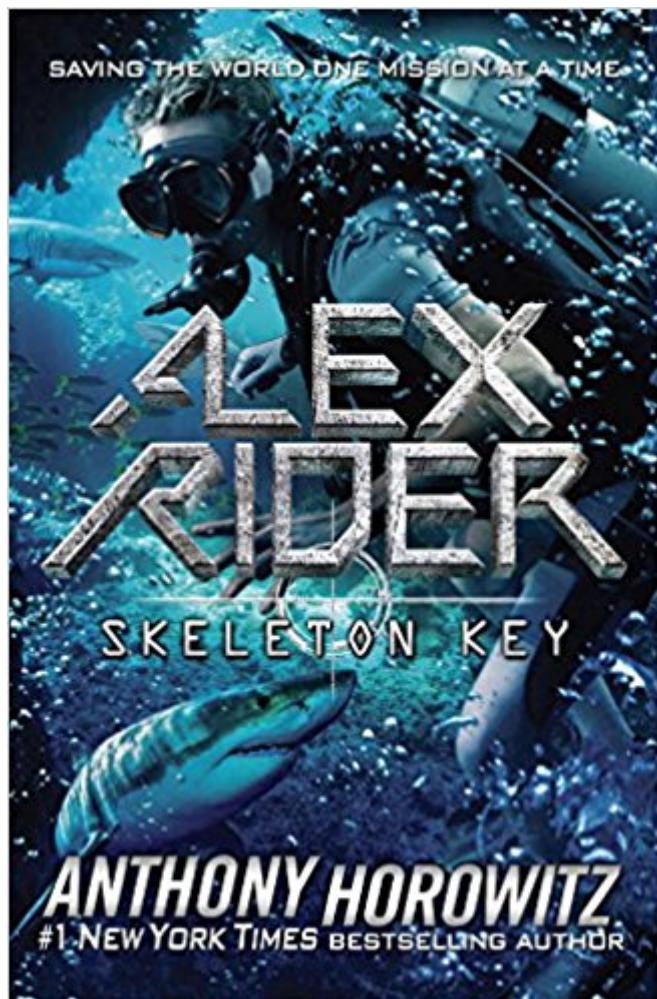


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# Skeleton Key (Alex Rider Adventure)



## Synopsis

Alex Rider is an orphan turned teen superspy who's saving the world one mission at a time—•from #1 New York Times bestselling author! Alex Rider has been through a lot for his fourteen years. He's been shot at by international terrorists, chased down a mountainside on a makeshift snowboard, and has stood face-to-face with pure evil. Twice, young Alex has managed to save the world. And twice, he has almost been killed doing it. But now Alex faces something even more dangerous. The desperation of a man who has lost everything he cared for: his country and his only son. A man who just happens to have a nuclear weapon and a serious grudge against the free world. To see his beloved Russia once again be a dominant power, he will stop at nothing. Unless Alex can stop him first... Uniting forces with America's own CIA for the first time, teen spy Alex Rider battles terror from the sun-baked beaches of Miami all the way to the barren ice fields of northernmost Russia. From the author of Magpie Murders and Moriarty.

## Book Information

Series: Alex Rider Adventure (Book 3)

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; First Printing edition (February 16, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0142406147

ISBN-13: 978-0142406144

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.6 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 274 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #32,906 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #80 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Mystery & Thriller #81 in Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Thrillers & Suspense #119 in Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Mystery & Detective

