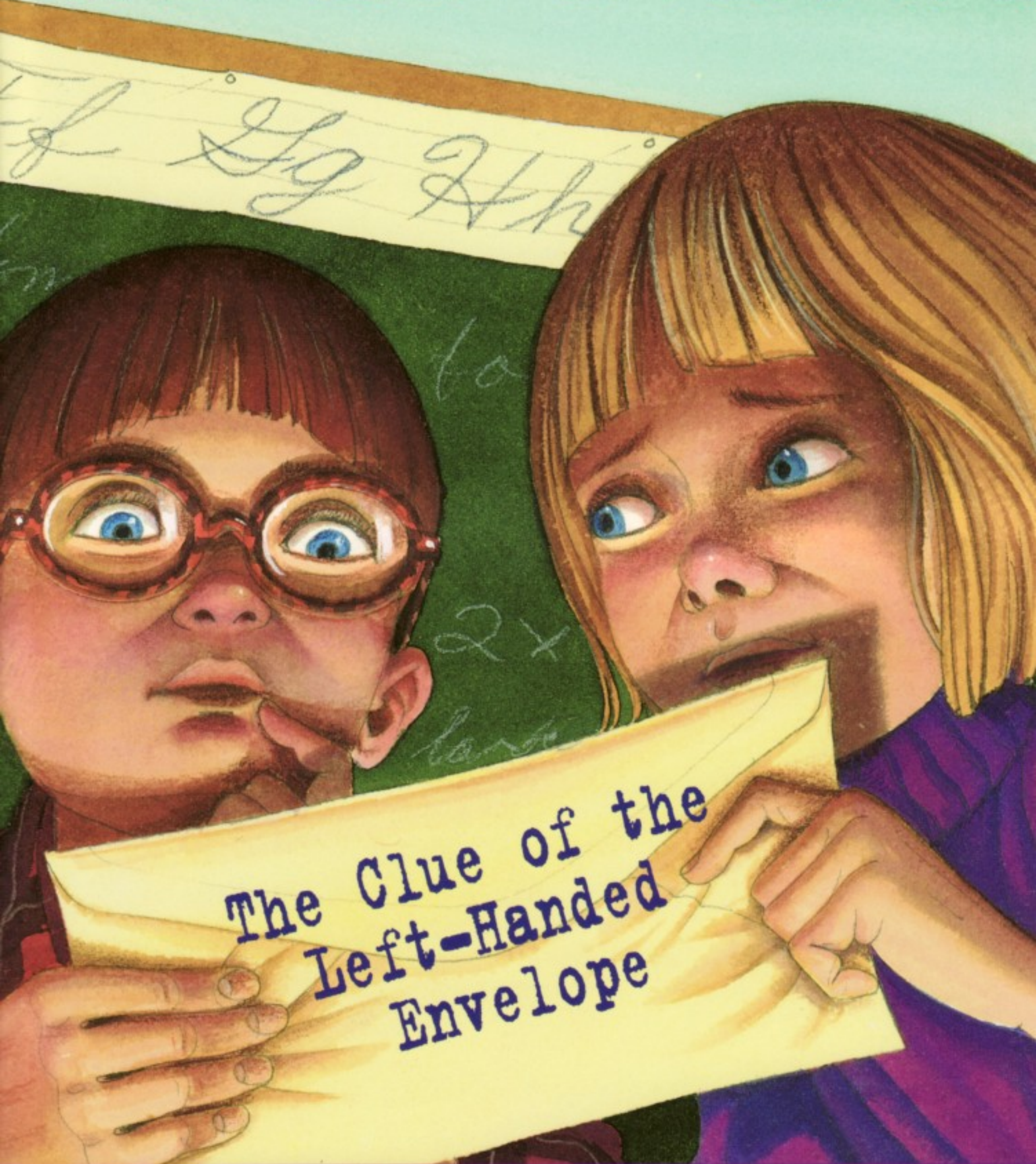


# THIRD-GRADE DETECTIVES #1



by George E. Stanley • illustrated by Salvatore Murdocca

# Chapter One

It was the first day of the third grade, and Noelle Trocoderro was late.

She ran down the sidewalk outside the school building.

All summer long, Noelle had been looking forward to starting school again.

Mrs. Trumble would be her teacher this year. Everyone loved Mrs. Trumble.

She was the nicest teacher in the whole school.

Finally, Noelle reached Mrs. Trumble's third-grade classroom.

She stopped at the door.

There was a *man* writing on the chalkboard.

*Something's wrong here*, Noelle thought.

She looked around.

Her friend Todd Sloan was waving to her.  
Todd lived across the street from Noelle.  
They did a lot of things together.

