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The Guggenheim Mystery

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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This story features Ted Spark, the young hero who previously came up with the solution to an unexplained disappearance that formed the core to Siobhan Dowd's brilliant [The London Eye Mystery](#) [4]. Before she died Dowd had another idea for a Ted story, and this has now been turned into a sequel by Robin Stevens. Once again he is faced by a baffling problem which he eventually solves using his faultless memory and his unerring capacity for logic. But Ted also suffers from a form of autism, which means he sometimes panics in strange situations and cannot always follow other people's speech when the language they use strays from the strictly literal.

He is supported in this by sister Kat and cousin Salim, both in awe of Ted's powers of deduction but also driven to distraction by his inability to read social situations correctly. The problem he has to solve this time is a disappearing Kandinsky painting, with suspicion falling on Ted's aunt, who works at the Guggenheim Museum. Ted decides to find out who really stole the painting, which he does chapter by chapter, meticulously reviewing all the facts as known up to that particular moment. He and his two helpers also dash about New York and the museum itself whenever they like, which makes it easier for them finally to spot the culprit but stretches credibility to breaking point. They also faithfully follow the first rule of most children's adventures stories involving crime: never involve the police force even when key evidence becomes available that should most certainly be shared.

Robin Stevens conveys Ted's puzzlement well when others use metaphors he can't understand. But his regular interrogations of the evidence available to him so far finally become wearisome, and throughout this novel the tone wobbles between catering both for younger readers as well as for older ones, ending up with something for both parties but perhaps not quite enough for either.

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