## Customer Reviews

Grade 5-10-Fans of Horowitz's *Stormbreaker* (2001) and *Point Blank* (2002, both Philomel), and newcomers to the series alike, will not be disappointed with this rip-roaring escapade featuring the 14-year-old spy. Trying to return to a "normal" life as a schoolboy after a mere four weeks since his last MI6 adventure, Alex Rider is recruited right off the soccer field to check out some suspicious

goings-on at Wimbledon. This assignment catapults him into a series of life-threatening episodes, such as coming face to face with a great white shark, dodging bullets as he dives off a burning boat, and being tied to a conveyor belt that is moving toward the jaws of a gigantic grindstone in an abandoned sugar factory. Soon the teen is single-handedly taking on his most dangerous enterprise yet. His mission is nothing short of saving the world from a nuclear attack, engineered by the psychopathic and egomaniacal former commander of the Russian army. Alex is armed only with a few specially designed gadgets, which are disarmingly age-appropriate: a Gameboy that doubles as a Geiger counter, a cell phone whose aerial shoots out a drugged needle that is activated by pressing 999, a Tiger Woods figurine that doubles as a small grenade when its head is twisted just so. This page-turning thriller leaves readers breathless with anticipation. When at last Alex returns home, his love interest, Sabina Pleasure, asks where he has been. "Well, I was, sort of- busy," he replies in a classic, understated, James Bond kind of way. Elizabeth Fernandez, Brunswick Middle School, Greenwich, CT  
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Gr. 6-9. Fourteen-year-old British secret agent Alex Rider, last heard from in Point Blank (2002), is back in another adventure. This time he's on an island near Cuba where he's up against a retired Russian general who plans to set off a nuclear device and, in the ensuing world chaos, take over the Russian government and restore the Soviet Empire. The general takes a shine to Alex once they meet, however, and he offers to adopt him as his son. Of course, this is the man's fatal mistake; Alex is there at the crucial moment to thwart the general's plans. This series unabashedly lifts details from the James Bond formula (minus the vodka martinis and casual sex) and transfers them to a novel for young adults. Yet, the Bond formula is the most successful in entertainment history, and there's no doubting the appeal of this action-packed spy novel. Todd Morning  
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I'm thirteen years old and have read the entire series over and over again. I LOVE them. They're fast-paced, interesting, but sometimes cheesy -- especially when the villain ties Alex up and then explains their grand plan to him in detail. I mean, COME ON. No villain would do that. Then they just so happen to leave Alex alone for the night or alone to die. The author's manipulation is felt really strongly in these parts. I much prefer it when the protagonist figures out what's going on by themselves, not by the antagonist. When they start to monologue, it's just so CRINGY. But despite

some of the flaws, I thought that the fourteen year old spy concept was pulled off well. Alex's good abilities were well-explained and not just passed off as talent, which I find irritating. But anyway, ON WITH THE REVIEW. Personally, I found "Skeleton Key" the weakest in the series. In it, Alex goes to Wimbledon as a ballboy by request of Crawley because there was a break-in. So once Alex gets there, he starts investigating a security guard who turns out to be part of a gang called the Big Circle, who will stop at nothing to kill Alex. So, Blunt sends Alex off to America for his safety with the CIA agents Turner and Troy as part of their cover. Once they get there, it becomes clear Alex doesn't know the full story and that the agents are REALLY investigating a man called General Sarov, who allegedly has a nuclear bomb. The Russian president is coming and nobody has a clue what's going on. That's a pretty loose synopsis, but I want to get on with my opinion. [MILD SPOILERS AHEAD.] OK, so first off: I didn't like Sarov as a villain. There, I said it. He always seemed far too sympathetic for my taste. Yeah, it's nice to have a "grey" character, but this is the ALEX RIDER SERIES! All the villains are NASTY! Sarov wants to do this terrible thing but his character just doesn't match that. He's willing to kill thousands of people, but wants to adopt Alex. Personally, if Sarov had been driven insane by his son's death and thought Alex was a sort of replacement for him, I would've liked it better. It would've fitted, anyway. But Sarov has never caused Alex bodily harm. I just find it hard to root for Alex when Sarov isn't that unlikeable. Conrad, on the other hand... I love Conrad. After Kaspar, he's my favourite sidekick. He is AWESOME. If he was the main villain and Sarov was the sidekick, it would've been a bit better. But hey, that's just my opinion. Some parts of the book I loved. The bit with the shark was really good, so was the sugar crusher thing Conrad used on Alex. I didn't think Sarov's plan would've worked as well as he hoped. It's a pretty big plot hole for Horowitz, because if something like that had happened, the outcome would be completely different. In conclusion: A decent entry to the series, but by no means up there with Scorpia and Snakehead.

