

2004

Horowitz, Anthony. *Stormbreaker*. Philomel Books, 2000.

SUMMARY:

Fourteen-year-old Alex Rider is awakened by the sound of the doorbell ringing at three in the morning. At that hour, it could mean only one thing---bad news. Alex learns that his uncle and legal guardian, Ian Rider, has been killed in a car wreck. Was Ian really not wearing a seat belt? What did Ian really do for a living? Was he really employed at a bank? While searching for answers, Alex finds himself in a junkyard looking for his uncle's car and almost gets himself crushed. The next thing he knows, Alex is becoming part of the Special Operations Division of MI6 and entering the undercover world as a spy. Alex soon finds himself meeting and becoming entangled with terrorists: Herod Sayle and his Portuguese man-of-war; Mr. Grin (an ex-circus knife catcher); and a professional hit man by the name of Yassen Gregorovich. In the end, Alex unveils the terrible secret of Herod Sayle and saves the day for the English schoolchildren who are being threatened. James Bond, move over!

QUESTIONS:

Would you want to trade places with Alex?
Is there any correlation between this book and the James Bond movies/books? Explain.
Why is Wolf so hard on Alex during training?
What qualities does Alex have that make him a good spy?
Why does Sayle want to kill all the children in England?
Why do you think Herod Sayle had "become an embarrassment"?
How is this Herod similar to King Herod in the Bible?

ACTIVITIES:

Have a local law enforcement agent come in and discuss his/her job.
Visit a local junkyard to see a crusher in operation.
Map the locations mentioned in the book.
Construct and run an obstacle course or do strength training.
Research the history and philosophy of karate. Arrange for a demonstration of karate moves.
Define the uniquely British words and slang that are mentioned in the book.
Draw a design for a spy "toy."
Learn more about the Portuguese man-of-war. What is its habitat? What does it eat?

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 5-8

BOOKTALK:

In *Stormbreaker* by Anthony Horowitz, we meet twelve-year-old Alex Rider. He is not known as young agent 007, but as young agent, double-o-nothing. Armed with only a Gameboy, yo-yo, and zit cream, Alex finds himself pitted against a professional assassin. Can he successfully complete his first mission, or will it be his last?

READ-ALIKES:

Horowitz, Alex. *Alex Rider Adventures* (7 volumes). Philomel, 2001-2007.
Beatty, Patricia. *Jayhawker*. Morrow Junior Books, 1991.
Colfer, Eoin. *Artemis Fowl Series* (6 volumes). Hyperion Books for Children, 2001-2008.
Etchemendy, Nancy. *Power of Un*. Cricket Books, 2000.
Tolan, Stephanie. *Flight of the Raven*. HarperCollins, 2001.
Van Draanen, Wendelin. *Sammy Keyes Series* (12 volumes) Alfred A. Knopf, 1998-2008

RELATED WEB SITES:

Alex Horowitz: <http://www.anthonhorowitz.com>

Teaching Resources for *Stormbreaker*:

<http://getjohnnyreading.blogspot.com/2007/05/teaching-resources-for-stormbreaker.html>

Teachit Teaching Resources: <http://www.teachit.co.uk/index.asp?CurrMenu=17&T=514#514>

OTHER RECOGNITION:

Winner of a Children's Choice Award in each of the following states:
Iowa, 2005; South Carolina, 2005; Utah, 2004; Wisconsin, 2003.

MOVIE TIE-IN: *Stormbreaker*. Samuelson Productions, 2006.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0457495>