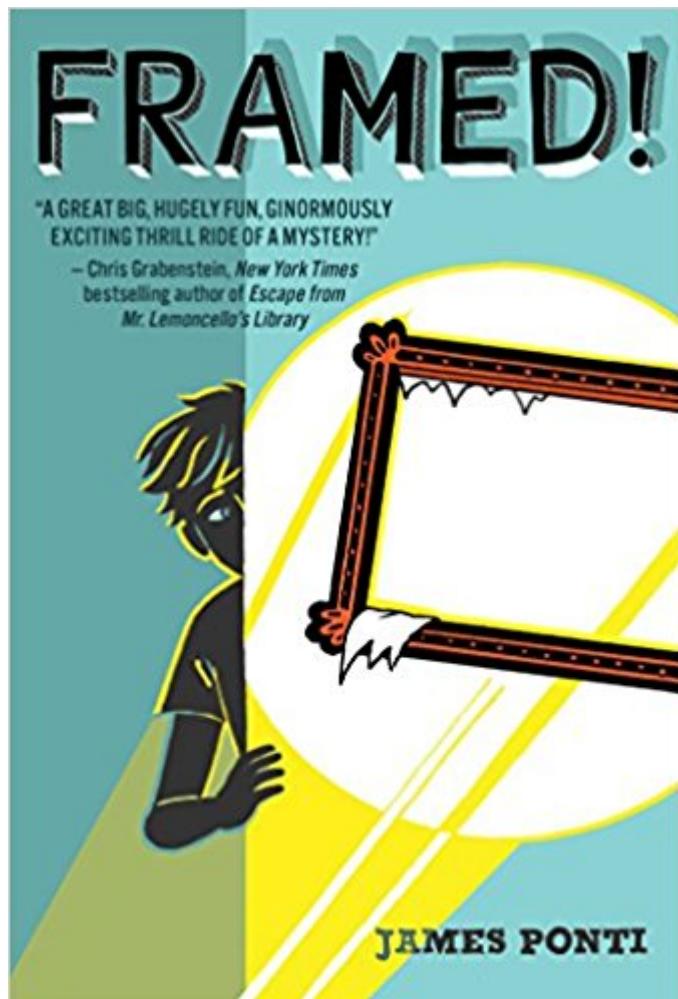


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## Framed!



## Synopsis

Get to know the only kid on the FBI Director's speed dial and several international criminals' most wanted lists all because of his Theory of All Small Things in this hilarious start to a brand-new middle grade mystery series. So you're only halfway through your homework and the Director of the FBI keeps texting you for help! What do you do? Save your grade? Or save the country? If you're Florian Bates, you figure out a way to do both. Florian is twelve years old and has just moved to Washington. He's learning his way around using TOAST, which stands for the Theory of All Small Things. It's a technique he invented to solve life's little mysteries such as: where to sit on the first day of school, or which Chinese restaurant has the best eggrolls. But when he teaches it to his new friend Margaret, they uncover a mystery that isn't little. In fact, it's HUGE, and it involves the National Gallery, the FBI, and a notorious crime syndicate known as EEL. Can Florian decipher the clues and finish his homework in time to help the FBI solve the case? Kirkus Reviews praised the "solid, realistic friendship bolstered by snappy dialogue," and School Library Journal said "mystery buffs and fans of Anthony Horowitz's Alex Rider series are in for a treat."

## Book Information

Series: Framed! (Book 1)

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Gr 4-7 •Mystery buffs and fans of Anthony Horowitz's "Alex Rider" series are in for a treat. Protagonist Florian uses a special technique he calls T.O.A.S.T. (Theory of All Small Things) to solve mysteries. The technique enables Florian to draw conclusions based on noticing tiny details. Florian has just moved with his family to Washington, DC. He has never had many friends before. When he meets Margaret, the girl who lives next door, she is intrigued and fascinated by T.O.A.S.T. and begs Florian to teach it to her. When they go to the National Gallery of Art so Florian can teach her his method, they discover details that may be linked to the theft of three paintings. Florian's use of T.O.A.S.T. to find the missing art impresses the FBI so much that he is asked to become a covert consultant. When a dangerous crime syndicate kidnaps Florian, he will have to use every trick he knows to escape and save the day. Florian is funny and smart and grows throughout the novel. VERDICT With elements of Alex Rider, James Bond, and Sherlock Holmes stories, this is likely to be popular with mystery and action/adventure fans. •Patrick Tierney, Dr. Martin Luther King Elementary School, Providence, RI --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The real draws here are the two resourceful leads' solid, realistic friendship, bolstered by snappy dialogue, brisk pacing, and well-crafted ancillary characters •not to mention behind-the-scenes glimpses of the FBI. More escapades are promised in this improbable but satisfying series starter. (Kirkus Reviews Kirkus Reviews) Mystery buffs and fans of Anthony Horowitz's "Alex Rider" series are in for a treat. . . . With elements of Alex Rider, James Bond, and Sherlock Holmes stories, this is likely to be popular with mystery and action/adventure fans. (School Library Journal School Library Journal) The implications Florian draws from focusing on minute details are lots of fun, and if upon reflection readers realize that Ponti is in authorial control of Florian's brilliance, well . . . it worked for Arthur Conan Doyle, too. EB (BCCB June 2016) What stands out is the portrayal of Florian's and Margaret's intelligence, their close friendship, and athlete Margaret's sports prowess. Refreshingly, the adults aren't portrayed as completely clueless; they are respectful of the kids' crime-solving abilities, even though the preteen sleuths, as they realize themselves, are not infallible. Young readers will enjoy this first caper in a projected series. (Booklist 7/1/16) Florian resembles a young Sherlock Holmes, and together he and Margaret use the TOAST technique to prove that things are not always as they first appear. This book will grab readers from the first page with its witty characters and non-stop action. It would be a great read for fans of Chasing Vermeer (Scholastic, 2005). (School Library Connection)

