

FLUSH

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2008 Grades 6-8

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Flush by Carl Hiaasen. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2005. 263 pages.

Summary

Noah Underwood did not expect to visit his father in jail on Father's day, but that's what happened after his father sank the casino boat, the *Coral Queen*. Noah's dad is certain that the owner of the *Coral Queen* is flushing its sewage tank into the harbor, making it unsafe for the animals and the children who swim there. In order to help his father, Noah enlists his little sister Abby to help prove that their father was only trying to stop pollution and save the beaches. With the assistance of Shelly, a bartender on the *Coral Queen*, Noah sets in action his plan "Operation Royal Flush," in order to bring down the bad guys. After many plot twists and surprises, the *Coral Queen* is finally shut down forever. This is an action-packed, quick read with likeable characters and a worthy message about the environment.

Read an excerpt:

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780375821820&view=excerpt>

Awards and "Best Book" List

2005 New York Times Notable Book
2005 National Parenting Publications Award (NAPPA)
2006 ALA Best Books for Young Adults
2006 ALA Notable Children's Book

Author's Biography

Carl Hiaasen was born and raised in Florida. He has been a writer for the *Miami Herald* since he was 23. "Hiaasen turned to fiction, after years as a reporter, because, as he told *Newsweek* (September 6, 1993), 'I can write my own endings, and for once the bad guys get what they deserve.' (*Wilson Web Biography*). He has written many adult books about corruption, greed, and the destruction of the environment. His first YA novel, *Hoot*, won the 2003 Newbery Honor and was made into a movie. He draws on his own childhood, newspaper headlines, and knowledge of Florida when writing his books.

Other YA Titles by Carl Hiaasen

Hoot

Related Titles

Because of Winn Dixie by Kate DiCamillo.
Lostman's River by Cynthia C. DeFelice.
Green Boy by Susan Cooper.
Remote Man by Elizabeth Honey.
Lord of the Deep by Graham Salisbury.
Harry Sue by Sue Stauffacher.

Classroom Connections

Teacher's Guide on *Flush*

<http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780375821820&view=tg>

Teacher's Guide includes writing activities, thematic units, vocabulary, and Internet resources relating to *Flush*.

Geography

- Have the students research facts about Florida and Key West.
<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108198.html>

Language Arts

- Have the students write a brief definition of what they think a bully is and the characteristics of a bully. Then have them answer the following questions:
 - Name the bullies in the story *Flush*.
 - Noah decides not to tell his parents about the bullies in the story. Why do you think he did this? Would you have done the same thing?
 - What ways can you deal with a bully without resorting to violence?
- Write a column about *Flush* for the local paper.
- Discuss the family dynamics in the book such as the father-son relationship, how Abbey and Noah work together, and their mother's desire to get divorced.

Art

- Have the children use the descriptions from the book to draw what they think Noah and Abby looked like.

Science

- Have the students look at the website provided and create an environmental book titled "How to Keep the Earth Clean." The book must include at least five ways to keep the earth clean, plus some illustrations. <http://www.justgive.org/html/kidscorner/40waysearth.html>
- Study diffusion and how it applies to food coloring.
- Look at the diseases raw sewage can cause.
- Find out what it would take to sink a boat. (buoyancy)
- Study fish and fishing.

Social Studies

- Paine Underwood mentions the First Amendment in the story. Have the students do research on the First Amendment so they will be able to decide if Paine's First Amendment rights were being violated. Have the students work in groups, so they can hear what their classmates' opinions are on the subject.
<http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=4699>
- Study how turtle habitats have changed over time and how human interactions have harmed or helped.
- Study the history of floating casinos and how they affect the local economy.
- Look up environmental activists.
- Find out what the penalties would be for Mr. Underwood if he were prosecuted for his crime.
- Talk about bullying, courage, and sacrifice.
- Study current events from the newspaper and how they effect the environment.

Drama

- Act out how you would feel in one of the scenes from the book, such as swimming in sewage, reacting to a bully, being in a jail cell, or hiding from a thug.

Math

- How long would it take to pump out the water from the casino using geometry?
- Draw a map of the town Noah lives in on grid paper.

Web Sites

Carl Hiaasen

<http://www.carlhiaasen.com/>

The author's site includes a biography, information about his other books, frequently asked questions, and dates of his appearances.

Bay Trippers

<http://baytrippers.thinkport.org/learn/lesson.htm#flush>

Lesson plans including one called "How much do you flush?"

Kids Health: For Kids

www.kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/bullies.html

This site has helpful information for children to learn how to deal with bullies.

Nancy Keane's Booktalks

http://nancykeane.com/booktalks/hiaasen_flush.htm

This site features a book talk about *Flush*.

New York Times

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/books/042400hiaasen-writing.html>

Hiaasen writes about writing.

Random House Publishing

<http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780375821820&view=tg>

Includes information on the book, author, and an extensive teacher's guide with activities for every school subject.

"Take a Stand"

<http://eduscapes.com/sessions/doors/index.htm>

See section numbers "Take a Stand." Write an essay for the *Flush* essay contest sponsored by the Nature Conservancy.