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Sample MonkeyNotes

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Hoot

by

Carl Hiaasen

2002



MonkeyNotes Study Guide by Diane Clapsaddle

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KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

SETTING

The story takes place in Coconut Cove, Florida, in the present day.

LIST OF CHARACTERS

Major Characters

Roy Eberhardt - Around 12 years old, he is the main character of the novel. He has just moved from Bozeman, Montana to Coconut Cove, Florida, where he is the proverbial “new kid.” The novel is a bildungsroman in a small subtle way as it shows Roy’s growing into a young man with integrity and compassion.

Mullet Fingers - Approximately the same age as Roy, Mullet Fingers is a nickname for Napoleon Bridger, a young man who has been rejected by his own mother, has no friends other than his step-sister, Beatrice Leep, and who is the first one to stand up to protect the Burrow Owls.

Beatrice Leep - The step-sister of Mullet Fingers, she, too, is a Trace Middle School student. She is tall and strong and plays soccer. She gives her step-brother his nickname and protects him from anyone who tries to hurt him.

Officer David Delinko - A young police officer who is determined to become a detective someday. He seems to grow up at the same time Roy does and in doing so, discovers what’s really worth pursuing in life.

Dana Matherson - A school bully, he targets Roy, because he is the new kid. He is the first “enemy” Roy must learn to face and conquer.

Minor Characters

Roy’s Parents - Two very astute people, they strive to teach Roy the right way to behave and how to be a young man who exhibits integrity. They understand that they must eventually allow him to decide the right thing to do even if the consequences might be too difficult.....

Additional characters are identified in the complete study guide.

CONFLICT

Protagonist - The protagonist is Roy Eberhardt whose journey towards manhood is the main subject of the novel. He faces the conflict of change in his life which he.....

Antagonists - The antagonists include Dana Matherson, the bully who picks on Roy and.....

Climax - The climax of the story occurs when Roy, Beatrice, and Mullet Fingers, along with many of.....

Outcome - After the truth is revealed about the Pancake House’s intent to build within the environment of the owls, the company is forced to back off, and the owls are saved. Also, Mullet Fingers is.....

SHORT PLOT SUMMARY (Synopsis)

A young boy named Roy Eberhardt moves to Coconut Cove, Florida where he takes on the burden of helping to save the burrowing owls by stopping the planned construction on the piece of land where they live. Not only does he do so, but he makes friends, helps those friends exposes the dishonesty of the companies.....

THEMES

Growing Up - The theme of growing up is one of the most prevalent themes. It reinforces the idea that life is all

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about change and how we adapt to it. We are also shown throughout the story that with maturity comes responsibility. It is exemplified in a simplistic form of a bildungsroman or the maturation of a young man.

Corruption - Another theme is corruption. This is especially seen in how the company of Mother Paula's Pancake House is willing to bribe local officials and lie to keep building on the protected lands of an endangered species. It's also seen in how parents and other adults are willing lie to their children to protect the world they've built around themselves.

Parental Love - A third theme is that of parental love. Mullet Fingers will never be normal, because his mother has rejected him while Roy will grow up to be an outstanding man, because his parents not only love him, but allow him to make decisions from which he will learn and grow.

Integrity - A final important theme is that of integrity. Roy finds out that life is always about learning to adjust to change and still make the best decisions you can make under the circumstances. As Roy says, it's about finding a balance between the head and the heart and then living with the consequences, no matter what they turn out to be.

MOOD

The mood is at times frustrating as we watch Roy try to adjust to a new community and the bully who makes his life miserable. But mostly, it is uplifting as we see several young people make decisions on behalf of what is right and good.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - BIOGRAPHY

Carl Hiaasen was born in Plantation, Florida on March 12, 1953 to Odel and Patricia Hiaasen. He attended Emory University and graduated from the University of Florida in 1974 with a journalism degree. He worked as a newspaper reporter for the Cocoa Today and later he moved to the Miami Herald, where he still works today as a columnist. He has always maintained a focus on environmental issues and the preservation of nature. In the 80s he began writing novels, but he has been writing about Florida since his father gave him a typewriter at age six. Then, it was hunt-and-peck stories about neighborhood kickball and softball games, given.....

