



Flush

By Carl Hiaasen

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Genre: Environmental Fiction

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Carl Hiaasen



*Picture from www.carlhiaasen.com

Carl Hiaasen has been writing novels for adults since 1986, and currently has two children's novels. His first children's novel, *Hoot*, was very successful and has been awarded the Newbery Honor award and has also been made into a major motion picture. His second, *Flush*, is also very well written and entertaining. Carl graduated from the University of Florida, and was a journalist for the *Miami Herald* since he was twenty-three. He was an investigative reporter, and has used some themes from stories he investigated for the plots in his children's novels. He was born and raised in Florida, and still resides there with his family.

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Annotation:

Carl Hiaasen writes another environmental-themed book, Flush, about a boy, Noah, and his family who live in the Florida Keys. Noah and his sister Abbey set out to catch a gentleman, Dusty, red-handed for dumping waste into the ocean. Noah's father sank the Coral Queen because he suspected that it's waste was being dumped in the ocean. There is trouble on the home front, as mom believes that dad acts irrationally about many issues and has caused a rift between them. The very self-confident Noah, devises a plan to help mom see dad for the truth. It is clearly evident that Flush is a very heart-warming story that very much tackles the theme of environmental protection as well as family issues.

Booktalk:

Noah and Abbey are investigating for their father, Mr. Underwood, who decided to sink a gambling river boat for a really good reason. Their father has discovered that the Coral Queen, a river boat, has been “flushing” human waste into the ocean endangering the lives of sea creatures and humans! Noah and Abbey come up with a plan to catch this crook red-handed without their father’s involvement. Does the plan work? Read this environmental fiction book, Flush by Carl Hiaasen, to find out...

Characters:

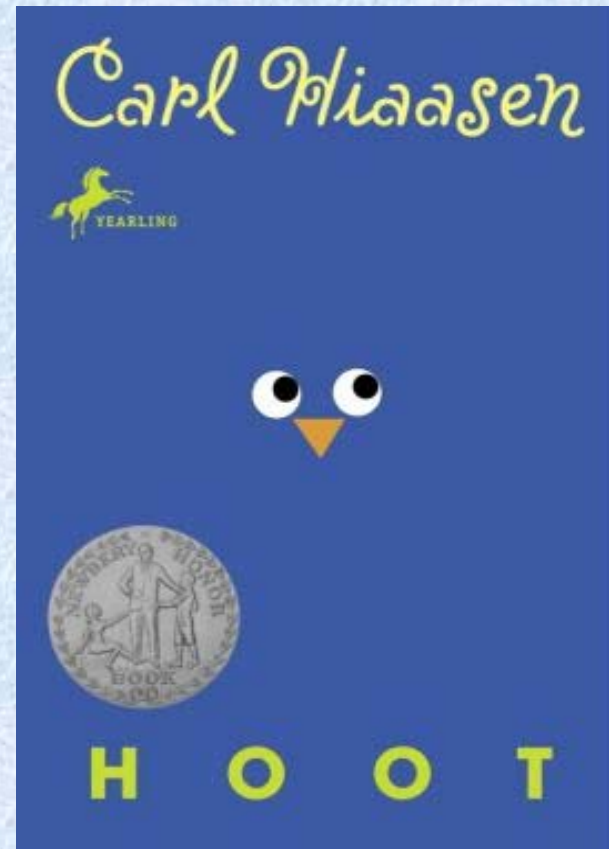
- Noah, an eleven year old, is a very self confident boy who devises a plan to help prove that the Coral Queen is dumping waste into the ocean.
- Abbey, Noah's younger sister, is a biter. She is a very honest child who always follows the rules and is in Elementary School.
- Lice Peeking is a very unlikable character. He is an alcoholic and very much a scummy gambler.
- Dusty Muleman is a crook who dumps waste into the ocean from his casino boat to save money.
- Dad probably in his late thirties, is a very smart, trusting character, but has a very bad temper and is always acting irrational.
- Donna, also in her late thirties, is Noah and Abbey's mom. She is a homemaker, and is always cooking and cleaning. She is upset with her husband because he is not always upfront with her.
- Shelly is a "trashy" character who works as Dusty's casino bar tender and aids in Noah's plan. She is in her early thirties.

