



2009

Crocodile Tears

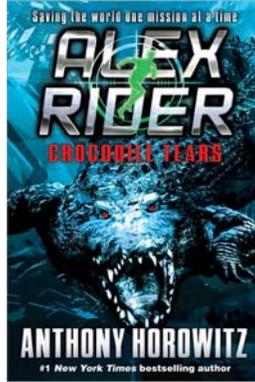
Donna Cardon

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Horowitz, Anthony. *Crocodile Tears*. Philomel, 2009. ISBN 9780399250569. \$17.99. 388 p.

Reviewer: Donna Cardon

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Adventure stories; Detective and mystery stories;

Subject: Spies--Juvenile fiction; Action adventure--Juvenile fiction; Genetic engineering--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Horowitz fans will welcome this eighth Alex Rider adventure. It has all the elements Alex Rider fans have come to expect: nonstop action, daring escapes, evil villains, cool gadgets, and exotic settings. Alex is kidnapped, almost drowned, drugged, and escapes eminent death no less than five times. In this installment, Alex, a teenage secret agent for the British MI6, stumbles upon a plan to use genetically engineered plants to cause an environmental disaster in Kenya.

Horowitz has done his homework and the science behind the plot is interesting. Unfortunately, Horowitz does not allow Alex to figure out what is going on by himself. Instead, the whole plan is revealed in a lengthy and very stereotypical villain monolog. As in past Alex Rider books, all the characters except Alex are two dimensional, and there is very little character development throughout the story. Unlike earlier books, this book does little to advance the larger over-reaching plot of the series. This is, perhaps, because many of the long standing issues were resolved in the previous book, *Snakehead*. Despite these shortcomings, Horowitz's brilliant action writing will carry even reluctant reader tween and teen boys clear to the end of the book and leave them eager for the next in the series.

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