

BEX FALCON

AND THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING MUFFINS

by Derrick Barnes • illustrated by Darnell Johnson



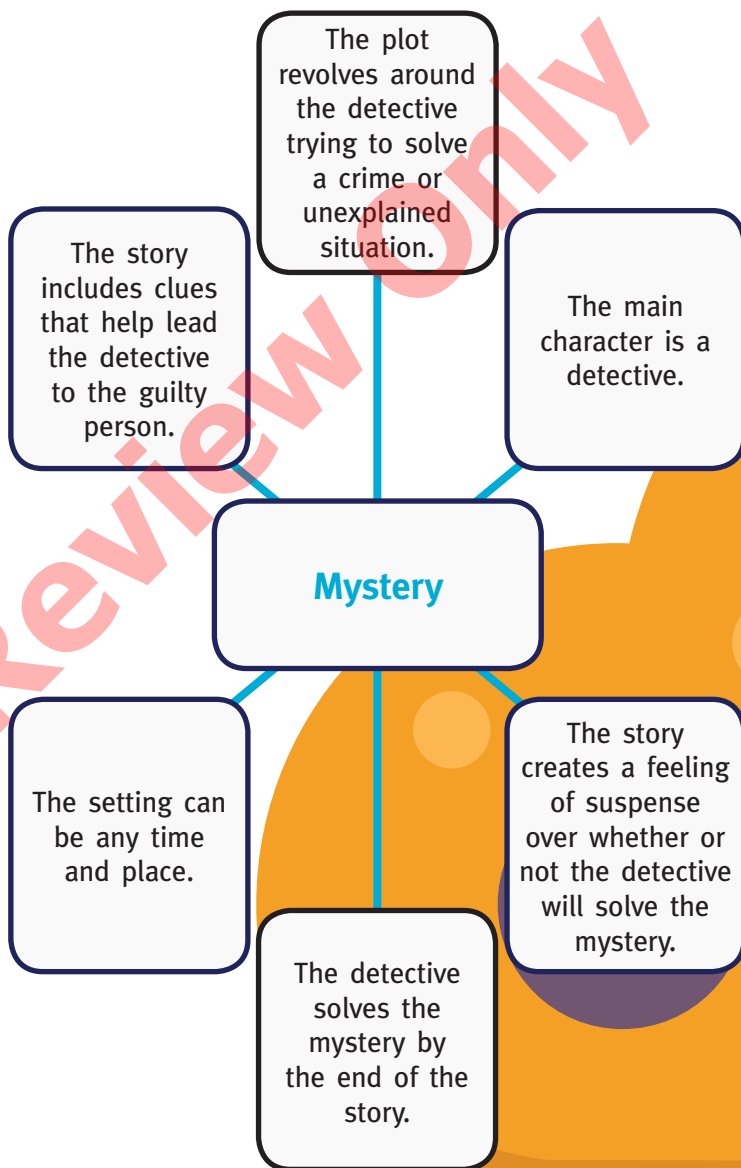
**MYSTERY
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ISBN: 978-1-5322-5632-5

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145 Huguenot Street • New Rochelle, NY • 10801

Grandpa Harry Can Bake

“Sweet-sweet—Sweet-sweet—Sweeeeet.”

Grandpa Harry Falcon sang into a wooden spoon as if he was onstage in a jam-packed theater. He wore a black apron that read: REAL MEN BAKE.



Grandpa Harry was making his amazing, out-of-this-world blueberry muffins. He stirred the ingredients and danced around his kitchen, mixing the batter in rhythm.

“Listen to you, Grandpa. I could hear you all the way down the hallway, just grooving,” said Bex.

Ten-year-old Bex came into the kitchen surrounded by Luther, her English bulldog, and Roberta, her cat. Mrs. Watson, her gerbil, rode on Bex’s right shoulder.

Grandpa chuckled. “I have to loosen up my singing voice for our reunion concert tonight, Miss Bex,” he replied.

“Your old soul singing group? Harry and the Harmonics?” Bex got excited. “I love, love, love, extra super-duper, marshmallow-and-a-chunk-of chocolate LOVE your music, Grandpa!”

“Not as much as I love those blueberry muffins you’re whipping up, Grandpa,” said Zo, Bex’s younger brother.

Zo soared into the kitchen, his arms stretched out in front. He was dressed like a superhero, with his blue cape flapping behind him.

“Zo, did you know that Grandpa Harry and his group, the Harmonics, are putting on a reunion concert?” Bex asked.

“Of course I know. That’s no surprise. That’s old news,” said Zo.



Bex Falcon on the Case

“Well, I have a surprise too!” Bex said. “I came up with a name for my private-eye business: the Golden Wings Detective Agency!”

“Okay, so now I know,” Zo said, turning his attention back to Grandpa Harry. “So, Grandpa, when will the muffins be ready? I’m starvin’ like Marvin.”

“Well, lookee here, Marvin. You can’t be starving that much,” said Bex, holding up an empty bag of cheesy fish crackers. “You have some explaining to do.”

“Cheese crackers? Who, me?” said Zo, innocently.

“Looks like I have my first case. Everybody but Grandpa, LINE UP!” Bex ordered Zo, Luther, and Roberta. “You too, Mrs. Watson. Climb on down.”

Bex opened her brand-new red and gold detective backpack kit. She took out a magnifying glass and held it up to her eye to see the image better.

She was ready to question her cheesy-fish-cracker-snatching suspects.

“I’m going to let you guys figure this out. I have to get dressed for the show,” said Grandpa Harry. He put the bowl of muffin batter in the refrigerator and headed upstairs.

Using her magnifying glass, Bex looked closely at the claws of her pets. Her cat, Roberta, licked her paws. She was completely unbothered. Luther whined and begged for puppy snacks, while her gerbil, Mrs. Watson, had fallen asleep on Luther’s back.

“I don’t see any cheesy cracker crumbs on you guys,” said Bex. She walked to the end of the line and stood right in front of Zo. “Okay, little bro. Hold out your hands. Come on now. Stop stalling, buddy.”

“Look, I was hungry, okay? I hadn’t eaten anything since breakfast. What was I supposed to do, Bex?”

“Ever heard of asking?” said Bex. “In the meantime, have a piece of fruit,” she said, pointing to a large bowl filled with apples and pears.



Just then Grandpa Harry came downstairs holding a rolled-up poster. He was wearing a shiny, electric-blue suit and his cool wing-tip shoes.

“Introducing the lead singer of the fabulous Harry and the Harmonics: Harry Falcon!” Grandpa announced. He spun around with his hands in the air as he showed off his dance steps.

“Grandpa, is that you, man? You don’t look so old anymore,” said Zo.

“Thanks, Zo,” said Grandpa Harry, removing the bowl of muffin batter from the refrigerator. He filled two muffin tins and slid them into the oven.

“Is that a big picture or something, Grandpa?” Zo asked, looking at the poster.

Grandpa Harry unrolled the poster and held it up for Bex and Zo to see. It was a picture of four young men all wearing blue suits in the style of 1970s R&B soul singers. The headline at the top read “Harry and the Harmonics.”

“Is that you? The one on the left?” asked Bex.

“It sure is,” said Grandpa Harry. “We were kind of a big deal back in my day.”



“That song I was singing earlier, ‘Love Birds,’ was a huge hit on our college campus. We were local celebrities, performing throughout the state.”

Bex loved it when Grandpa Harry took out his old photos.

Bex’s grandparents, Harry and Venus, met in their first year at Hilltop College. They held their wedding there after graduation on August 9, 1975. “Your Grandma Venus came to every single show. Rest her soul. She was my number one fan,” said Grandpa Harry.