Conflict and Conflict Resolution:

- There are two conflicts in Flush.
- The internal conflict is evident between Noah's family and his father. Dad sank a river boat because he knows that the owner is dumping waste into the ocean. However, he has no proof and his family is upset as to why he has done this and wants him to leave it alone.
- The external conflict is between Noah and the environment. There is waste being dumped into the ocean from the Coral Queen gambling boat by Dusty. This is harming sea life and needs to be stopped.
- Both of these conflicts are resolved after Noah and his sister, Abbey, continue with a plan to catch Dusty Muleman red-handed leaving dad out of the plan. They do succeed in doing this and the environment is restored.

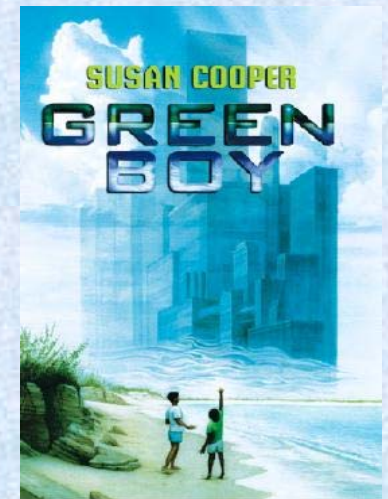
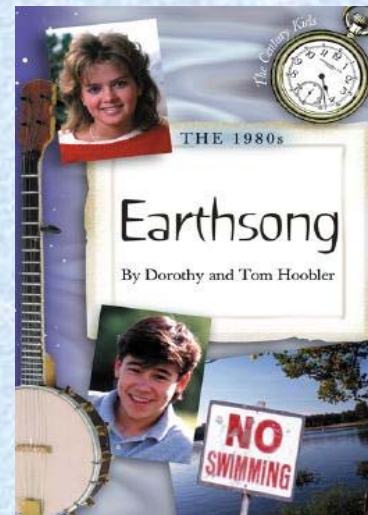
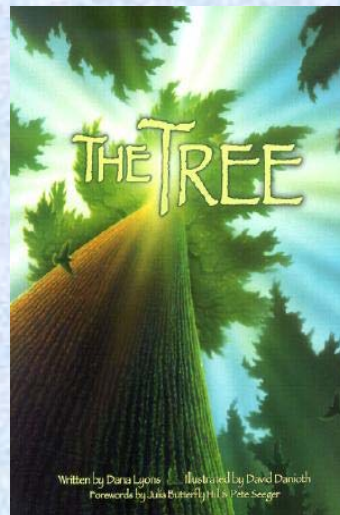
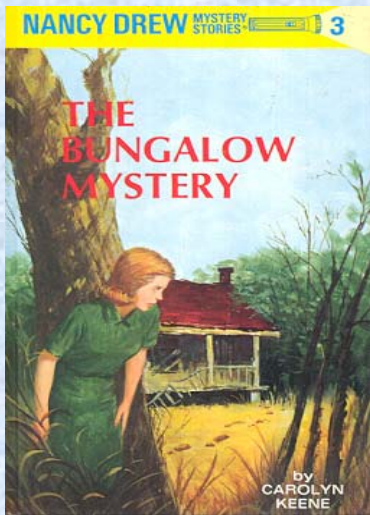
If you liked Flush,
you'll *love* Carl's Newbery Honor:

- Hoot by Carl Hiaasen



If you like Flush, you'll also *love*:

- The Bungalow Mystery by Carolyn Keene
- The Tree by Dana Lyons
- Green Boy by Susan Cooper
- Earthsong by Dorothy Hoobler



Interest Level and Reading Level:

- Interest Level: Middle grades fourth through sixth
Ages 9-12 years
- Reading Level: Fifth grade

Read Aloud Passages:

Chapter One, pg: 9

Noah just came back from visiting dad in jail. He is telling his sister, Abbey why dad sank the Coral Queen...