CHAPTER SUMMARIES WITH NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

Summary

The main character of the novel, Roy Eberhardt, is introduced by way of his curiosity about a boy with strawberry blond hair, wiry build, and nut-brown skin from the sun, who is running along the sidewalk as if to catch the same bus that Roy was riding to Trace Middle School. Instead, he runs on by on bare feet whose soles are as black as barbecue coals. Roy is also introduced at the same time as the victim of a bully named Dana Matherson who is mashing his face against the bus window at the same time the strange boy runs by. Because of Dana, Roy is unable to satisfy his curiosity about the running boy and must instead try to save himself from the bigger kid's grasp. He gives into Dana's demand that he says he's had enough and then immediately opens the bus window to try to see where the runner has gone. He's too late, but that doesn't stop his innate curiosity – who is this boy and what is he running from?

The action then moves to that of Officer David Delinko, a police officer who has been sent to the future site of another Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House. For now, it is a vacant lot where he meets a construction foreman named Curly who, in spite of his humorous name (he's as bald as a cue ball), is cranky and unsmiling. Someone has vandalized the site by pulling up all the survey sticks and filling in the holes, putting the project behind even more than it is already. Officer Delinko is concerned about whether to label the crime vandalism since there have been no monetary damages. He's willing to label it trespassing and malicious mischief. As he

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walks back toward his patrol car, he trips after stepping into a rather large hole. Curly tells him that the hole is the burrow of some owls that are no bigger than a beer can. Curly has no sympathy for the creatures and labels them stupid. When Delinko asks what will happen to them, Curly just smiles maliciously and says, “What owls?”

Roy can't stop thinking about the strange running boy. He looked in school between classes to see if he could recognize him, but he never saw him. He then sits alone at the cafeteria table, with the exception of a boy named Garrett who just says hi, because he is the new kid. He's an old pro at being the new kid, because he has attended six schools and the town, Coconut Cove, Florida, is the tenth town his family has lived in since he could remember. That's because Roy's father works for the government and frequently gets promoted. Garrett then begins to carry on a conversation for the first time, talking first about skateboards and then snowboards since Roy had just moved from his favorite place – Montana – where he snowboarded a lot. It turns out Garrett is no better than a D student, but is very popular, because he cuts up in class. He is known as the “King of Farts,” because he can actually fart out the first line of the Pledge of Allegiance. His mother, ironically, is the Guidance Counselor for Trace Middle School. Roy tells Garrett about the running boy to see if he knows him, but Garrett can only guess that he might be a high school kid. Roy speculates that he might be an outlaw and is determined to find him.

Notes

Roy's experiences reveal a great deal about him: he's a somewhat lonely boy, because his family is always moving; he is creative, intelligent, and curious in his imagining the running boy's story; he's impatient with dealing with such kids as Dana Matherson, but he's also realistic enough to know that he can't beat his size; and he longs for the state he just left, Montana, where he was his happiest.

The incident with Office Delinko is foreshadowing in that it prepares us for the people who are trying to save the owls who live in burrows on the site of yet another pancake house.

CHAPTER TWO

Summary

The next morning on the bus, Roy trades seats so as to be closer to the door. He keeps his backpack on his shoulders as if preparing to jump off the bus after the running boy. However, the boy doesn't show up. The same thing happens the day after that and the day after that and Roy pretty much gives up. Then, on Friday, as he is reading an X-Men comic book, he sees the boy out of the corner of his eye. Roy jumps up to follow the boy, when suddenly he is grabbed around the neck from behind by Dana Matherson. He's desperate to get off the bus and even though he knows it's against the rules to fight on the bus, he clenches his right fist and brings it up blindly over his shoulder and thrust it at Dana as hard as he can. The punch lands and Dana gives out a gargled cry and lets Roy go. He edges past a tall girl with curly blonde hair and glasses as well as the bus driver who both demand to know where he's going. But Roy doesn't stop to answer. He just keeps going, believing he can run fast enough to at least keep the boy in sight.

