

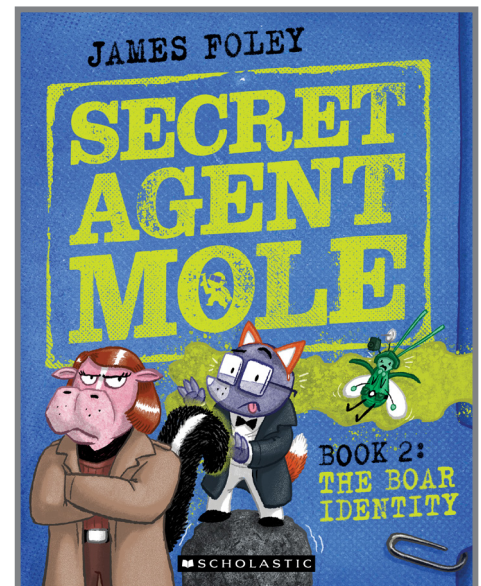
The Boar Identity (Secret Agent Mole Book 2)

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR
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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Upper Primary



SYNOPSIS

When Star Division discovers a magical meteorite with anti-gravity powers, Dr Nude will stop at nothing to get his naked little hands on it—including brainwashing a Star employee!

This important mission features a secret mountain base, an exploding rocket and a flying pig with no clothes on. Can Max Mole, Helena Hippo and June Bug stop Dr Nude's evil plans? I hope so, otherwise we're all doomed! It's 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, Gastronomers, 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 do you think is happening on the cover of this book?
 - What famous adult spy series is this title spoofing?
 - Who has read the first book in this series? What can you remember of the story and characters?
 - Who do you think this story might be about?
 - Which of the characters on the front cover do you think might be one of the protagonists? Why do you think this?
 - What can you see happening in the photographs on the back cover?
 - What do you predict might be likely to happen in this book?
- Dr Nude helps himself to Colonel Hamstrung's fruit bowl. Looking carefully at the pictures of it, what do you think is the rudest thing about the way he has done this?
- How are the characters in this story introduced to the reader? What do we know about them all by the time we have read p 10? In small groups, write brief character profiles of everyone who has appeared in the story so far. As new characters are introduced, write a brief profile for each of them as well. Add to your profiles as the action continues, and discuss what you are learning about each character from the textual narrative, and from the visual narrative as the story progresses.
- What is a meteorite? How does it differ from a meteor? Can you think of another commonly used (non-scientific)

name for either of them?

- If you found a meteorite, what would you do? How could you tell it was a meteorite?
- The acronym for the Space Travel and Research division (STAR) is highly relevant to who the group is and what they do. In pairs or small groups, brainstorm to create names for fictional agencies, groups or clubs, where the acronym formed by the first letters of the words in their name is relevant to their function. Think of as many as you can and share your final inventions with the class. (Hint; sometimes it is easier to think of a word first, and then try to create an organisation title afterwards.)
- Who were the first astronauts to walk on the moon? Which characters in this story are based on them? Do the characters have anything in common with the real people other than similar names? Why do you think this is the case?
- Looking at the list of the crew of Pollo 11, can you identify all the famous people who have similar names to the crew members?
- What would you do if you could reverse gravity over as large or as small an area as you wished? Draw a two to four panel comic showing what you would do, and caption each panel with a description of what is happening.
- What does it mean when someone says 'Pigs might fly'? What does this mean in the context of the story?
- What do you think is the funniest scene in the book? What is funny about it, and why do you like it more than the other funny scenes?
- What do you consider to be the funniest pun in the whole story?
- As a class, discuss all the different ways you can identify that the author has used humour in this story. Be sure to also consider the reasons why an author would choose to include humour in a novel, and how readers would be likely to react to a book filled with humorous scenes as compared to one without them. Do you think you would enjoy a story like *Secret Agent Mole* if the author and illustrator had decided to use no humour at all? Why/why not?
- Chapter 8 is titled 'A Falling Out'. What does this phrase usually refer to? What do you think it is referring to in the story?
- Agent Mole and his team have a very cool flying car. If you had a flying car, what would you want it to look like? Design a flying car of your own. Create a labelled diagram showing all the different features and parts of it, as well as a coloured illustration of it flying.
- Make bottle rockets and launch them from the middle of the school oval (or any other large clear space.) The simplest version of a bottle rocket needs a large clean empty soft drink bottle, a square of paper towel, four pencils, a cup of vinegar, a heaped tablespoon of baking soda, and a cork or piece of pool noodle to fit securely and firmly inside the neck of the rocket, making an airtight seal. **WARNING. THESE ROCKETS CAN GO A LONG WAY UP, AND IF THEY FALL OVER CAN GO A LONG DISTANCE SIDEWAYS. ALWAYS STAND WELL BACK FROM ONE WHILE WAITING FOR IT TO LAUNCH AND NEVER HOLD ONTO ONE AFTER IT HAS BEEN TURNED OVER AND THE VINEGAR HAS HIT THE BAKING SODA.** Follow the below instructions for how to create the rocket:
 - Tape the four pencils to the bottle, parallel to its long axis, so that when you turn the bottle upside down and rest it on the ground, the pencils support it with the neck of the bottle held above ground level. The pencils are like the scaffolding on an actual rocket's launch pad, and their only job is to hold the rocket steadily in place, upside down and just above the ground until it launches.
 - Carefully pour a cup (or two) of vinegar into the rocket.
 - Cut a piece of paper towel into a square approximately 10 cm on each side.
 - Place the tablespoon of baking powder into the middle of the paper towel, then scrunch and fold the paper towel closed over it.
 - Carefully wedge the paper towel filled with baking soda inside the neck of the bottle. Be sure none of the baking soda falls into the vinegar.
 - Push the cork or piece of pool noodle into the neck of the bottle. It is OK if some of the paper towel is jammed between the stopper and the bottle, but don't push the paper towel and baking soda into the vinegar.
 - Turn the bottle over and immediately put it down so it is standing on the pencil-feet, and move away from it. Do not shake it or stay near it once you have turned it over.
 - Stay well back and wait for it to launch!

- Clean the vinegar spray from any surfaces it has touched. Vinegar is an acid and if it isn't washed off it can damage clothing, plastic, or metal, and it will kill grass. Do not do this in the middle of a cricket pitch unless you want some very unhappy cricketers.
- An alternative activity could be researching online to find instructions for how to make bottle rockets, and comparing the results from following different methods.
- Why is there no oxygen in low earth orbit, and why is it so cold? Research online or in the library, and find out at what height do people (and presumably moles and hippos) need special equipment to survive?
- Secret Agent Mole worked out that Buzz had been replaced by a robot because Buzz is left handed but the robot signed his name with its right. Discuss the following questions as a class:
 - How many people in your class are right handed?
 - How many people in your class are left-handed?
 - Is anyone ambidextrous?
 - Can you write your name with your non-dominant hand?
 - Use your non-dominant hand to draw a picture of a buzzy insect (Like Buzz or Bug) sitting on a flower, and sign your name to it; then draw the same picture again using your dominant hand. As a class look at all the different pictures and discuss how easy or difficult you found it to draw and write with your non-dominant hand.

AUTHOR OF NOTES
RAE CARLYLE