"He's lost his marbles," Abbey muttered.

"Who, dad? No way," I said.

"Then why did he do it?"

"Because Dusty Muleman has been dumping his holding tank into the water," I said.

Abbey grimaced. "Yuck. From the toilets?"

"Yep. In the middle of the night, when there's nobody around."

"That is so gross."

"And totally illegal," I said. "He only does it to save money."

Chapter Twelve, pg: 138

Noah, Abbey and Shelly were at the beach just hanging out when they had to retrieve a beer can that Shelly threw at a boat driver that was litter in the ocean...

"She frowned. "Man, I hate litterbugs."

"Me too, I said, and started wading out.

"Hey, stud, where do you think you're going?"

"To get the beer can. It's no big deal," I said.

"It is too a big deal, " said Shelly. "Check out the water, Noah."

I glanced down and felt my stomach pitch. The shallows had a darkish yellow tint. Strands and clots of foul, muddy-looking matter floated here and there, around my legs.

"What is it?" Abbey asked.

"Something seriously gross," I said. Now I could smell it too.

Setting and Point of View:

- The serious, yet funny story, Flush, takes place in the present time 21st century in the Florida Keys. The season is early summer. The story begins around Father's Day which usually falls on the third Sunday in June.
- The story is told in First Person Omniscient. Noah is the narrator, and seems to know everything about all the other characters in the story.

Theme:

- The main theme in Flush is environmental protection of sea life.
- This story focuses on Noah and his father's love for the environment. As the title portrays...human waste is being "flushed" into the ocean. Throughout the story Noah and his family are very much environmental supporters. All of them comment frequently about the sea life being harmed and what needs to be done to help keep the ocean clean and people safe.

Across the Curriculum Connections:

Science/Language Arts

Individual Activity:

Students are to research the "Green Flash" and write a three paragraph writing piece on the phenomenon. These websites are full of information:

<http://www.islandtime.com/islandlife/cindi/cp-green.htm>

<http://mintaka.sdsu.edu/GF/pictures.html>

<http://scubageek.com/articles/wwwgfl.html>

This activity is connected to Flush because the setting is in the Florida Keys, and Carl Hiaasen mentions this phenomenon in the story.

Science/Art

Pairs or Small Group:

View the "Virtual Area" at the website "Sewage in Your Face" at <http://www.sandiego.gov/mwwd/kids/index.shtml> and read the "Virtual Sewage Treatment" about where and how sewage is treated from your own home. After viewing this segment, design your own sewage diagram using your local landmarks. Then, develop a unique sewage plan for the casino boat the Coral Queen in the story Flush.

This activity connects to Flush because the theme in the story is environmental protection.

Additional Online Activities:

- <http://www.epa.gov/students/>
- Visit this site and explore the modules. Check out the Environmental Club Projects and Environmental Youth Awards. Also, visit the Fun Activities and learn more about protecting the environment.

- http://www.ecokidsonline.com/pub/eco_info/browse_topics/index.cfm
- Explore this website and find out how your school can join the EcoKids Club. Learn about environmental issues and more. Post your opinion about environmental protection and see other student's opinions as well.

Literature Circle *Discussion Leader* Role Sheet

The students will be in Literature Circle Groups, and each child will have an assigned role for the assigned section of the book. These are designated before the assigned section for the discussion. This is one of five roles:

- Discussion Director Directions:

Your job is to write at least two questions before, during and after the reading. Remember to write several **FAT** questions that cannot be answered by only yes or no and will generate discussion. You are responsible for keeping your group focused during discussion. You will call on each group member to report on their assigned role as you keep the discussion positive and quiet.

What **FAT** questions do you have before beginning this section?

What **FAT** questions tickled you brain during the reading?

Now that you are done reading, what **FAT** questions do you still have from this section?

Discussion Questions:

Chapters 1-3

What do you think the title, Flush, means?

Why is dad in jail on Father's Day? P.9

What trait does Noah have to be able to believe dad's story?

While watching the Coral Queen being raised from the bottom, how do Noah and Abbey feel?

