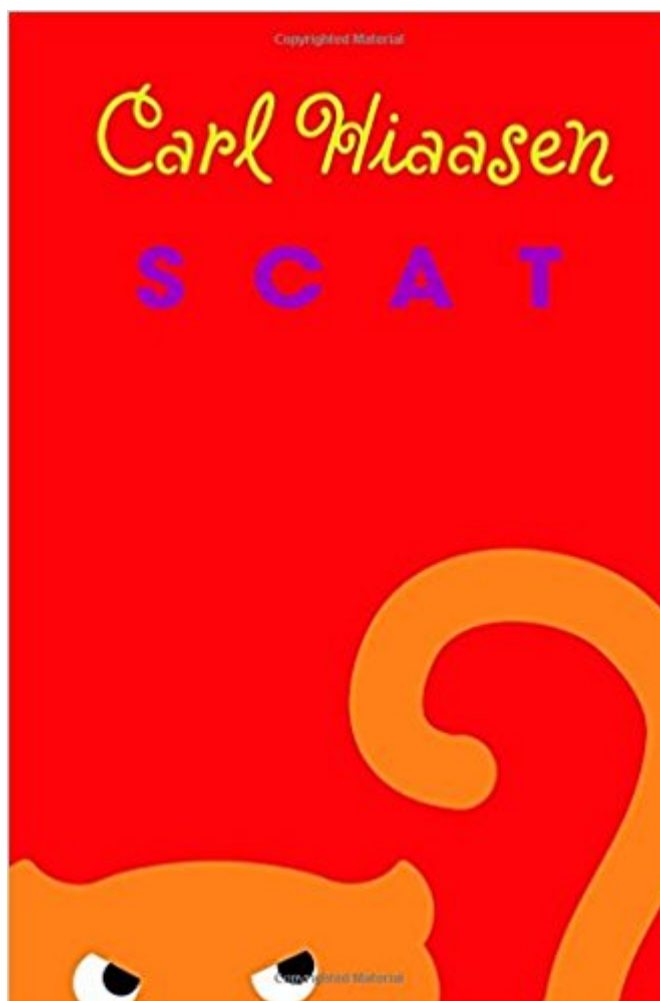


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# Scat



## Synopsis

From Newbery Honoree Carl Hiaasen comes this New York Times bestseller set in Florida's Everglades in which an eccentric eco-avenger, a stuffed rat named Chelsea, a wannabe Texas oilman, a singing substitute teacher, and a ticked-off panther can't stop two kids on a mission to find their missing teacher! ã Buny Starch, the most feared biology teacher ever, is missing. She disappeared after a school field trip to Black Vine Swamp. And, to be honest, the kids in her class are relieved. ã But when the principal tries to tell the students that Mrs. Starch has been called away on a "family emergency," Nick and Marta just don't buy it. No, they figure the class delinquent, Smoke, has something to do with her disappearance. ã And he does! But not in the way they think. There's a lot more going on in Black Vine Swamp than any one player in this twisted tale can see. It's all about to hit the fan, and when it does, the bad guys better scat. ã ã ã "Ingenious . . . Scat won't disappoint Hiaasenphiles of any age. ã • The New York Times ã ã "Woohoo! It's time for another trip to Florida ã • screwy, gorgeous Florida, with its swamps and scammers and strange creatures (two- and four-legged). Our guide, of course, is Carl Hiaasen. ã • ã • DenverPost.com From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 5 • Once again, Hiaasen has written an edge-of-the-seat eco-thriller. When their unpopular biology teacher goes missing in a suspicious fire during a field trip to the Black Vine Swamp, Nick and Marta don't buy the headmaster's excuse for her absence and decide to do some investigating of their own. Eco-avengers; an endangered, hunted panther; illegal pipelines in the Everglades; and an underachieving student with the nickname "Smoke" all play a part in this gripping novel. From the first sentence, readers will be hooked. The teens' dangerous detective work, with help from some unlikely sources, and the ethics of environmental awareness are well balanced. The emotion and personal changes that Nick goes through due to his father's injury in Iraq are on their own a worthy study of the struggles that military families are facing today. This well-written and smoothly plotted story, with fully realized characters, will certainly appeal to mystery lovers. • Dylan Thomarie, Johnstown High School, NY Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Hiaasen starts off this story • a hybrid madcap swamp adventure and cast-driven environmental whodunit • with the disappearance of a biology teacher after a fire breaks out during a field trip in the Everglades. The immediate suspect for the fire, at least, is a young miscreant, but friends Nick and Marta figure something else is afoot: it might have something to do with the nefarious oilmen slinking about nearby, as well as the rumor of an endangered panther and her cubs in the swamp. A generous cast of characters • each imbued with a few unexpected traits • flits about and provides most of the impetus to keep things rolling. Adding some emotional heft is the subplot involving Nick's father; he returns home from Iraq minus his right arm, and Nick binds his own arm so that they can learn to become lefties together. Hiaasen's gumbo tastes a lot like his previous efforts, pitting conservation against reckless greed and setting the can-do of youth among determined Floridian quirkiness. But there's a reason why a recipe tastes so good time and again. Grades 5-8. --Ian Chipman --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