Once, in his pursuit, Roy sees the boy look backwards as if he knows he's being chased, but Roy never stops. Eventually, he finds himself on a golf course as he follows the boy down a long, lush fairway. Golfers scream angrily at him, but that doesn't make him stop either. It's only when he's hit with a ball off a long drive and collapses to the ground that Roy's pursuit finally comes to an end. As he lies there, he's aware that there are men running up to him in a panic, but he drifts away into his own thoughts and dreams. He remembers Bozeman, Montana, where he had wanted to stay forever, and how he had cried when his parents had told him they were moving once again.

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Later, Roy finds himself back at school and in the principal's office, because he punched Dana Matherson. He explains that the act was not unprovoked as Dana said and that no one else complains about his bullying behavior because they're afraid of him. He explains that he ran, because he's afraid of Dana, too. He doesn't want the principal to know the real reason he left the bus. The principal examines the knot on his head and then sees the finger marks on his neck from Dana choking him. Nonetheless, she suspends him from the bus for two weeks – something that Dana is happy about – and orders him to write a letter of apology to Dana.

At lunch, Roy is ordered to sit down by the same tall girl with the red-framed glasses. She demands to know if he had been chasing someone when he ran from the bus. Roy thinks she can identify the kid for him, but, instead, she pushes him around and orders him to “mind his own damn business.” She won't identify the boy and just walks off, flipping him off as she goes.

Notes

This chapter helps to flesh out Roy's character even more. The reader must wonder what makes Roy so determined to find the running boy. He is unusual for his age, seeking the answers to questions that other teens would never have sought. He even takes on a bully like Dana in his search for the answers. He is sensitive as well as he remembers the time he spent in Montana. With the principal, he is humorous and witty in his observations about what he had done to Dana, acting more mature than one would expect from a boy his age. Even when confronted by the blonde girl in the cafeteria, it isn't her threatening attitude that Roy cares about. It's whether or not she can answer his questions about the running boy. All of this tells the reader that Roy is someone worth knowing, a character who will present more surprises as the plot unfolds.....

OVERALL ANALYSES

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Major Characters

Roy Eberhardt - Roy is a typical teenager with all the angst that puberty brings. His parents move around a great deal because of his father's job, and Roy seems to just find his way in one place when he has to move to another. Like any kid, he has some resentment for this situation, but he also has a strong sense of responsibility as the only child of his parents. He knows that he had a baby sister who died early in his mother's pregnancy and that they never had any more children. Because of this, he knows he owes it, especially to his mother, to keep himself safe. This is a highly mature attitude for such a young boy. When Roy comes to Florida, he is very homesick for his favorite place, Montana. Florida is very difficult to adjust to. What's worse, he.....

Mullet Fingers - Far from normal, Mullet Fingers – also known as Napoleon Bridger - is the product of an extremely dysfunctional family. He has no idea who his biological father is and his own mother has literally rejected him, forcing him from her home. His step-sister, Beatrice Leep, is the only one
Additional characters are discussed in-depth in the complete study guide.

PLOT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

The story is a narrative told omnisciently in third person point of view about Roy Eberhardt's decision to stand up for some endangered owls.

THEME ANALYSIS

Growing Up - The theme of growing up is the most relevant of the novel. It is applicable to any young person who might read this book and learn through Roy's example. It emphasizes that growing up means adjusting to change even when we don't want to; it means making decisions based on a balance between the head and the

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heart and then accepting the consequences of those decisions no matter what they might be; it means having integrity and using the strength of it to help you survive; it means accepting people for who.....
Additional themes are identified and analyzed in the complete study guide.

RIISING ACTION

The rising action begins in chapter one when Roy first sees the running boy and out of curiosity and

FALLING ACTION

The falling action occurs when everyone turns against Chuck Muckle and Mother Paula's Pancake House at the demonstration. As a result, the building project.....

POINT OF VIEW

Third-person omniscient. It is written omnisciently as if viewed by a source outside all the action.

OTHER ELEMENTS

FORESHADOWING

There are several other literary devices that pop up at various times in the story. One of the most prevalent ones is foreshadowing which frequently presents clues of something that will happen later in the novel. Some examples of foreshadowing include:

- 1.) The incident with Office Delinko is foreshadowing in that it prepares us for the people who are trying to save the owls who live in burrows on the site of yet another pancake house.
- 2.) The owners of Mother Paula's are depicted as the villains of the story. They only care about the money they're making and they foreshadow a coming battle over the owls.....

