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Friday Barnes Girl Detective by R.A. Spratt

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Friday Barnes is a clever 11-year-old who is the equal of Sherlock Holmes. The daughter of brilliant, absent-minded parents, Friday has been an independent child from an early age. Her preoccupied parents have mostly left their daughter to grow up on her own. However, their extensive library has taught Friday more than her teachers ever could.

Friday dislikes immature social interaction, so she makes herself invisible at school by wearing bland clothes and hiding behind books - particularly crime thrillers. Consequently, she knows how to track down even the most elusive criminals.

Having won a large reward for solving a bank robbery, Friday uses the money to fund her education at a private school where she hopes to gain a superior education. For once, Friday has miscalculated. The co-educational school is filled with the children of wealthy parents. Many of the students are spoiled brats, determined to make the mousy newcomer's life miserable.

It's not long before mysterious happenings at the school require Friday's skills. Her classmates soon recognise her abilities as a sleuth and pay her to solve their dilemmas and get them out of trouble. These lucrative contracts help the entrepreneurial detective pay her expenses. Nevertheless, there's something strange going on down in the school's swamp that puzzles even Friday. She resolves to seek out the truth.

An entertaining read for intermediate-age students who enjoy a good mystery.

Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett

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