I really liked Ponti's Dead City series, and Framed! didn't disappoint. As a children's librarian, kids often come to me asking for a mystery, but unless I drag out Nancy Drew, there just aren't a lot of them. Adult mysteries deal almost exclusively with, at best, corpses, and at worst, ghastly horribly maimed corpses, and we don't want those in the kids' section. Art theft is a very nice second best, and Ponti throws in a very believable secondary plot of trying to trace one of the main character's parents, who abandoned her at a fire station. Which is an indication of how many appealing small details there were in this book. Our hero, Florian Bates, has invented T.O.A.S.T., the Theory of All Small Things. He and his buddy Margaret play people watching games in Washington D.C., and they prove to be so good at it that they're soon helping the FBI solve a major art crime. Sounds like a major stretch, but Ponti fills the book with enough humanizing and humorous literary details that makes FRAMED! add up to a successful T.O.A.S.T. of a book. Like any good mystery, FRAMED! ends with a very nice surprise twist. Leaving me looking forward to the next one.

Sherlock Holmes...eat your heart out! When I first was given this book, I must admit I was less than eager to read it (I embrace the fact that I am a book-cover snob and this one just did not speak to me). However, once I started, I could NOT put it down...which was a wonderful surprise. From the first chapter to the last, I became wrapped up in the antics of Florian, the main character, who utilizes something he refers to as T.O.A.S.T. (The Theory of All Small things), in order to solve mysteries. He focuses on small clues; things that others would take for granted, or dismiss all together, in order to solve crimes that baffle more professional investigators. This gift of hyper-awareness and analysis lands him a job in the FBI...at only twelve year of age. The main character is a perfect blend of cleverness and self-deprecation. His humor helps move the story along, just as much as his brilliance helps the reader discover clues at a blinding speed. The book held my attention so well, that I found myself trying to use the T.O.A.S.T technique on strangers around me...trying to figure out who they were, where they came from and where they were going...just by looking at their shoes or what they had on their lapel. It is rare that a book makes me actually ACT on what I am reading in order to see if I can replicate the brilliance in my own life. Let me just admit...it is best left to Florian, as I am sure my neighbor is not an ex-patriot spy who is hoarding grape jelly in his basement for nefarious reasons. This book is a perfect read for young adults and adults alike. If you like deductive reasoning, attention to detail, characters that seem to breath life at every turn of the page, and humor throughout, this is a book that will satisfy. I am so glad that I opened this book, and I look forward to many more from this author. Well done, James Ponti! Well done, indeed.

My whole family loved this book! I read it aloud to my two children, aged 11 and 8. My husband usually doesn't mind if I read aloud to our kids without him, but after a few chapters we were all hooked, and he insisted I wait for him each night before I started reading. Florian is a good detective, and his friend Margaret is a great character. Together with their TOAST technique it makes for an awesome Sherlock Holmes-esque mystery. We cannot wait for the next book!

"Framed! (A T.O.A.S.T. Mystery) by James Ponti is a tightly woven story about art museum heists, the FBI and a very observant middle schooler. Florian Bates is a very well defined and likable character. His observation skills earn him a place on the FBI investigation of the theft of several masterpieces. Florian's best friend, Margaret, joins him on this adventure as he teaches her the significance of TOAST, Theory of all Small Things. I loved the warm relationships of the characters and look forward to the continuation of this series. This book has challenged me to work on my observation skills. James Ponti is a very astute writer who knows how to connect to the reader.

Framed! had everything that I love about a middle grade mystery. Great characters! Interesting plot with twists and turns! And most important of all, a connection to Sherlock Holmes! Florian Bates uses his T.O.A.S.T. theory to figure people out and solve mysteries. His Theory of All Small Things states that life can be figured out by paying attention to the small details. He uses his theory to make friends as well as figure out the best ways to survive middle school. Moving around frequently with his parents leaves Florian plenty of time to put his theory into action. But when he meets Margaret and uses his theory to figure her out, she is enthralled with his techniques. And when they visit the National Gallery where Florian's parents work, they put T.O.A.S.T. into action figuring out all they can about the other visitors. One visitor in particular stands out though, especially when he shows up more than once under unusual circumstances. None of that means anything though until Florian finds out that the museum has been robbed. Florian goes with his father to see if he can help figure out the mystery. And Florian solves the mystery within a couple of hours which catches the eye of the FBI. But there turns out to be more to the mystery than was originally thought which leads Florian and Margaret deeper into what turns out to be a rather dangerous set of conditions. Florian and Margaret are fun characters, each with their own quirks. T.O.A.S.T. turns out to be a rather fascinating way to see the world and the mystery itself takes several sharp turns (including a kidnapping, a mob boss, and a forgery). This is a fabulous new series for young readers who enjoy a good mystery with dabs of humor spread throughout.

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