



Catsup High Detective Agency

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

BfK Rating:

4

When cats in the town of Catsup start to disappear cat detective Malarkey decides to recruit a new assistant to the Catsup High Detective Agency. At first Malarkey is reluctant to hire a kitten, even one with special powers, but he is eventually persuaded by his fellow office residents, an intellectual spider, and a family of constantly nibbling mice, to give Sparkie a chance. The cat detective duo set out to solve the mystery of the missing cats, armed with Malarkey's magic flying scarf and Sparkie's amazing electric paws and ability to find clues, and feline mayhem ensues.

Margaret Ryan's skill and experience in writing funny, fast-paced series fiction for younger readers are well evident in this humorous tale. The story is full of jokes, puns, wordplay and comic situations and the language is carefully chosen to add to the humour and to develop the vocabulary of its readers. Malarkey and Sparkie form a classic comic duo of bumbling detective and bright assistant, and all the extra characters contribute to the sense of fun. The illustrations by Vicky Barker complement the text perfectly and add considerably to the comic effect of the story. There are plenty of visual clues and jokes as well as maps and character profiles to keep readers engaged and the use of page space and comic-book style draw the reader in and increase the pace of events. All in all, this is a funny and appealing book for younger readers, fulfilling the need for engaging books to bridge the gap between beginner readers and longer fiction.

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