

*Scat*

Carl Hiaasen

Reviewed by: Annie, 24

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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This book is long. Very long. Don't get me wrong, *Scat* is an excellent story revealed through a suspenseful plot, but if you are looking for a manageable novel to encourage a young reader, the length may actually deter rather than promote reading.

A lot happens in this novel. It centers on the life of Nick, a young Florida teen. At first, the main problem seems the disappearance of both Nick's biology teacher and a troublemaker in his class named Dwayne, or as he prefers, "Smoke." The two vanish without a trace following a fire in a swamp Nick's biology class visits on a field trip. Nick and his friend Marta set out to find their teacher and find out whether Smoke had anything to do with her disappearance.

This mystery, though enough action for a novel of its own, is supplemented by at least three more story lines – and maybe more. There is the mystery of who started the fire, the story of Nick's father's recovery from an explosion in Iraq, the story of Smoke's family and resulting behavior, and the story of an oil company and its involvement in the fire.

If read in school, I imagine weeks could be spent dissecting all of Carl Hiaasen's political and environmental commentary. Maybe this makes it a good book for kids and college students alike, or maybe it makes it a jumble of the author's thoughts and opinions on the Iraq war, capitalism, and environmental preservation. While no doubt a thought-provoking novel, I for one think this is better suited for an older audience than its library categorization.