

**SKELETON KEY  
BY ANTHONY HOROWITZ**

**Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2006  
Grades 6-8**

Submitted by Susan Gerhart, Young Adult Coordinator  
Calcasieu Parish Public Library, Lake Charles

**Title: Skeleton Key**  
**Author: Anthony Horowitz**  
**Publisher: Philomel Books, 2003**  
**Pages: 264**

**Summary**

Alex Rider, a teenage-spy, agrees to keep his eyes open for trouble at the Wimbledon tennis championships, and finds himself targeted by a Chinese crime ring. To escape the Chinese hit men chasing him, Alex reluctantly agrees to provide cover for CIA agents who wish to search former Russian General Sarov's secluded home on a Cuban controlled island. General Sarov however, has other plans for Alex.

**Author's Biography**

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Anthony Horowitz was born in Stanmore, Middlesex, England on April 5, 1955 to a family of wealth and status. A miserably unhappy and overweight child, Anthony was sent off to boarding school. He made up stories of revenge and retribution. Anthony Horowitz also found solace and escape in avidly watching James Bond films. After boarding school, he attended Rugby School and the University of York.

Anthony Horowitz has been called "the busiest writer in Britain" by a major British newspaper and with good reason. He balances multiple careers as a popular children's book author, playwright, and screenwriter for television and movies. Horowitz stated, "I genuinely think that 14-year-olds are the coolest people on the planet." The popular Alex Rider series features a teenaged 007 (James Bond) character who has daring adventures armed with the latest gadgets. Horowitz says that the plots for *Skeleton Key* was inspired by a story about a Kirsk submarine that nearly lost the Russian President his power. He then added the CIA, the Wimbledon tennis tournament, surfing and the exciting climax in which Alex operates a crane.

Horowitz told Contemporary Authors: "It seems that kids, who don't like to

read, love my books! They're written for anyone who loves adventure, excitement, humor, and non-stop action. *Stormbreaker* and *Point Blank*, which are about a fourteen-year-old spy, were both inspired by James Bond, and when you read my books I hope you'll be able to 'see' them—to imagine them as movies. I write a lot for television and the cinema too, particularly horror and murder mystery. There is a dark side to my writing, but mainly I believe in having fun."

Mr. Horowitz lives in London with his wife, Jill, and their two sons, Nicholas and Cassian. (Source: Contemporary Authors)

## **Awards**

IRA Children's Choices, 2004

ALA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers, 2004

## **Other Titles by Horowitz**

*The Puffin Book of Horror Stories*, 1994

*The Devil and His Boy*, 2001

*Horowitz Horror: Nine Nasty Stories to Chill You to the Bone*, 1999

*More Horowitz Horror: Eight Sinister Stories You'll Wish You Never Read*, 2000.

*Diamond Brothers Series*

*Power Of Five Series*

*Alex Rider Series*

*Stormbreaker*. 2001

*Point Blanc*. 2002

*Skeleton Key*. 2003

*Eagle Strike*. 2004

*Scorpia*. 2004

## **Other Titles With Similar Themes**

### **Teen Spies**

*Gideon Tell and the Siege of Vicksburg* by Robert Walker

*Rifles for Watie* by Harold Keith

*Ship of Fire* by Michael Cadnum

*Spy High Mission One* by A. J. Butcher

### **Teen Adventure**

*Band of Angels* by Julian Thompson

*Dealing with Dragons* by Patricia Wrede

*Devil and His Boy* by Anthony Horowitz

*Distance of Hope* by Sid Hite

*Drackenbergh Adventure* by Lloyd Alexander

*El Dorado Adventure* by Lloyd Alexander

*Gold of Dreams* by Jose Maria Merino

*Goldclimbers* by Nancy Luenn  
*Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson  
*Searching for Dragons* by Patricia Wrede  
*Sparrow Hawk Red* by Ben Mikaelson  
*Sudden Country* by Loren Estleman  
*Teeth of the Gale* by Joan Aiken  
*Strange Attractors* by William Sleator

### **Terrorism**

*Danger Zone* by David Klass  
*Fearless* by Francine Pascal  
*For the Love of Venice* by Donna Jo Napoli  
*Infiltration* by Breen Frazier  
*Normal* by Francine Pascal  
*Operation: Titanic* by Carolyn Keene  
*Run* by Francine Pascal  
*Scooter Girl* by Chynna Clugston-Major  
*Skin Deep* by Cathy Hapka  
*Teeth of the Tiger* by Tom Clancy  
*Terror* by Francine Pascal  
*Third Wheel* by Jamie Suzanne  
*Twisted* by Francine Pascal  
*Vanishing Act* by Sean Gerace

### **Web Sites**

AllReaders

[www.allreaders.com/board.asp?BoardID=24378](http://www.allreaders.com/board.asp?BoardID=24378)

Book discussion board about Anthony Horowitz's books.

Channel 4: Book Box

[www.channel4.com/learning/microsites/B/bookbox/authors/horowitz/index1.htm](http://www.channel4.com/learning/microsites/B/bookbox/authors/horowitz/index1.htm)

Includes a biography, bibliography, and audio segments about Anthony Horowitz.

Scholastic

<http://www2.scholastic.com/teachers/authorsandbooks/authorstudies/authorhome.ihtml?authorid=5910&collateralID=10847>

Site contains a biography as well as a video about this author.

Penguin Group

[www.penguinputnam.com/nf/Author/AuthorPage/0,,0\\_1000015379,00.html](http://www.penguinputnam.com/nf/Author/AuthorPage/0,,0_1000015379,00.html)

Site features a biography and bibliography of Anthony Horowitz.

Write Away! Meets Anthony Horowitz

<http://improbability.ultralab.net/writeaway/anthonyhorowitz.htm>

Includes an interview with the author conducted by a teen.