerr

Harper Trophy 2001

ISBN 0064472639

John Fell might have spent the summer with the daughter of a wealthy Seaville family but that doesn't mean that his Brooklyn background and widowed mother pass muster with his girlfriend's dad. But the night she stands him up for the school ball events take an unusual turn and Fell is offered a chance to go for free to an exclusive boarding school for his senior years – provided he is willing to attend under someone else's name. Mysterious circumstances indeed, but only the beginning.... SB

The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency

Alexander McCall Smith

Abacus 1999

ISBN 034911675

When Precious Ramotwse's father died he had hoped that his daughter would open a butcher's shop, instead she established Botswana's first detective agency. She's asked to investigate the veracity of a man claiming to be a woman's father, a hospital doctor who is mysteriously competent one day and a bungler the next, the baffling disappearance of an 11-year-old boy and the case she/hasn't she case of an Indian girl with a boyfriend. The beauty and simplicity of Mme Ramotswes's solutions shine throughout the book. WM

Operation Red Jericho

Joshua Mowll

Walker Books 2005

Hb ISBN 978 1844286256

In 1920, sister and brother Rebecca and Doug arrive in Shanghai to join their uncle and guardian Captain Fitzroy McKenzie on his scientific vessel *The Expedient*. Both the Captain and his ship have more to them than meets the eye and Becca and Doug soon find themselves tangled up in the mysterious affairs of the Honourable Guild of Specialists. A thrilling adventure story created in the form of Becca's diary and very convincingly illustrated with drawings, maps, diagrams and photographs from her and her brother's travels. This is the first in what will be a trilogy. Highly recommended for readers aged 13-16, especially boys! SB

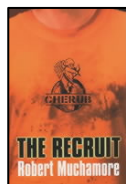
The Recruit (CHERUB)

Robert Muchamore

Hodder Children's Books 2004

ISBN 0340881534; ISBN-13 9780340881538

The Recruit is the first book in the CHERUB series and its popularity can be shown by how difficult it was for our reviewers to lay their hands on a copy from any library. CHERUB recruits teens under 17-years-old as agents against terrorists and drug dealers. James is recently orphaned and going off the rails until CHERUB recruits him. The series is edgy and has some language and content that makes it more suitable for teens, even though James is only 11 at the start of the book. AC



Terrier

Tamora Pierce

Scholastic 2006

ISBN 9781862917217

Set 200 years before the Alanna books, *Terrier* features

one of George Cooper's forebears – Rebakah (Beka) Cooper, a 'puppy' or trainee Provost Dog. Beka has some magical ability: she can hear voices the dust spinners pick up, and those of the dead carried by the pigeons. When the voices become too much, Beka is compelled to solve the murder of her friend's baby, uncovering more kidnappings and murders. Meanwhile, adults are vanishing, too. And Beka learns some hard lessons about being in law enforcement. First in a planned trilogy. AC

Trickster

[containing *Trickster's Choice* & *Trickster's Queen*]

Tamora Pierce

Scholastic 2005

Hb ISBN 9781865046525

Alianne (Aly), daughter of Alanna, appears to have no ambition. However, she wants to be a spy, to her parents' dismay. While sailing, Aly is captured by pirates and sold into slavery on the Copper Isles. There she learns she is the tool of Kyprioth, the Trickster god, who makes her a deal. Aly has the chance to use the skills and knowledge she has gained, being the grand-daughter of the Tortall's spy master and the daughter of the head of the spy network. Not just an adventure story, Pierce explores the themes of female roles, race and colonisation, with the realities of revolt clearly stated. AC

The Ruby in the Smoke

Philip Pullman

Scholastic 2006 (first published 1985)

Available in many editions

ISBN 0439943663; ISBN-13 978-0439943666

Sally Lockhart is an unconventional Victorian heroine. Taught by her father to run a business, shoot a gun and other unladylike activities, Sally is fully capable of solving the mystery surrounding her father's death, and the letter she received soon after. An excellent insight into the seamier side of Victorian life, which is often quite brutal. The first of four novels featuring Sally, it has been made into a television series, starring Billie Piper. NC

Imperial Spy

Mark Robson

Simon and Schuster 2006

ISBN-13 9781416901853

Femeke, aka Lady Alyssa, has been sent by her Emperor to the neighbouring country of Thrandor in order to secure a lasting peace. While there she is accused of two murders. Unknown to her a super assassin, Shalidar and long term adversary, has had a direct hand in the murders. She has to prove her innocence to the Thrandorian king as well as to her own emperor. The first part of a trilogy. This title would be enjoyed by both boys and girls. WM

Framed! (Traces)

Malcolm Rose

Kingfisher 2005

ISBN 9780753410494

This is the first in the Traces series about a teenage forensic investigator, Luke Harding. Set in the future, but not so far in the future it is unrecognisable, technology rules. London is a slum and the North is the cultural capital. The Authorities remove you from your parents at age five and it is they who determine your entire future. No sooner has Luke graduated from his studies to become a forensic investigator than he is put on his first murder case...he is also the prime suspect! JB