Noelle thought Todd was more interesting than most of the girls in her class.

She hurried over and sat down in the empty seat next to him.

"Who's that man?" Noelle whispered.

"Mr. Merlin," Todd replied. "He's our new teacher."

"What happened to Mrs. Trumble?" Noelle asked.

"She moved," Todd said. He leaned closer to Noelle. "Amber Lee Johnson said Mr. Merlin used to be a spy."

Noelle blinked. "How did she find that out?"

Todd shrugged.

Noelle looked at Mr. Merlin again.

She liked spy shows on television.

Maybe she wouldn't miss Mrs. Trumble after all.

Mr. Merlin stopped writing on the chalkboard.

He turned around and faced the class.

"Good morning, class. I'm Mr. Merlin. I'm your new teacher," he said. "I used to be a spy."

Leon Dennis raised his hand. "What did you do when you were a spy?"

"I caught lots and lots of other spies," Mr. Merlin said. "I used lots and lots of secret codes, too."

Todd leaned over to Noelle. "Amber Lee said he did those things in *foreign countries*," he whispered.

Noelle looked at him. "Really?" she whispered back.

Todd nodded.

"*Going to school is like solving a mystery*," Mr. Merlin continued. "We're going to solve a lot of mysteries this year."

"What kinds of mysteries?" Amber Lee asked.

"All kinds," Mr. Merlin said.

He looked around the classroom.

"Does anyone here have a mystery we can start with?" he asked.

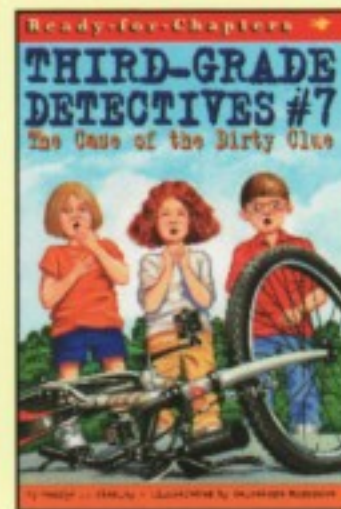
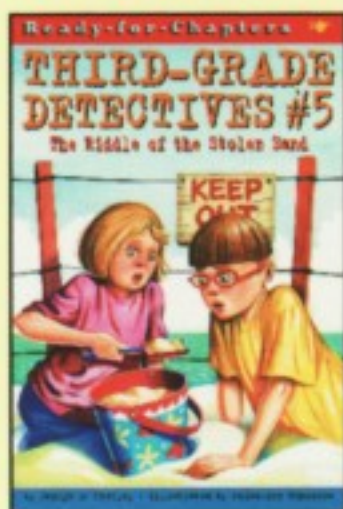
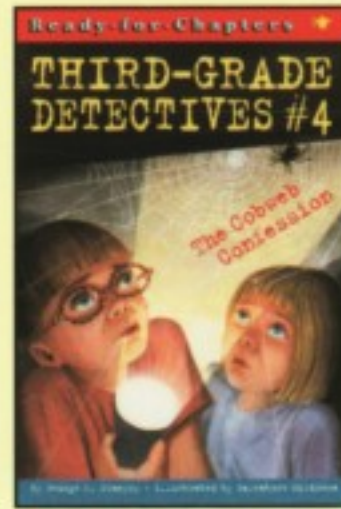
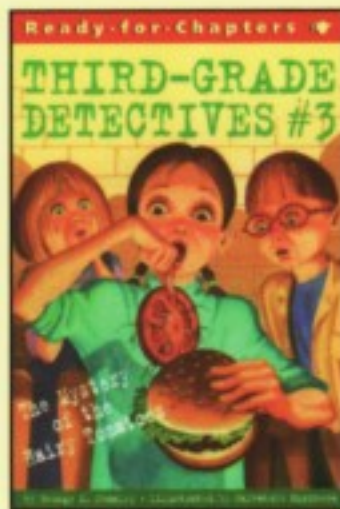
Noelle sighed.

# WHO SENT AMBER LEE AN ANONYMOUS LETTER?

Everyone loves the new teacher, Mr. Merlin. Mr. Merlin used to be a spy, and he knows all about secret codes and the strange and gross ways the police solve mysteries.

Now there's a mystery in their very own class—someone sent Amber Lee Johnson an anonymous letter. Noelle and Todd want to solve the mystery before anyone else. But first they have to figure out Mr. Merlin's clues. How can a bunch of envelopes tell them who sent the letter?

You can help decode the clues and solve the mysteries in these other stories about the Third-Grade Detectives:



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US \$3.99 / \$5.50 CAN

ISBN-13: 978-0-689-82194-3

ISBN-10: 0-689-82194-8

EAN



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