

The Nebula secret (Sep 2018)



By:

Trueit, Trudi Strain

Ages 9-12

Fiction

Series: [Explorer Academy, 1](#)

Min/max grade level: 4 - 6

Lexile score: [660](#)

Accelerated reader: [IL: MG, BL: 4.7, AR Pts: 8](#)

DESCRIPTION

Twelve-year-old Cruz Coronado leaves his home in Hawaii to study and travel with other young people invited to attend the elite Explorer Academy in Washington, D.C.

Booklist:

Grades 4-7 The first fiction series from National Geographic's new Under the Stars imprint features Cruz Coronado, 12, who's selected to attend the elite Explorer Academy in D.C. in this action-packed illustrated adventure. Cruz and 23 other kids from around the world are training to become explorers aboard the academy's flagship, which travels around the globe doing research. As if the training—and having an aunt on the faculty—isn't hard enough, a scarred man in snakeskin boots is stalking Cruz. He warns Cruz to leave or Nebula will kill him like they did Cruz's mother, who died mysteriously in the academy's synthesis lab when Cruz was five. Who or what is Nebula? Can the codes that Cruz loves to decipher help him solve his mother's death? The students' training includes lessons on cool technologies available now or in the near future, plausibly incorporated into the plot. Not all the characters are fleshed out,

but there's potential to learn more about them in future installments. Sure to appeal to kids who love code cracking and mysteries with cutting-edge technology. -- Sharon Rawlins (Reviewed 8/1/2018) (Booklist, vol 114, number 22, p70)

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School Library Journal:

Gr 4–6—This new National Geographic series introduces 12-year-old Cruz, who lives in Hawaii with his dad and has been accepted into the elite Explorer Academy in Washington, DC. It's where his mother, a scientist, was killed in a lab accident, and his aunt, an anthropologist, is still a teacher. He and his classmates are set to embark on an expedition aboard the ship Polaris, but only after training at this high-tech Hogwarts-like academy using things like Augmented Reality Challenges and mind-control cameras. In addition to the pressure of academics, Cruz has acquired a mysterious stalker in cowboy boots and learned that his mother's death may not have been an accident after all. When he is falsely accused of cheating and immediately expelled, he must rely on family and friends to clear his name and track down his mother's hidden journal. An afterword explains "The Truth Behind the Story" and directs readers to the online Explorer Academy. VERDICT Nonstop action and a mix of full-color photographs and drawings throughout make this appealing to aspiring explorers and reluctant readers alike, and the cliffhanger ending ensures they'll be coming back for more.—Laurie Slagenwhite Walters, Brighton District Library, Brighton, MI --Laurie Slagenwhite Walters (Reviewed 09/01/2018) (School Library Journal, vol 64, issue 9, p111)

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Publishers Weekly:

After 12-year-old Cruz Coronado is invited to attend the prestigious Explorer Academy in Washington, D.C., he leaves his Hawaii home to join fellow students from around the world who are training to become the next generation of conservationists, scientists, explorers, and more. It appears that someone is determined to obstruct Cruz's efforts, however (he is grabbed by a diver while surfing, then followed in an airport), and he soon suspects that the sabotage may be tied to his mother's mysterious death, years earlier. Cruz must discover the truth behind these events before his time at the Academy is cut short. While the story line by Trueit (*The Sister Solution*) focuses on the

mystery, the book's real strength rests in its adventure, as its heroes, including Cruz's new friends, Emmett Lu and Sailor York, tackle puzzles and simulated missions as part of the educational process. Maps, letters, and puzzles bring the exploration to life, and back matter explores the "Truth behind the Fiction," such as notable real-life National Geographic explorers and relevant science. This exciting series opener introduces young readers to the joys of science and nature. Ages 8–12. Agent: Rosemary Stimola, Stimola Literary Studio. (Sept.) --Staff (Reviewed 08/20/2018) (Publishers Weekly, vol 265, issue 34, p)