Black Gold (Alpha Force)

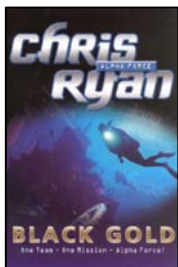
Chris Ryan

Red Fox 2005

ISBN 0099482320

One of the Alpha Force series by ex-SAS hero Chris Ryan, *Black Gold* is about a major oil spill in the Caribbean. The five teenagers are doing training at a nearby island, when a ship inexplicably drives itself aground, rupturing its tanks and spilling a deadly slick over the tropical reef. Amidst the clean-up operation, Alex, Li, Paolo, Hex and Amber soon find out that it was not merely an accident.

The Alpha Force series is particularly good because each book concentrates on a specific world problem, including oils spills, ivory poaching, drugs, and terrorism. Coupled with teenagers who have learned skills to help them in their quest to do good, this series is action packed and enthralling. 12+. LH



The Thief

Megan Whalen Turner

HarperCollins 2006 (First published 1996)

ISBN 0060824972; ISBN-13 978 0060824976

This Newbery Honor Book introduces Eugenides, Eddis' Thief. However, when we first meet him, he is undercover as Gen – a braggart locked up in a Sounis prison. Gen is one of the most convincing and appealing heroes in years. Followed by *The Queen of Attolia* & *The King of Attolia*, making this a richly layered fantasy trilogy. AC

Montmorency

Eleanor Updale

Scholastic 2006 (new edition)

ISBN 978 0439 943017

Scarper is a thief in 19th-century London, a young man who has always had to live by his wits and take risks to survive. As this story opens, he is incarcerated in a brutal prison, horribly injured from his last job and without great prospects for the future. When a gentleman surgeon takes an interest in him as a way to practice improvements in surgical technique, the young man begins to devise a means to escape the poverty and ugliness of the world he has known so far. Once free from jail, he steals and hoards with an urgency, until he has enough money to set himself up with an alter ego, a gentleman of leisure – Montmorency. Through the four Montmorency stories, Updale develops this intriguing Jekyll and Hyde character variously into a solver of mysteries and a secret agent for his country, while continuing the complication of his dark side. 13+. SB

The Extraordinary and Unusual Adventures of Horatio Lyle

Catherine Webb

Atom 2006

Hb ISBN 1904233600; Pb ISBN 1904233619

Horatio Lyle is a scientist and inventor in Victorian London who, occasionally (when pressed and with little choice) acts as a detective. His house is broken into by Tess and, taking a chance, Horatio recruits her as his assistant – just in time to chase down an ancient artefact. A mix of Sherlock Holmes, Doctor Who and Thomas Edison. AC

Non fiction (for all ages)

Nick Huckleberry Beak's Dastardly Detective Secrets

Nick Huckleberry Beak

Southwater 2001

ISBN 1842154834

Previously published as *Detective Fun*.

Craft ideas for budding detectives, including disguises, invisible writing, intruder detectors and taking fingerprints. Fun for 7+. AC

Bone Detective: The Story of Forensic Anthropologist

Diane France

Lorraine Jean Hopping

Franklin Watts 2005

ISBN 0531167763; ISBN-13 978-0531167762

Diane France helped identify bodies after 9/11, she also worked with the supposed skeleton of Jesse James.

This very personal account of her life and work introduces the reader to what is necessary to become a forensic anthropologist. A good read for those fascinated by the TV show *Bones*. 12+ years. AC

Forensics

Richard Platt, forward by Kathy Reichs

Kingfisher 2005

Hb ISBN 075341113X

A fabulous introduction to the science of forensics and the different roles and careers available. It is divided into three chapters: Signs of the crime, Who is it?, and Crime lab. Each chapter contains a summary, which includes places to go for more information. Full colour illustrations and diagrams are found throughout. Great for science-minded 9+ years. AC

Spy: Eyewitness Guide

Richard Platt

Dorling Kindersley, c2000.

Hb ISBN 0789458527; ISBN-13 978-0751360769

As always, this Eyewitness Guide is lavishly illustrated, with just enough information to spark an interest. There's information about spy tools, surveillance, codes, double agents – everything a budding spy or agent needs to know. 10+. AC



Spies & Traitors

Stewart Ross, illus McRae Books

Aladdin/Watts, 1995

Hb ISBN 0749621893

A look through spying and the world of the traitor since ancient times. Included are profiles of Belle Boyd (a spy in the American Civil War), Mata Hari, and the Cambridge Four. There is even a world map of today's main espionage agencies. 8+. AC

Cool Careers for Girls as Crime Solvers

Linda Thornburg

Impact Publications 2001

ISBN 9781570231742

Ten women, working in crime solving, share their personal and career histories and what their roles entail. Each role contains a checklist for budding criminologists. An interesting read for 10+. AC