



Lark Takes a Bow

Natasha Deen

Illustrated by Marcus Cutler

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About the Book

Mysteries seem to follow Lark and Connor Ba wherever they go, and today is no exception! The part-time detectives head to their local community theater to rehearse the play they are in, only to discover that someone is playing pranks on the theater company. The twin sleuths need to work quickly to catch the culprit before one more prank closes down the play for good. It's show time, Lark and Connor!

Lark Takes a Bow is the third title in the Lark Ba Detective series, following *Lark Holds the Key* and *Lark and the Diamond Caper*.

About the Author

Award-winning author **Natasha Deen** loves stories: exciting ones, scary ones and, especially, FUNNY ones! Her most recent books include *Lark and the Diamond Caper*, *Terminate* and *Across the Floor*. When she's not working on her books or doing presentations at schools, she spends a lot of time trying to convince her dogs and cats that she's the boss of the house. Natasha lives in Edmonton, Alberta. For more information, visit natashadeen.com or follow her on Twitter @natasha_deen, Facebook (@natasha.deen.9) or Instagram (@natasha_deen).

About the Writing

Natasha loves going to the theater, and as someone who also participated in school plays, she knows a lot of exciting things can go on behind the curtain. "It's so much fun going into past experiences and memories, and using all of those awesome things to come up with a story that gives readers insight into worlds and experiences they may not know," she says. "In this book, I also used my imagination to come up with a great puzzle for both readers and Lark and Connor to solve."

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections***Prereading Ideas***

Lark Takes a Bow is a mystery-adventure starring a brother-and-sister team of sleuths.

- Lark and Connor are called to investigate when someone starts playing pranks at the community theater. Have any of your students ever seen a play or acted in one?
- Who are some of their favorite actors? Why?
- Have students discuss the kinds of jobs/tasks that need to be done in order for a play to run successfully.

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Having discussed the types of jobs that happen behind the curtain, ask students which ones they think they'd like to do.
2. Someone is playing tricks at the theater. What might be the motivation for the prankster to do this?
3. Why might the director want to shut down the play? Do students think this is fair?
4. Before reading the final chapters, ask students who they believe is responsible for the pranks.
5. Once the prankster is revealed, ask them what they think of that person's reasons for doing what they did.
6. What other ways might the prankster have solved their problem?
7. How do you feel about the way the problem of the pranks and the prankster was resolved?

Suggested Activities

1. Part of being an actor is memorizing lines. Have students pick a paragraph from the book and memorize it.
2. Have students design charms for the fronts of their desks.
3. Ask students to choose a scene from the book and act it out for their classmates.
4. As a creative-writing exercise, have students imagine a different culprit for the story and write an alternate ending.
5. Have students design a diorama of one of the scenes from *Lark Takes a Bow*.
6. A guided science experiment on the science of stains can be found here: sciencebuddies.org/blog/stained-laundry-science-and-bleach

Other Titles and Websites of Interest

Theater: *Jeremy and the Enchanted Theater*, by Becky Citra (Orca, 2004)

Performing arts: *Ten Thumb Sam*, by Rachel Dunstan Muller (Orca, 2007)

Twins: *The Big Tree Gang*, by Jo Ellen Bogart (Orca, 2005)

Learning obstacles: *My Name is Mitch*, by Shelagh Lynne Supeene (Orca, 2003)

Mystery: *The Great Bike Rescue*, by Hazel Hutchins (Orca, 2013)

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Lark Holds the Key (Echoes)

Lark and the Diamond Caper (Echoes)

Across the Floor (Limelights)

Burned (Retribution)

Terminate (Retribution)

Sleight of Hand (Soundings)

Reviews and Awards***Lark Holds the Key***

Canadian Children's Book Centre's starred selection, starred selection, commended

"A problem-solving adventure led by a lovable character and enhanced with vocabulary lessons: there is much to celebrate in this story. Lark Ba is a welcome addition to early chapter book heroines." —*School Library Journal*

"The narrative style...has a distinctively personal flavor with the inclusion of crossed out spelling attempts. Lark's fascination with words enhances the text and adds humor... *Lark Holds the Key* provides an excellent example of the steps of problem solving...After reading this first book in the Lark Ba detective series, young readers will look forward to the sequel." —*CM Magazine*

"Although there are many labels that could be placed on this short chapter book's protagonist, none of them matter to the plucky little heroine who loves to read...the subjects of race and learning disabilities are incorporated neatly...Lark is a mixed-race girl debuting a lighthearted series...she may develop into a character with a fan base, like Ramona and Clementine before her." —*Kirkus Reviews*

Lark and the Diamond Caper

“Lark’s quiriness is in good form here, and the target audience will find her quite humorous. In particular, Lark, who has dyslexia and explains it quite well, makes amusing vocabulary mistakes, and kids will be learning from them without even realizing it. There are illustrations scattered throughout the chapters that are very appealing, and that perfectly enhance the story with descriptive facial expressions on all of the characters. This offering in the Orca Echoes Series of beginning chapter books is one that most libraries should see gain the interest of younger grades.”

—*Resource Links*

“Engaging sequel to *Lark Holds the Key*...Lark’s candid narration features crossed-out words she misspells, as well as other misunderstandings and malapropisms, that reflect her tricky relationship with language (she’s dyslexic), and Cutler’s digital illustrations bring the children’s multicultural community to life.” —*Publishers Weekly*

“*Lark and the Diamond Caper* combines problem solving and social development issues into an appealing, funny mystery. Young readers will be waiting for the next title in the series. Highly Recommended.” —*CM Magazine*

“A lively read for young mystery enthusiasts.” —*School Library Journal*

“Deen’s heroine reflects an underrepresented reader group and is as successful as any other lead character in early chapter books...Diamond theft is a serious crime, but Lark and Connor are organized, perceptive, and thorough, undeterred by adults who dismiss them...Lark’s sparkly presence on the chapter-book shelves will be welcomed by many.” —*Kirkus Reviews*