

WHIZ TANNER AND THE CRIME LAB

Tanner-Dent short

As I race to the Tanner-Dent Crime Lab, I don't have a lot of time for idle chit-chat, so I'm going to jump right into an introduction. My code name is Agent K and I'm on my way to meet Agent M. M is deep underground in our secure Crime Lab.

Now don't go thinking that just because Whiz, I mean Agent M, and I are sixth-graders at Jasper Springs Elementary that we aren't real private detectives—we most certainly are. In fact, we have a quickly growing list of cases we've solved since starting the Tanner-Dent Detective Agency.

Whiz Tanner and I started the agency last summer and the first thing we did was adopt code names to hide our true identities while we were on a case. Whiz, the brains of our outfit, chose Agent M and I—I'm Joey Dent, by the way—chose Agent K. Why? Well I'm turning my bike into Whiz's driveway just now and don't have time to answer questions.

I skid to a halt and drop my bike cleanly in the side yard just off the driveway—can't have Dr. Tanner running over it with his car now, can I? Carefully, I look around for spies and make my way quickly to the back of the shed. Once there, I drop to my knees and take one last look around. Seeing nobody, I press the fake knot on the cedar shingles and wait.

'Name?' sounds from the hidden speaker.

"Agent K," I reply.

'Password?'

"Pangram," I state clearly.

Pangram is what I call a Whiz Word. Whiz has this thing he does that makes it difficult to understand him—even adults are flustered sometimes. Strange big words and awkward sentences are part of that. Many evenings I look up some word Whiz has thrown at me that day.

Anyway, our Crime Computer analyzed my voice and checked my answers. And, since everything was okay, it sent an electrical signal to a switch that allowed a secret door in the back of the shed to open. I rushed in and closed the door, causing a black-light to come on. Now, I could see the white tape on the edge of the steps leading down the old bomb shelter—the Tanner-Dent Crime Lab.

At the bottom, I opened one last door and entered the Lab. This place is amazing! We have tables and shelves full of homemade detective stuff. We have microscopes, and Bunsen burners, and shovels, and flashlights, a police scanner, walkie-talkies, measuring tapes, rope, and many others things we found useful while on a case. There is a built-in bookcase along one wall with our growing library of detective books. We have a plastic marker board making up our Evidence Wall. Recording equipment and cameras—you name it!

A while back, Dr. Tanner and my dad, built a shed over an old bomb shelter—some say it was a storm shelter, but I'm telling this story, so it's a bomb shelter—in the Tanner's back yard. We covered it with cedar shingles to match the house and Whiz created a special shingle with a fake knot that is really a switch. The front of the shed is a real shed for the lawnmower and wheel barrow and other yard equipment. The back has a secret section covering the bomb shelter stairwell. Cool, huh?

As I entered, Whiz was sitting behind a large oak desk tapping away at the Crime Computer. He looked up.

“The case has broken wide open, Agent K, illuminating some previously obscure clues. Are you ready to get to work?”

You bet I was!

“Agent K, reporting for duty.”

The End