



Nick and Tesla's Special Effects Spectacular: A Mystery with Animatronics, Alien Makeup, Camera Gear, and Other Movie Magic You Can Make Yourself!

By Bob Pflugfelder, Steve Hockensmith

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What do a pair of kid inventors with a knack for science and electronics do when Hollywood comes to town? Why save the day, of course!

In *Nick and Tesla's Special Effects Spectacular*, 11-year-old siblings Nick and Tesla Holt find themselves on the set of a big-budget superhero movie. But someone's sabotaging the onscreen debut of their favorite comic book hero, so the brother and sister sleuths must crack the case with the help of a fresh assortment of homemade special-effects gadgets. This cinematic saga features instructions for all-new movie magic projects that kids can build themselves, such as camera gear, stunt dummies, make-up magic, and more. Science and electronics have never been so much fun!

“How do you connect students interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) with fiction reading? Look for science adventures. Get started with the Nick and Tesla series. Each book contains an engaging adventure revolving around a ‘build-it-yourself’ science project.”—*Teacher Librarian*

“Real project blueprints are included along with this tale of 11-year-old siblings who create outrageous contraptions and top-secret gadgets.”—*Los Angeles Times*

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 4–6—Twin brother and sister Nick and Tesla Holt find themselves involved in a dual mystery: the disappearance of their parents who are abroad (supposedly) and the sabotage of their favorite comic book hero. To distract themselves from solving the first "grown-up mystery," the twins and their friends dive into action to save the job of a line producer who happens to be Demarco's aunt. With the help of movie aficionado Silas, and aspiring stuntman Demarco, the friends help to solve the mystery and weirdness on the set of *The Stupefying Metalman*. There's a smorgasbord of characters: Uncle Newt, Elisha and Monique (Demarco's sisters), Aunt Zoe, Mr and Mrs. Holt, all of the characters on the set of the movie, among others. All of these figures, many with shallow development, provide for a slow and confusing read. Thankfully, the main characters provide some balance and, refreshingly, all of the female protagonists, including Aunt Zoe, avoid negative gender stereotypes, proving themselves to be critical thinkers and leaders. Fans of cinematography and action movies will enjoy this series installment, which includes step-by-step instructions for creating movie props. VERDICT Readers who like the "Nick and Tesla" series, detailed mysteries, and learning how to make movie paraphernalia will enjoy this offering.—Gwen Collier, Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, NY

Review

“Another banner book by these science geeks...who live to make science fun.”—*Geeks of Doom*

“The book gives great behind-the scenes information about making a blockbuster film, including technical terms and insider slang. Kids love movies, a mystery, and projects, and this book provides all three.”—*Catholic Library World*

“This was a great continuation of the Nick and Tesla series.... It's a fun mystery read with some science, some humor, cute illustrations throughout, and some neat experiments/projects. I would recommend to middle grade readers who like mystery and science.”—*Hidden in Pages*

“What an absolute treat!... *Nick and Tesla's Special Effects Spectacular* is a terrific addition to this awesome series.... I can't wait for the next one!”—*A Bookish Way of Life*

Praise for *Nick and Tesla's High-Voltage Danger Lab*

“*Nick and Tesla's High-Voltage Danger Lab* has the perfect formula: Mega-watts of funny writing plus giga-hertz of hands-on science equals fun to the billionth power!”—Chris Grabenstein, *New York Times* best selling author of *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*

“Real project blueprints are included along with this tale of 11-year-old siblings who create outrageous contraptions and top-secret gadgets.”—*Los Angeles Times*

“...the combination of exciting elements and innovative DIY projects in action yields a guaranteed pager turner.”—*ScienceBuddies.org*

“[*Nick and Tesla's High-Voltage Danger Lab* is] a great way to show kids that problems can often be solved

by applying a bit of creative energy with some tech know-how. And Nick and Tesla (and Uncle Newt) are the perfect companions for your young reader looking for some (safe) adventures.”—*Geek Dad*

“A mystery, adventure, and activity book all rolled into one entertaining story....Plenty of excitement, with science.”—*Common Sense Media*

“Part mystery, part mad science...the story will leave readers wondering what mayhem will be forthcoming.”—*School Library Journal*

“...a strong start...”—*Publishers Weekly*

“How do you connect students interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) with fiction reading? Look for science adventures. Get started with the NICK AND TESLA series. Each book contains an engaging adventure revolving around a “build-it-yourself” science project.”—*Teacher Librarian*

“Engaging characters and brisk plotting make this a fun and educational read.”—Jennifer Ouellette, author of *The Calculus Diaries* and *The Physics of the Buffyverse*

“A promising first offer in a series that offers plenty of appeal for middle-grade and middle school readers.”—*Kirkus*

“Suspenseful, funny, and loaded with do-it-yourself robots, rockets, and burglar alarms. Nick and Tesla are an unforgettable new detective team, sure to inspire an entirely new generation of scientists and readers. Can’t wait for the next book!”—Amy Herrick, author of *The Time Fetch*

“A book with action, adventure, mystery, humor -- and instructions on how to build rockets and robots. What more could young readers possibly want? 'Nick & Tesla' is a great book that will keep your kids enthralled with its intriguing story -- and inspire them with its clever science experiments. I can't wait for the further adventures of these fascinating characters.”—Stuart Gibbs, Edgar-nominated author of *Spy School* and *Belly Up*

“I love the book! It combines science, intrigue and great fiction together in a wild ride for the reader. Nothing tickles me more than seeing a story really charged up with science. And the projects are so much fun! More please!”—Lynn Brunelle, four-time Emmy Award-winning writer for “*Bill Nye the Science Guy*” and the author of *Pop Bottle Science*

“What kid wouldn't want to join Nick and Tesla and their wacky family? This is a great way for budding scientists to have fun while exploring the intricacies of physics, chemistry, and more--up close, personal, and hands-on!”—Jane Hammerslough, author of *Owl Puke: The Book* and *Dino Poop: And Other Remarkable Remains of the Past*

“Pflugfelder and Hockensmith debut a captivating series about crime-solving kid inventors in the spirit of Tom Swift and Alvin Fernald. But Nick and Tesla give us what their literary predecessors always omitted: blueprints for whiz-bang inventions that kids can actually build themselves (with some adult assistance). Electromagnets, tracking devices, rockets and the like. Hands-on science has never been so cool.”—Joseph D'Agnese, author of *Blockhead: The Life of Fibonacci*

About the Author

“**Science Bob**” **Pflugfelder** is an elementary school teacher based in Newton, Massachusetts. He has made

many television appearances on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, *The Dr. Oz Show*, and *Live With Kelly and Michael*, among other media outlets.

Steve Hockensmith is the author of a *New York Times* best seller (*Price and Prejudice and Zombies: Dawn of the Dreadfuls*) and an Edgar Award nominee (*Holmes on the Range*).

Users Review

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George Hinnenkamp:

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Jacqueline McArdle:

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Curtis Tyson:

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