One of the legacies of J.K. Rowling and the Harry Potter books is a virtual glut of so-called "young adult" literature that can appeal to both kids and adults. The problem is that not all writers, even those successful at "adult" fiction, can write for this particular audience (for example, Michael Chabon is generally a good writer, but his attempt at this genre, *Summerland*, falls flat). Fortunately,

Carl Hiaasen is not one of these lacking writers, as demonstrated in his first foray, *Hoot* and again in his new book, *Scat*. The main character in *Scat* is Nick, a mid-teens Florida kid concerned about his father, a reservist in Iraq. These concerns are justified but are also competing with a more local concern: the disappearance of the dreaded Mrs. Starch, Nick's drill sergeant of a biology teacher. Mrs. Starch has vanished after a field trip to the local swamp that had been concerned by a fire that turns out to be caused by arson. The prime suspect for the arson is Duane Scrod, Nick's classmate and a known troublemaker who has also vanished after a nasty argument with Starch. Duane has had previous arrests for arson and has a nickname of Smoke, so things don't look good for him. Of course, there's more to Smoke than meets the eye, and there is another suspicious party: a shady oil exploration company that has a scam that involves digging in a nature preserve. Similar to *Hoot*, *Scat* also deals with a threatened animal, in this case, the Florida panther. And like almost all Hiaasen books, a major theme involves overdevelopment and the destruction of Florida's natural beauty. And like all Hiaasen books, this is a fun read, with a lot of humor and some more serious moments as well. Though tamer than Hiaasen's adult work (i.e., no real sex or violence), this will appeal to most people, regardless of age.

*Scat* is another feast by Carl Hiaasen. Part of the fun is in the names he assigns to his characters: Duane Scrod, Sr and Jr-who also goes by his self determined nick-name, Smoke, the teacher, Bunny Starch, and Twilly Spree, whose devotion to nature gave him leave to relentlessly harass the representative of the Red Diamond drilling company- a group that was actually setting up their operation on Federally protected land. The young man, Nick Waters, whose family is trying to normalize after his father returns severely injured from Iraq, is basically the lead character around whom the insanity occurs! The events of this novel include a set fire, a school field trip, the rescue of a baby panther, reuniting said baby panther with his mother, a family fishing trip, and a feast of other insanity which only Hiaasen could create!

originally i picked up "Razor Girl" and thoroughly enjoyed it. So I ordered his four best sellers. I should have been a bit more diligent. The four I ordered [SCAT, CHOMP, HOOT and FLUSH] are all "young adult books. I have now read all four and they were very good. I am now passing them on to my grand children. Good plots and characters. Great messages and all very good reads.

This is a fun story to read with students in your 5th grade class. My students and I would read this book individually and then have book talks at the end of the chapters. Interesting, educational and

appropriate for adolescent learners.

My son did not enjoy this book as much as he loved hoot. He said it was super confusing and had way too many characters for him, and jumps around a lot. He's 12 so maybe it just wasn't his thing. He told me he doubts he will finish it.

This was pretty advanced reading, and dialogue for my 10 year old, the bad language was not appropriate for elementary age students. The story line is nice but the dialogue and verbiage makes it difficult to understand, as well as many characters. I read this with my daughter and I even had to stop and re-read some areas as the "slang" made it difficult to understand, multiple side stories, makes the flow confusing.

Not much to say other than READ THIS BOOK. It has everything you'd expect from a mystery /detective sort of book plus something extra: humor. I'm not talking about just the knee slapping sort of jokey humor (although there is some of that) but also and more importantly the real, human kind of good humor that is too often lacking in the crime fiction genre.

What can I say? I love this writer.Easy to read and always entertaining.

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