

'A jewel of a book.' *Pip Murphy*

MAJOR and MYNAH

OPERATION RAVEN



KAREN OWEN

illustrated by Louise Forshaw

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and
MYNAH

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For my wonderful Nan and our Owen family,
who were born close to where this story is set

-KO

For all the readers out there

-LF



Super Perceptive Undercover Detectives

Agent Files

Name: Callie Major

Age: 9 $\frac{3}{4}$

Code name: CM1

Detective skills: Spying

Keeping secrets

Remembering names and
interesting facts

Talents: Riding a bike

Super sprinting

Removing huge hairy spiders
from the bath



Super Perceptive Undercover Detectives

Agent Files

Name:

Grace Ambrose

Age:

9 years, 11 months, 2 days, 3.5
hours (at the time of writing)

Code name:

GA1

Detective skills:

Code breaking

Map drawing

Calculating numbers

Talents:

Basketball

Bike riding

Reaching chocolate hidden on
the top shelf



Super Perceptive Undercover Detectives

Agent Files

Name:	Bo Mynah
Age:	??? (Bo said it's a secret)
Code name:	Spy in the Sky
Detective skills:	Spying Tailing suspects Mimicking voices and sounds
Talents:	Flying Eating (a lot) Pooping (especially on suspects)



It all started when...

'Chirp!'

Bo flew off his perch in my bedroom and landed on my shoulder.

'Morning,' I said, stroking his warm little head with my finger. His black feathers tickled my neck.

'Chirp!' he called impatiently.

'Hang on, let me put the Slugs in.' I called my hearing aids 'the Slugs' because when I first wore them it felt like something fat and horrible had crawled into my ears. The name had stuck, even though I'd since discovered they were amazing.

Carefully, I fitted them into my ears and switched them on.

‘Breakfast time!’ said Bo.

See, that’s why the Slugs are amazing. I could understand Bo when I wore them, which was ultra-cool seeing as he was a mynah bird. It was a huge secret and only my BFF Grace knew about it.

‘I’m hungry,’ said Bo.

‘You’re always hungry. Help me pack my school bag and then I’ll get your breakfast,’ I promised.

He held my list up in his beak while I checked I’d got everything for today’s class trip to the Tower of London.



Packed lunch ✓

Water ✓

Woolly hat ✓

Coat ✓

The Slugs ✓

Spare batteries for the Slugs ✓

The spare batteries are SO important. If the Slugs stop working I can't hear anything properly, and that includes our teacher Mrs Manning and Bo, of course. The first time it happened was at the worst possible moment – I couldn't hear Bo when we were tailing a mystery thief!

'Don't forget me!' said Bo.

'I'd never forget you, Bo, and I'm really sorry but you can't come.'

'Why not?'

'Because the trip's only for my class,' I said.

He cocked his head on one side and opened his beautiful eyes so wide they looked like precious black jewels.

‘Please,’ he begged. ‘I’ll be good, promise. I won’t steal anyone’s black-currants. Or crisps. Or sandwiches.’

‘I wish you could, but Mum doesn’t let animals travel on her coach unless they’re special ones like guide dogs or hearing dogs,’ I said.

‘Ah, I’m not an animal! I’m a bird!’ Bo protested.

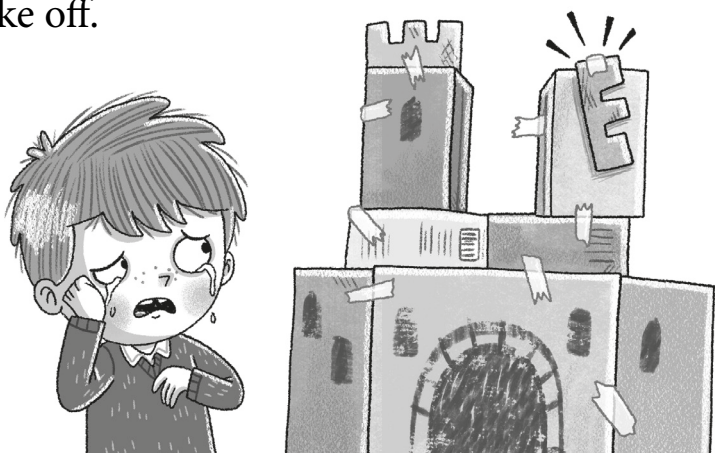
‘She doesn’t allow birds on the coach either. Even when they’re as special as you.’ I stroked his chin.

‘But I want to have an adventure,’ said Bo.

Dad poked his head around the bedroom door. ‘Hurry up and clean your teeth or we’re going to be late for school.’

