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# Scat

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Reviewer:

[Robert Dunbar](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

A biology teacher ? the wonderfully named Bunny Starch ? goes missing on a school field trip and two of her young teenage students, Nick and his friend Marta, are soon involved in attempting to solve the mystery of her disappearance. Their primary starting point demands that a decision be made about the role played in that disappearance by a fellow student, Duane Scrod, whose nickname ?Smoke? would seem to suggest some possible link between him and a forest fire which breaks out at the time of the field trip. We are in Hiaasen?s favourite territory, Black Vine Swamp country in Florida, and his usual strong ecological message about the conflict between rural conservation and despoliation is once again given a prominent place in his narrative: familiar also will be his penchant for a cast of wacky characters, the best of whom here is one Wendell Waxmo, a supply teacher whose classroom practices almost defy description. (Florida?s schools, if even remotely like the one represented by Hiaasen, must be very strange places!) But a more serious thread, focusing on Nick?s relationship with his soldier father who has just come home, minus an arm, from Iraq, is skilfully woven into the text and provides an interesting thematic balance to what is, overall, an entertaining, if at times convoluted, story.

Running Order:

60

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