Additional examples are included in the complete study guide.

IRONY

Another element that is important to note is irony – when something happens, or is seen, or is heard that we may know, but the characters do not, or that appears opposite of what is expected. Some examples of irony include:

- 1.) A construction foreman named Curly who, in spite of his humorous name (he's as bald as a cue ball), is cranky and unsmiling.
- 2.) Garrett is no better than a D student, but is very popular, because he cuts up in class. He is known as the "King of Farts," because he can actually fart out the first line of the Pledge of Allegiance. His mother, ironically, is the Guidance Counselor for Trace Middle School.....

Additional examples are included in the complete study guide.

MOTIFS

Another literary device used by the author is a **motif**. This device allows the author to run an important idea throughout the story by using images to create the thought for the reader. There is one motif used in *Hoot*:

- 1.) Bildungsroman which is a motif whereby a young boy grows, matures, and comes of age. The reader sees this in the following ways: Roy searches for the reason why a boy his age would be barefoot, living in the woods, and not going to school; he has to find a way to deal with a bully that is mature and effective; he must make choices that could have serious repercussions; he had to recognize that he owes his parents respect, because they have earned it; and he must accept that life is all about change and how we adapt to it.

IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS - QUOTES

The following quotations are important at various points in the story: (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2002):

- 1.) “*‘What’s gonna happen to them? Once you start bulldozing I mean.’* Curly the foreman chuckled. *‘What owls?’ he said.*” (pg. 8) This quote begins the confrontation between what’s right and what authority claims is right.
- 2.) “*‘Next time you’ve got a problem just tell me, and then we’ll sit down and talk about it like civilized human beings.’*” (pg. 45) This is Roy’s comment to Dana when he tries to reason with boy to stop the bullying.....

Additional quotes are included in the complete study guide.

SYMBOLISM / METAPHORS / IMAGERY / SYMBOLS

Other elements that are present in this novel are **symbols and metaphors**. Symbols are the use of some unrelated idea to represent something else. Metaphors are direct comparisons made between characters and ideas. There are many symbols and metaphors used by the author such as:

- 1.) “The next morning, Roy walks to the bus stop and notices some ospreys have built a nest at the top of a concrete utility pole. He’s excited to see them, because he had seen them in Montana, too, and didn’t think he’d find them here. He finds it remarkable that the same species of bird can thrive in tow places so far apart and so completely different. It makes him feel like maybe he can do the same thing.” (The ospreys are a metaphor for Roy’s inability to adapt to change for awhile after he comes to Florida.).....

Additional examples are included in the complete study guide.

IMPORTANT / KEY FACTS SUMMARY

Title: *Hoot*

Author: Carl Hiaasen

Date Published: 2002

Meaning of the Title: It refers to the owls who are protected by a group of children who discover something deeper in life.

Setting: Coconut Cove, Florida during the present day

Protagonist: Roy Eberhardt who chooses to stand up for the endangered owls.....

STUDY QUESTIONS - MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ

- 1.) Roy is intrigued by the running boy, because
 - a.) he runs faster than anyone Roy has ever seen before.
 - b.) he is running barefoot.
 - c.) he is nearly naked.
- 2.) Roy’s reaction at first to Dana’s bullying is
 - a.) to sit somewhere else on the bus.
 - b.) to scream at the bus driver to help him.
 - c.) to take what Dana hands out.....

ANSWER KEY

1.) b 2.) c 3.) a 4.) c 5.) a 6.) c 7.) a 8.) c 9.) a 10.) c 11.) a 12.) c 13.) b 14.) c 15.) b 15.) b

ESSAY TOPICS - BOOK REPORT IDEAS

- 1.) Follow Roy’s maturation by showing how he learns about change, adaptation, and integrity. Cite specific events from the story.

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2.) Describe the kind of boy Mullet Fingers is. Why does he live the way he does? What might his future hold?.....

Additional topics/ideas are included in the complete study guide.

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