


opening extract from

# Alex Rider
# The Gadgets

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published by

## Walker Books

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## Cutter CD Player

When Alex was sent to infiltrate the mysterious Point Blanc Academy, gadgets were a problem. The only piece of electronic equipment Alex was allowed to take was a personal CD player – as long as all his CDs were classical! So Smithers' CD player works just like the real thing – except for two important secret features...

**Cutter CD player:** This CD player becomes a circular saw when the Beethoven CD is inserted. The saw blade has been manufactured to look and feel as much like a CD as possible. It is a lightweight titanium steel disc with a clear plastic coating on each side and a diamond cutting edge.



*Scanning electron micrograph (SEM) of diamond-edged cutter*

The cutting arm, made of strong titanium steel, extends when the Beethoven saw blade is inserted. A belt system connects the disc to the main saw motor, which spins the blade at up to 5,800 revolutions per minute. When not in use, the cutting arm lies flat against the bottom of the CD tray, where it is difficult to detect except under close inspection. The blade will cut through plastic, wood and even thin sections of metal, marble and stone. Because of the heat and vibration produced when slicing through harder materials, it is recommended that the saw be used only in short bursts.

The saw batteries contain enough charge to power the saw for up to twenty minutes of continuous use. Because they are hidden inside the main body of the machine, they cannot be replaced without dismantling it. The normal CD playing mode runs off two AA batteries.

When the *fast-forward* button is pressed three times, a burst transmission sends a distress call lasting less than a tenth of a second. It is then picked up by the local MI6 signals station and sent via satellite to HQ. It is so short and compressed it is difficult to detect by outside sources, even if radio is being monitored.

It is important that the CD player should appear as realistic as possible, while still being sturdy enough to withstand the strong vibrations produced by the saw blade and motor. As above, the frame is made out of a titanium alloy which is 45% lighter than steel but twice as strong. The shell of the CD player is made from high-impact polyurethane.

