



2007

Snakehead

Donna Cardon

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Horowitz, Anthony. *Snakehead*. Philomel, 2007. ISBN 9780399241611. \$17.99. 385 p.

Reviewer: Donna Cardon

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Adventure stories; Detective and mystery stories;

Subject: Spies--Juvenile fiction; Orphans--Juvenile fiction; Adventure and adventurers--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Horowitz is one of the best YA action writers out there. His chase scenes are as vivid as any movie sequence. This is the seventh in his hugely popular Alex Rider series. Alex is a fourteen year old spy for the British intelligence agency MI6. In this installment he is recruited by the Australian Secret Service to infiltrate an illegal immigrant smuggling ring. As the story progresses, Alex discovers that he must stop an evil mastermind from creating a tsunami that will cause widespread devastation. As in all Alex Rider books, this one is long on action, and short on plot. The characters surrounding Alex are all stereotypical comic book stock. There is the evil demented mastermind, the heartless heads of security, the loyal friend that turns out to be a double agent. Alex is the only complex character. He deals with issues from his past and questions about his future, yet at the end of the book Alex has not really progressed or changed at all. Despite this, the book is entertaining because of the fast passed action scenes and the exotic settings. Horowitz does his research to make sure that each of Alex's unbelievable stunts is set in a realistic location and situation. The reader should beware that the book contains some graphic violence, even more than the earlier books in the series. However Alex, himself, does not intentionally kill anyone and the worst violence is committed by the bad guys.

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