

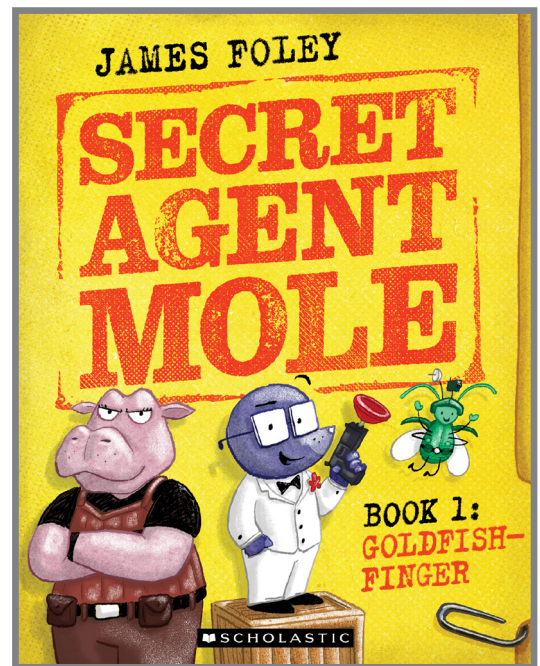
# Secret Agent Mole Book 1: Goldfish-Finger

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



## SYNOPSIS

Max is a mole on a mission. With Helen Hippo and June Bug by his side, Max must stop the evil Goldfish-Finger from stealing a priceless, solid gold fishfinger. This dangerous, top-secret mission will involve explosions, a naked mole rat and being flushed down a giant toilet. Will Max and the team defeat the fiendish fish? Time to rock and mole!

## ABOUT THE CREATOR

James Foley is a children's author and illustrator. He makes picture books, comics and middle-grade novels. His books include the Toffle Towers series, *Total Quack Up*, *Brobot*, *Dungzilla*, *Gastronauts*, *My Dead Bunny* and *The Last Viking*. James is an ambassador for Books In Homes and Room to Read Australia.

## STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, as a class, discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
  - What is a Secret Agent?
  - What is a mole?
  - Where do moles live and what do they look like?
  - What is a 'mole' in the context of spies and secret agents?
  - What can you see happening on the front cover of the book?
  - What is happening in all the photos on the back cover?
  - Who do you think this book might feature?
  - What do you think might happen in the book? Now, read the blurb on the back cover. Do you want to change your hypotheses about what might happen? Why/why not?
- Some of the words on the back cover have been crossed out in thick black pen. As a class discuss when you might expect to see documents with sections blacked out like this, and why this can happen.
  - What do you think some of the missing words on the back cover might be?
  - Before reading the book, in small groups or pairs try to guess as to what the missing words could be.
  - After reading the book, go back and see how many blacked-out sections you can now fill in accurately. How many of your guesses were correct, and how many were wrong?
    - Write a short story of your own, then create an exciting one-paragraph summary of your story. Cross out some of the words in your summary, and then let your classmates try to guess what the missing words are both before and after reading your story.

- What does the mountain (where Max's molehill comes up at the start of Chapter One) look like to you? Think of three words to describe the mountain and its surrounds.
- How do you think the Agency Judges got to the mountain? How about to the end of the pier? In pairs create a fantastic story of your own describing the Judges' journeys to all the different places Max, Helena and June Bug go.
- The Agency Boss has a hard time coming up with names for the Agency, that don't end up spelling something unfortunate when you look at just the first letter of each word. A word that is created using the first letter of each word in a longer phrase or title is called an acronym. In pairs or small groups, brainstorm an excellent name for a secret agency, group or club, that also makes a truly cool acronym.
- How many puns and silly jokes can you find in the story? Choose your favourite chapter of the book, and identify all the different jokes and puns that Max and the others use while trying to solve crimes and foil villains.
- Naked Mole Rats and Toxic Fish, are both rather unlikely super-villains of crime. Can you think of any other animals that might make fitting adversaries for Max, Helena and June to try to defeat? Draw a detailed picture of your Villain, and write a paragraph describing their strengths and weaknesses. Caption your picture carefully with all the important details about their appearance and attributes.
- When Helena and Max are paralysed, they are saved by Chekhov making a 'paralysing-pufferfish-poison prevention potion'. This description is an example of alliteration, where every word in a sentence, phrase or name starts with the same consonant. Think of an alliterative name for a cool potion, device or technique that the Secret Agents might want to use at some point. You will want to have at least three alliterating words in your name or description.
  - Draw a picture of a secret agent using your alliterative invention, and write a description of what it is, what it does and how it is used.
- Max keeps being told he needs to do a better job of planning ahead. What are some things that you think he might have done better that could have helped him defeat the villains earlier?
- How important is planning ahead in your daily life? What are the consequences for you, personally, if you fail to plan? What types of things do you need to plan for on a daily basis? Remember, even simple ordinary things such as having clean clothes to wear in the morning, and lunch to eat at school, all require planning! Make a list of different things you (or your family and friends) need to plan every day. Can you come up with at least ten different items?
- Why is Helena so pleased to discover that the giant fishfinger statue is actually made of steel instead of gold? What are some of the differences between steel and gold? How can you tell if something is made of solid gold without damaging it in the process? Research this question in small groups, and share your answers with the class. How many different ways of identifying these metals could you find?
- When Bug hits the inflated pufferfish with a champagne cork, it deflates rapidly and whizzes all around the room. Recreate this scene using a party balloon and then let go without tying a knot in the neck. You can decorate your balloon with permanent markers to make it look more like a fish if you want, or you can just have fun blowing it up and letting it go. As a class, have a go at deflating balloon races to see whose balloon ends up the furthest from the starting point. What types of things affect how far and fast the balloons travel?
- Andy Warthog discovers a new painting technique in Chapter Eleven. What is his technique and how well do you think it would work? Invent a new painting technique of your own based on Andy Warthog's. You probably don't want to try slapping fish on a canvas to create paintings, but you might get some interesting effects if you use leafy twigs, a cardboard fish-shape cutout or half-inflated balloons. Try your new technique outside in an easy to clean area, and be sure to use washable paint and wear painting smocks!