

Stormbreaker by Anthony Horowitz

Subject: Spies; Terrorism; Orphans

Book Lists: Gifted, Middle School, Reluctant Readers

Props: Folders



When the doorbell rings at three in the morning, it's never good news. Alex Rider was awakened by the first chime. He went to the door of his room and opened it. He could hear two policemen talking to the housekeeper down the hall, but only some of the words reached him.

“... a car accident . . . called the ambulance . . . intensive care . . . nothing anyone could do . . . so sorry.”

His uncle was dead. Driving home his uncle had been hit by a truck. He hadn't been wearing his seat belt and he had been killed almost immediately. Alex couldn't believe it, his uncle, his friend really, was dead. He had been raised by his uncle after his parents had been killed in a plane crash a few weeks after his birth. For the past fourteen years, he had lived with his uncle in London. It was almost impossible for Alex to imagine that he would never again see the man or hear his laughter.

The next few days passed slowly for Alex. He greeted well-meaning visitors, attended his uncle's funeral, and listened as adults talked about his future. But what really bothered Alex, what he couldn't let go of, was that the police had said his uncle hadn't been wearing a seat belt. It didn't make sense. His uncle was a very careful driver and he was a fanatic about wearing seat belts.

It didn't add up and Alex decided to investigate. He searched and found his uncle's car in an auto salvage yard. One look at the car and Alex's suspicions were confirmed. The car hadn't been in a crash. The driver's side was riddled with bullet holes. His uncle had been shot and murdered. But that didn't make sense either. His uncle was a banker. Why would anyone shoot a banker and why had the police lied about it?

Again Alex decided to investigate. He went to the bank where his uncle worked and broke into his uncle's office. Sitting at his uncle's desk, he opened a drawer. It contained four or five thick files. (*Bring out files with labels*) He saw at once that they had nothing to do with banking. The first was marked: Nerve poisons. The second: Assassinations. Another was labeled: Stormbreaker. His uncle was not a banker, he was a spy. Alex was about to read the Stormbreaker file (*Put files down*) when two men walked into his uncle's office. One man lifted his hand. He was holding a gun pointed at Alex. The man fired. Alex felt something slam into his heart. His legs buckled, the room twisted, and he fell back into nothing.

But Alex has not been killed, only heavily drugged. Drugged, in fact, by the very people his uncle had worked for: a Special Operations Division of Britain's secret intelligence service. They drugged him because they needed to talk to him and they wanted his cooperation. Alex will find out that his uncle had indeed been murdered, murdered because he had uncovered a plot by a man named Sayre to kill thousands of innocent British school children. And now Britain's secret service wanted Alex to continue his uncle's work and go undercover. They want him to pose as a student and find out how to thwart the evil Sayre and save the children.

Will Alex take the assignment? Will he avenge his uncle's death and save the children? (*Hold up book*)
Stormbreaker by Anthony Horowitz.