Will Noah get Lice Peeking's help? P.25

When the kids started talking about their grandpa, is there a foreshadowing?

Chapters 4-6

How did Noah feel when he went back to Lice Peeking's trailer?

When the lawyer showed up, were the kids nervous about the subject matter?

Do Noah and Abbey have a little bit of dad's temper? And, what happens that leads to this conclusion? P.37

Chapters 7-9

How do you think the Underwood family will feel about the reporter segment of the news?

Did the reporter "twist" the story at all? If so, how?

When mom was on the phone to Janet, what was the mood of the conversation?

What huge clue did Noah find when he was at the dock again? P.81

Chapters 10-12

What are mom and dad going to think about what Jasper did to Noah?

What is dad going to think about the news Shelly delivers to the house? P.114

Where was Abbey when mom found her room empty?

What is the mood in the car as they are going to look for Abbey?

Did dad lose his temper when confronted by Dusty's goon? P.126

How did mom, dad and Noah feel when they found Abbey walking home?

What might happen if the sheriff finds out dad left the house?

Discussion Questions:

Chapters 13-15

- What kind of plan do you think Noah will come up with?
- Do you think dad is “serious about getting serious?” p.145
- Do you think that Noah’s visit to see Shelley will be successful? Why or why not?
- What is Noah thinking about his parent’s while they are on the boat ride at sunset? P.157
- What are Noah and Abbey going to do with the food coloring?
- When Jasper apologized to Noah, what was Jasper’s mood?
- Will Noah and Abbey get caught leaving the house when the parents go on a date?

Chapters 16-18

- Will Noah get back to safety?
- Why is Noah panicking after “coloring” the water in the Coral Queen? P.187
- What will happen after Abbey and Noah are caught in the dingy?
- What is the significance of the pirate stranger?
- What was the mood of the story when the storm hit?
- Who was the surprise visitor? P.212
- Do you think the food-coloring plan will work?
- What was mom’s feeling once she saw the ocean tinted purple? P.217

Chapters 19-21

- Would Noah and Abbey be applauded for their plan?
- What did Noah and Abbey learn about their grandfather? P.232
- How do you think this plan brought mom and dad back together?
- Why did dad lose his temper again even after being in anger management? P.245
- Why did the lieutenant think dad burnt down the Coral Queen?
- How did the family feel when mom stood up for dad and provided an alibi? P.256
- Was it ironic to find out who burnt the Coral Queen down? Why?
- What was the event at the end of the story and it’s significance?

Literature Circle *Vocabulary Leader* Roll Sheet

The students will be in Literature Circle Groups, and each child will have an assigned role for the assigned section of the book. These are designated before the assigned section for the discussion. This is one of five roles:

- Vocabulary Enricher Directions:

Your job is to be on the lookout for especially important, puzzling or unfamiliar words in the reading. Write down the words as you are reading. After reading, look up the words in the dictionary and record the meaning. While there is no set number of words to locate, you should have at least five. When your group meets for discussion, help the members find the words in the book and discuss the meaning. Challenge yourself!

Page # and Paragraph	Word	Definition
1. P.46 paragraph 6	droned-	to talk tediously and in a monotone
2. P.87 paragraph 7	tinkering-	to make or repair something in an experimental or unskillful manner
3. P.91 paragraph 4	bogus-	not authentic; counterfeit
4. P.195 paragraph 8	skittered-	to skip or glide lightly and quickly over a surface
5. P.219 paragraph 7	indignantly-	feeling strong anger in response to something considered unjust or unworthy

Indiana Academic Standards: 6th Grade

- **Reading**

- 6.2.4 Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, notes, diagrams, summaries or reports.

6.2.5 Follow multiple-step instructions for preparing applications.

6.3.6 Identify and analyze features of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images.

6.3.8 Critique the believability of characters and the degree to which a plot is believable or realistic.

6.5.2 Write descriptions, explanations, comparison and contrast papers, and problem and solution essays that:

- state the thesis (position on the topic) or purpose.
- explain the situation.
- organize the composition clearly.
- offer evidence to support arguments and conclusions.