My teenage daughter had to have this book. She's read each of the Alex Rider series books several times! She can't get enough. Talks about them all the time. Great to keep our youth reading.

I'm breaking a taboo in this first paragraph to say how much I am enjoying this series for "children" (10 and up). Actually, anyone who enjoys a great spy thriller and very little outright graphic violence would absolutely LOVE this series. Not since Harry Potter have I had such fun! "Skeleton Key" is the third in the series about Alex Rider, a 14-year-old English school boy, who works as a spy for MI6, the U.S.'s equivalent of the CIA. Not that he wants to work as a spy--oh no, he does not, but

M16 manages to entangle him every time in a new episode in which, bottom line, he saves the world. That's three times now that he has done so. The first time was "Stormbreaker," set in the Cornish coast of England, involving a computer scheme unlike any you have heard of. Alex triumphs spectacularly! The second time was "Point Blank," set in an elite school for highly privileged and troubled youth. The school is set on Point Blank in Switzerland. Another, no, make that two spectacular endings in this book! Let me say that what Anthony Horowitz creates for Alex to know and do are truly preposterous--if you logically examine the plot, but, I'm telling you also truthfully, that Horowitz's skill at writing is such that the reader believes these things CAN happen. Example: Alex must board a departing yacht and does so on skateboard by ramping up a plank, hurtling through air, just barely grasping the handrail, and pulling himself up and over. Allow me to explain: In book one, Horowitz laid the back story to show that Alex was trained in many areas by his uncle, who was a M16 spy, unbeknownst to Alex. In Book Three, "Skeleton Key," Alex's new assignment is working with two agents from the CIA to explore a mansion on the tip of an island, Skeleton Key, owned by a retired Soviet general, who has serious hanky-panky in mind. It involves uranium and an atomic bomb. The yacht-leaping takes place in this story. However, Alex is thwarted several times in this adventure, showing the reader that Alex cannot elude every case of danger. An atomic bomb, world domination, a mad general, and one more put-together Frankenstein assistant. Can a 14-year-old boy handle those? That is absolutely the fun of reading this series--you know he will, but you don't know how! Highly recommended!! This is a series that needs to be read in order for the back story, which builds with each book. To begin: 1. A. Alex Rider: Stormbreaker tie-in novel (Alex Rider Movie) 2. A. Point Blank (Alex Rider Adventures) There are currently eight books in the series. Horowitz plans a total of ten.

Bought for my classroom library. The students seem to like it.

My son loves this series.

This book is about Alex Rider a 14 year old teenage spy. M16 picked him up after his uncle was killed by a man named Yassen Gregorovich a contract killer. In the book Alex is given a weekend get away to CUBA. Supposedly Alex is just there to stand as the child of two other agents from the CIA. But Later he finds out that this is not a regular mission this is a mission that could save the world. There is supposedly some nuclear material on an island they call Skeleton key. And after the disappearance of two men selling uranium the mission becomes more dangerous. Later Alex goes

scuba diving with his "Parent's" and finds out later that they have been killed. From that point on Alex is kept hostage by a man named Alexei Sarov and his assistant Conrad.

This is a good read for teen boys - a teen age James Bond. It is fast paced and the characters are well developed. Women play stereotypical roles and/or minor ones. That is my biggest criticism - the female agent is the worrier, dies early in the book, women are used as sex objects, even Mrs. Jones and Jack Starbright are cardboard characters. The level of violence is greater and more gruesome than its predecessor the Hardy Boys. Yet it is fun to read and is a good choice for boys who don't like to read.

It was an action packed adventure with twists and turns but in the end it had a good resolution and I cannot wait to read the next one

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