

SECRET AGENT 44

Chapter 1

At 1:00 a.m. in Washington, DC, not far from the White House, three men, turned off a bank's alarm system, and worked fast to rob it. Suddenly, the leader of the robbery froze. He thought he heard a sound and stopped tossing money into a bag. The other two robbers did not hear anything. They kept loading up bags of money. Again, the robber turned around, thinking he heard footsteps.

Nothing.

No one was around.

He shrugged his shoulders and went back to work, throwing heavy bags of money into a cart. After all the bags were loaded, each robber grinned under his Halloween mask. With the masks on, their faces were hidden from video cameras in the vault and throughout the bank. One robber waved goodbye to a camera.

Out front was a large, black getaway van. Working fast, the leader started rolling the cart out of the vault. After he pushed it just a few feet, a wheel unexpectedly broke and fell off. This made the robbers frown.

The only one not frowning was Secret Agent 44. Twelve-year-old Charlie Richmond, a skinny boy in the sixth grade with fair skin and wavy black hair, wore a big smile. Hidden safely in the back of the vault, the junior spy was testing out his new

invention—invisible spray. *So far, so good*, he thought, as he had just broken the wheel, using a small, hand-held remote control. Big trouble was now creeping in on the robbers.

Charlie chuckled. He pushed another button. Another wheel fell off the cart.

“What’s going on?” one of the robbers snapped.

With things going wrong, the group leader reached down and grabbed the two small wheels off the floor. In doing so, he saw black wires sticking out from under the cart.

“Huh?”

His black-gloved hands jerked on the wires. Sparks flew out from under the cart.

Secret Agent 44’s eyes grew wide.

“We’re not alone!” the lead robber yelled, throwing the wires down.

With the discovery of the wires, things were not looking good for Secret Agent 44.

He started to ease his right hand into his pocket. This was the perfect time to activate another homemade invention of his—exploding bubble gum. *This was going to be loud!*