Indiana Academic Standards: 6th Grade

- **Science**

- 6.1.2 Scientific Inquiry Give examples of different ways scientists investigate natural phenomena and identify processes all scientists use, such as collection of relevant evidence, the use of logical reasoning, and the application of imagination in devising hypotheses* and explanations, in order to make sense of the evidence.
- 6.1.7 Technology and Science Explain that technology is essential to science for such purposes as access to outer space and other remote locations, sample collection and treatment, measurement, data collection and storage, computation, and communication of information.
- 6.1.9 Explain how technologies can influence all living things.
- 6.3.13 Earth and the Processes that Shape It Identify, explain, and discuss some effects human activities, such as the creation of pollution, have on weather and the atmosphere.
- 6.4.8 Interdependence of Life and Evolution Explain that in all environments, such as freshwater, marine, forest, desert, grassland, mountain, and others, organisms with similar needs may compete with one another for resources, including food, space, water, air, and shelter. Note that in any environment, the growth and survival of organisms depend on the physical conditions.

Indiana Academic Standards: 6th Grade

- **Social Studies**

- 6.3.13 Environment and Society Analyze and give examples of the consequences of human impact on the physical environment and evaluate ways in which technology influences human capacity to modify the physical environment.
- 6.3.16 Uses of Geography Identify environmental issues that affect Europe and the Americas. Examine contrasting perspectives on these problems and explain how human-induced changes in the physical environment in one place cause changes in another place.
Example: Acid rain, air and water pollution, deforestation.

Indiana Academic Standards: 7th Grade

■ **Reading**

- 7.2.3 Analyze text that uses the cause-and-effect organizational pattern.
Example: Use a comparison chart, such as a T-chart, to illustrate causes and effects.
- 7.2.8 Identify methods (such as repetition of words, biased or incomplete evidence) an author uses to persuade the reader.
- 7.3.2 Identify events that advance the plot and determine how each event explains past or present action or foreshadows (provides clues to) future action.
- 7.3.3 Analyze characterization as shown through a character's thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions; the narrator's description; and the thoughts, words, and actions of other characters.
- 7.3.5 Contrast points of view — such as first person, third person, limited and omniscient, and subjective and objective — in a literary text and explain how they affect the overall theme of the work.
- 7.3.8 Analyze the influence of the setting on the problem and its resolution.

■ **Science**

- 7.4.2 Describe that all organisms, including the human species*, are part of and depend on two main interconnected global food webs*, the ocean food web and the land food web.
- 7.4.9 Understand and explain that as any population of organisms grows, it is held in check by one or more environmental factors. These factors could result in depletion of food or nesting sites and/or increased loss to increased numbers of predators or parasites.

Indiana Academic Standards: 8th grade

- **Reading**

- 8.2.4 Compare the original text to a summary to determine whether the summary accurately describes the main ideas, includes important details, and conveys the underlying meaning.
- 8.2.9 Make reasonable statements and draw conclusions about a text, supporting them with accurate examples.
- 8.3.4 Analyze the importance of the setting to the mood, tone, or meaning of the text.
- 8.3.8 Contrast points of view — such as first person, third person, third person limited and third person omniscient, and subjective and objective — in narrative text and explain how they affect the overall theme of the work.
- 8.3.9 Analyze the relevance of setting (places, times, customs) to mood, tone, and meaning of text.

- **Science**

- 8.3.7 Explain that the atmosphere and the oceans have a limited capacity to absorb wastes and recycle materials naturally.
- 8.4.8 Describe how environmental conditions affect the survival of individual organisms and how entire species may prosper in spite of the poor survivability or bad fortune of individuals.

- **Social Studies**

- 8.3.9 Identify ways people modified the physical environment as the United States developed and the types of problems that resulted.

Bibliography

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<http://www.epa.gov/students/>

http://www.epa.gov/safewater/kids/pdfs/activity_grades_k-3_activitybook.pdf

<http://www.doe.state.in.us/standards/welcome.html>

All pictures in this presentation
are from www.booksamillion.com



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