

<<Hoot(拯救猫头鹰)>>

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作者：Carl Hiaasen

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内容概要

Unfortunately, Roy's first acquaintance in Florida is Dana Matherson, a well-known bully. Then again, if Dana hadn't been sinking his thumbs into Roy's temples and mashing his face against the school-bus window, Roy might never have spotted the running boy. And the running boy is intriguing: he was running away from the school bus, carried no books, and – here's the odd part – wore no shoes. Sensing a mystery, Roy sets himself on the boy's trail. The chase introduces him to potty-trained alligators, a fake-fart champion, some burrowing owls, a renegade eco-avenger, and several extremely poisonous snakes with unnaturally sparkling tails.

Roy has most definitely arrived in Carl Hiaasen's Florida.

Roy Eberhardt is the new kid--again. This time around it's Trace Middle School in humid Coconut Grove, Florida. But it's still the same old routine: table by himself at lunch, no real friends, and thick-headed bullies like Dana Matherson pushing him around. But if it wasn't for Dana Matherson mashing his face against the school bus window that one day, he might never have seen the tow-headed running boy. And if he had never seen the running boy, he might never have met tall, tough, bully-beating Beatrice. And if he had never met Beatrice, he might never have discovered the burrowing owls living in the lot on the corner of East Oriole Avenue. And if he had never discovered the owls, he probably would have missed out on the adventure of a lifetime. Apparently, bullies do serve a greater purpose in the scope of the universe. Because if it wasn't for Dana Matherson...

In his first novel for a younger audience, Carl Hiaasen (*Basket Case*, etc.) plunges readers right into the middle of an ecological mystery, made up of endangered miniature owls, the Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House scheduled to be built over their burrows, and the owls' unlikely allies--three middle school kids determined to beat the screwed-up adult system. Hiaasen's tongue is firmly in cheek as he successfully cuts his slapstick sense of humor down to kid-size. Sure to be a hoot, er, hit with middle school mystery fans. (Ages 10 to 15)

--Jennifer Hubert

With a Florida setting and proenvironment, antidevelopment message, Hiaasen (*Sick Puppy*) returns to familiar turf for his first novel for young readers. Characteristically quirky characters and comic twists will surely gain the author new fans, though their attention may wander during his narrative's intermittently protracted focus on several adults, among them a policeman and the manager of a construction site for a new franchise of a pancake restaurant chain. Both men are on a quest to discover who is sabotaging the site at night, including such pranks as uprooting survey stakes, spray-painting the police cruiser's windows while the officer sleeps within and filling the portable potties with alligators. The story's most intriguing character is the boy behind the mischief, a runaway on a mission to protect the miniature owls that live in burrows underneath the site. Roy, who has recently moved to Florida from Montana, befriends the homeless boy (nicknamed Mullet Fingers) and takes up his cause, as does the runaway's stepsister. Though readers will have few doubts about the success of the kids' campaign, several suspenseful scenes build to the denouement involving the sitcom-like unraveling of a muckity-muck at the pancake house. These, along with dollops of humor, help make the novel quite a hoot indeed. Ages 10-up.

Grade 6-9-Packed with quirky characters and improbable plot twists, Hiaasen's first novel for young readers is entertaining but ultimately not very memorable. Fans of the author's adult novels will find trademark elements-including environmental destruction, corrupt politicians, humorous situations, and a Florida setting-all viewed through the eyes of a middle-school student. Roy Eberhardt has just moved with his family to Coconut Cove. He immediately becomes the target of a particularly dense bully who tries to strangle him on the school bus. Roy seems more concerned, however, with discovering the identity of a running, barefoot boy he spots through the window of the bus. Meanwhile, plans to build a pancake house on a vacant lot are derailed when someone vandalizes the construction site. The two story lines come together when Roy discovers that the runaway boy is disrupting the construction to save a group of burrowing owls. Roy must help his new friend, nicknamed Mullet Fingers, as well as fend off the bully and adapt to life in Florida. The story is silly at times but rarely laugh-out-loud funny, and there are several highly unlikely scenes. Also, it wraps up a little too neatly-Roy's classmates join him to protest the construction project, his father finds the missing environmental impact report, and the owls are saved.

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While Roy is a sympathetic protagonist, few of the other characters are well developed. Students looking for humorous, offbeat characters and situations will probably prefer Louis Sachar's *Holes* (Farrar, 1998) or books by Daniel Pinkwater.

Miranda Doyle, San Francisco Public

Library

Gr. 5-8. It seems unlikely that the master of noir-tinged, surrealistic black humor would write a novel for young readers. And, yet, there has always been something delightfully juvenile about Hiaasen's imagination; beneath the bent cynicism lurks a distinctly 12-year-old cackle. In this thoroughly engaging tale of how middle-schooler Roy Eberhardt, new kid in Coconut Cove, learns to love South Florida, Hiaasen lets his inner kid run rampant, both the subversive side that loves to see grown-ups make fools of themselves and the righteously indignant side, appalled at the mess being made of our planet. When Roy teams up with some classic children's lit outsiders to save the home of some tiny burrowing owls, the stage is set for a confrontation between right-thinking kids and slow-witted, wrongheaded civic boosters. But Hiaasen never lets the formula get in his way; the story is full of offbeat humor, buffoonish yet charming supporting characters, and genuinely touching scenes of children enjoying the wildness of nature. He deserves a warm welcome into children's publishing.

Bill Ott

The loneliness of being the new kid in town, a mysterious boy, bullies of all ages, and protected miniature owls make for some familiar high jinks in Hiaasen's first novel for young readers. Someone has been sabotaging the site of Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House. Survey stakes get uprooted, alligators swim in Porta Potties, and water moccasins terrorize four rottweilers from hell. Chad Lowe narrates, as Roy Eberhardt, newly arrived in Florida from Montana, makes it his mission to save the owls. Lowe does wonders with the cast of mostly likable oddballs. We know how it will end, but in his inimitable fashion, Hiaasen has crafted a delicious screwball comedy for all ages--and Chad Lowe's performance is a hoot. S.J.H.

Roy, who is new to his small Florida community, becomes involved in another boy's attempt to save a colony of burrowing owls from a proposed construction site.

length: (cm)19.7

width:(cm)12.8

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