Luke was already in the bathroom when I got there, squeezing toothpaste everywhere except on his toothbrush. He stamped his foot because he's five and he gets cross when things go wrong. Dad came in and huffed at the mess. Then he did the toothpaste for him, which made Luke even crosser. It took forever before I got to clean my teeth and I still needed to feed Bo.

I rushed to the cupboard under the stairs where Bo's food was kept but Luke had built a huge castle out of recycled cardboard boxes in front of it. I tried to move it carefully but the top of the tower broke off.



Straight away Luke burst into tears. 'Daddy! Callie's broken my castle and she did it on purpose!'

'I didn't mean to,' I shouted.

'You're supposed to say the magic password,' Luke cried.

Dad stomped down the stairs. 'Callie, you've got exactly twenty-two seconds to feed Bo!'

I grabbed the bag of Bo's dried food and poured it into a bowl. The little pellets were made of juniper berries, dried insects and crushed seeds. It sounded disgusting to me but Bo adored them.

By the time I got back to my room, he'd disappeared.

'Bo, breakfast!'

But he didn't appear, even though food is his most favourite thing. He must have hidden on top of the wardrobe because he was in a grump about the trip.

‘Are you sulking?’

No answer.

I sighed. ‘You know why you can’t come.’

Still no answer.

‘Callie!’ Dad bellowed up the stairs. ‘We’re leaving NOW!’

I dumped Bo’s breakfast bowl on the windowsill and grabbed my school rucksack. ‘I’ve got to go. I’ll try and bring you back a treat,’ I promised.

He still didn’t answer.



Everyone in our class was using their outdoor voices indoors because they were so excited about the trip. Our teacher Mrs Manning darted around with a clipboard, telling each parent

helper who would be in their group. I was dreading that I'd be in the same one as Tamsin. She's mean and purposely tries to scare me by making loud noises right up close to the Slugs. Thankfully, Grace and I were teamed up with Finn and Jack, with Finn's mum. I like Finn's mum because she's kind and friendly.



My mum was going on the trip too because it was her job: she was driving the coach. She had lots of rules, including no animals allowed, but the biggest one was **NO EATING ON THE COACH**. The last time we went on a school trip, Kieran Evans was sick because he ate

three Snickers bars in one go. The coach stank and Mum had to clean it, which wasn't fair.

Grace and I grabbed two seats together and fastened our seat belts. We played rock-paper-scissors and I won, which meant I got to sit by the window on the way to London and then it'd be Grace's turn on the journey home, when it was dark. Mum said the journey would take two hours, which is longer than a movie!

'My dad said there's going to be wintry showers, which might even mean snow!' said Grace. 'We can make snow angels.'

'Or have a snowball fight!' But we might not have time to play. The trip to the Tower of London was part of our history project and Mrs Manning said there'd be a million and one things to do and see.

Everyone cheered when Mum started the coach and we were on our way. She's a really good driver, even when everyone's singing 'Ten Green Bottles' for the thousandth time.

Grace fished around in her backpack and pulled out our SPUD notebook. It's where we log all of our investigations and codes. We've already invented one code using our torches so we can communicate from our bedroom windows. Grace is SPUD's code expert and she wanted to show me a new one she's created.

She scribbled down a word in the notebook:

REPUS

'What does that mean?'

'Work it out.'

'I don't know. A weird plant? An alien planet?' I guessed.

‘Read it backwards, right to left,’ said Grace.

I spelled out each letter. ‘S-U-P-E-R. Wow, that really is super! Do another one.’

EVITPECREP

‘This is hurting my brain.’

‘It’s supposed to be tricky. You’ve got to be clever to crack codes,’ said Grace.

Slowly, I read the letters backwards. ‘P-E-R-C-E-P-T-I-V-E. Perceptive.’

REVOCREDNU

‘U-N-D-E-R-C-O-V-E-R. Undercover.’

SEVITCETED

‘D-E-T-E-C-T-I-V-E-S. Detectives.’ I grinned. ‘That’s us! Super Perceptive Undercover Detectives.’ SPUD, for short. At first we were going to be the Brilliant Undercover Mystery Squad but that

would have spelt BUMS! So in the end we chose 'perceptive'. It's one of Mrs Manning's favourite words but we liked it because it describes someone who is very good at spotting things.

Mrs Manning clapped her hands to get our attention. She told us what would happen when we arrived. Mostly it involved doing exactly what our grown-ups told us because she didn't want anyone to get LOST or FALL in the River Thames or get IMPRISONED in the Tower for treason.

Suddenly, Grace grabbed her pencil and scribbled in the logbook:

OB

I frowned. 'Bo?'

GAB

'Bag?'

She gestured at my school rucksack,
which I'd dumped on the floor under the
seat in front.

Bo's orange beak was sticking out of it!