



Dawn Undercover

Anna Dale

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Dawn Buckle spends most of her days trying to get people to notice her, but whether at home or at school, it's as if she's invisible. And that's exactly what makes her the ideal recruit for S.H.H. (Strictly Hush Hush)—a secret intelligence agency. How the world's most forgettable girl transform herself into a world-class spy (and brings in a surprising double agent) makes for a rollicking read.

Dawn Undercover Details

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Author : Anna Dale

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From Reader Review Dawn Undercover for online ebook

Maya says

Really Really Good!!!! You get into it straight away and it's good for any reader

Shar says

I picked this one up because Karalee said Whispering to Witches is good but it wasn't at the library but this one was by the same author...so I got it instead. :) It was a fun story and it doesn't end with a "to be continued" which is something I am coming to appreciate in these days of trilogies and such!

Damien Malcolm says

Wonderful read. Strikes the perfect balance between an interesting, engaging childrens adventure and mature, twist-turning mystery novel. The kids loved it, every night eager to know what happens next. Kept us all guessing and wrapped up beautifully. Well done!

Hayley says

My mother got me a copy of this when I was younger because of me going through a bit of a James Bond phase and I was hooked. I think I read the book in a weekend and spent the next couple of weeks making up secret codes with my friends. Though looking back this is more a mystery than a spy novel I found it gripping and despite the main character being female the book wasn't girly so I would happily recommend it to any child/young adult who is interested in mysteries.

Neal Russell says

A beautifully written children's book, the different methods of cryptography are fantastic, and I particularly always liked the 'Cumberbatch Alphabet', of which I can still recite to this day.

Anne says

this was one of the first books i really loved.
i wanted to be a spy at that age. ;) i read it in dutch. its such a lovely book! you people should go read this!

Pop Bop says

Le Carre for the Middle Grade Set

This book offers an appealing combination - an engaging girl hero and a fairly complicated spy novel. At least to me, Anna Dale always writes sly, slightly vinegary books, and this seems like a book that might appeal very much to a confident, ambitious middle grade reader.

We start out with a good straightforward running joke. Dawn, for some reason, is always overlooked or unnoticed by people. At the outset we follow Dawn as she has to wait at a school crossing for another school kid to show up because the crossing guard just doesn't register Dawn waiting alone to cross. We follow Dawn's day as time after time she just seems to be invisible to everyone, including her own parents. At one point Dawn is absolutely thrilled because a passing motorist seems to actually look at and see her. Turns out, this motorist is a recruiter for a spy agency and is on the lookout for just such an invisible girl as Dawn.

With that, the spy adventure begins. Dawn is recruited and trained. She is sent into the field to track down the most famous traitor/spy in England. Action, adventure, disguises, double identities, crosses and doublecrosses, and lurking and spying follow. The plot bobs and weaves; it really does feel like John Le Carre was whispering into Dale's ear as she plotted this out.

The result is a mixed bag, in the sense that this is a couple of different books, and it all doesn't fit together exactly seamlessly. Dawn is often deadpan funny and she has a dry wit and observational skills well above the ordinary. But she is deeply attached to her stuffed donkey. She is both shy and fearless, hesitant and assertive, childish and mature. That's fine. But when we get to Dawn's training, there is a lot of, well, training. You actually feel like you're in the bowels of M-5 or M-1 or whichever M the spy agency is.

Then we get out into the field and we have an actual Cold War style spy novel. But with some kid friendly jokes. But with a lot of talk about agency budget cuts. Around here we have added in all of Dawn's fellow agents. They're all adults and sometimes these sections read like an adult spy novel that just happens to have a kid at the margins. Except for the fact that there is some broad middle grade humor blended in with the dry adult humor; and a stuffed animal.

The upshot is that you get fine and clever writing, wide variations in style and tone, a tricky but sometimes silly plot, and this wonderful little girl wandering around in the thick of it. It seems to me that a young reader would very much like and identify with Dawn, and that this would carry that reader through the denser chapters. Given the rewards to be found, including great humor and wry insight, on balance this seems an interesting choice for a confident reader who's willing to take a bit of a chance.

Please note that I found this book while browsing in our local library. I have no connection at all to either the author or the publisher of this book.

Cheryl-Lynn says

So I've decided this just isn't my genre. The preteen books have a hard time keeping my attention. This was cute though very unbelievable to me. I finished reading it just to finish but not because I felt any desire to find out the end.

Audrey Arlis says

It is the best book ever for me

Leo says

This is a really amazing book about a girl who is trained to become a spy. She has lots of adventures undercover and it really doesn't let you go until you've finished the whole book. Plus, it has a lot of spy codes at the back.

Adrienne says

Once again, Anna Dale proves herself an exceptional author. The story is captivating, though a bit predictable at times, but overall is a splendid read. If you haven't read Dale's *Whispering to Witches*, read it. I liked it even better than *Dawn Undercover*. In fact, it was the book that led me to *Dawn*.

Ellinor says

Dawn Undercover is a bit like a girl's version of the Alex Rider books. From an adult's perspective most of the story is naturally completely ridiculous and improbable. But for young girls this book is great entertainment.

Aaron Fitzgerald says

too predictable.

Oda Renate says

fave from when I was younger. adding it to my shelves now.

Carissa says

i think i originally checked this out because this year's slp theme was all about mysteries and i thought it might be a good mystery book to recommend. it sat on my bedside table for a very long time but i finished

reading most of it yesterday. it's actually a spy book more than a mystery (although, of course, there is a mystery to solve). sort of reminds me of the mysterious benedict society only without the tight-knit group of spy kids—there's really only one spy kid. and her adult cohorts. and one bumbling boy and his boisterous dog. the premise is somewhat interesting—the main character, dawn, is so average and boring that no one ever takes notice of her (not even the school crossing guard) until one day a spy agency recruits her for her amazing ability to go unnoticed. once given a taste of self-esteem, however, dawn gets a tiny bit cocky (in my opinion) but in the end still manages to remain a likeable character. it was a good book, but i'm not rushing to find a sequel.
