



Lark and the Diamond Caper

Natasha Deen

Illustrated by Marcus Cutler

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About the Book

Rookie detectives Lark and Connor Ba are back on the case! When a pair of diamond earrings goes missing from the neighborhood general store, Lark and Connor just happen to be in the right place at the right time. Carefully mining the adults for clues, the twin sleuths work together to solve the mystery.

Lark and the Diamond Caper is the second title in the Lark Ba Detective series, following *Lark Holds the Key*.

About the Author

Natasha Deen's family moved from Guyana, South America to Canada. She loved growing up in Canada but sometimes felt out of place. Thank goodness for stories and books that showed her that being different could also mean being awesome. Visit Natasha at www.natashadeen.com.

About the Writing

One of the best parts of writing a story is writing on the wild side! Authors get to create dastardly villains, and think of ways the bad guys trick the good guys. It's a lot of fun researching ways to hide clues for readers, and coming up with ways for the bad guy to get away with their crime.

Unfortunately for the villain in this story, Lark and Connor are on the case, which means it's only a matter of time before the culprit gets caught!

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

Lark and the Diamond Caper is a mystery-adventure starring a brother and sister team of sleuths.

- A fish tank, diamonds, a table, a bottle of pop, and a jug of milk all play a part in the story. Have students brainstorm the roles these items might have in helping (or hindering) Lark and Connor solve the case.
- In the story, someone has stolen a pair of diamond earrings. What might motivate someone to take something that doesn't belong to them?
- What do students think the thief might do with the earrings? (Are they a gift for someone? Will the thief sell them and use the money for something else?)

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Do any students know how to do a magic trick?
2. Can any of the students describe how a diamond is made?
3. It's more difficult for Lark to read than for Connor, so Lark uses a few techniques (like using colored paper) to help her. Are there activities students find difficult, and what are some of the techniques they use to help themselves?
4. Can students create a list of some of the things Connor and Lark do to track down the clues and solve the mystery?
5. Someone has stolen diamond earrings from the Lees' General Store. How might Mr. and Mrs. Lee protect their property in the future?
6. Sophie and her friends were putting together a movie. Do any of the students create movies or plays?

Suggested Activities

- Every month has a birthstone. Have students research what their birthstone would be and write a paragraph describing the stone.
- Visit www.clker.com/clipart-blue-gem.html for a free clipart image of a diamond. Have students write on the image what they think makes for good teamwork, then hang the diamonds around the room.
- Sophie's movie project involves a volcano and a monster. As a fun writing exercise, have students create the scene where the monster rises from the volcano.
- For your own experiment with Mentos and Diet Coke, visit www.sciencekids.co.nz/experiments/dietcokementos.html for instructions and for a discussion on the science behind the reaction.
- Using shoe boxes, craft paper and other art supplies, have students make a diorama of a fish aquarium.
- There are some great science experiments for kids that can be found here www.sciencekids.co.nz/experiments.html.

Other Titles of Interest

Bagels the Brave, by Joan Betty Stuchner (mystery)

Bats in Trouble, by Pamela McDowell (mystery)

Justine McKeen, Bottle Throttle, by Sigmund Brouwer (strong female character)

Mystery of the Missing Luck, by Jacqueline Pearce (mystery, strong female character, multi-culturalism)

Sam and Nate, by PJ Sarah Collins (friendship)

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Lark Holds the Key (Orca Echoes)
Across the Floor (Orca Limelights)
Burned (Retribution Series)
Terminate (Retribution Series)
Sleight of Hand (Orca Soundings)

Reviews and Awards

Lark Holds the Key

CCBC Best Books starred selection

“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*

“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*

“*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*